

HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDE US INTO ALL TRUTH?

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Guidance by what may be called extraordinary methods as impressions, visions, peculiar providences, etc.

We have now come to that part of the subject where dangerous errors most abound.

But we think that if the following proposition be admitted and kept in mind, it will help materially to solve all difficulties concerning the whole matter, viz., that impressions, visions, dreams, etc., are not necessarily the work of the Holy Spirit, nor yet of Satan. They belong to us as a part of our make up, just as memory or the sense of smell. They are distributed, like the sunshine, amongst the evil and the good. For example, take impressions, and on close examination it will be found that it is something akin to superstition that makes them the act of either a good or bad spirit. It is simply because of their rarity that they excite awe-inspiring thought.

We see the sun nearly every day, and there is no superstitious thought comes to any in this enlightened age concerning his goings forth which are of old. But let a fiery comet rush into the solar system, and there is the tendency on the part of many to talk of war or pestilence: for superstition is excited by the rarity of the occurrence. We believe that just as the comet has its assigned place amongst the heavenly bodies, and should no more excite our fears or hopes than every-day sunlight, just so impressions, although comet-like in their rarity of visitation, should be treated like every other power of our being, as a necessary part of ourselves, and not as some irruption of spiritual influence into our being.

Hence we infer a man may be led by impressions, and not be led by the Holy Spirit on the one hand or by the devil on the other. We repeat it: in impressions, dreams, or visions, there is nothing necessarily spiritual, any more than in passion, appetite, or intellectual action.

Need we delay here to establish this fundamental truth? We are prepared to do so, if need be, by many arguments; but any one who looks steadily at this proposition will, we believe, see that it is really a self-evident truth.