

quoting the one which is better known probably than any of the others, that of the calling up Samuel by the woman of Endor. "In this case you will recollect Saul, in a great state of despair, sought out a woman who was in the habit secretly of practising divination, with a view to ascertain his fate in the future. He had already, it seemed, enquired of the Lord by the usually appointed methods, but had received no answer, "neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets,* and, consequently, in his extreme anxiety he set at defiance the Mosaic law, and sought out a woman who had a familiar spirit. Having sworn to her that no evil should befall her in consequence of her practice of an art so strongly prohibited, and which he himself had previously taken active steps to suppress, she asked the question, "Whom shall I bring up unto thee? and he said bring me up Samuel."†

The consequence of this was, as you know, that Samuel came and delivered to Saul the unwelcome intelligence that the kingdom was rent from him and given to David, and that on the following day the king and his sons should join the prophet in the land of spirits. Now, the whole of this scene becomes absurd, upon the principle that at the time at which it was said to have occurred the people who took an active part in the events herein chronicled had no belief in the separate existence of the spirit after death. There is an opinion largely entertained that the woman was simply an impostor, having no power whatever over the dead, and that the practice of divination in those times was of a character analogous to the conjuring and fortune-telling of to-day. But even if this were so, it would in no sense affect the question under consideration, because a belief in necromancy would be still necessarily implied in the event. Clearly it was not the body of Samuel that came up, for that was buried at Ramah, more than sixty miles from Endor. Various conflicting opinions are entertained by commentators as to the real nature of this apparition. The Rev. John Browne maintains that it is absurd to imagine that God would raise a man from the dead to give information to Saul, seeing that He had refused to answer him by the

* 1 Samuel xxviii., 6.

† 1 Samuel xxviii., 11.