

The Editor's Private Corner

“Saul and the Witch of Endor”

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A Spiritualist Medium

“Being a reader of PRESENT TRUTH, and reading in it about the state of the dead, I do not understand about 1 Samuel 28:3, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18. How could Samuel be brought back from the grave, or the dead?”

If you remember that “For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14), it will help to remove the difficulty from your mind. Since he can transform himself into an angel of light, and even personating Christ Himself, so as almost to deceive the very elect, it is no marvel that he could assume the form of Samuel so successfully as to deceive Saul, who had forsaken God, and who was wholly given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind.

Let us take a view of the situation as set forth in the chapter referred to. Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, was dead and buried, so that Saul could no longer consult him. Indeed, long before Samuel died there had been no communication between him and Saul, because Saul had rejected his counsel from the Lord.

Moreover, “Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land” (v. 3), according to the commandment of the Lord: “There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you” (Deut. 18:10–12). “You shall not permit a sorceress to live” (Ex. 22:18). “Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God” (Lev. 19:31).

But now Saul was in sore distress, and when he enquired of the Lord, “the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets. Then Saul said to his servants, “Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.” And his servants said to him, “In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor” (vv. 6, 7). This woman was a spiritualist medium, and her “familiar spirit” was the demon with whom she was in constant communication. Thus Saul had rejected God, and had turned to the devil, applying to one of the mediums whom he had banished.

The woman practiced her incantations, and **the familiar spirit assumed the appearance of Samuel, and talked with Saul.** Now the question is, was it really

Samuel, or was it not? **That it was not Samuel, is evident from the fact that God alone has power to raise the dead, and He had ceased to communicate with Saul. It is not consistent to suppose that when God had refused to answer Saul by His own appointed means, He would communicate with him through a way which He Himself had forbidden.** God “cannot deny Himself,” and therefore He had nothing to do with the woman with the familiar spirit; so it is evident that He did not raise up Samuel; and it is still more evident that the woman could not; **therefore the real Samuel was not present at all, but only an evil spirit who is called Samuel because he pretended to be Samuel, and Saul thought that he was Samuel.**

Note, however, that Saul himself did not see the apparition at all, but had only the woman’s statement that she “a spirit ascending out of the earth,” and that his form was that of an old man covered with a mantle.

Thus the case is very easily disposed of. We might call attention to one other feature, for the benefit of any who think that the dead are in heaven, and that is that this being whom the woman saw came up out of the earth. He did not come from heaven, but from beneath. In the woe pronounced upon Ariel, we read: “You shall be brought down, You shall speak out of the ground; Your speech shall be low, out of the dust; Your voice shall be like a medium’s, out of the ground; And your speech shall whisper out of the dust” (Isa. 29:4). This tallies exactly with the case before us.

The sum of the matter is, therefore, that Saul, who had rejected God, and appealed to the devil, was led captive by him at his will, and made to believe that which was not true, and which he ought to have known was not true, since truth is found only with God.

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