

**MGR. CAPEL ON SPIRITISM.**  
*Modern Spiritism is Ancient Necromancy*  
*The History of a Great Delusion.*

The past fifty years have seen in many parts of Europe and the United States outbreaks of Spiritism, or, as it is improperly called, Spiritualism. An attempt has been made by its votaries to crystallize it into a form of religion, having special rites and services. It is well, therefore, to remind ourselves of what are our true relations with the world of spirits, and thus guard ourselves against dangers to which we may be exposed, especially when death takes from us those whom we love dearly.

**I.—THE SPIRITISM UNTO LIFE.**

First, in God we live and move and have our very being. Secondly, it is God who excites every supernatural movement of the will; having so excited, He co-operates by His grace in doing the supernatural work; and it is by His help that it is perfected to the end. Thirdly, angels who are pure spirits have come as messengers to men; they are described in the Book of Revelation as offering the prayers of men before the throne of God; they are guardians of men on earth. Fourthly, of those who are dead their disembodied and immortal souls are in heaven, in purgatory or in hell. If they have left earth in deadly sin, and, therefore, in enmity with God, for ever and ever they are suffering the pain of loss and the pain of sense, and with them we hold no relations. If, on the other hand, souls depart in perfect charity, as do baptized babes or repentant sinners like the Magdalen, they are enriched with the light of glory, and at once enter heaven; but should there still be the stains of imperfection on the departed soul, it enters purgatory, there to be purified before being admitted to heaven. With these departed ones we hold close, intimate relations. They still form part of the great Church; though a veil parts us, their love for us is more intense than it ever could have been on earth, and the prayers they offer for us on earth at our request or otherwise, they continue in heaven. And for the suffering souls in purgatory, while they pray for us they can do naught for themselves, and we on earth can help them by our prayers and good works. This is the blessed doctrine of the Communion of Saints. From death it takes the sting, it makes us live in company with the blessed in the other world; it confirms within our souls the hope of becoming associates with those who dwell where there can be neither tears nor death; it makes us pray to and for those beloved ones whom death has taken away. Holy Church in her private devotions and public offices daily leads her children to intimate converse with her triumphant members in heaven and with her sufferers in purgatory. Lastly, the Evil Spirit and his companions lay in wait and seek our destruction; with them we are to be in constant warfare.

These constitute in outline our relation with the unseen world of spirits. They are the teachings of the Church of God, and are very fully and plainly evidenced in the Holy Bible.

**2.—THE SPIRITISM UNTO DEATH.**

A spurious imitation of a part of the doctrine just enunciated has from the earliest times existed. To conjure up the spirits, to hold communication with the souls of the departed, to seek the knowledge of things hidden and of things future, are older than written history. Necromancy, as it is called—that is, the consulting of the spirits of the dead and divining through them—is constantly referred to by the earliest sacred and profane writers. "The Evokers of Spirits" (Psychagogoi) formed among the Greeks a profession. Their conduct and ceremonies are amusingly described and ridiculed by the Greek satirists. The comic writer, Aristophanes, who was born 444 years before Christ, among others does this in his play, the "Frogs."

The poet Homer, in the eleventh book of the Odyssey, represents Ulysses as consulting the shade of Tiresias evoked from the infernal regions. The Old Testament narrates in detail (I. Samuel or Kings, xxviii) how, when the Lord had departed from Saul, the latter went to the woman that had the divining spirit, at Endor, that she might evoke the soul of the dead Samuel. She granted his requests. In the New Testament (Acts xvi, 16), it is narrated that Paul and Silas were confronted by "a certain girl possessed with a spirit of divination, who brought her masters much gain by divining."

These instances put beyond doubt the fact that "mediums," "consultors of the dead," "evokers of the souls of the departed," have existed from the earliest days.

**GOD'S JUDGMENT ON SUCH.**

On them God has passed judgment.

He says (Leviticus xx, 27): "A man or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones." And Deuteronomy, xviii, 11: "There shall not be found among you . . . a consultant with familiar spirits, a wizard, a necromancer; for all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord." To communicate with such mediums or necromancers is strictly prohibited by God: "Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits, nor unto the wizards; I am the Lord your God." (Leviticus, xix, 31.) In the next chapter the same prohibition is repeated. And Isaiah, the prophet, says: "When they shall say to you, seek unto them that have pythonic spirits and diviners that mutter in their enchantments, should not the people seek unto their God, and not for the living to the dead?" (Is., viii, 19.)

These prohibitions show that the "evocation of spirits," "divining through the dead," "consulting the departed," are in themselves intrinsically wicked. No wonder that the Church, to whom is committed the office of proclaiming and guarding "the faith once delivered to the saints," should from the commencement have authoritatively condemned as grave violations of the first commandment necromancy and divination, and have attributed their action and power to the Evil One. Wisely does the Church prohibit as grievous sin participation in such dealings with the departed.

**MODERN SPIRITISM IS ANCIENT NECROMANCY.**

Making all allowance for mesmerism, clairvoyance, animal magnetism, the trickery of the operators and the hallucinations of those operated upon, there yet remains a large residuum of true manifestations and of extraordinary marvels. But these are admittedly produced by evoking the souls of the dead. Modern spiritism is, therefore, identical with the necromancy which existed among the Egyptians, the Jews and the pagan nations. The revolting rites performed by the Thessalian mediums give way in modern spiritism to soft, plaintive song; but the solitude and dim light—even darkness—together with mysterious passages, movements and emblems, still remain to precede or surround the essential act of "calling up the spirits."

Modern spiritism, therefore, falls under the same judgment of God as did the ancient necromancy. It is intrinsically wicked; it is in opposition to God and God's power. That He permits it at times to do things apparently good and to speak things that are true, alters not the question—it ever remains the work of the Evil One, and it merits the severe punishments mentioned in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. It cannot be practised seriously without raising up a false god, without introducing superstition and impiety. Being intrinsically wicked, under no set of circumstances may spiritism be indulged in; nay, mere passive assistance at spiritualistic seances cannot be otherwise than sinful.

The exercise of common sense ought to save persons from this delusive snare. Spiritism has nothing to offer; it has no code of morals, nor special means for conferring grace; at best it professes to put us in physical communication with the departed, who with the rudest and most laborious manifestations inform of their happiness, send complimentary messages and crude statements to friends. Even for the truth of these no proof is adduced. One thing common sense dictates, that souls enjoying the beatific vision are not likely to be at the beck and call of mediums, who at their good will are pleased to summon the departed; nor are the condemned in the everlasting prison to dance attendance on necromancers. Spiritism claims to have discovered and proved the immortality of the soul. Such immortality can be discovered in part by the light of natural reason; and it has ever been proclaimed by the Jewish and Christian revelation.

PALACE HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO.

**Presidential Pleasantries.**

When President Cleveland was asked to appoint Judge Tree to a foreign mission, he replied:

'I'd just as leaf as not.'  
This gracious answer to the application was received with a profound bough. 'In making this appointment, however,' continued the chief magistrate, 'it was not to be considered by any branches of the Judge's family that they have only to apply for a position to be appointed.'  
'Certainly knot,' was the response.  
'Then, I guess, you can tell Judge Tree to pack his trunk,' said the President.  
'You expect me, of course, to appoint him,' he added.  
'We knew you wood,' was the reply.  
'Well,' said the President, 'I was aware that Judge Tree did not pine for the office, nevertheless in such a position I am

anxious to see, as our English friends would say, a good man at the 'olm, and while I'm maple—'  
'Chestnuts!' exclaimed the delegation in a breath.  
Then the President retired to his desk with a pleasant smile on his face, and the delegation departed, well pleased with the success of their mission.

**BITS OF WISDOM**

Do not lose courage by considering your own imperfections, but instantly set about to remedy them.

In the region of Faith there is light enough for those who wish to see, and obscurity enough for those of an opposite disposition.

"Ask my friend," said Lady Georgiana Fullerton on her death-bed, "not to spend money on flowers for my coffin, but to give it to the poor instead."

An oriental potentate once bade his Prime Minister compose for him a motto that would answer both for seasons of prosperity and adversity. Here is the sentence, which he had engraved on his signet ring. "This, too, shall soon pass away."

When we feel ourselves moved by a vehement desire to perform any important, nay, holy work, we should defer it until another time, and wait until our heart shall be in a state of tranquility and indifference, in order that self-love may not sully the purity of our intention.

The race of mankind would perish did they cease to aid each other. From the time that the mother binds the child's head, till the moment some assistance wipes the death-damp from the brow of the dying, we cannot exist without mutual help. All, therefore, that need aid have a right to ask it from their fellow-mortals. No one who holds the power of granting it can refuse it without guilt.

**WANDERING WHIMSECALITIES.**

**Hound to Marry a Divorcee.**

'Judge, I just can't live with my wife any longer, and I must have a divorce if it takes every cent I've got.'  
'What do you want a divorce for?'  
'So she can't sue me nor nothing. They tell me she can get board wages if I leave her without writings.'  
'Oh, fudge! How long have you been wanting to get a divorce?'  
'Most two weeks.'  
'How long have you been married?'  
'About two weeks.'  
'Well, that beats the Dutch. What's the cause of the trouble?'  
'Judge, she does snore just awful, if I must say it, but I don't want to, and thought maybe I wouldn't have to. There's no such thing as getting a wink of sleep in the same house with her, and as I have to work for a living, I've got to do my slumbering at night.'  
'But that won't give you a divorce.'  
'Not if I pay for it?'  
'Why, no; you would be kicked out of court.'  
'But along with her snoring she whistles through her nose like a tugboat. She's a little woman, but good heavens, Judge, she'd raise the dead!'  
'That don't make any difference. The law says you must put up with it and make the best of it. To get a divorce you must have a reasonable cause to begin with.'  
'Well, great Caesar, judge! Ain't having to sleep in the coal shed enough to begin with, I like to know? I thought the law was made to help a body along. Don't it take no pity on a man at all?'  
'Not in a case like that. It presumes that you married this woman with your eyes open.'  
'So I did, judge, and they've been open ever since. Does the law say I've got to go without sleep till I drop, or bunk in the barn? Does the law give that woman a right to make a fog horn of herself, and shake the whole house with her nose as soon as she shuts her eyes? Does the law uphold her in robbing me of sleep that's the same thing as bone and muscle to me? Does the law give her the right to whistle through her nose and snore fit to make a cow bawl the livelong night, and at the same time give her a whack at my property, if I leave her and take to the timber to save my life! Does it do all that, judge?'  
'Well, yes; it simmers down to about that.'  
'Well, then, I'll never vote again as long as I live, and I won't pay a cent of taxes, if I hang for it. If the law tries to buldoze me that way, it'll have to paddle its own canoe after this, that's all. I fit for the government once, but I'll be blamed if I'll ever do it again.'

**—THE—**  
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