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"RAYMOND" AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

(Continued from page 749.)

in his general criticisms, I have not read anything better on the subject.

In "emphatically asserting" that the spirit of Raymond was never present at any of the séances, the Professor buttresses his position by quoting from 1 Peter 3:19, wherein "Spirits" are stated to be under guard or "in prison," from which he holds that "God in His mercy does not allow these spirits to revisit this earth."

This, I concede, is a fair conclusion, provided the "spirits" the Apostle alludes to are the spirits of dead men and the "prison" is Hades. I venture as "emphatically" to assert that in both these suppositions, the Professor errs. Because:

1. Nowhere in Scripture is man called or termed a spirit; he has a spirit; not is a spirit. Man is always termed dust; earth; ashes; soul. Angels on the contrary are termed spirits in numerous Scriptures.

2. When Peter wrote, these "spirits" were already in prison and there is no evidence that it continues to entertain any more. I am well aware that Hades is gratuitously defined as "the place or abode of departed spirits," but there is not a scrap of evidence supporting this theological blunder.

3. The "prison" is not Hades, but Tartarus, into which (see 2 Peter 2:4) the sinning angels (spirits) were incarcerated for a later judgment, as reaffirmed in Jude 6.

4. The spirits of men (good, bad and indifferent) at death do not go to Hades, as erroneously supposed, but is clearly stated as "returning to God who gave it." As originally emanating from its source, it returns thither. Moreover, the word "return," implies a prior presence, and if the spirit returning to God, bears or carries personality with it, then are we bound to the pagan idea of a prior existence before we were born, which

belief, to be sure, lands us gently in the lap of theosophy!

All these texts, I venture to hope, unprejudiced minds will see, refer to fallen angels and not to spirits of dead men. Gen. 6 may doubtless throw light on the subject, as I believe it was to these "spirits in prison" that the Lord Jesus (after His resurrection) went and preached at intervals, during the forty days before He ascended up on high and took a multitude of captives captive with Him. For "He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit."

5. It is difficult to see, if these spirits were of the dead antediluvians, why the Lord has been so partial as to offer them and not to others, a "second chance."

The Professor would have done well had he stopped just where he launches out afresh with his concluding paragraph "Biblical Evidence." To make good the prevalent idea of spirits of dead men carrying personality, the Professor unwarrantably introduces into the account, of Saul and the Witch of Endor the word "spirit." He writes: "The medium was terrified at the appearance of the spirit of Samuel." "The spirit of Samuel bitterly reproached Saul for disturbing his rest."

Would it be believed that the word "spirit" is not once mentioned in the whole transaction? (See 1 Sam. 28.) The account, if genuine, was assuredly of a bodily resurrection of Samuel. For the 1st verse states that Samuel dies and is buried. The 14th verse, Samuel an old man cometh up and is covered with a robe. The 15th verse, Samuel asks, "Why hast thou quieted me to bring me up?"

I respectfully venture to question all what the Professor has formulated and the inferences following his interpretation. My position, briefly, is this: The whole transaction was a hoax. The witch knew Saul in spite of his disguise, for who of that notorious king's subjects would not know the king of that land? The witch was a ventriloquist as well as a medium. She knew Samuel lately

dead. She asks Saul, "Whom shall I bring up?" and forthwith pretends she sees Samuel before her. Saul never saw Samuel. The conversation following was a fine art exhibition of ventriloquism, when, doubtless, the woman was compelled by God to speak, even as the ass spoke to Balaam.

Is it reasonable to suppose that God would (even on the Professor's premise) at the bidding of a wretched witch, whom He had ever proscribed, send the spirit of faithful Samuel from its rest to talk to the fallen and discredited monarch whom He had already rejected? This remark applies with tenfold intensity, if Samuel was raised from the dead!

The whole account is a warning to us. "Should not a people seek unto their God? On behalf of the living, should they seek unto the dead?" Isa. 8:19. To a doubting soul, alienated from God, anything and everything offering a possible relief from grief and anxiety, yea even resorting to Spiritualism, are tried, rather than abiding in faith in His immutable word: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring unto Him."

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Sir,—The article entitled "Raymond" and the Witch of Endor in your issue of October 30th will doubtless attract wide attention. Professor Michell assumes "that God for His own purposes sent the spirit of Samuel to Saul from its place of rest." In an article some years ago by Israel Abraham, Esq., M.A., on the Witch of Endor he suggests that "the narrative is designedly the narrative of a gross but simple deception." Designedly, in order that it might act as a warning to any inclined to follow Saul's own example. Mr. Abraham says: "It can hardly be necessary to remind the reader of the extent to which the human mind is liable to illusion of many kinds. . . . In normally constituted beings a state of deep exhaustion, whether bodily or mental, will materially interfere with the action of the senses. The eye can no longer see, the ear can no longer detect and classify sounds with their wonted delicacy, and they are apt to deliver in an incoherent manner what they actually receive from without. But further, the presence of any morbid emotion, in conjunction with exhaustion of the brain, will so colour the sense impressions, themselves only imperfectly received, that the judgment formed as to the character of external objects will be utterly unreliable and a complete illusion must result. Now, in his interview with the Witch of Endor, Saul is brought before us as suffering from both the disturbing influences described above."

"The narrative proceeds thus: Then said the woman, 'Whom shall I bring up unto thee?' And he said: 'Bring me up Samuel.' And when the woman saw Samuel she cried with a loud voice and the woman spake to Saul, saying: 'Why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul' (verses 11 and 12). There can be no doubt that these verses are clouded in deep obscurity. If the woman really saw Samuel, we must suppose, either that her incantation was successful, or that God interposed to bring about a result which the witch little expected. As Trench remarks: 'None was more amazed at the success of her necromancies than the sorceress herself.' The alternative is clearly untenable. It is simply impossible to suppose that God, who had refused to answer Saul when he sought counsel in a legal way, would respond to the pressure of illegal rites. But, if that be so, the question presents itself, how could the woman's incantations be successful when they had not yet been

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performed? There is not a word in the text which implies that there was any interval of time between verse 11 and verse 12. It cannot be that so important a detail is suppressed as unnecessary, nor was there any reluctance on the part of the sacred writers to divulge details of this character. (See Ezek. xxi, 21 seq.)

"It remains to suggest another explanation. The importance attached by the ancient thaumaturgists to a knowledge and use of the true names of beings they wished to invoke, is well known. Hebrew names were supposed to have a great effect. I therefore suggest that Saul, as he named Samuel, also wrote down the name 'Samuel,' in accordance with the usual custom. It was this 'Samuel' that the woman 'saw,' and might well see, without any interval being needed between verses 11 and 12. It is simply astonishing how well this explanation fits in with what follows. When the woman saw that Saul, by boldly asking for Samuel, no longer wished to shroud himself in mystery (for how could he, after his promise to protect her?), she, too, threw off her disguise in turn and confessed her recognition of him. He had practically revealed himself, and she could gain nothing now by pretending not to know him.

"But Saul mistakes, as she, perhaps, intended him to mistake, the meaning of her alarmed cry of recognition. He attributes it to the dreadful spectacle she is witnessing. He eagerly attempts to quiet her fears, and asks her to describe what it is that is passing before her eyes. Saul then sees nothing after all. The woman quickly catches at his mistake. 'An old man covered with a mantle,' she says is coming up and this suffices to make Saul believe that it is Samuel who addresses him. 'If you think it is Samuel so be it.' And the text then naturally puts the speaker's words into the mouth of Samuel. . . . This narrative, then, I venture to submit is designedly the narrative of a gross, but simple deception. Designedly, I say, in order that it might act as a warning to any inclined to follow Saul's own example."

Ashlyn A. Trumper.

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