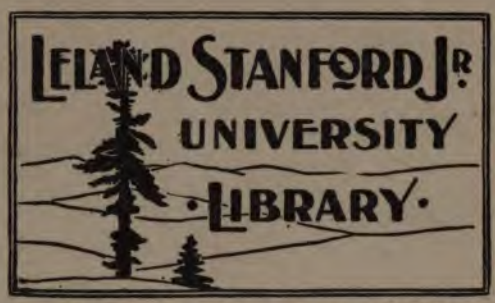
Doane, W.C.
Seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. A sermon preached in St. Barnabas' free mission chapel, Burlington, N.J. 1863.



Seducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils.

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN

ST. BARNABAS' FREE MISSION CHAPEL,

BURLINGTON, N. J.

BY THE

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SERMON.

DEUTERONOMY 18, PART OF VERSES 10, 11, 12 AND 15.

"THERE shall not be found among you one that useth divination, . . or an en chanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a *necromancer*, for all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: *and because of these abominations*, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. . . . The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren; unto him ye shall hearken."

ON the third Sunday in Lent, ten days ago, among the teachings of the Holy Church for that particular day, was the wondrous record of the transfiguration of the Lord; of the admission of the three chosen Apostles, St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, to behold the glorified body of Jesus, and to hear the mysterious converse between Him and His faithful servants, Moses and Elias, who there appeared with Him. In my office as the teacher of those whom God has committed to my charge, I had stood with them, in the afternoon, in the presence of that excellent glory, to learn, as far as we may, here, the lessons of that mysterious event, and had felt "how good it was for us to be there." When I came down, I was confronted by the statement, that some of those souls for whom I am to give account to God, had been drawn by curiosity into contact with a circle of men who pretend to hold converse with the souls of the departed. I felt at first that private warnings would be enough to check the danger. I dread to give to any thing, which contains so large an admixture of silly

vulgarity, the dignity of a public contradiction. But as I thought of the unwearied and varied devices of the adversary of our souls: how sometimes, in the majesty of an angel fallen, he leads us to the high level of argument and reason; and sometimes, in the dishonour of a hissing snake, he crawls upon the belly of vulgar and insinuating lies; as I felt how such an infection spreads and taints, in secret, many souls, which show no outward symptoms, till, suddenly, they die; as I felt that, by God's grace, I might save other souls than those committed to my care, my sense of duty took another turn, and I could feel, in a degree, as my mind turned from thinking of the glory of the Transfiguration, to thinking of the vile, sensuous blasphemies of modern Spiritualism, I could feel, in a degree, what the Apostles must have felt when coming down from the company of the Saviour glorified, with Moses and Elias, they descended to the loathsome, terrible sight of that poor demoniac boy, torn by that evil spirit, gnashing his teeth and withering* away, and wallowing, foaming on the ground. And I came here that night, with very little time for thought, to stand, as I stand now, to speak to Christian men, to any man who believes the Bible to be the Word of God, upon the duty of my ordination vow, "the Lord being my helper," to "banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word." The dumb spirit that possessed that boy mastered the imperfect faith of nine Apostles on the day of the Transfiguration. If your imperfect or uninstructed faith have yielded to the claim of this new device of Satan, it is not his greater power, but your weakness. And when the voice of Christ speaks out of His old Word, "*I* charge thee;" the voice of the Revealer of the Scriptures, out of their letter; the voice of the Incarnate, out of the written Word, of both the Old and the New Testaments; when that voice speaks out, as it does out of the text in Deuteronomy and the Scriptures which I shall quote to-night, then shall the truth prevail. I simply state, as what I mean to prove, that the pretensions of so-called Spiritualism are false, impossible, blasphemous, and dangerous to men's

* *Ξηραίνεται.* S. Mark 9 : 18.

souls. It may seem strange, beloved, to turn for the rebuke of to-day's sins to the Scriptures of centuries ago; but *all* Scripture is profitable for reproof and for instruction, because it *all* is given by God. And if Christian men fall into the errors of which Jews were warned, if Christian men commit heathen abominations, the old voice of God speaks out, through all the centuries since its first utterance, to condemn the revived wrong. And while the comfort of the ancient promises still stands for us, the sternness of the old denunciations stands as well. They speak in every age to all who have any need to hear.

Now, the prohibition in the text covers a class of sins which it denounces in one breath, and gives the reason for their denunciation. The sins thus put together are kindred sins. Charmers, enchanters, witches, and wizards, are on a level in the eye of God with necromancers and consulters of familiar spirits. The distinctions among these various words are worthy of notice. In the original they mean, fortune-tellers, consulters of birds, those who sing enchantments, examiners of the entrails of sacrificed children,* ventriloquists;† while the word necromancer‡ means directly a man who inquires of the dead.

In such company, at the outset, in God's esteem, do spiritualists stand. Fortune-tellers and witches are handed over to be used by the most ignorant, most vulgar, most degraded human beings. No man having a claim to the title of respectability would dare to own that he so much as thought of using them. They stand with jugglers, and tricksters with cards, as either vulgar impostors, *forbidden by law*, or as clever sleight-of-hand men. I need not argue against them; I speak of them to show you in what esteem the Word of God, and men who believe the Word of God, hold necromancers, or those who inquire of the dead. Of these consulters of the dead there are two classes, all de-

* Tertullian, Apol. I. 23. Magicians also produce apparitions, and *disgrace the souls of the departed*, . . entrance (edidunt, rather slay) children to make them utter oracles.

† Ἐγγαστρίμυθος, a ventriloquist; *pytho* in the Hebrew plural is, *mendacos*, liars.

‡ Επερωτων τους νεκρους.

scribed by the one term. Some went and lay all night upon a grave, with their ear pressed to the earth, and heard the voice *of the dust that there was buried;* or else, fell asleep while there, and heard it in their dreams. Others, and of such was the Witch of Endor, by their control of familiar spirits, or demons,* claimed to have power over the souls of the departed. Against the whole practice, in either way conducted, this Word of God protests. And upon what grounds? That they were heathen abominations; the very abominations on account of which the seven nations were driven from the promised land. And into these, men are to fall in Christian times. With abominations such as these, that good land which God has given us is to be overrun. O my beloved! at the start, take in and realize this truth.

Sorely upon our nation lies the heavy hand of God. Religious men must own this visitation a punishment for sin. How far does this abomination enter in to fill up the cup which is so overfull? Those seven nations of Canaan are, in all Christian esteem, the type of essential and intolerable wrong, of the seven deadly sins. Will you draw nigh, on any motive, to touch them? Can you, without defilement? "There shall not be among you *one* who inquires of the dead." And there are among us, it is stated, two millions openly, four millions imperfectly, practising, believing this, which, in a heathen nation, was abomination unto the Lord.

But there is a deeper, farther reaching reason even than this. "The Lord thy God hath not suffered thee to do" these things. "The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet out of the midst of thee, of thy brethren; unto him ye shall hearken." Here, my beloved, was the great fundamental truth on which this prohibition stands. A far-off point, centuries away; a prophecy, whose fulfilment should wait, and wait, through generations; a prophet *to be* raised up; a hope, a promise, a future thing; this was ground enough on which to forbid all seeking after revelations from the dead. Toward this the straining eye of every faithful Jew looked, peering through the lingering twilight of

* Justin Martyr, Dial. cum Trypho. Sec. cv.

that protracted dawn. Toward it the types all turned, the prophecies pointed, the providences of God converged. And ever and anon, like a lamp shining in a dark place, there came a voice from that expected Prophet, the Revealer, speaking through His commissioned teachers, and declaring all that was needful and best for them to know. To those who would be wise beyond this, intruding into those things which they could not see, the only way open to gratify their wicked curiosity was in the use of these forbidden arts, against which stood out the stern denunciation of the text.

But, my beloved, you may make the case stronger still, with the fuller teachings of our time. Listen to that only voice, that comes to us out of the mysterious shadows of the abode of departed souls, in the Saviour's parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The agony of that rich man's helpless remorse longed for some other voice, some voice from the dead, to reach his brethren's hearts. And from the Father of the faithful, in whose bosom rest all faithful souls, the answer came—whose perpetual present is the eternal witness to the sufficiency of the Scriptural revelation: "They *have* Moses and the prophets." How it goes back to take in God's ancient word: "A Prophet shall the Lord raise up of thy brethren." How it sweeps up from that first revelation every inspired voice, from Moses down to Malachi. How it holds up to every soul of man the completed Canon as containing all needful, ay, all possible manifestations of God. "They *have* Moses and the prophets." Ah, beloved! if the necromancers of our day could get a voice to speak to them from Paradise; if the vulgar violence of their knockings and callings could wake even an echo from that blessed place; could they so much as stir a ripple of its peace to break itself against those open gates, this would be the only answer, or else the words of Jesus Christ are false: "Ye have Moses and the prophets." Nay, more for us. This was for Jews. This was for ante-Christian days. This was for the Scriptures of the Old Testament only. With what a thousand-fold increased force do the Divine reason in Deuteronomy, and the word of Abraham in St. Luke, come to us. We have Moses and the prophets,

and the Prophet like unto Moses, even Christ; we have Him in His incarnate life; we have Him in the power of His perpetual presence; we have Him in the Bible; we have Him in the Church; we have Him in our hearts; we have Him living, teaching, revealing, leading, opening Heaven, showing us the Father. How dare we turn from Him to any other revelation? How dare we insult the fulness of His mercy by seeking something more, from the Living to the dead? Mind you, beloved, in the outskirts of this subject, before you touch it, that you may not touch it, the old Word of God reads so for us, and we shall be judged by this reading: "There shall not be found among you a necromancer, *one* who inquireth of the dead. The Lord thy God *hath raised up* unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren; unto him ye shall hearken." And from the place of the departed comes up the antiphon of their response, who, since the first Easter even, have rejoiced in fuller light and richer peace; ye have, nay, rather, in the communion of saints, *we* have Moses and the prophets, and *the* Prophet, the Anointed, the Messiah—let us hear them. I account this in itself to condemn as unlawful and outrageous, the impertinent pretensions of spiritualism.

But I want to look with you a little further into the workings of its claim, and their results. A single error attacks truth on many sides; and every side bristles with defenses. The weapons vary as the points of attack change. And remember, beloved, that truth does not attack; it defends itself. These pushing, forward, impudent inventions are the offenders. Not to be feared, in one sense; because the truth of God is sure to prevail; and yet, in another, to be feared, because their specious falseness will allure, to destruction, many a silly soul. I do not propose to enter into a detailed examination of spiritualism. Whether its signs and tokens are tricks or not; whether they are wrought by natural or by supernatural means; whether they depend upon sleight-of-hand and ventriloquism; whether they are the uncontrollable workings of well-known physical laws; whether they are merely, or mainly, the overwrought violence of that imagination which turns white sheets upon a clothes-line into ghosts, and the

phosphorescent marsh-lights into the devil's lanterns; or whether they are the operations of some yet unknown law of nature; with these things I have no concern. The vulgarity, the sensuality, the low common-place, the falseness, the money-making trickery, the utter folly, the violent absurdity, of much that is mixed up with spiritualism, refer a good part of its claims to a decidedly earthly origin, and that a very low, and ignorant, and uneducated one. I am not prepared to say whether or not there is more than this in it. Nor do I dispute its phenomena. The magicians of Egypt worked miracles, as well as Moses, up to a certain point. And Simon Magus was a successful sorcerer. I confess to a general disbelief in them. If I were asked to define spiritualism, I should call it a mixture of the essentially earthly and the supernatural; the earthly being of the lowest and most earthy sort, and the spiritual being evidently, and beyond a doubt, devilish. But that does not touch the case. What I have to do with is their right or wrong, their truth or error.* And these are ques-

* The following extract from a notice of Mr. Home's Autobiography, in the *Saturday Review*, makes it needless for me to expose, as I had meant, just this fallacy, which forms the whole basis of the argument in that very curious but very tedious book, by Robert Dale Owen, suggestively called *Footfalls on the Boundaries of Another World.* We would advise the former member of Congress to look out what sort of a world it is, on whose boundaries his feet are falling:

"And here the inquiry becomes one of great practical importance. Few people in these days of loose thought are capable of seeing what the question at issue in regard to spiritualism is, or how far it goes. They are told that if they disbelieve in the facts of spiritualism they are disciples of a merely material philosophy, and that they ought, in consistency, to disbelieve in all spiritual things; that they are Sadducees, not only as regards revelation, but as regards all religion, and that they are skeptics to the extent of disbelief in spirit itself. And they are also told that the objections which are now urged against spiritualism were urged against Galileo, Copernicus, Harvey, the steam-engine, the electric telegraph, and all sorts of things, which were at first incredible, only because they contradicted the registered experience of mankind. The consequence is, that many persons had willingly run the risk of being thought over-credulous rather than irreligious. And at the same time, some think it more philosophical to have no opinion on spiritualism, and hesitate to speak out on its absurdities, because they are truly told that man is not

tions independent of any examination of the phenomena. It is not needful to get drunk in order to preach against drunkenness, or to mingle with profligates to denounce lust. Nor need you

acquainted as yet with all the secrets and hidden forces of nature. The result is, on the one hand, an undue and blind submission to testimony, or rather to the name and pretense of testimony; on the other hand, an intellectual vice is made to do duty as a moral virtue, and inquiry and investigation, if they result in adverse conviction, are stigmatized as treason to the habit of religious faith, and also to philosophic caution and hesitation. Men of science, and still more, men who would be thought to be men of science, are promised the revelation of higher and yet undeveloped laws of nature; and a greater discovery than that which adorns the name of Newton is to be the reward of those scientific investigators who will only not say that Mr. Home's floating on the ambient air is a delusion. Men of religion are told that they practically disbelieve the New Testament if they dare to doubt that the spirits of Franklin and Coleridge dictate bad English to an ignorant old woman in Boston, or to an ungrammatical medium who lodges up two pair of stairs in Red Lion street, Holborn. It is only testimony of a certain kind, then, that can give credibility to any alleged facts; and the requisites of testimony vary in proportion to the nature of the alleged facts. The testimony which is sufficient to guarantee the alleged fact that it rained yesterday at Windsor may be very slight; but it would require an amount of testimony of the very strongest kind, that is, the uncontradicted assertion of a vast multitude of persons dwelling on the spot, and of unimpeachable veracity, and who had no interest in propagating a falsehood, and who had every requisite for the right use of their senses, to accredit the fact that the constellation Orion was visible at Windsor for a whole hour yesterday at midday. Further, though the nature of the proof from testimony is the same if three, or if three thousand witnesses depose to it, yet the credibility of the witnesses varies. That is to say, all persons are not equally credible. In the case of the alleged facts of spiritualism, we are bound to demand testimony which can stand the very severest tests, because the facts alleged are directly contradictory to the experience of the whole world. It is quite true that for some of them there is precedent. As Mr. Home's introduction writer aptly remarks, the Cock-lane ghost anticipated all the phenomena of rapping; and Mr. Howitt can, with a good supply of paste, put together two, as he might have put together two dozen volumes of ghost stories and old wives' tales, which have grown up within the last two thousand years. But the alleged fact of Mr. Home floating on the air is quite another matter. We are not aware of any instance of the suspension of the laws of nature and of the human body in space parallel to the prodigy related of Mr. Home, except a similar, and not uninstructive, miracle attributed to Apollonius of Tyana, and recorded by his biographer, Philostratus."

examine and try the working of spiritualism in order to denounce and disbelieve it. Nay, false as it is, there is danger in so doing. You do wrong in dabbling with it at all. The *beginning* of it is a sin. And when you begin it, when you enter into it, you do wrong, you commit a sin. Amusement, curiosity, love of novelty, speculative inquiry, are no excuse for committing sin. It was only the curiosity to see the daughters of the land that led Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, to her own dishonour, and caused the death of all the men of the city of Shechem, the son of Hamor. When you presume, when you tempt the Lord, when you go out of the path of your Christian duty, you go away from the protection of God and the angelic care. I do not know, beloved, nor you, how thin the veil is that parts us from unknown and unimagined mysteries. That invisible spirit of evil, that great and terrible reality, the devil, is near us; how near I know not, but always very near. And when you reach your hand out wilfully into this veil, hung up by God, to grope and grasp after what God has purposely concealed, that evil power may be there to clutch it; to fill it with what seems a discovery, to draw this groping hand, and the soul with it, into utter destruction and death. "Touch not the accursed thing." This is the only rule. If to inquire of the dead be, as we have seen, an abomination to the Lord, even the fact of their answering, even if it be proved, does not justify it. If *any further revelation* is contrary to the revealed word of God, then the Christian duty of every man is plain: to condemn it and avoid it as an evil, no matter what its seeming tokens. Try the spirits whether they be of God or no. If they contradict, nay, if they *are in the fact of their pretended existence*, contrary to what is written, they are tried and self-condemned. I dwell on this because I would have you understand it. It is St. Paul's urgency against the manifestation of the man of sin, with "all deceivableness of unrighteousness." Not examine it, *but* "hold fast the traditions which ye have been taught." Oppose possible error with positive truth. "If we, or an angel from Heaven, preach unto you *any other* gospel, *let him be accursed*."

But now, taking holy Scripture as our guide, let us look at the two inspired records of communication with the world of spirits. Let me contrast, for the benefit of spiritualists and Christians, Saul the wicked king of Israel, and Paul the holy Apostle of Christ. I have just read to you the strange* story of Saul's interview with the Witch of Endor. On the face of it, it seems a warrant for consulting the dead. I should be willing to grant that the prophet Samuel did really answer to the call of the woman, and appear to Saul. And if modern spiritualism prefers to claim this story as a testimony to its truth, I will gladly give it over. Now let us look at the company, consulters of the dead get into, in this story. Who was Saul? He was the chosen and anointed king of Israel—every inch a man, every inch a king. This was his first estate, when the cry, "God save the King," called down God's freely-given favour and full blessing upon His faithful servant. And yet that same man stands before us, in this picture, sneaking, in disguise and under cover of the night, to the poor out-of-the-way hovel of an old despised and persecuted witch, and stooping to the whisper of an old crone, who peeped and muttered of gods ascending out of the earth, of an old man coming up, covered with a mantle. There is no such picture of abject degradation; his royalty, his godliness, ay, his mere manhood dishonoured and degraded and defiled. Spiritualists are welcome to this pattern. For how did Saul come to this? The steps of his fall are gradual and evident, down to this lowest deep. And there are too many of Saul's sort among our spiritualists, too many who have travelled Saul's downward path, that easy descent to hell of which the poet speaks, to add the dignity to it of either manliness or godliness. Saul started, as we have seen; but he soon fell away. His first sin was an intrusion upon the sacred office of the prophet. It was a sin of which modern days, with their large words of liberal Christianity, would have made little, would have applauded. Before the battle with the Philistines at Michmash, the Hebrews became alarmed. The Philistine host was larger; and no sacrifice was offered to the Lord to secure the victory. And Sam-

* 1 Samuel xxviii. This whole chapter ought to be read.

uel waited seven days, and the king grew impatient, and the people became frightened; and he did not wait for Samuel to come, but *forced himself*, and offered the burnt offering. God, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, hates the wilful intrusion of unauthorized persons into holy offices. It is the spirit of sect and schism, in direct opposition to God's essence, which is unity. And for this sin, Samuel rebuked him, warning him of the loss of his kingdom. Again, at Shur, when the victory was won over the Amalekites, Saul disobeyed God's express command to destroy utterly the whole nation, king, subjects, and cattle. He spared the king, and kept the spoil, under a mean and false pretense, and then sought to deceive God and His prophet about his disobedience. He rebelled against the Lord. In the strong word of God, he *rejected* the Lord; and though there came the sentiment of repentance, of fear, and the hope of restoration, we hear of him next, that for his continued sin and disobedience, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him, and an evil spirit troubled him. You will remember how from this time he ran down the long line of continuous and repeated sins, till he committed suicide; how he betrayed David and sought his life, by the meanest and most contemptible treachery; how he pursued him as men hunt wild beasts, untouched by David's magnanimity and forgetful of his former love; how he slew, in their defenselessness, eighty-three of God's anointed priests; how he drove Samuel away, so that he saw him no more till the day of his death; how he ceased finally to inquire of the Lord at all. He would not turn to Samuel; he would not consult the school of the prophets at Ramah; he would not inquire of Urim and Thummim. Saul has ceased to inquire of the Lord, in His appointed voices, and so the Lord ceased to answer him; and in the last stage of his ruin and despair, when after his sin all else had failed him, he turned to the Witch of Endor, and sought to inquire of the dead. And this man—bad in all ways, a rejecter of God, and rejected by him, a refuser of all proper sources of revelation or of worship, the betrayer and would-be slayer of his friend, the murderer of God's priests, a man possessed with the devil, desperate, ruined, an unbeliever

virtually, and a suicide — this man, and the heathen nations of Canaan, are the Scriptural patterns of men who inquire of the dead. Spiritualists are welcome to their exemplar and their company. But there is a further question even than this. When under the cover of the night, that hides from men's eyes thieves and man-slayers and adulterers, this hopeless man had crept with stealthy steps and in disguise to Endor; when he had humbled himself to a wicked woman, whom by the consistency of his kingly word he was bound to banish from the land, what did he find? It was bad company he got into there, my friends, and cold comfort that he found. The description which I have read to you answers very well to the wicked farces of our day: the mystery, the darkness, the woman's fear, the pretended vision, seen only by the witch, the old man coming up, the mantle. But who was it that spoke? Beyond a shadow of a doubt to my mind, it was the devil.* I know that Justin Martyr, in a casual passage, takes the other view. But the general consent of the fathers, and the context of the story, go to show that the soul of Samuel was undisturbed, and that, under a phantasm, Satan himself wrought one of "those lying wonders," of which St. Paul warns us to beware to-day. Now, so far as the lesson goes, it matters not whether it was Samuel's soul or not. The power that brought up whatever spoke to Saul, was the devil. This Witch of Endor had a familiar spirit, a dæmon, a python, one of the same evil spirits that inspired the false oracles of heathen Greece and Rome; and to this demon, this devil, this evil spirit, Saul appealed, and from it got his answer. All contact, therefore, with the dead, if it be possible, if it be suggested—as the context and Catholic interpretation declare it is not, in this passage — all con-

* That "scourge of the Fathers," Daille, makes a great point of this in his attacks. That he does, proves the general view of Christianity to be opposed to the reality of this apparition. If Justin Martyr needed defense against such a foe, it is enough to say, that erroneous personal opinions on points not essential to the Faith, do not invalidate the value of his *μαρτυριον* to what that Faith was. I am persuaded, from an examination sufficiently thorough, that the views here advanced are sustained by the great bulk of Christian interpreters, ancient and modern.

tact with the dead is contact with the devil, disquieting the dead. And it is utterly and formally opposed to the whole Scriptural revelation of the state of the departed, that the souls at rest can be disquieted by any power of earth or hell. Here, then, you have your choice, to turn for knowledge to the living God, Whose manifestation is merciful and all-sufficient, or, *leaving* Him—for you can not have both—to turn to the dead, through the devil; in plainest words, to the devil directly. The spiritualist is compelled to abandon God's ancient and attested revelation in the Bible, and take instead the vulgar, silly, sensual, material mixture of twaddle and lies, whose base absurdity would disclaim their devilish origin, were it not that they seem cunningly suited and adapted to base and absurd minds. When God had refused to answer Saul in the appointed way, He surely would not have answered him in ways forbidden. His holy prophet, Samuel, surely could not, and would not have done that which God in terms refused to do. But for this crowning act of sin, in turning to forbidden arts for knowledge, there must have been a plea to repentance, had God's prophet really spoken to the king. The sin at Amalek could not have been stated by Samuel as a failure to execute God's *wrath*, when the great wrong was the *fact*, and not the *nature* of the disobedience. And the prophecy (not accurate, because the time fixed was not true) that Saul and his sons should die on *the morrow*, may well have been a clever guess, based upon Satan's knowledge of God's declared purpose to take the kingdom away from Saul. Thus, under that conjured up old man at Endor, *whom only the old crone saw*, Satan seems evidently to follow the victim of his long deceiving, with devilish taunts of his desperate ruin. "The Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy. To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be *with me*." We give Saul over, then, and the woman with her familiar spirit, and the abominations of the heathen nations, and the devil their fellow, to keep consort with modern consulters with the spirits of the dead; only, for the sake of the dignity of Satan, *an angel although fallen*, utterly disclaiming the purpose of referring to him a tenth, a thousandth, a millionth part of

the shallow, flimsy, self-condemning folly of the spiritualists of to-day.

But now, beloved, turn from this painful picture of humanity, drawn down beneath that little lower than the angelic level, to a contemplation of another sort, that lifts earth towards heaven, and draws up man, redeemed and restored in likeness to the God-man, to his legitimate communion with the saints departed, the holy angels, the triune God. It breaks upon us like the breath and light of upper air to those who come up from the almost suffocation of the deep pit of a mine. I must read you, in his own inspired words, the record of St. Paul's communication with the place of the departed, and with heaven. "It is not expedient doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I can not tell, or whether out of the body, I can not tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I can not tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." * Here is an inspired, authentic, attested record, attested by the miracles of the writer, by the testimony for eighteen centuries of the Christian Church, by God's wonderful preservation of the sacred volume that contains it. Here is a record of a vision of Paradise, ay, of heaven itself. There is no wrinkled, muttering, frightened witch; no sneaking, disguised, desperate man; no shade of night, no pretense of magic, no disquieting of the consecrated dead. The old serpent has not wiped his snaky tail across, to blur the fair, celestial colours of this picture. Notice the attractive modesty of the introduction. St. Paul withdraws himself from sight; he is coming to visions and revelations of the Lord, not to self-glorification. He begins with the purpose of not alluding to himself. He is impersonal in his shrinking modesty: "I knew a man in Christ." He has so shrunk from any boastfulness, that he has kept locked up in his own heart for fourteen years the amazing honour and privilege which God

* 2 Corinthians 12 : 1-5.

vouchsafed to him. But there are other points than this. This is not a trance, a theoretical, sentimental, nervous agitation of the feelings, an enthusiastic unbalancing of the mind, in which judgment is dethroned, and discrimination inebriated. It is a translation so perfect, that perhaps soul and body, certainly the soul, were absolutely caught up, removed from earth. Not crouching on the earth-mounds that cover decay and human dust, not bowing down to the ground in a crone's cavern, and lying all along upon the earth, but lifted up, translated, the Christian Apostle held communion with the living souls of the departed, in their blessed abode; ay, with Him that liveth and was dead, the ascended Saviour, Who is alive for evermore. And for this communion, remember, the spirits of the dead were not brought down, or called up; they were not disquieted and called from their rest, but the soul of the Apostle was caught up from earth to the high level of their home. Again, here in this inspired statement of an attested fact, the unity of God's truth and the consistency of these divine revelations are perfectly preserved. St. Paul is caught up into heaven, *and* into Paradise. The broad distinction is drawn. There are two distinct translations, two separate visions. He is twice caught up; first, ἕως τριτόν ὄυρανον, *even as far as* the third, the highest heaven; and then, after that, you must have noticed how the distinction is kept, and the separation guarded; after that, distinct and separate from that, he is caught up into Paradise. First into the far-off holiness and glory of perfect heaven, of angelic intercourse, of God's immediate presence; and then, after that, by a second translation into Paradise, the garden, "the palace park," the calm and sweet abode, where the spirits of the just, made perfect, are in joy and felicity; whence they behold "the vision of the king in his beauty," and of the heavenly land, from them not very far off; whither Paul is entered now, among God's special saints, and the thief from the cross, among God's accepted penitents; where all God's saints of every age still wait, "God having provided this better thing for us, that they *without us* should not be made perfect." Beloved brethren, I dwell strongly upon this. I know the outer

world has fallen far away from the accurate fulness of the Scripture revelation of the state of the departed. I know how men talk as though their souls went instantly from earth, to heaven or to Gehenna. I know how many assert it, out and out. I do not stop to combat this error, with such texts as I have alluded to; with the surface absurdity of calling back for *judgment*, souls already entered upon their punishment or their reward. You know the Catholic faith, of the communion of saints in the holy Catholic Church, as its reach extends to Paradise, by the further Catholic doctrine of Christ's soul descending into Hades, or hell. But while the gates of hell, *πύλαι ἅδου*, the gates of Hades, of Paradise, of the place of departed spirits, while these gates prevail not, according to Christ's promise, against the Church; while through them she holds fast her communion between the living members of the body, on earth and in Paradise; while she points us, through their opening, to see the dim disclosure of *their* rest and peace, who "rejoice in their beds," who yet have "received not the promise," whose souls are in the hand of God, who are "in Abraham's bosom;" while those gates prevail not against her, the powers of hell, of Gehenna, prevail not either. But they do prevail, where men have made shipwreck of their faith. And this very foolery and falsehood of the devil bringing souls up from hell, or down from heaven, where *yet* the souls of men are not—to speak of their final condition—this very fact, that his revelation through spiritualism ignores and denies the Scriptural, Catholic, comfortable truth of the soul's resting-place, and waiting place, is argument enough against the pretensions of his claim.

But go with me a step more. Listen to the voice of this one only man, who certainly and beyond a doubt had communication with that mysterious world of spirits then *in Paradise.* He heard unspeakable words, *ἄῤῥητα ῥήματα*, (it is as though, he said, unwordable words,) words that could not be put into words; which (*ἃ οὐκ ἔξον*) it is not lawful for a man, rather which it is out of the power of a man to utter. Need we go further to contrast the impudent fluency of the flash revelations of to-day, with the reverent, compulsory unutterableness of the true revelation

of eighteen centuries ago? For fourteen years, closely locked up in his heart of hearts, the blessed Apostle kept from the ear of man the fact of his vision of Paradise. And when it was forced from him, when he was compelled to its avowal, he stops there. He can go no further. His soul bursts with the glowing consciousness of that unveiled glory. But the door of his mouth is kept. His tongue can not find or frame an utterance. The visions of heaven and the voices of Paradise can not articulate themselves in human speech. Man's earthly language has no vocabulary for such glory. And he can only say, what is always true, that the voices of the dead, the visions of their place of peace, the communications of departed souls, are unutterable; unspeakable words, which it is not lawful, is not possible for a man to utter.

Beloved, the case is ended. Spiritualism with its mock revelation, its voices of departed souls, its message from the spirit-land, tested by the plain self-evident letter of the word of God, is self-condemned, and has no room left, no spot of ground this side of the unbottomed pit, whereon to stand.

Thus are they *false*, as contrary to God's word; *impossible*, because the souls at rest in God's hand can not be disquieted, and because their voices are unutterable by human tongues in earthly words; *blasphemous*, because thus violating God's ancient law, they refer for all their little spirituality to the evil spirit, the devil; and *dangerous*, how?

First and least, beloved, because spiritualism is the mother of insanity. Those terrible and yet merciful charities, the madhouses, the asylums for the insane, by absolute and undeniable statistics, are filled up by this devilish imposture of spiritualism more than by any other ten causes. Spiritualism creates the maniacs of this century. This is bad enough — this is gain enough for the devil. But this is not the most dangerous. This foul womb, impregnate with satanic seed, has borne two monsters; and its twin offspring, the last more dangerous, more deadly than the first, insanity and infidelity, are stalking, like gigantic curses, through the land. I warn you, beloved, who, for fun, for excite-

ment, for amusement, for curiosity, are playing with this monster in disguise, I warn you that it is the mother of lost minds, and of lost souls. How shall it not be? The spirit of this thing, when you try it, is opposed to God's word. You must give up one or the other. If you deny, renounce the Bible, you are an infidel. Not merely do its pretended revelations contradict God's revealed word, but the pretense of any added revelation is a denial of the Word of God. Mark this well. It is the preaching of another Gospel. It is adding to that complete and perfect Book, the Bible, which, by God's explicit declaration, contains *all truth*, which is sealed up and closed, as the final and only revelation of God manifest in the flesh, of the incarnate Word, Who is, in the revealed word, the Image, whole, perfect, and complete, of the invisible God. To seek after such a thing, to touch, to dabble in it, is, whether you own it or not, virtually, necessarily, to deny, to disbelieve, to denounce the Bible.

Such, my beloved, is the awful danger against which I would warn you. Is it weak thus to fear? Does it imply want of confidence in the truth to plead with you not to come into contact with such error? I fear not for the truth, but for your souls. While you do right they are safe, angel-guarded, protected by God. But the devil is stronger than you, stronger than any but God and godly men, and if you leave God out, and banish His indwelling in your hearts by disobedient presumption, how shall it not be with you as with poor, wretched Saul of old: that, having rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord also shall reject thee; that the Spirit of the Lord shall depart from thee, and an evil spirit *from God* shall trouble thee; that the Lord, against whom you fight, shall become your enemy. Receive, dearly beloved, as the blessed Apostle exhorts the Thessalonian Christians, the LOVE of the truth, the *love* of THE TRUTH, (as it is in Jesus,) in His Scriptures, His Church, that ye may be saved — lest God should send you strong delusion that you should believe a lie.

So far for you and me, and* for them who are asleep in Jesus,

* It is not a little curious that Justin Martyr's individual admission that the Witch of Endor really raised Saul, is followed by this declaration, against which

how shall we bear this insult and dishonour to them; how shall we endure as the old Father Tertullian said that "the souls of the departed" of God's special saints, and of our best beloved, should be "*thus disgraced;*" that any should think to disquiet them, and bring them up from the deep well of their calm peace to the troubled, turbid surface of our outer world. No, my beloved, of them think this, that "they are in peace," with Christ in Paradise, for Paradise is the garden of the Lord, in which His voice walketh with His beloved. Not yet the Palace of the great King, yet it is the Park, the Garden of the Palace, where the King lives. Think that there, conscious with a deep spiritualized perception, they see God, not yet close to, but no more through the darkened glass of any window of flesh; that there, mindful of us and yet untouched with any sense of our sorrow, their prayers rise up with ours, for us, as ours, with theirs, for them; they saying, "How long, O Lord! holy and true?" and we, "Thy kingdom come;" asking so for God's completed kingdom set up over all; and that "we, with them" in it, "may have our perfect consummation and bliss in body and soul." Think that their whole atmosphere is *rest* and peace, beyond the reach of fear, of doubt, of earthly disturbance, no ripple of any wave from our life's sea, so much as reaching that far-off and quiet shore; that there, in the only not inspired words of the wise man, "the care of them is with the Most High: for with his right hand shall he cover them, and with his arm shall he protect them." Ay, and remember the day shall be when we shall be caught up *together with them* to meet the Lord in the air, and *so*, together with them, we shall ever be with the Lord; that, here and now, we believe in the Holy Catholic Church, which is the communion, the knitting together, the fellowship, the oneness of all the saints. Think this of them; and of yourselves, think this: That to touch pitch is to be defiled; that over the fathomless deep of the sea of God's revelation, the ship sails safely when the pilot steers with

humanity revolts, and all Scriptural assertion and catholic belief rebel: "All the souls of the prophets and of just and righteous men are subject to such operations."

compass and with chart; but when he casts these away and nears the outer circle of the maëlstrom, meaning just to see it and sail by, the quiet circling of its outer edge sweeps him in slow composure round and round, almost unfelt, at first, till he grows giddy and the whirl goes faster, and the central gulf is nearer, and the jaws of the whirlpool open; and there is a shipwrecked soul. "Thou shalt not bring an abomination into thine house; but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it, for it is a cursed thing." And for those outside of you, who have forsaken the right way and gone astray, remember this: that neither controversy, nor denunciation avail so much as prayer. And yet forget not His solemn words Who is the Author of all revelation, the Source of all truth; Who is, as He reveals Himself, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending; Who, as such, opens and begins in Genesis and ends and seals in the Apocalypse, the *only* revelation from God, till the beatific vision is allowed; forget not His solemn words that end the Revelation of St. John the divine: I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches: . . . for I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. . . . He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus!