

The Occult

By Siegbert Becker

Lecture I: DIVINATION

The past decade has seen a veritable explosion of interest in the occult and a remarkable change in attitude toward the occult. The scientific research in the field of parapsychology made popular by J. B. Rhine at Duke University and now being carried on in many scientific laboratories has helped to prepare the way for the acceptance of many occult phenomena and has made interest in the subject academically respectable. The repeal of the laws against witchcraft in England a quarter of a century ago has also encouraged many practitioners of the occult to admit openly to what was once generally considered to be deviant behavior.

The amount of literature being produced in the area is stupendous and the varieties of occult phenomena is surprising, at least to those of us who can still remember what the attitude of society toward the occult was only about a generation ago. In 1948 Rudolf Bultmann could write, "Now that the forces and laws of nature have been discovered," we can no longer believe in spirits, whether good or bad."¹ When the French scholar, Jules Michelet in the middle of the nineteenth century wrote what at least one edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica is reported to have called "the most important work on Medieval superstition yet written,"² he could treat witchcraft as a crime invented by the church as an excuse for burning poor women who tried in the only way they knew how to find some alleviation of the miseries to which the feudal society and the church of the middle ages subjected them and their families. And even in 1961 the Spanish scholar Julio Caro Baroja could still write, "A world which accepts magic is, above all, a world that accepts slander."³

Before we begin the consideration of the various types of occultism it might be well for us to consider the options that are open to men when they come face to face with these phenomena. It is possible, of course, to write the whole business off as fraud and trickery from beginning to end. The other extreme is to consider all occult events as perfectly normal happenings which are not understood as such because we have not yet discovered the laws of nature that underlie them and that they could, therefore, be duplicated by anyone who is a partner to the secret involved. Between these two extremes lies the view that occult occurrences are real but supernormal and therefore limited in their performance to those who have special gifts that are still part of the natural world or that they are truly supernatural events that can come to pass only by the intervention of spirit powers.

While it is possible that any one of the four views may apply to a specific case, yet the one option that is not open to a Bible-believing Christian is the view that all occult phenomena must be cases of fraud and deception. At the very least he will have to grant that there have been real cases of devil possession, at least in the days of Jesus' visible sojourn here on earth. A Christian can not, therefore, accept the absolute impossibility of occult events in principle as is done by the materialistic philosophy which has dominated our modern world for so long. There are clear indications in the Bible that the forces of the spirit world may be able to have a far more direct influence on human behavior than we often suppose possible.

In this connection I sometimes wonder whether Gausewitz's translation of the second commandment was not influenced by the view that occult occurrences are impossible, at least at the present time. The word superstition at least in modern American usage implies a belief that has no connection with objective reality. When Luther used the word *zaubern* he certainly had reference to the use of magic and sorcery, about the reality of which he seems to have had no doubt. But very likely a generation ago few people expected to have to deal with actual cases of witchcraft in twentieth century enlightened America.

Today, however, we must once more deal with the problem and Luther's words telling us not to profane God's name by using witchcraft are very much in place. It is not our business to determine whether instances of occult involvement are real or fraudulent deception. Actually, aside from the kind of divine inerrant revelation we have in the Bible, it is probably impossible to decide with certainty the question of whether we are dealing with evil spiritual powers that have intruded into our physical world or with a clever trickster. Or could it be both?

It is enough for us to know that all involvement with the occult is a violation of God's holy law. It may, however, occasionally be of some pastoral value for us to be acquainted with the various forms of occult involvement so that we may recognize the enemy when we meet him and be competent also in this area to counsel the souls committed to our care. Moreover, we must be careful to distinguish the truly occult from what we do not understand.

When the various aspects of the subject are studied, one is often reminded of the fact that the occult is the devil's mimicry of the mighty works of God or, as Luther says, that the devil is God's ape. God sends his prophets into the world to guide men on the way to heaven and the devil sends his messengers to lead men astray by divination. God empowers Moses to do miracles in order to persuade the people to believe God's Word and the devil apparently empowers the magicians of Pharaoh to help harden the king of Egypt in his unbelief. God inspires holy men to speak his Word and evil spirits from hell speak through trance mediums. The Holy Spirit comes to live in our hearts and to move to lead sanctified lives and the devil takes possession of the souls of men to lead them to blaspheme God and spit out obscenities. God seeks our worship and asks us to honor him in our lives, and the devil seeks that worship and honor for himself and gets it from the proponents of Satanism in our time.

These are also the five areas into which we have chosen to divide our discussion of the subject of “The Occult.” In the time remaining to us today we shall consider the matter of divination or fortune-telling. In the following lectures, God Willing, we shall turn our attention to witchcraft and magic, spiritism, devil possession, and Satanism.

DIVINATION

Divination, which is derived from the Latin word *divinare*, to foresee or foretell, is the art of discovering without the use of the five normal senses information about secret things that are far removed from our senses in time or space. Just where one is to draw the line between what is called extrasensory perception and divination is sometimes very difficult to establish. There are people who question whether such a line should be drawn at all, but it would seem that there are instances of telepathy and clairvoyance that are perfectly natural even if they might be called paranormal and others which must be denounced as the kind of divination which is clearly forbidden in Scripture.

Unbelieving scholars have the habit of classifying the activity of the prophets with heathen divination. To them Samuel’s words about the asses of Kish are on the same level with the revelations of a gypsy fortune-teller. The visions of Daniel, if they are not pure invention, are no different qualitatively from those produced by the clairvoyance of Jeane Dixon. But the Bible makes clear that there is a difference. The one is forbidden while the other is viewed as a gracious gift of the Lord, and even the magicians of Pharaoh must admit that the power behind the miracles of Moses is the finger of God (Ex 8:19). The devil is truly God’s ape, as Luther says, but we know from the infallible Scripture that the difference between true prophecy and false divination is as great as that between heaven and hell.

ASTROLOGY

Probably the most popular form of divination in the world today is astrology, which is also often called the first step toward involvement in the occult. Of the 1700 or so daily newspapers in America over 1200 carry regular astrology columns, and the same practice is followed by many of the popular magazines. It is estimated that over \$150,000,000 is spent per year on personal horoscopes,⁴ that more than 10,000 men and women in America make their living by casting horoscopes and that 175,000 part-time practitioners of astrology are active in the United States. Magazines devoted wholly to astrology, horoscope and American Astrology each have about a half million subscribers.⁶

Astrology is the art of predicting the future on the basis of the belief that the stars to a greater or lesser degree control or at least influence the character, the lives, and the destinies of men and nations.

The origin of astrology is hidden in the distant past. It is, however, generally agreed that its beginnings are found in Babylonia. When the NEB calls the wise men from the east “astrologers” it evidently does so on the premise that all the wise men from that area of the world were practitioners of astrology, and at least one German critic of the New Testament, Ethelbert Stauffer of Erlangen has suggested that it was astrological doctrine that formed the basis of their conviction that the king of the Jews had been born.⁷ Stauffer says that in the summer of 7 B.C. Jupiter and Saturn were in conjunction in the sign of the Fishes and he writes,

Jupiter was regarded as the star of the ruler of the universe, and the constellation of the Fishes as the sign of the last days. In the East Saturn was considered to be the planet of Palestine. If Jupiter encountered Saturn in the sign of the Fishes, it could only mean that the ruler of the last days would appear in Palestine. Such were the passages that prompted the Magi of Matthew 2:2 to go to Jerusalem.⁸

Strangely enough, Stauffer believes that in this way he has demonstrated by the use of the historical-critical method that, as he says, “the star of Bethlehem, too, is a historical fact.”⁹

The basis of all astrological prediction is the zodiac, a word derived from the Greek word for “animal.” The zodiac is an imaginary belt in the sky about fifteen degrees of arc wide with the ecliptic, or the apparent path of the sun in the center of the belt.

The zodiac is divided into twelve sections, or “houses,” each of which is named after a constellation which occupies or governs the houses. These constellations are also called the “signs” of the zodiac. The whole belt of the zodiac moves around the earth once each year, so that each house occupies a position on the eastern horizon at sunrise for approximately one month, or, as it may be stated in another way, it takes the sun approximately one month to move from one house to another. The planets likewise move from one house to another at varying rates. Each planet is said to be “at home” in two houses and the sun and moon in one house each.

A horoscope is constructed on the basis of the position of the planets in the various houses at the moment of a person’s birth. The most important astrological influence is that of the sun and one’s astrological sign is determined by the position of the sun at the moment of birth. Lesser influences proceed from the moon and the planets. A horoscope is cast only after the exact position of the sun, moon, and the planets has been established. Not only the position of the various planets in the houses is important but also their position in relation to each other. Planets are said to be in conjunction when they are situated in the same house within five degrees of each other. They are in opposition when they are six houses or 180 degrees apart, squared when they are three houses or 90 degrees apart; they form a sextile when they are two signs or 60 degrees apart and a trine when they are four signs or 120 degrees apart.

The rules for constructing a horoscope are very ancient, although astrologers have found it necessary to make some adjustments because since the rules were first laid down, three new planets have been discovered.

The first point considered in all horoscopes is the position of the sun at the time of the candidate's birth. If the sun was in the house of the lion, for example, he will move with catlike grace and have as his most striking physical characteristic a heavy head of hair reminiscent of a lion's mane. One text on astrology says, "Leos love to be the center of attention and are driven by a desire to be in command."¹⁰ For those who would like to test the accuracy of those statements it might be mentioned that Leos are people born between July 23 and August 21.

The basic activity of the astrologer has remained unchanged since Biblical times. The word "astrologer" is used eight times in the King James Version. Once in Isaiah and seven times in Daniel. The word translated "astrologer" in the Daniel passages really means "enchanter" or "magician." But the Isaiah passage (47:13) is most interesting. The KJV translation says, "Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that come upon thee." Literally the "astrologers" are "those who divide the heavens," which in this context clearly refers to the houses of the zodiac. The "stargazers" are those who observe the positions of the stars in these divisions of the heavens. The "monthly prognosticators" are literally "those who give knowledge for the month," again an obvious reference to the fact that the sun spends approximately one month in each house of the zodiac every year.

The reading of the various rules for casting horoscopes will confirm the opinion that it is amazing what people are willing to believe just as long as it is not taught in the Bible. For example, although it is obvious that a connection is made between the zodiac sign of the lion and the characteristics of those born when the sun is in the house of the lion, it would certainly appear that the naming of the constellation is so arbitrary that the stars making up that constellation could just as readily have been named the "Lamb."

Moreover, the scientific fact is that people born between July 23 and August 21 are not born while the sun is in Leo. The sun arrives at the eastern horizon on March 21 a little earlier each year and therefore does not remain in the same house on the same date. This phenomenon is known as the precession of the equinoxes. In 25,800 years the sun will actually move through all the twelve houses on March 21,¹ which means that the sun will rise on March 21 in the same house for about 2,140 years and then will rise for the same length of time in the previous house of the zodiac. For people born in the last two thousand years the zodiacal signs have all been wrong. People classified as Aries, for example, who are born between March 21 and April 20, are not born while the sun is in the house of Aries but in the house of Pisces. This will no longer be true of those born on these dates in the future, for during the so-called Age of Aquarius the first date of Spring will come while the sun is in the house of Aquarius and those who are classified by astrologers as Aries will actually be Aquarians.

Moreover, the boundaries of the houses are so ill-defined that astrologers are not really sure in what year the sun will begin to rise in Aquarius on the first day of Spring. Some say it began in 1904, others date its beginning in 1936 or 1962, while still others insist that it has not yet begun.¹²

While astrologers are not sure just when the new age of Aquarius will be ushered in, if it has not already begun, they all seem to agree that a new star age means a new beginning for the earth. They often point to the fact that Jesus was born near the beginning of the age of fishes.¹³ When the new age of Aquarius begins new types of government, new forms of worship and new philosophies will come into existence. Sybil Leek, for example, says that in the age of Aquarius, "There will be a completely new set of values — moral, religious, personal, and national."¹⁴ Some astrologers evidently believe that Christianity will go out of existence and that humanism will be the religion of the future.

There are other difficulties involved in this whole theory that the stars influence life on earth. Why should only the constellations in the narrow band of the zodiac exercise such influence? Moreover, in eastern countries where astrology is even more widely practiced than in the west, other symbols are used which have different meanings from those given to the various signs of the zodiac by those who follow the Ptolemaic system.

It is also strange that the moment of birth should be chosen as a determining factor in constructing a personal horoscope. It would surely seem that the moment of conception would be more reasonable if there were any truth in the system.

In spite of all these difficulties astrologers insist that their art is a science and they point to the fulfillment of their prophecies as proof for their claims. When these claims are examined, however, they often demonstrate rather the folly of the art. As an impressive instance of the fulfillment of an astrological prediction, one astrologer cited the magazine *Astrology Today* which prior to the assassination of Pres. Kennedy printed a horoscope for that November in which it was said, "The powerful Mars influence incites much social unrest of the sort that erupts blindly into retaliative violence."¹⁵ As a specific prediction of the Kennedy assassination those words clearly leave much to be desired. Moreover, they are so general that dozens of events that happened during that November, or for that matter, during any month of any year, could be cited as a fulfillment.

At the beginning of this year I noticed that the copy of the *National Enquirer* of Jan. 6, 1976, displayed in the supermarket contained astrological predictions for this year. Because I knew that I would be writing on this subject in September I bought a copy and placed the astrology page into my files. Although the year has not yet ended it seems pretty much of a foregone conclusion at this time that we will very likely not see the fulfillment of the predictions on that page which tell us that "Nelson Rockefeller finally will become president" and that "President Ford won't run this year because of a personal upheaval in his family" ... "health problems, political problems and domestic troubles." William Petersen cites a research project in which the predictions of leading astrologers for one day were compared, and his conclusion was "that if you want to keep your faith in

astrology, you better not compare one against the other.”¹⁶ Walker Knight says that “when astrologers are followed up, almost complete disappointment results.”¹⁷

Isolated instances of fulfilled astrological predictions can truthfully be cited. But if dozens of horoscopes are cast dealing with the same person, some of them are bound to be correct. Many astrologers claim that they predicted President Kennedy’s death. Kurt Koch says that prior to November of 1973 one horoscope predicted the president’s impending death, another predicted his reelection in the following year, and still another that he would be forced to resign in 1964 for reasons of health.¹⁸ Under such conditions, fulfilled predictions ought to occasion no surprise.

On the other hand scientific studies have clearly demonstrated the folly of astrology. Paul Couderc, of the Paris Observatory, investigated the birth dates of 2,817 musicians to see whether any pattern could be discovered that would show a correlation between the signs of the zodiac and musical ability. According to astrological theory there ought to be such a correlation, but Couderc concluded that the position of the sun has no influence whatever and that musicians are born throughout the year on a chance basis. Couderc’s conclusion was that the value of astrology is “zero.”¹⁹ A similar study of the birth dates of scientists listed in *Who’s Who* produced the same results, and the conclusion arrived at was that the birth dates of scientists are just as random as those of the rest of the population.²⁰

Yet, in spite of everything, millions of people believe in the system. On May 24, 1976, *News and World Report* published an article on the subject which alluded to a Gallup Poll that showed that about 32,000,000 people in America took astrology seriously and that as many churchgoers as others said that they believed in astrology.”²¹

Dr. Joyce Brothers explains the popularity of astrology by saying that “astrologers know what their clients want and they dish it out. This feeling is further reinforced by what psychologists call ‘the self-fulfilling prophecy’ — the likelihood that saying a thing is going to happen will actually bring it about.”²² It might be said also that much of what is written in the daily astrology columns is good advice. If a man is told that on a certain day it is especially important for him to be careful not to let his temper get out of hand he can hardly go wrong in following that counsel. *Time* magazine some years ago pointed out how difficult it is to demonstrate the incorrectness of many astrological assertions by saying, “Break a leg when your astrologer told you the signs were good, and he can congratulate you on escaping what might have happened had the signs been bad.”²³

It has been said that successful astrologers are good psychologists.

When this whole business is examined just on the basis of human reason alone, we find that, even if we can not fully agree with the judgment on astrology pronounced by the Astronomical Society, yet it is basically true, as the Society said in 1949, that “Whatever lies behind the title of astrology ... is nothing more than a mixture of superstition, duplicity, and business.”²⁴ The Roman poet Ennius was right when he said that horoscopes cost one drachma each and are one drachma too expensive.

Some astrologers admit this openly or indicate unconsciously that they are aware of it. Johann Kepler, the famed astronomer, practiced astrology because his livelihood depended on it; but he said,

Astronomy is the wise mother and astrology is her whoring little daughter, selling herself to any and every client willing and able to pay so as to maintain her wise mother alive.²⁵

And in the *Milwaukee Journal* about two months ago an astrologer who claims that he is consulted by many important leaders in business and politics said that many people would be shocked if they knew how many decisions are guided by the stars and he confessed that he himself was frightened at the thought. If he truly had the confidence in his craft that he professes to have, he would not need to fear the consequences.²⁶

ANCIENT DIVINATION

While astrology is the most popular form of divination practiced today, there are countless other ways in which men seek hidden knowledge in ways that are unlawful. Many of these methods, like astrology, are thousands of years old and are referred to already in the Bible. Ezekiel, for example, refers to one of the most common types of Mesopotamian divination when he says that the king of Babylon “looked in the liver” (Eze 21:21). Close examination of the liver of a sacrificed animal was made the basis of predictions concerning the king, and clay livers have been found in Mesopotamia that were used to teach the art. The Greeks called this practice hepatoscopy and they also practiced it. The same passage in Ezekiel says that the king shook the arrows, a reference to another mode of divination among both Babylonians and Greeks. The Roman custom of consulting augurs and *haruspices*, who divined by examining the entrails of animals as well as the flight and feeding of birds is a similar practice. It is very likely that Moses was referring to activities similar to these when he spoke of observers of times, enchanters, and charmers in Deuteronomy 18:10-11. Keil-Delitzsch says that in these verses Moses groups together all the words used in Hebrew for the different ways of discovering what the future had in store.

ROD AND PENDULUM

Similar practices are still prevalent today. One ancient mode of divination still very common in Germany today, according to Kurt Koch, is the use of a rod or pendulum. They are used in various ways to point out the answer to the question being asked. In using the rod and pendulum to discover information useful to sick people, for example, the rod is passed over the body until it responds and points to the area that is supposedly affected. The pendulum is used in the same way until it begins to circle over the affected organ. Sometimes instead of passing the rod or pendulum over the body itself, the diviner uses a chart of the body

instead. Others use the rod or the pendulum in a way to select the proper medicine from a group of remedies or drugs. In some respects this method is similar to dowsing for water, of which a little more will be said later.

CARD LAYING

Cartomancy or card laying is more common in America. While some fortune-tellers who employ this method of divination use a regular card deck, it is more common for those who take this business seriously to use the Tarot.

The Tarot is a deck of cards that was invented in Italy early in the fourteenth century. A full deck consists of 78 cards, which are divided into the Lesser Arcana (or Trumps Minor) and the Greater Arcana. (or Trumps Major). The Lesser Arcana is very similar to a bridge deck except that it has a fourth face card called the page. The Greater Arcana consists of 21 numbered face cards, many of which depict religious symbolism, and one “fool” or joker.

The cards are shuffled until the practitioner “feels” intuitively that they have been shuffled enough, after which a number of cards are laid out in one of several standard patterns. Each card has its own significance and, as in astrology, the position and combination of the cards has special meaning.

Advocates of fortune-telling by means of cards say that significant readings are given only if the reader enters into a trance state and it appears at times that we are dealing here with something that comes very close to possession by the devil,²⁷ and one writer with a favorable attitude toward card laying says that the Tarot cards “have a special magic of their own as any sensitive person who has handled a pack can perceive.”²⁸ Kurt Koch says that some forms of card laying are based on genuine mediumistic abilities and he tells of one fortune-teller who under questioning admitted that when she was actually in the process of telling fortunes she found herself controlled by a strange power that actually forced her to say things of which she had no previous knowledge.²⁹ Merrill Unger also says that “mediumistic abilities are often present in card-laying,”³⁰ and we shall have more to say of this when we discuss the subject of spiritism.

I CHING

Another type of fortune-telling becoming more popular in America is I Ching, or the *Book of Changes*, translated from the Chinese. In using the I Ching, Chinese people work with fifty yarrow stalks, but in America Usually three coins are used. The coins are tossed six times and according to the way the coins fall either a broken or solid line a drawn until you have six lines one above another (e.g.). This same pattern will also be found at the beginning of one of the chapters of the Book. The chapters are very short and very obscure, but those who use it find the answers to their questions in them. In some ways it is similar to the practice of pointing blindfolded to passages in the Bible to find guidance.

PALMISTRY or CHIROMANCY

A far more common and well-known type of divination is palmistry or chiromancy, telling fortunes by examining the hands, which is also a very ancient practice.

It would seem that palmistry operates with principles and rules similar to those used by astrologers but its connection with paganism is even clearer. The user of astrology may speak of Jupiter, Mars, and Venus exclusively in terms of the planets that bear those names, but palmistry still uses the name of Apollo as the name of the sun. Just as astrology depends on the position of the sun, moon and the five planets which bear the name of old Roman gods, so various areas of the hand are named after the gods Mercury, Apollo, Saturn, Jupiter and Venus, and the patterns of interpretation is very similar to that followed in astrology. For example, the little finger is assigned to Mercury, the god of travel, and if the fleshy area in the palm just below the little finger, called the mount of Mercury, is pronounced, this indicates a love of travel. The shape and length of the fingers, the conformation of various areas of the palms, and the various lines of the hand are examined as a basis for the reading. But again it might be said that the more successful chiromantists are those who exhibit mediumistic gifts.

PSYCHOMETRY

A few words might also be said about psychometry. Those who practice this type of divination operate with some object worn or used by the person concerning whom information is desired. Occasionally we come across newspaper articles concerning psychics who have found missing persons or identified murderers in this way. Kurt Koch tells of a diviner who was able by the use of the man’s socks to point to the exact spot where the body of suicide could be found.³¹ But the device is also used to describe the characteristics of the person involved and to see something in his or her past, present, or future. For what it is worth, it might be mentioned in this connection that Kurt Koch testifies that he met a clairvoyant in Switzerland who used psychometric powers and whose statements were 100 percent accurate. For example, he could diagnose illnesses correctly if an object belonging to the sick person was placed before him. The Dutch psychic, Peter Hurkos makes extensive use of this device in his work with police departments.

There are also many other types of divination that we can not discuss. Crystal gazing, numerology, the reading of tea leaves or coffee grounds, and onciromancy or the interpretation of dreams are some of the more familiar.

CLAIRVOYANCE

A word should, however, be said about clairvoyance of what is commonly called “second sight,” the ability to see things more or less vividly that are far away in space or time. In many cases this would appear to be very closely related to mental telepathy. It often occurs spontaneously in people who have no desire to traffic with the occult.

However, it is a gift which is easily abused in the interest of divination, Jeane Dixon is a case in point. She uses some of the methods described above, astrology, dreams, a crystal ball or a deck of cards, but often does not look at the cards and only holds them in her hand for the “vibrations.”

I suppose, however, that a number of us could cite cases in which such clairvoyant experience came to people who could hardly be accused of being involved with the occult world of evil spirits. A very close friend of mine, while waiting for a plane in the O’Hare terminal, saw his dog jump up at him and heard him barking at the same moment that the dog died at his home.

Such experiences make it very difficult to draw the line between psychological mysteries and occult practices. But the ease with which some people pass from such passive experiences to involvement with the occult ought to teach us to exercise great caution in this area.

WATER DOWSING

A related practice is that of dowsing, or divining for water. This, too, is a very old practice. In ancient Rome they were called aquileges. It seems rather well established that there are people who have the ability to walk over an area with a forked stick in their hands and locate water under the ground. Some of them can even tell exactly how deep the water is below the surface. I have been told on rather good authority that at one of our Lutheran high schools several attempts were made to drill a well without success. Finally one of the board members took his niece, who was a dowser, to the high school grounds one evening, and today the school has a good supply of water from a well drilled at the spot marked by the girl.

In my younger years I used to ridicule all such stories as nonsense, but the evidence pointing to the success of this method of finding water seems to be overwhelming. Up to 1975, for example, the town of New Sharon in Maine suffered from a chronic shortage of water. The town spent \$160,000 for geologic studies and drilled several wells that produced nothing. Finally, in desperation they hired a dowser for \$500 and today the town has all the water it can use as a result of his efforts.³²

I would find it very difficult to condemn the practice. Certainly God’s name is not being taken in vain and no evil spirit powers are being summoned to give their aid. And yet when I read that there are dowsers who can hold the divining rod over a map and locate water in this way hundreds of miles away, I am not so sure that in at least some cases, there are occult powers involved. Kurt Koch finds a very close connection between dowsing and the use of the divining rod for fortune-telling, and yet he says that in his pastoral counseling he has not found any evidence of any psychological disturbance that has resulted from dowsing on a purely physical level.³³

THE DANGERS INVOLVED

The same can not be said of truly occult practices. Kurt Koch, who seems to be well aware of the need to avoid credulity in the area of the occult, has cited literally hundreds of cases in which tragedy, psychological disturbances, and even insanity have resulted from occult practices. He tells, for example, of a young German mother with two children who was told by two card layers that her husband who was missing in action was dead. After the second visit she killed herself and her children with gas. The next day her husband came home from a Russian prison camp.³⁴

One story like that, of course, does not make a case. However, even those who are heartily in favor of divination recognize that such events are not at all unexpected results of fortune telling. In preparation for these lectures I read two books of instruction in the art of divination, and both of them warn against revealing what they have learned from card laying or other methods of divination if it will have a tendency to upset the person having his fortune told. One of the authors writes. “To predict death, illness, accidents, and catastrophe can cause many to worry unnecessarily.”³⁶

The same author speaks of the danger that threatens the fortune-teller. He writes, “Because of the dangers that can attend trance meditation, it is well, to begin with, to submit to direction from a virtuous and well-instructed adept.”

A Christian student of the occult quotes a German psychologist who said, “We can see how dangerous it is by the way in which serious psychic disturbances, a fear of life, despair and derangement are produced by it in sensitive people. Astrology paralyzes initiative and powers of judgment. It stupefies and encourages shallowness. It molds the personality into receiving an underground movement that thrives on platitudes.”³⁷

THE SINFULNESS OF DIVINATION

Christians, however, really do not need to prove the dangerous nature of divination. Nor is it necessary for them to answer the question of whether it is fraudulent or real. Even those who advocate the practice admit that there are many charlatans who have given divination a bad name. And those who seem to have truly miraculous powers of prediction do not claim inerrancy for themselves. The zany mistakes made by even the most successful psychics demonstrate beyond question that this type of prophecy is not from God. When the children of Israel asked how they could distinguish a false prophet from a spokesman of the Lord, Moses told them that the prophet whose predictions do not come true is not from God (Dt 18:22).

On the other hand, if the prophecies do not come true, this does not prove that the fortune-teller is a complete fraud and dissembler. The devil is the father of lies and he tells the truth or lies as it suits his purposes to do so. The lying spirits in the mouth of the prophets of Ahab led him to his death (1 Ki 22:1-38).

What children of God need to remember is that all divination is directly forbidden by God (Dt 18:10.11; 44:25; Lev 19-26). It is a violation of the first commandment. The Christian believer who knows that God has loved him with an everlasting love in Christ and who says, “My times are in Thy hand,” does not need the

assurance offered by those who are charlatans at best and direct agents of the old evil foe at worst. Astrology at least made sense when heathen men believed that the planets were intelligent gods who could influence the lives of men. Today it is only another example of the irrationality of unbelief, and at yet the same time a form of idolatry that is every bit as evil as open paganism Merrill Unger is right when he says, "The upsurge in astrological interest is unmistakable evidence of moral and social decay."³⁸

The kind of interest in the future displayed by those who use divination to discover what lies before them manifests a lack of trust in the wisdom of God who has revealed to us what we need to know and who promises that all things will work together for our good. Divination, however, is not only destructive of faith. The attitude toward morality that is inculcated by it is destructive of Christian living. When one reads the advice of the astrological columns, it becomes clear very quickly that the morality of astrologers is pure pragmatism. The fundamental questions that are always involved are, "Will it benefit me?" The Christian, however, ought to ask, "Is it right?" The astrologers often excuse their mistakes by saying that "the stars impel, but do not compel," and that astrology is only an aid to guiding us in making our decisions. God has given us the only guide we need. In questions of morals, he has given us the law. In questions that deal purely with decisions concerning this present life he has given us human reason. Astrology subverts both.

Divination in all its forms is therefore to be avoided by all Christians. We do not drink poison to see what it tastes like. In the same way we ought to warn our people against any kind of involvement in these practices, even if it is done only for entertainment. To the argument that it is just in fun or for curiosity's sake Kurt Koch answers, "Whether it is out of ignorance or curiosity, whether as a joke or in all seriousness, when I release the catch on a hand grenade, the result is always the same."³⁹ In the Lord's commands against all manner of fortune-telling we have only another evidence of his love which desires that we avoid all those things that can in the end only bring grief and suffering with them.

Endnotes: (Lecture I)

1. Rudolf Bultmann and others, *Kerygma and Myth*, edited by Hans Werner Bartsch, translated by Reginald H. Fuller, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1961 (German edition, 1948), p. 4.
2. Jules Michelet, *Satanism and Witchcraft, a Study in Medieval Superstition*, tr. by, A. R. Allinson, New York, The Citadel Press, 1933. (note on back cover).
3. Julio Caro Baroja, *The World of the Witches*, tr. by O. N. V. Glendinning, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1965, p. 131 (published in Spanish in 1961).
4. Edmond O. Gruss, *Cults and the Occult in the Age of Aquarius* Grand Rapids, Baker, 1974, p. 76.
5. Merrill Unger, *Demons in the World Today*, Wheaton, Ill., Tyndale Publishers, 1971, p. 60. See also Wm. J. Petersen, *Those Curious New Cults*, New Canaan, Conn., Keats Publishing Inc., 1975, p. 22.
6. Wm. J. Petersen, op. cit., p. 22.
7. Ethelbert Stauffer, *Jesus and His Story*, tr. by Richard and Clara Winston, New York, Alfred Knopf, 1960, pp. 32ff.
8. Ibid., p. 33.
9. Ibid., p. 34.
10. Rod Daview, *How To Tell Fortunes*, New York, Pinnacle Books, 1976, p. 145f.
11. *Life Nature Library, The Earth*, by Arthur Beiser and the Edition of Life, New York, Time Incorporated, 1962, p. 13.
12. Wm. J. Petersen, op. cit., p. 28.
13. E. G. Sybil Leek, *My Life in Astrology*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice-Hall, 1972, p. 202.
I am surprised that in the extensive reading that I did on the subject I did not find one astrologer who pointed out the fact that the fish is a symbol of Christianity.
14. Op. cit., p. 202.
15. Wm. J. Petersen, op. cit., P. 32.
16. Ibid., p. 28.
17. Walker L. Knight, *The Weird World of the Occult*, Wheaton, Ill., Tyndale House, 1972, p. 18.
18. Kurt E. Koch, *Christian Counseling and Occultism*, Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1972, pp. 97f.
19. John Warwick Montgomery, *Principalities and Powers*, Minneapolis, Bethany Fellowship, 1973, pp. 113f.
20. Peterson, op. cit., p. 30.
21. Op. cit., p. 74.
22. Quoted in Knight, op. cit., p. 17.
23. Time, March 21, 1969, p. 56.
24. Quoted in Peterson op. cit., pp. 30f.
25. Kurt Koch, *Between Christ and Satan*, Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1962, p. 13.
26. *Milwaukee Journal*, July 25, 1976, *Insight Magazine*, p. 14.
27. Basil Ivan Rakoczi, *Foreseeing the Future*, Now York, Harper and Row, 1973, p. 53.
28. Ibid., p. 36.
29. Kurt Koch, *Between Christ and Satan*, p. 21.
30. Op. cit., p. 63.
31. *Between Christ and Satan*, p. 32.
32. Emily and Per Ola D'Aulaire, "The Forked Stick Phenomenon," *Reader's Digest*, May, 1976, p. 136.
33. Kurt Koch, *Christian Counseling and Occultism*, Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1972, p. 104.

34. Ibid., p. 82f.

35. Rod Davies, *How to Tell Fortunes*, New York, Pinnacle Books, 1974, P. 11.

36. Rakoczi, op. cit., P. 53.

37. Peterson, op. cit., P. 30.

38. Op. cit., p. 60.

39. *Christian Counseling and Occultism*, P. 83.

THE OCCULT

Lecture II: Magic and Witchcraft

Parapsychologists distinguish between two kinds of psychic phenomena and speak of them as being either of the Psi-Gamma or Psi-Kappa type. Psi-Gamma phenomena are those that involve paranormal knowledge, the name being derived from the Greek word *gignoskein*, to know). The various forms of divination, since they involve the acquisition of supposedly supernatural knowledge, belong under this classification. Psi-Kappa phenomena are those that involve some paranormal physical or psychical effect on people or things. The name of this second type is derived from the Greek word for “move” (*kinein*). The various forms of magic and witchcraft for the most part belong to this category, although many witches also practice divination.

DEFINITIONS

It has been suggested that the old English word *wicca*, from which the word witch is derived, is related to the word “wise.” The English witch Sybil Look says witchcraft is the craft of the wise. This derivation is uncertain, but we do know that witches were often called “cunning women,” and one of the Hebrew words for practitioners of the occult is derived from the Hebrew word for “know” and means “the knowing ones.”

It is agreed, however, that the word “wizard,” which in the sixteenth century came to be used to denote a male witch, is derived from the word “wise,” and it may be that just as a drunkard is a man who drinks more than he ought to, so a wizard is a man who knows more than he ought to.

The word “warlock,” which is also a common term for a male witch is an old English word for the devil. Literally, it means a “covenant-breaker,” or a “covenant-liar.” It later came to denote someone who made a pact with the devil and thus came into possession of magical powers.

The term “sorcerer” is the Anglicized form of a French word for magician which, in turn, is derived from the Latin word “*sors*,” in the sense of “oracle” or “prophecy.” It would seem, therefore, that originally it must have had reference to Psi-Gamma phenomena.

Another word used to denote a wizard is conjurer. To conjure originally, meant “to swear together,” “to enter into a conspiracy.” Later conjuration came to denote the act of appealing to some sacred person or thing. From there it was an easy step to the meaning it has in witchcraft, namely to effect something supernatural by invocation or incantation.

The term magic is derived from the Persian word for “Priest” or “wise man,” and the word “magician,” which today is largely used to denote a sleight-of-hand artist, was originally also a word for sorcerer or wizard. It is interesting to note, however, that the Greek author Heraclitus used it as a synonym for an impostor or a charlatan.

Of special interest is the Greek word for witchcraft, *pharmakeia*, from which our word “pharmacy” is derived. Drugs have from ancient times been associated with the practice of witchcraft. They were used and are used today to induce trance states, to cure diseases and to inflict suffering and death. Sybil Leek, for example, speaks of a fungus called the “Calendar of Death” which is tasteless and when fed to a guest causes a fatal illness of the intestines in exactly eighty-four days, leaving no traces of its use. Whether this is true or not, it is typical of the sort of thing associated with the use of drugs in witchcraft. Much of the knowledge that made the witch a wise or “cunning” woman was and still seems to be connected with such drug use.

TYPES OF MAGIC

Magic has been defined as “a divinely forbidden art of bringing about results beyond human power by recourse to superhuman spirit agencies.”¹ That definition probably needs to be modified so that it reads instead, “Magic is the divinely forbidden art of attempting to bring about results beyond human power by recourse to superhuman spirit agencies.”

In the various forms of magic we ought to recognize the devil’s aping of the miracles of God. In this area, too, as in the question of divination, unbelief sees no qualitative difference between miracle and magic, and it must be conceded that from the outside they often appear to be identical. We may not be able to say exactly how the magicians of Pharaoh produced snakes but as far as outward form is concerned they performed an act that seems to be identical, at least up to a certain point, to the miracle of Moses. Yet Christians believe that there is a great difference between the two. Moses acted at the command of God. The magicians acted in opposition to God. The miracles were done to promote faith. The magic was done to hinder obedience to God. This is the test by which magic can be recognized for what it is, according to Dt 13:1-5, where Moses says that miracle workers who encourage men to follow other gods are to be executed, just as a witch was not to be permitted to live (Ex 22:18).

Much confusion exists in the area of the distinction between magic and miracle. A former Jesuit now teaching philosophy at a university, writing under the pen name of David Farren, says, “As a Catholic student and then as a Jesuit seminarian, I lived in the environment of magic and never realized it. *Magic* was not even in our vocabulary: we had the sacraments (like the Eucharist) and the sacramentals (like holy water), all of which conferred grace *ex opera operato*; non-Christians had superstitions.”² His words demonstrate how easily complete confusion can be created between magic and the mysteries of the Christian faith.

It is not difficult to understand why an apostate Catholic should make such an observation since the sacramentals of Roman Catholicism are little more than magical charms, but it is a little more surprising to discover that John Stevens Kerr, in a book published by Fortress Press, creates the same kind of confusion when he defines magic as “the art of manipulating the course of nature by supernatural means” and goes on to say that praying to God to avert a disaster or to bring rain is, “technically ... so much a magical act as the Roman *haruspices* sacrificing a pigeon to the gods for the safe return of a general from battle with the barbarians.”³ This is surely a point of view against which our people must be warned in these days of the repopularization of magic and witchcraft.

Magicians and witches distinguish between “black magic” or “goety” (from the Greek , sorcery) and “white magic” or “theurgy” (from the Greek , sorcery). Black magic involves calling upon the devil or evil spirits and is used to harm others or for purely selfish ends. Most witches claim to employ “white magic” in which the invocation is directed either to the Triune God or to spirits or gods classified as benign. Sybil Leek, for example, denounces black magicians and insists that all good witches believe in a supreme being. Yet she speaks of incantations invoking the help of the Lords of the watchtowers.”⁴ She distinguishes between “witchcraft” and “Black Magic.” The first she says is a “religion” and the second “a debased art.”⁵ She claims to use her powers only for good and yet she implies that it would be perfectly proper to murder anyone who would dare to reveal the secrets of the craft.⁶ She relates in her *Diary of a Witch* how she once threatened to use “reverse tactics” (her term for what under all the rules ought to be called “black magic”) on a black magician who came to her for help. When he objected that this was contrary to her principles, she replied “that evil may be justified if it is for the greater good of the whole.”⁷ She also says that in the practice of witchcraft all “sympathy, pity, affection, dislike ... have to be put aside.”⁸ It is rather obvious that the differentiation between black and white magic is completely meaningless from a Christian point of view, and a Bible-believing Christian will be especially horrified at the use of the name of the Trinity and the name of Jesus in the incantations of magic. One of the members of my first congregation once told me of how she was cured of malaria by scattering a handful of barley in a circle around herself at the crossroads at midnight while reciting an incantation that began with the words,

“Ich streue diesen Samen
In meines Jesu Namen”
(I scatter this seed
In name of my Jesus).

This is surely an open misuse of God’s name which deserves the name “black magic” even though it has a show of Christian piety. Unger says that “white magic” is only “black magic in pious masquerade.”⁹

Some writers speak of a third type of magic, which is variously named neutral magic or personal magic. In this type no personal being, either “good” or bad, are invoked. At times such magic is almost pure superstition which in itself may not involve the misuse of God’s name. For that reason it may be very difficult to demonstrate its sinfulness. People who believe that alfalfa tea can cure a case of nerves may have as little justification for their faith as a man who believes that warts can be cured by touching them with a round stone by the light of the full moon. Kurt Koch does not agree with this judgment. He says,

My counseling work continually supplies evidence to the effect that magic in any form is the work of the devil, whether it sails under a black, white, or neutral flag.¹⁰

Magic is also classified according to the type of magical act employed. “Sympathetic magic” works with analogy. The familiar voodoo practice of sticking pins into dolls to cause pain and even death is one example of this kind of magic. When Jacob peeled strips of bark from twigs, so that the cattle at the watering troughs saw twigs with white streaks in them, in order to produce offspring that would show such striped markings, he was using what would by many people be called and is called, sympathetic magic. What should be our reaction to such remarks? My hair has a tendency to stand up at the back of my neck when I read such things in the commentaries. Yet we know that some of the great heroes of faith were guilty of many sins. We know also that God can use the sin of men for his own purposes without approving of the sin itself, and therefore we ought to be careful not to defend Jacob absolutely against such charges, nor, on the other hand, ought we without question to accept those charges as justified. There is nothing in the text to indicate that Jacob used the name of God in vain nor that he called upon infernal spirits in practicing what could be called an act of superstition. Nor does the text in any way recommend that such methods be used by us. Nor does it promise that it will ever work again as it did in Jacob’s case. While I would be rather reluctant to call it magic at all, yet I do not believe that this ought ever to become a doctrinal issue among us. Perhaps in the story of Jacob we have another illustration of Luther’s remark that it will not do to construct articles of faith on the words and works of the fathers. Certainly no one ought ever to say that the Bible teaches that we can produce striped cattle by laying striped twigs in the watering troughs where they come to drink.

“Imitative magic” operates on the theory that like produces like. When pagan rain dancers imitate the falling of rain by the motions of their bodies together with the ritual chant or incantation, this imitative action, in theory, will produce rain. “Contagion magic” works with things that have been in contact with the person acted on in order to produce either a beneficial or harmful effect. For this reason people who consult witches are often asked to bring some object which has been worn by the person who is to be harmed or helped.

HOW WITCHES ARE MADE

A great deal has been written about the way in which a person becomes a witch or a wizard. It seems rather evident that most of the Protestant writers on the subject have done a great deal of plowing with Kurt Koch’s heifer, for repeatedly one finds a repetition in his remark that most often such powers of witchcraft are hereditary and can be traced back over three or four generations in one family.¹¹ Sybil Leek, however, claims that her family has a tradition of witchcraft that can be traced back on her mother’s side to 1134 A.D. David Farren, a former Jesuit seminarian, whose interest in witchcraft stems from his marriage to a witch, says that his wife is descended from a line of thirteen generations of witches.¹² Women who have acquired their supernatural powers by heredity are called “genetic witches” by Farren.

Farren tells the story of how his wife became a witch. From the age of five her mother and grandmother instructed her in herbs and spells. At the age of eleven she was amusing herself with a ouija board when she suddenly began to hear voices that told her she would not need to use the board anymore since she would hear the answers. The voices identified themselves as “the voices of God.” She was committed to a mental hospital, diagnosed as a schizophrenic. After two months in the hospital she had a vision telling her that if she did not want to hear the voices, which she was hearing constantly, she would not hear them. She recovered very quickly from that point on, much to the amazement of the doctors. But, according to Farren, (and it might be remembered that this man is a former Jesuit seminarian and a university professor of philosophy) she also from that time on had powers, which, if Farren describes them correctly, we could only classify as supernatural. Farren’s description would seem to indicate that it is sometimes impossible to distinguish clearly between witchcraft and possession by the devil.

Kurt Koch speaks of two ways in which the powers of witchcraft are passed down from one generation to the next. The first is by genetic inheritance and the second by what he calls “succession.” By this, he says, “we mean the custom of a person on his deathbed actually bestowing the magical powers upon the eldest son or daughter in order to die peacefully.” Koch says that at times the children do not want the powers, in which case the witch “may cry out for weeks on his deathbed for someone to relieve him of his magical powers.”¹³ The Spanish scholar Baroja says that among the Basques magical powers are transferred by accepting certain objects, often a pincushion or a needle case, from a witch, or by the touch of a witch on her deathbed.¹⁴ It would appear, however, that to a certain extent at least, a passing on of occult powers either by genetic inheritance or by deathbed transfer is often accompanied by instruction in the art. Both Sybil Leek and David Farren have much to say about such teaching.

Another method by which magical powers are supposedly transferred is by the laying on of hands. In this connection Kurt Koch speaks of a young man who did not have the gift of dowsing for water but who acquired it when a dowser held his hands while he held the stick.¹⁵ Apparently Koch believes that this is not dowsing on a purely “physical level,” of which he speaks in one of his later books,¹⁶ for he says that after acquiring the gift the young man’s love for the Word of God declined.

In regard to this type of occult transference, Merrill Unger writes,

Sometimes magical powers are transferred by the occult ceremony of laying on of hands.... The history of occult practice often relates how one or more Magicians, particularly those adept in black (devil) magic, impart gifts of healing or clairvoyant and mediumistic abilities by placing their hands upon the head of a person desiring them and uttering magic charms and incantations.¹⁷

Simon Magda of Samaria apparently believed in such a transference of occult powers (Ac 8:18). This is an occult phenomenon that surely ought not to be left entirely out of consideration when we evaluate the modern charismatic movement with its practice of the laying on of hands. There may be a far closer connection between the revival of magic and witchcraft in our time and the rise of the Pentecostal movement than we sometimes realize.

While practitioners of witchcraft often speak of inheritance and transference as the way to the possession of magic power, (Sybil Leek, for example, says that “most of the leading witches in the present era have a family tradition of witchcraft behind them,”¹⁸ and Baroja says that “all” (our emphasis) witches and “all” magicians in Scandinavia were descended from three specific ancestors.¹⁹) yet the practice of acquiring such powers by making a pact with the devil has been known since ancient times. Such agreements were and still are often put into writing and signed with the blood of the witch. Merrill Unger says of this way of coming into possession of occult powers,

Such blood-bound occultists frequently become endowed with astonishing magic capabilities.... This practice of satanic blood pacts is not a mere superstitious hangover from medieval witchcraft and hobgoblins. It is a well-known and fairly common practice today in various rural districts of Europe where magic literature has circulated for centuries and magical powers have passed from one generation to another.²⁰

Kurt Koch also speaks of the acquisition of magical powers that come from reading occult literature and experimenting with occult practices on one's own. He gives few examples of this and the case is not well made. But it may still serve as a reminder to us that interest in the occult for the occult's sake or experimenting with such things is potentially dangerous and also here we ought to flee every form of evil.

Baroja says that according to Basque tradition one can also become a witch by walking around a church three times.²¹

WITCHCRAFT AS A RELIGION

Some witches insist that witchcraft is a religion. The English anthropologist Margaret Murray claims that it is the original religion of man by which man sought to bring nature under his control. She calls it the "Old Religion" and one commonly finds this term in the literature. In using the term "Old Religion" witches often make the point that their worship antedates and therefore is superior to Christianity. Jeffrey Russell, a historian who has made a study of medieval witchcraft, says "the historian knows" that there is no evidence for Margaret Murray's view "that witchcraft is an ancient religion that has preserved a marvelous continuity to the present day."²² Baroja also rejects the view that worship of witchcraft dates from prehistoric times.²³ For us this question is not important and it is enough to know that witchcraft is heathenism pure and simple.

The gods generally worshipped in witchcraft include Hecate and Diana, the so-called "horned god," whom Christians have usually identified with the devil, the forces of nature conceived of as personal or impersonal, the devil himself, and many others.

In witchcraft worship special efforts are evidently made to ridicule and blaspheme the God of the Christians. It may well be true that some of the descriptions of this worship found in the records of the medieval church are exaggerated. Those descriptions are based on confessions extracted under torture. Jeffrey Russell, however, says that some of the confessions were made in the secular courts and that therefore "there are good reasons for not rejecting them as fraudulent."²⁴ Baroja gives such a report from the records of the inquisition that says

They all walked over a cross, spitting on it, scorning Christ and the Holy Trinity. Then they exposed their hinder parts to the sky and the heavens as a sign of their disregard of God, and after eating and drinking their fill, they all had sexual intercourse.²⁵

Baroja himself says,

In witchcraft, Christian symbols and values are always used in inverted form. Whereas in Christian ritual the blessing is given with the right hand, witches use the left hand when making their spells.... At the mere mention of the name of Jesus all spells lose their power.

Baroja records a prayer used at such services which reads

Come infernal terrestrial, and celestial Bombo goddess of the crossroads, guiding light, queen of the night, enemy of the sun, and friend and companion of the darkness, you who rejoice to hear the barking of dogs and to see the blood flow; you who wander among the tombs in the hours of darkness, thirsty for blood, and the terror of mortal men; Gorgo, Mormo, moon of a thousand forms, look favorably on my sacrifice.²⁷

There are also persistent reports of the sacrifice of infants, and a few weeks ago the *Milwaukee Journal* reported that a woman in a divorce trial testified that her husband wanted to sacrifice their child to the devil. More may be said of this in connection with Satanism.

Some of the confusion about the religion of witchcraft stems from the fact that the worship services are held in secret. Sybil Leek says that it is a pity that the ritual of the golden Dawn and the Sabbath ceremony must remain secret,²⁸ yet she herself gives at least some of the details connected with her own initiation into a witches coven. Among other things she says that she was bound and a knife was held close to her heart while the high priestess explained what becoming a witch would mean. After that, she says, she took the oath of fidelity to the religion of witchcraft and joined in the ritual dances and incantations.²⁹ She also implies that terrible things would happen to anyone who would dare to reveal the secrets of the craft. Many writers state that sexual orgies are connected with these worship services, that the *Book of Shadows* or the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* are read, and instruction in magic arts is given.

While there are accounts of gatherings of multitudes of witches in medieval literature, it seems to be generally agreed that a coven or congregation of witches consists of thirteen members, usually, a high priest or priestess, plus six men and six women. The word "coven" is said to be related to the word "covenant" and signifies a gathering of people who have assumed an obligation to each other, or a group of people gathered for religious purposes.

The covens meet from midnight to dawn on the witches "sabbath."²⁹ Michelet says that is word "sabbath" when used in this sense is a corruption of the name of an ancient festival in honor of Bacchus, called Sabasia,³⁰ but I found this derivation nowhere else. Baroja says that in the Basque country of Spain, Friday night is the appointed time of the Sabbath meetings in memory of the day when Christ was crucified.³¹ Others say that the sabbaths are held on the night of the full moon, at the beginning of each season, and on the night of Jan. 31, April 30, July 31, and Oct. 31. In connection with the sabbaths it might be mentioned that Sybil Leek writes, "One of the marvelous things about a Sabbath meeting is that it always leaves me completely exhilarated."³² Those who are impressed by the claims of charismatics who speak of the exhilaration brought by the "baptism with the Spirit" might take note that not all feelings of joy are inspired by the Spirit of God.

There are evidently a great many witches and witches' covens active in our day. Edward Tiryakian of Duke University wrote in 1974, "In the past five years witchcraft has come to life again in the urban centers of the United States, a country where one might least expect it to happen."³³ William Petersen says there are 10,000 practicing witches in Germany and 30,000 in England. He quotes Sybil Leek as saying that there are 400 covens in the United States, more than two dozen of which are found in San Diego.³¹ Not all witches are associated with covens, however. It is, therefore, a problem that we can not ignore, especially because the television networks persist in presenting witches as perfectly normal citizens of the community. A related problem of which we as Pastors ought to be aware is that it is a subject that carries with it a great deal of fascination for many people, which could only be increased by an incorrect presentation of the subject.

MAGIC PRACTICES

The magic practices that are carried on by witches are many and varied.

Hypnosis

Kurt Koch classifies what he calls the criminal use of hypnosis as a form of magic.³⁵ Most psychologists insist that no one under hypnosis can be forced to do what he considers to be wrong, but Koch disagrees and he cites a number of cases to demonstrate that the views of the psychologists in this area are incorrect. Psychologists, however, do warn against the use of hypnosis by amateurs who are not aware of the damage that they may do. Koch's view is that some types of hypnotism can not be condemned, but that it easily lends itself to magical abuse.

Astral Projection

Apparently a very common magical practice is what is today usually called "astral projection," and which is associated with the ancient belief that witches rode to the Sabbath meetings on broom sticks. That there were people who really believed that they did such things is conceded by scientific investigations; but it is commonly held that the experience was a purely mental state induced by the use of drugs. Leaves of certain plants were boiled or smoked, drinks or ointments were concocted from them and they were used to induce sleep. Baroja says that sleep, induced in this way brought with it fantastic dreams,³⁶ and "that it is these opiates, then, not flying brooms or animals, which carry the witch off into a world of fantasy and emotion."³⁷ He also tells of a scientist who used a recipe given to him by a sorcerer to prepare an ointment which produced such a reaction.³⁸ Carlos Castaneda, an anthropology student at UCLA in his book *The Teachings of Don Juan*, describes similar experiences induced by drugs to which he was introduced by a Yaqui Indian medicine man.

John Charles Cooper, in his book *Religion in the Age of Aquarius* (p. 135) records a Young man's account of an LSD trip, in which he said,

I began to melt down into a little puddle of wax on the floor. I could see bright, iridescent colors of smoke, and I could taste the music — like salt and pepper. Then I seeped under the door and floated down to the beach. There suddenly the clouds parted and I watched my soul leave my body and go up through the hole in the clouds and there I met God. He took my soul to the planet where it will live when my body dies from life on this planet. Man, was it a beautiful place.

The young man was waiting to get out of jail so that he could take an overdose and go back to the planet God showed him.

Whether this is the whole story of astral projection remains to be proved. Sybil Leek claims that two teachers at the school she attended were prepared to swear that she was present in two classes during the same period and that it was "only a simple matter of astral projection."³⁹ Yet later in the same book she describes astral projection as an experience in which the spirit is released from the body,⁴⁰ which she says "Can be extremely dangerous." This definition could hardly account for the body being in two places at the same time. David Farren in all seriousness tells of such an astral projection trip across the Atlantic Ocean made by his mother-in-law, who on this trip brought back from Scotland a piece of jewelry which she left around the neck of her sleeping daughter.⁴¹ The Rosicrucian order claims to operate with similar powers.⁴²

Metamorphosis

The persistent stories which are told of witches who changed themselves into animals are perhaps to be explained in a similar way. They may well be accounts of drug induced experiences. Already St. Augustine in the *City of God* expressed doubts about the reality of such events and explained the phenomenon as a trance state in which the subject imagined himself to be an animal.⁴³

Incantations, Charms, and Spells

More common magic practices involve the use of incantations and charms or spells. These are verses or magic formulas recited either by an individual witch or in unison at coven meetings, which are intended to produce a magical effect. The word *charm* is derived from the Latin word "*carmon*" (a "song") and the word *spell* is the old Saxon word for "tale" or "story." It is the same word that forms the second part of the word "gospel."

"White" charms are often introduced with the names of the Trinity while "black" charms invoke the aid of three devils. Magicians insist that the spell must be recited in a precise way, syllable by syllable or it will not work.

Often the reciting of the spell is accompanied by a magic action, such as blowing, stroking or spitting. The object to be affected is sometimes sprinkled with "Easter water," which is water taken from a pond at 12 p.m. on Easter night, or with the ashes of a burnt snake, toad, bat, or bone.⁴⁴

There are many types of charms. For example, one magic recipe recommends as a cure for stomach trouble the drinking of holy water while reciting the names of the Trinity.⁴⁵ The *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* recommend boiling a piece of swine's flesh in the urine of a sick person. The boiled piece of meat is then fed to a dog, after which the dog is supposed to die while the ill person recovers. Walnut leaves inscribed with Bible verses that are eaten unread are used to cure disease. A fertility charm also recommended in the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* consists in placing a woman's hair between two loaves of bread which are then fed to cattle while reciting the magic words.⁴⁶

Charms, Amulets, Talismans, Fetishes

The word *charm* has acquired also another meaning. Through the use of incantations and spells it is believed that certain objects can be charged with magical powers which are able to cure or inflict disease, attract the opposite sex, improve crops, bring rain, defend against enemies or danger in general, or any one of a hundred desired effects.

Such charms are also called amulets, talismans, or fetishes. They may be worn around the neck, buried in the basement of a house, hung on a tree or fence, or used in other similar ways. Sometimes the charm consists of a potion to be drunk or an ointment to be rubbed on the body. Here again the witch's knowledge of herbs and drugs is undoubtedly of great significance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CHARMS

Such charms are often very effective. Kurt Koch tells story after story to demonstrate this. It is also well-documented fact that African witch doctors are able to cause death by pronouncing a curse against a man and leaving a sign of the curse on his doorstep. Scientists usually explain such happenings as cases of autosuggestion by saying that it is fear that kills the man who knows he has been cursed. The fulfillment of predictions of death by fortune-tellers is explained in the same way. Kurt Koch, however, holds that the charms or curses often work when the person involved is ignorant of what has been done.

Why do they work? Practitioners of witchcraft often express their belief that witches can direct a psychic force toward the object to be affected. This force is especially effective if a group of witches gathered for a Sabbath direct their powers in concert with one another. Such ceremonies produce what is called a "cone of power," which can produce magical results. The midnight hour is especially suited for such efforts since the world and also the person to be affected are more relaxed and therefore more open to outside influence.

The various studies in parapsychology may indicate that there may be some truth in these claims, but this can hardly be the full explanation. Some of the effects that apparently are produced go far beyond anything demonstrated in the laboratory of J. B. Rhine. It is hard to resist the conclusion that the devil's power is actually brought to bear in many cases of magic. If half of the stories told in the books written by Kurt Koch are true, then there can hardly be any doubt that witchcraft is effective today through the enlistment of demonic powers. It should be mentioned that Koch himself says that we must be very careful not to jump to the conclusion that we are dealing with occult phenomena.

David Farren tells a story which would also seem to substantiate this. He and his wife visited a magic booth at a fair near Los Angeles, where he saw a copper amulet with his wife's zodiac sign. The man in the booth who claimed to be a warlock tried to sell him the amulet for his wife and kept reducing the price until he bought it. A few days later his wife got a phone call from the man even though he did not know her name and her phone number was unlisted. He invited her to become a member of a black magic group and put her into a trance over the phone. Even though many attempts were made to get rid of the amulet it kept reappearing under the most mysterious circumstances, and Farren's conclusion is "that witchcraft does involve something more than hallucinations which might be attributed to an overactive fantasy."⁴⁷

HEALING MAGIC AND THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Of special interest and significance in view of the modern charismatic emphasis on healing is the area magical healing. Sybil Leek, for example, claims that she has a "flair for healing."⁴⁸ She tells in some detail of a cure she claims to have affected at long distance on a man in Rotterdam whose doctors had given three months to live. It is significant that she says that the process of healing someone through psychic power resulted in a severe strain on her own health.⁴⁹ This would tend to corroborate Kurt Koch's statement that in magical healing there is always a detrimental compensation in some other area.

We have surely all learned to be extremely skeptical about reports of miraculous healing, for all too often much reports can not bear the pressure of close investigation as the examination of Kathryn Kuhlmann's healing "miracles" by Dr. William Nolen, for example, have clearly shown. And yet we must bear in mind that one demonstrated fraud does not prove that no such healings really take place. The evidence for the genuineness of some of the cures seems to be rather strong.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that Kurt Koch who accepts charismatic healing openly charges in one of his books that the healing ability of Oral Roberts is magical rather than charismatic.⁵⁰

All things considered there would seem to be enough evidence for magical healing to warrant the conclusion that being healed can hardly in itself serve as a good basis for believing that the Holy Ghost has been active or that the person healed is a believing Christian. Even if the healing were real, it would still not serve that purpose well.

In fact, there are many things in the popularization of magic in our time that remind us of the charismatic movement. The more we become at least open to the possibility that witchcraft and magic are not pure invention, the more aware we ought to be that it is imperative that we remember that the spirits can be tried

only by God's Word, and while the miracles confirm the Word and are intended to be aids and not the hindrance to faith which modern theology so often considers them to be, yet the Word must also confirm the miracle. False doctrine ought always to alert us that a false spirit is at work, and a charismatic emphasis that in any way detracts from the Word is always a work of the devil. When charismatics say that after they had been baptized with the Spirit, there was no more need to quote Bible passages, the spirit that motivates them is all too clearly revealed.

Kurt Koch, as we have said, is sympathetic toward the charismatic movement and defends it. Yet even he cites examples to demonstrate the danger that may accompany such phenomena. He tells of eighteen missionaries in Japan who were overjoyed when they received the gift of glossolalia at a pastoral retreat. Within a very short time, however, fifteen of the eighteen dropped out of mission work, one died, and the two others continued their mission work only after renouncing their charismatic experience.⁵¹ He speaks of a school in France where about a dozen students became involved with charismatic activities while the rest of the student body rejected the movement. Sometime later all of the affected students had given up living as Christians while all the rest were still active.⁵²

It is impossible for human beings to look at apparently supernatural or paranormal events and identify the spirit behind the event except for the context in which the event occurs, and the most important feature in that content is the Word of God. Where false doctrine accompanies the so-called miracle, the spirit behind the miracle is always suspect.

As far as magic and witchcraft themselves are concerned, both foes and friends agree that they can be extremely dangerous. On that account alone, all men ought to avoid it. Human reason itself would seem to indicate that it is a mistake to take laws against witchcraft from the statute books. But whether they are on the statute books or not, God's people will know that God wants them to have no traffic with any kind of witchcraft. He made his will clear when he told his people under the old covenant, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

Endnotes : (Lecture II)

1. Merrill Unger, *Demons in the World Today*, Wheaton, Ill., Tyndale Press, 1971, p. 76.
2. David Farren, *The Return of Magic*, New York, Harper and Row, 1972, p. 83.
3. John Stevens Kerr, *The Mystery and Magic of the Occult*, Philadelphia Fortress Press, 1971, p. 70.
4. Sybil Leek, *Diary of a Witch*, Signet Books, 1968 p. 61.
Nov York,
5. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 62f.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
9. Merrill Unger, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
10. Kurt Koch, *Between Christ and Satan*, Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1962, p. 77.
11. *ibid.*, p. 62.
12. *Op. cit.*, p. 27.
13. *Op. cit.*, pp. 62f.
14. Baroja, *op. cit.*, pp. 231f., cp. also p. 133.
15. *Between Christ and Satan*, p. 65.
16. *Christian Counseling and Occultism*, P. 104.
17. *Op. cit.*, p. 82.
18. *Op. cit.*, p. 17.
19. Baroja, p. 47.
20. *Op. cit.*, p. 82.
21. *Op. cit.*, p. 231.
22. Jeffrey B. Russell, "Medieval Witchcraft and Medieval Heresy" in Edward A. Tiryakian, *On the Margin of the Visible*, Now York, John Wiley and Sons, 1974, p. 180.
23. Baroja *op. cit.*, p. 243.
24. Jeffrey Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 187f.
25. Baroja, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
27. Baroja, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
28. *Diary of a Witch*, p. 202.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 61 f.
30. Michelet, *op. cit.*, p.4 XIV.
31. Baroja, *op. cit.*, p.147.
32. Sybil Leek, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
33. Tiryakian, *op. cit.*, p. 178.
34. *Those Curious New Cults*, p. 76.
35. *Between Christ and Satan*, pp. 65ff.
36. Baroja, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 255.

38. Ibid., p. 205.
39. Sybil Leek, op. cit., p. 42.
40. Ibid., p. 155.
41. David Farret, op. cit., p. 36.
42. Max Heindol, "The Order of Rosicrucians" in Edward A. Teryakian, op. cit., pp. 147-151.
43. *City of God*, XVIII, 18.
44. Kurt Koch, *Christian Counseling and Occultism*, Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1972, pp. 135ff.
45. Kurt Koch, *Between Christ and Satan*, P. 74.
46. Merrill Unger, op. cit., p. 91.
47. David Farren, op. cit., pp. 36f.
48. Sybil Leek, op. cit., p. 105.
49. Ibid. p. 108.
50. Kurt Koch, *Occult Bondage and Deliverance*, Grand Rapids, Kregel, no date given, p. 52.
51. Kurt Koch, *Christian Counseling and Occultism*, pp. 9f.
52. Ibid., pp. 8f.

THE OCCULT

Lecture III: Spiritism

Introduction

While the Bible clearly forbids all divination and the practice of magic and witchcraft, it is sometimes difficult for us to define these areas so exactly that we can know with certainty just what is forbidden. We may, for example, not know where to draw the line between spontaneous telepathy and a sinful invasion of another person's mind, or between a harmless misunderstanding of some of the forces of nature and a sinful faith in occult practices.

When we come to the area of spiritism, however, no such doubt can exist. Every effort to contact the dead for any purpose is specifically forbidden by God.

THE BIBLICAL PROHIBITION

Spiritualists seek to find justification for their sinful practices in the Scripture. The Old Testament prophets as well as Jesus are described as accomplished mediums. Time and again Spiritists speak of the experience of Jesus and his disciples on Mount of the Transfiguration or of the first Pentecost as the greatest séance ever held. Such remarks serve only to demonstrate that spiritism is the devil's mimicry of inspiration.

However, even the most twisted exegesis can not escape the conclusion that when God through Moses forbade the children of Israel to tolerate in their midst any consulter with familiar spirits or any necromancer (Dt 18:11), he clearly and decisively laid down a strict prohibition against the practices engaged in by modern spiritists, or spiritualists, as they prefer to call themselves.

It is, however, not completely clear exactly what is meant by a "familiar spirit." This is the AV's translation of the Hebrew word _____(OB), concerning the exact meaning of which there is some doubt. Perhaps all that we can say is that it is obviously an intelligent spiritual being with which a "witch" can establish contact. The Greek translators understood those who have familiar spirits to be ventriloquists. This may be an indication of a fraudulent attempt at giving the impression of a message coming from a spirit, or it may also be a reference to a phenomenon that we shall meet again in our discussion of possession as well as in connection with mediumship. In such cases the possessed person or the medium very often speaks in a completely different voice.

There is however, no uncertainty about necromancers. The Hebrew words here are very explicit. They are people who go to the dead with their requests for information.

That consulting the dead is a rejection of God's revelation is made clear by the words of Isaiah,

When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and to wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isa 8:19,20).

In the story of Saul and the witch of Endor we have a concrete demonstration of the practice which is here condemned by Isaiah. The question of whether this woman with a familiar spirit was a fraud or whether she really contacted Samuel or whether it was an evil spirit who spoke to Saul probably cannot be decided this side of eternity. But that whatever she did was an abomination to the Lord is not left in doubt.

Personally I am convinced that she was in contact with something supernatural. The fact that she cried out in fear may indicate that she got more than she expected. But the question of whether this was Samuel or not is more difficult to decide. Luther says that it was a spirit that imitated Samuel in appearance and dress.¹ Such a view is not impossible even though the text says that Samuel spoke (1 Sa 28:15). The argument that God would not permit one of His departed prophets be disturbed in death is certainly not based on any clear statement of Scripture, even though it is widely held. It is, however, hardly necessary for us to answer or even

to debate such questions. That it was a sinful act on Saul's part, to attempt to gain hidden knowledge in this way and that it brought him nothing but grief is, however, made crystal clear in the text.

MODERN SPIRITUALISM

The practice of necromancy, or consulting the dead, probably never completely died out, but for the most part it seems to have been practiced more or less in secret.

The rise of modern spiritualism is usually traced to Hydesville, New York, where in 1848 Margaretta and Catherine Fox supposedly contacted the spirit world. The story of the Fox sisters and the subsequent growth of spiritistic activity in America and Europe is too well-known to delay us here. That the dead were actually being contacted was accepted as fact by otherwise highly intelligent people. When professional magicians, however, demonstrated again and again that all the apparently supernatural phenomena could be reproduced by natural means, when they exposed one medium after another as frauds, and one of the Fox sisters confessed that the so-called spirit rappings were actually produced by snapping their toe joints, spiritism suffered what appeared to be a death-blow from which not even the repudiation of Margaretta Fox's confession could rescue the movement.

After the First World War, however, spiritism once more began to flourish and the church notices in the daily newspapers carried long columns devoted to spiritualist services and séances. Yet it seems to me as I look back to those days that even most Lutheran theologians, who would not have dreamed of denying the supernatural, were almost fully convinced that spiritualism was trickery and deception from beginning to end. That much, if not most, of the spiritistic phenomena should be characterized in this way is probably true. When I was a student at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in the late thirties, we heard a lecture by a Lutheran undertaker who was also an amateur magician and whose hobby was exposing the fakery of spiritistic mediums. I remember him saying, "I bury those people and I know that they don't come back." Such an attitude, however, could hardly be viewed as being characteristic of either sound theology or solid science.

BISHOP JAMES PIKE

The renewed interest in spiritism in the second and third decade of this century again faded away from public attention until the Episcopal Bishop James Pike became a convert. His acceptance of spiritism is another example of how easily the wise men of this world become fools. Pike had rejected the authority of the Bible and all the fundamentals of the Christian faith. It is especially worthy of note that at the time when he became interested in spiritism he had even given up his belief in an afterlife.

It was a strange series of events that convinced the bishop that the dead are able to communicate with the living. He and his last wife, Diane Kennedy, have told the story of those events in their book, *The Other Side*.ⁱⁱ

The story begins with the suicide of Pike's son Jim on Feb. 4, 1966. At that time the bishop, together with his chaplain, David Barr, and his secretary Maren Bergrud, was living in Cambridge, England. It should be noted that both Barr and Bergrud also did not believe in life after death.

A little over two weeks after his son's death he found two postcards that he had never seen before lying on the floor in front of the nightstand next to his bed. The cards were arranged in such a way that they formed an angle similar to that formed by the hands of a clock at twenty minutes after eight. He was reminded of Jim, who was in the habit of buying postcards that he often forgot to mail.

Two days later Maren Bargrud came to breakfast with part of her bangs cut off, She apparently did not know that this had happened until Pike and Barr called her attention to it. The same thing happened the next morning and Pike remembered that Jim had told him once that he did not like Maren's bangs and that she ought to cut them off. On the third morning the bangs had completely disappeared and no trace of the missing hair could be found.

That day Pike, Barr, and Bergrud made a trip to London. When they returned the next day they found two books lying in the same spot where Pike had found the postcards arranged in the same way as the cards had been. Two photos had disappeared from the wall of the bedroom. When Barr opened the closet door he found the whole left side of the closet in disarray and in the heap of clothes on the floor he found the missing pictures together with some postcards they had never seen. They then found a clock that had not been wound and which had been stopped at 12:15 but which now read 8:19, with the hands therefore at the same angle as the postcards and the books. The coroner's report had indicated that it was somewhere near eight o'clock English time that Jim had committed suicide in New York.

A number of other unusual events reminded Pike and his companions of Jim and persuaded them that Jim was trying to get in touch with his father. An Anglican clergyman, who was interested in the occult and whom Pike consulted, suggested that they try to contact Jim with an inverted wine glass on a smooth table on which the letters of the alphabet, cut out of paper, had been arranged. When this did not work out well, although the glass did move, it was decided to consult Mrs. Ena Twigg, a medium who had also been suggested by the Anglican clergyman. A séance with Mrs. Twigg was scheduled for March 2.

On March 1, a whole series of highly unusual events, similar to those that had occurred earlier, took place. The next day, at the séance, the bishop was convinced that his son spoke to him with the voice of Mrs. Twigg. Jim had a great deal to talk about. He said that he was in a place like hell, that he could not believe that God is a person and that he could not be a Christian. At one point Jim was interrupted by another spirit who claimed to be Paul Tillich and who told Pike not to worry about Jim because he and others would look after him.

At a second séance a few days later Pike, who was leaving for the United States shortly, asked Jim how he could get in touch with him in America. Mrs. Twigg, in a trance and in a voice that sounded like Jim's, spoke the words, "Spiritual Frontiers, Father Rauscher, priest of the church, in New Jersey." Neither Mrs. Twigg, nor Pike knew anything about Spiritual Frontiers or Father Rauscher.

At a church service in New York a few weeks later Pike met the Rev. Arthur Ford, who in the course of the conversation mentioned that he was connected with Spiritual Frontiers. Pike was surprised and asked if they had anything special in New Jersey. Ford told him that Father Rauscher, an Episcopalian priest lived there.

Pike says in his book that he talked to his son again in August and September of that same year in five different séances. Between the third and fourth session Maren Bergrud committed suicide.

The famous televised séance with Arthur Ford took place about a year later on September 3, 1967, and in the next year, after a number of other remarkable experiences, Pike's a book, *The Other Side*, was published.

ARTHUR FORD

Arthur Ford is an ordained Disciples of Christ minister. He has had a long involvement with spiritism and is a well-known medium. In his autobiography, *Nothing So Strange* he tells how the spirit of Harry Houdini contacted him. Houdini, whom those of you who are older remember as one of the most celebrated magicians of all time, had devoted many of his efforts to demonstrating that spiritism was a fraud. But before he died he promised his wife that he would get in touch with her after death if he could and they arranged a private code that would be used so that she could be sure that it was really he if he contacted her.

After Houdini died in 1926 his wife offered \$10,000 to any medium who could communicate with her in the secret code. After two years, when all efforts to contact her husband had failed, she withdrew the offer. In 1929 Ford supposedly was able to establish contact between Houdini and his wife and the spirit of Houdini spoke with his wife in the code they had agreed on. The editor of the *Scientific American* was present at the séance and a transcript of the session was made. Mrs. Houdini later denied that the code had been broken and yet the evidence seem to contradict her later repudiation.³

EDGAR CAYCE

During one of the séances arranged by Bishop Pike another celebrated medium, Edgar Cayce, the so-called "sleeping prophet," made his presence known and tried to persuade Maren Bargrud to become a healing medium.

Edgar Cayce was born in Kentucky in 1877. Kurt Koch's statement that occult powers tend to be inherited would seem to be borne out by the fact that Cayce's father could make a "broom dance" and had such an unusual attraction for snakes that they would follow him home from the fields.⁴ At the age of six or seven Cayce began to have visions and at the age of 24 he intentionally entered into a trance state in which he prescribed medicine and treatment for his own voice problem. From 1901 until his death in 1945 he entered into trance thousands of times. From 1923 on his "readings" were recorded by stenographers. He was not conscious of what he said and it is reported that he spoke at times in languages that he had never learned.⁵ There is no doubt that he used complicated medical terms with which he was not familiar in his waking state. His early readings all were given in answer to requests for medical help. Both friend and foe agree that the medical readings are most remarkable.

In 1923 Cayce began to give "life readings." These were pronouncements made in the trance state in response to questions about religious matters. When Cayce, who was a Christian Sunday School teacher, heard what he had said in the first of these readings he himself denounced it as a work of the devil. But gradually he began to believe in the readings and gave up Biblical Christianity as a result.

In addition to answers to religious questions, Cayce also made many historical predictions. The life readings are as ridiculous as the medical readings are amazing. He predicted, for example, that China would become a Christian nation by 1968⁶ and that a new land, the lost continent of Atlantis, would rise out of the ocean in 1968 or 1969.⁷ Edmond Gruss says that his prognostications are a "catastrophe," while his medical readings are "impressive."⁸ It would appear that in Cayce we have a typical trance medium without some of the usual features of Spiritistic mediums. In fact, Cayce refused to try to communicate with the dead. Still in some of the readings, Spirits who claimed to be those of dead people did supposedly speak and Cayce's opposition to consulting the dead seems to have been overcome.⁴⁰

URI GELLER

Another man who obviously belongs to this class of people is the young Israeli "magician" Uri Geller. His story had been published by Andrija Puharich, a Roman Catholic doctor of medicine, evidently a brilliant man, but a man who also becomes a fool by accepting the most inane statements made by alleged, spirit voices as great revelations of truth.¹⁰

Uri Geller has been denounced as a clever trickster by many. Yet, his extraordinary powers were tested under laboratory conditions at the Stanford Research Institute. All possible precautions against fraud were taken and all test results in which there was any possibility of cheating were disregarded. Even under such conditions Geller achieved results that go far beyond anything that has come out of the researches at Duke University. According to the Stanford experts the chances of achieving the results achieved by Geller are one in one trillion.

Geller belongs into the spiritist fold because, according to Puharich's account, in his presence tape recorders begin to run automatically and messages from spirit beings are allegedly recorded. Although Puharich is convinced the messages are important, Geller himself expressed the opinion that he and Puharich were dealing with a bunch of clowns, because of the inconsistency of the messages. While the account given by

Puharich is rather impressive, and if what he says is true, there can be no doubt that there are demonic forces involved. My own mind harbors the suspicion that Puharich lives on the brink of insanity, but even that would not explain everything he says. I am sure, however, that most people would be inclined to laugh out loud when they hear that Puharich says that all the tapes disappeared before or after transcripts were made of them. Puharich is a scientist and knows that this is the normal reaction and yet he feels compelled to relate such things. He says in his book, "It was apparent to me that I could never try to convince another human being of my experiences."¹¹

ARIGO'

Before he became involved with Uri Geller, Puharich had investigated the claims that are made for Arigo', the famous Brazilian healer, who was definitely a spiritist. Arigo' claimed that all his surgical skill came directly from the spirit of Adolph Fritz, a German doctor who died in 1918, but whose spirit was now continuing his medical practice in and through him. Arigo' is a healer of the Espiritista Church in Brazil. This is apparently not what we would call a Spiritist group but a Pentecostal denomination with branches in Brazil and the Philippine Islands.

When Puharich watched Arigo' operate he was so amazed at what was happening that he suspected that he and the other observers might be hallucinating, so he asked Arigo' to operate on a growth he had on his elbow. Moving pictures were taken of the operation and afterwards Puharich was given the excised tumor, which had been regularly observed by another physician for seven years. The operation convinced Puharich that Arigo' was not a charlatan.¹³

On the other hand, William Nolen, a Roman Catholic doctor of medicine, investigated similar healing "miracles" in the Espiritista Church of the Philippines and concluded that fraud was involved.¹⁴ In the Philippines he found that medical instructions came through speaking in tongues, but aside from the terminology his description of speaking in tongues could be used as a description of a spiritualist séance.¹⁵ Nolen, also submitted to an "operation" for the removal of a tumor, which he was shown very briefly before it was destroyed, and after the removal there was no trace of any incision. This experience is completely unlike that of Puharich who says that the scar of his operation remains to this day and the tumor is still in a bottle of alcohol.¹⁶

While it has been clearly demonstrated time and again that much of what passes as spiritistic activity is clever deception, yet there obviously remains an unexplained and inexplicable residue that can only be viewed as truly supernatural. A Christian who believes in miracles and inspiration will not find such a conclusion to be *a priori* untenable.

MOHAMMEDANISM

It may seem strange at this point to speak of what may at first appear to be a completely unrelated subject, namely, the origin of the Mohammedan Koran.

According to Islamic tradition, the story of the Koran begins one night when Mohammed had a vision of an angel and heard him speak words which the "prophet" was able later to reproduce verbatim. Mohamed was not convinced that what he had heard and seen was real. He was afraid that he was losing his mind. When he told his wife Khadija about his vision, she tried to persuade him that God was speaking to him. She tried to convince him by pointing out that he never had done anything wrong. Mohammed was not convinced, because he said that all his life he had abhorred men possessed by spirits. He went to the mountains to commit suicide, but there he had another vision by which he was persuaded. John B. Noyes in his book *Man's Religions* writes,

When it began to appear that the strange experiences, in which rhapsodies in Arabia flowed across his lips, would continue spontaneously, without his willing them, he came to believe that Allah was using him as his mouthpiece.¹⁷

When we remember Paul's statement that the worship of the heathen is addressed to devils, we may well be moved to ask whether Mohammedanism is in reality only the invention of an uneducated camel driver.

In this connection a remark made by God to Moses at the burning bush may be significant. The Lord told him that as a sign that he had really spoken to him the Israelites would come back to this same place on their way to the promised land. This is indeed a remarkable prophecy since it would mean a long and difficult and apparently completely unnecessary detour on the way to Palestine. But the words would seem to indicate that Moses, too, like Mohammed, might begin to doubt the reality of the vision. One thing, however, is noticeably different. The argument that Moses is a good man who had never done wrong is never used in an effort to demonstrate the genuineness of his experience at the burning bush.

SPIRITISTIC PHENOMENA

The apparently supernatural phenomena connected with spiritualism are many and varied, as in the practice of magic, with which they could also be classified.

THE OUIJA BOARD

Probably one of the best known and most common spiritistic tool is the Ouija board, which was invented a little less than a century ago and is now marketed by Parker Bros. This so-called toy, which also many Christians use as an amusement device, is actually very dangerous. It consists of a smooth board on which are printed the letters of the alphabet, and the words, Yes, No, and Goodbye. A small three-legged pointer or "planchette" is used with the board. Two people sit at the board with their fingers lightly touching the planchette, which moves until it points to one of the words or to individual letters in order to spell out other words.

It may be true at times that the planchette moves because one or both of the operators are pushing it subconsciously and that some of the remarkable answers given can be explained by telepathy. But this can hardly be the whole story. We have already noted that Mrs. David Farren began to hear voices while using the board. This is not at all a unique experience since the same thing has happened in other cases.¹⁸ Its use has reportedly led to devil possession,¹⁹ and not only theologians, but also psychiatrists and medical doctors and spiritualists warn against its use.²⁰ The passive state of mind required for its successful employment is a typical prerequisite for the invasion of the mind by alien spirit powers.

GLASS MOVING

The ouija board is not necessary to practice this sort of spiritism, however, The same results can be obtained by placing a glass upside down on a smooth table with one's fingers resting on it lightly. It will be recalled that this was the method used by, Bishop Pike in his first attempt to contact his son.

Similar devices have been used for many centuries and in many different countries. The divining rod and the pendulum have also been used to spell out words in this way.

TABLE TIPPING

Another common practice sometimes played as a parlor game, but also used in avowed consulting of spirits, is table tipping. One or more people sit at a table with their fingers resting on the table top. The table is then asked to move in a certain way to indicate yes or no answers or to spell out words as the letters of the alphabet are recited. Sometimes the tipping is preceded by an open request to the spirits in the room to indicate by the tipping of the table what they wish to communicate. This practice even if only used for amusement can become very dangerous to both the mental and spiritual health of those who engage in it.

AUTOMATIC WRITING

Many people also become involved in spiritism by the practice of automatic writing. The planchette which is used with a ouija board originally had a pencil as its third leg and it was used to write out messages in the same way in which it is used today to spell out words.

But such a planchette is not necessary. People with mediumistic abilities can sit at a table with a pencil poised above a sheet of paper and when a passive mental attitude is assumed, the hand begins to move of its own accord and writes out a message. After such automatic writing has been practiced for a time, it may take place spontaneously even while the subject is carrying on a conversation which has nothing to do with what is being written.

Kurt Koch quotes a psychiatrist who says that such writing can have a strong morbid influence on those who practice it. He also quotes a psychologist who holds that it easily becomes impulsive. Koch tells of a lady who felt the urge to let her hand write automatically in a restaurant, and when she was told by her husband not to do it, her hand began rapping loudly on the table and so persistently that she was unable to stop it.²¹ While such automatic writing may at the beginning be nothing more than autosuggestion, as some hold, it should be evident that it can easily become a device by which spirit influence can invade the material world directly.

LEVITATIONS

The ouija board, glass moving, and table-tipping all involve touching the object to be moved. Parapsychologists have demonstrated that it is possible to cause physical objects to move by mental concentration alone. Such telekinetic movements, however, are usually very slight. Spiritists claim that even heavy objects are sometimes moved significant distances up and down or laterally in evidence of the presence of spirit forces. Many such phenomena, called levitations or telekinesis, have been demonstrated as being pure trickery and deception. When Annie Besant, the founder of Theosophy, died it was discovered that her home was filled with all kinds of machinery that could produce such effects, and even her followers wondered why the machinery was necessary since they said that she could produce the effects without the aid of such devices. On the other hand, it is probably true that also in levitation and telekinesis there is an unexplainable residue.

A combination of such independent movements and table tipping is allegedly produced by placing the finger tips under the table instead of on the table. In this way, it is claimed, heavy tables, as well as other objects, can be lifted as though they were almost completely weightless.

MATERIALIZATIONS

A rarer phenomenon in spiritistic practice is materialization. In materialization a body or part of a body appears and often the visible "spirit" is heard to speak. Cases of materialization are highly suspect because they usually occur in the dark. The Lutheran undertaker of whom we spoke earlier demonstrated at an actual séance that the "spirit" floating over the heads of those sitting around a table was nothing more than a piece of luminous cheesecloth on a stick. But the Bible surely indicates that such visible manifestations are not a priori impossible.

APPORTS

Similar to materializations of spirits is the phenomenon called apports. Material objects are made to appear or disappear without any apparent cause. The mysterious disappearance of the Uri Geller tapes is an example of apports. According to Puharich, Geller also caused a steel ring which Puharich himself had placed into a sealed box to disappear and six hours later while several persons were watching the box they heard the sound of something metallic falling inside the box and when it was opened the ring had reappeared. Puharich says, "This is the first time I had experienced an object vanishing where I was certain that there had been no deception involved."²² The phenomenon becomes very common in Puharich's experience after that, and more

and more difficult to believe, even though Puharich seems fully aware of the need for careful observation and for guarding against deception.

In the case of Bishop Pike the disappearance of Maren Bergrud's hair and the material appearance of the postcards and the books and other objects are also manifestations of apport.

At least one writer suggests that the serpents of the magicians of Pharaoh were produced in this way. He says, "Demons were dispatched to the desert at lightning speed by the satanic powers working with those men, and exchanged serpents from the desert rocks for the priests' sticks."²³ He does not say where or from whom he learned that this was the case.

SEANCE

The most typical feature of spiritism is the séance. The word is derived from a French word meaning "sitting" or "session." Séances begin with a time of quiet meditation. Usually they are held in darkness or in very dim light, although this is not always the case as is sometimes asserted. Often some object in the room will move as an indication of the presence of the spirit or spirits. After that the medium will usually go into a trance in which contact will be made with a spirit guide. Some mediums do not go into the trance state to contact the spirits. In the early days of the movement the spirit guide usually was an Indian chief, but this is no longer the case. Arthur Ford's guide is a deceased French-Canadian named "Fletcher." These spirit guides are evidently what was meant by the term "familiar spirit." Whether this is also what is meant by the Hebrew word _____ is uncertain.

The spirit guide then introduces the various spirits, all of whom at séances, at least, identify themselves as spirits of the dead. Often, as in the case of Bishop Pike and Paul Tillich, the spirits claim to be the spirits of famous men, but the observation is often made that they must have suffered severe brain damage in death because their remarks are usually very trivial and not at all in character. The spirits speak with the voice of the medium who may suddenly switch from the third to the first person as the spirit takes over completely. Usually, however, the medium's voice will be raised or lowered in pitch. This communication with the spirits continues until the end of the séance.

It is generally agreed by Christian students of spiritism that if spirits really speak at a séance they are not the spirits of the departed but evil spirits impersonating the dead.

THE DOCTRINE OF SPIRITISM

That they are diabolic spirits becomes evident when we examine their teaching. We have already noted that Edgar Cayce gave up his Christian faith as a result of the revelations that came through his voice while he was in trance. The doctrine that overshadows all others in the theology that Cayce learned from his trance readings was reincarnation. He even came to believe that Jesus was the thirtieth reincarnation of Adam. Many of those for whom he gave readings were, according to the revelations that came to him, reincarnations of relatives of the apostles and of the family of Jesus. His Biblical proof for reincarnation he then found in the words of the Savior, "Ye must be born again."

Before he died Cayce founded the Association for Research and Enlightenment, a study center devoted to the study of over 15,000 of Cayce's readings. Out of that study center comes a book in which it is said,

For almost twenty centuries the moral sense of the Western world has been blunted by a theology which teaches the vicarious atonement of sin through Christ, the Son of God.... All men and women are the sons of God.... Christ's giving of his life ... is no unique event in history.... To build these two statements, therefore — that Christ was the Son of God and that he died for man's salvation — into a dogma, and then to make salvation depend upon believing that dogma, has been the great psychological crime ... it places responsibility for salvation on something external to the self; it makes salvation dependent on belief in the divinity of another person rather than on self-transformation through belief in one's own intrinsic divinity.²²

It becomes apparent also why the devil would want to help Cayce give accurate health readings when we hear one of the people who accepted his views on reincarnation say,

If his subconscious was right, where the professional medicos', conscious was so wrong, why shouldn't this selfsame subconscious be equally accurate and the professional theologians equally wrong.²³

Shakespeare was correct when he said that the instruments of darkness tell us truths and win us with honest trifles to betray us in the deepest consequence.

This animosity toward Christ and the doctrine of vicarious atonement is characteristic of the theology of spiritism, even though it may sometimes be masked. Victor Ernest, a Christian pastor, who in his youth was deeply involved in spiritism, has in his book *I Talked with Spirits*, told the story of the last séance he attended. The spirit control, after taking over the voice of the medium, announced that he was ready to answer questions on theology. Ernest, who had by this time begun to study the bible, asked the spirit if Jesus was the Son of God. When this question was answered affirmatively, Ernest asked whether Jesus was the Savior of the world, and again he received an affirmative answer. Ernest then asked his third question, "Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross and shed his blood for the remission of sins?" Instead of an answer to this question being given, according to Ernest,

The medium, deep in a trance, was catapulted off his chair. He fell in the middle of the living room floor and lay groaning as if in deep pain. The turbulent sounds suggested spirits in a carnival of confusion.²⁴

This same attitude toward the cross of Christ is also evident from the Spiritualist version of the hymn, "Just as I am." Two of its stanzas read,

Just as I am without One plea,
But that, O God, Thou madest me,
And that my life is found in Thee,
O God of love, I come, I come.

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Though dogmas I may ne'er believe,
Nor heights of holiness achieve,
O God of love, I come, I come.²⁵

This attitude also became evident in the séances in which Jim Pike supposedly spoke to his father. He urged the bishop to publish his book in which he attacked the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. He also said that in the spirit world the others talked about Jesus but as an example, not a Savior, and that man must cleanse himself in the next world as he becomes more and more enlightened. While this is not identical to Cayce's views on reincarnation, yet the way of salvation is the same. This is part and parcel of the basic fabric of Spiritualistic theology and denial of the vicarious atonement is a necessary corollary.

In all Spiritualistic theology we find the most blatant type of work righteousness. The National Spiritual Association of Churches has issued a "Declaration of Principles" which says,

1. We believe in Infinite Intelligence.
2. We believe that the phenomena of nature, both physical and spiritual, are the expressions of Infinite Intelligence.
3. We affirm that the correct understanding of such expression and living in accordance therewith, constitutes true religion.
4. We affirm that the existence and personal identity of the individual continue after the change called death.
5. We affirm that the communication with the so-called dead is a fact, scientifically proved by the phenomena of Spiritualism.
6. We believe that the highest morality is contained in the Golden Rule: ...
7. We affirm the moral responsibility of the individual, and that he makes his own happiness or unhappiness as he obeys or disobeys nature's physical and spiritual laws.
8. We affirm that the doorway to reformation is never closed against any human soul here or hereafter.
9. We affirm the precept of prophecy contained in the Bible is a divine attribute proven through mediumship.

²⁶

CONCLUSION

From such a declaration of principles it should be evident that it is really not important for us to know whether a spiritistic medium is a fraud or genuinely in touch with the spirit world, for in either case, spiritism promotes a theology that denies the gospel in its totality as well as being in itself a clear violation of the law of God. Spiritism is the devil's substitute for God's inspiration, and it is worthy of note that in one of Edgar Cayce's readings he said, "The Spirit of Forces (God) speaks as often to men as He did in the past."²⁷ No amount of curiosity ought to tempt us to experiment with that sort of thing in any form, whether it be a ouija board or a parlor séance. The psychiatrists tell us that often mediumship is a way to insanity. What is even worse is that teachings of spiritism can lead only to eternal death.

Endnotes: (Lecture III)

1. From a sermon on Ex 7: 3-21.
2. James Pike and Diane Kennedy, *The Other Side*, New York, Doubleday, 1968.
3. John Stevens Kerr, *The Mystery and Magic of the Occult*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, pp. 94-96.
4. Edmond G. Gruse, *Cults and the Occult in the Age of Aquarius*, Grand Rapids, Baker, no date given, pp.109ff.
5. Jess Stern, *Edgar Cayce, the Sleeping Prophet*, New York, Doubleday Bantom Books, 1967, pp. 11,105,257.
6. Ibid., p 89.
7. Ibid., p. 34.
8. Op. cit., p. 117.
9. May Ellen Carter, *My Life with Edgar Cayce*, New York, Harper and Row, 1972 p. 113.
10. Andrija Puharich, *Uri*, New York, Doubleday, 1974.
11. Ibid., p.122.
12. William A. Nolen, *Healing: A Doctor in Search of a Miracle*, New York, Random House, 1974, p. 152.
13. Puharich, op. cit., pp, 26ff.
14. Nolen, op. cit., pp. 139-231.
15. Ibid., p. 189.

16. Puharich. op. cit., p. 29.
17. John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, New York, Macmillan, 1974, p. 514.
18. Gruss, op. cit., p. 104.
19. Ibid., p. 103.
20. Ibid., p. 105.
21. *Christian Counseling and Occultism*, p. 51.
22. Puharich, op. cit., p. 97.
23. H. A. Maxwell Whyte, *The Kiss of Satan*, Monrosville, Pa., Whitaker House, 1973, p. 52.
24. Peterson, op. cit., p. 55f. (Quoted from *Many Mansions* by Gina Cerminara).
25. Jess Stearn, op. cit., p. 247.
26. Victor H. Ernest, *I Talked with Spirits*, Wheaton, Ill., Tyndale House Publishers, 1970, p. 32.
27. Quoted in Peterson, op. cit., p.64.
28. Quoted by Walker L. Knight, *The Weird World of the Occult*, Wheaton, Tnydale House, 1972, pp. 27,28.
29. Mary Ellen Carter, *My Years with Edgar Cayce*, New York, Harper and Row, 1972, p.29.

THE OCCULT

Lecture IV : DEMONIC POSSESSION

It is strange that a world which appears in large measure to have lost its faith in God seems to be intent upon demonstrating the existence of the devil, and many people who have lost interest in the truths of God's revelation display a morbid curiosity in demonism. Thirty-five years ago, it seems to me, anyone who would seriously have suggested that there are today actual cases of devil possession would in most instances have been looked at askance as incurably superstitious. This was even characteristic of most Christians. Liberal Protestantism widely denied even the existence of a personal devil. One of the most noted theologians of that generation wrote,

I maintain that to revive or perpetuate the demonology of the New Testament in the modern world is to incur the charge of obscurantism and superstition. The church should do all in her power to root it out, for it can only stultify her proclamation.¹

The more conservative admitted that there were cases of devil possession in New Testament times but seriously questioned whether such things could still happen today.

But in the past decade we have seen a long list of novels and films dealing with the subject of devil possession and devil worship. *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Exorcist*, and the *Omen* are perhaps the best known. A serious scholarly study of possession and exorcism by the Jesuit professor Malachi Martin has been published by the Reader's Digest Press and our newspapers and newsmagazines from time to time carry articles dealing with the subject. My own impression is that none of those things could have happened a third of a century ago.

DEVIL POSSESSION IN THE BIBLE

No Bible-believing Christian can deny the possibility and the reality of demonic possession. The Bible tells us in clear and unmistakable terms that there were people possessed by devils who were cured by the Lord Jesus and by the apostles. To doubt the possibility of demonization is to doubt the authority of Scripture, and even the apostate priest David Farren says, "From a reconsideration of whether Jesus did 'drive out devils' to whether the Resurrection was an actual event is a very short stop."²

In spite of the clear statements of Scripture, however, there have been many so-called Christian scholars who have denied that there is such a thing. They have attempted to explain the Biblical language by saying that Jesus and the evangelists were children of their time. By the Jews of that unenlightened, prescientific age, it was commonly held, so it is argued, that both physical and mental illnesses were caused by devils. If Jesus effected any cures, and even liberal critics will admit that he did, they were cases of psychosomatic illness which were cured by suggestion.

If it was so commonly believed that diseases were caused by devils we might ask why it is that the great majority of illnesses cured by Jesus are not ascribed to devil possession. Of the twenty-three healing miracles described in some detail in the four Gospels, only six or seven (if we include the woman in Luke 13:11) are designated as cases of devil possession. The Gospels also make a very clear distinction between disease and devil possession. Matthew for example, says that they brought to Jesus "all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments and those which were possessed with devils" (Mt 4:24).

Moreover, such a view could not be held by anyone who believes that the Bible is the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God and accepts the deity, omniscience, and truthfulness of the Savior.

Closely related to this way of looking at the matter is the opinion of those who say that there is no such thing as devil possession, that Jesus knew that there was no such thing, but that he accommodated himself to the views of the populace and went along with them in order to heal by suggestion those who believed themselves to be possessed. While such a view may seem to uphold the omniscience of the Savior, it is certainly an attack on his truthfulness and on the reliability of the inspired record, so that no Bible-believing Christian can hold such an opinion.

Historical-critical scholarship is inclined to view the stories of the healing of demoniacs as an outgrowth of the conviction of the early Christians that Jesus had come to destroy the works of the devil. Whether or not he really cast out devils is a subject of little concern to the critical scholars. The important lesson to remember,

according to their view, is that in Jesus the forces of evil are overcome. The individual believer thus is left free to believe in the reality of demonic possession or not, as he chooses. In this way another obstacle to ecumenical togetherness is removed.

It is sometimes held that devil possession is just another name for mental illness. Aside from the fact that such a view also violates the clear statements of the Gospels, it should be pointed out that in only one, or at the most three cases, do we have any clear reference to what would appear to be beyond question mental aberration in the demoniac. The Gadarene demoniac displays some of the classic symptoms of a schizoid personality, but it is to be questioned whether this would explain his superhuman strength. The demoniac boy whom Jesus healed after the transfiguration (Mt 17:14; Mk 9:17; Lk 9:38) exhibits the symptoms of epilepsy which surely ought to be classified as at least partially a physical illness. Whether the shouting of the demoniac in the synagogue of Capernaum (Mk 1:23; Lk 4:33) is a mark of mental illness or not could be debated. In the case of the dumb demoniac (Mt 9:32) and the dumb and blind demoniac (Mt 12:22; Lk 11:14) nothing is said that would suggest any kind of mental illness. Only their physical affliction is mentioned. In the case of the daughter of the Syro-Phenician woman we are only told that she was "grievously vexed by the devil" (Mt 15:21; Mk 7:24), which does not tell us much about her symptoms. If the woman in Luke 13 who could not stand up straight, and of whom Jesus said that Satan had bound her for eighteen years (Lk 13:16), is included in the list of demoniacs, we have another case of what would appear to be a purely physical affliction brought on by the devil. Devil possession evidently can manifest itself in various ways.

When the Biblical statements are taken at face value the only possible conclusion to which we can come is that at least in New Testament times people were possessed by devils and that Jesus and his disciples actually cast them out. On this conclusion there is no room for compromise.

DEMONIC POSSESSION TODAY

Whether there is such a thing as devil possession today is at least subject to question. The question probably cannot be answered with absolute finality without a revelation from God, since we are here dealing with things that are beyond the measuring capacity of scientific instruments. However, I must say that, for myself, I am convinced of the occurrence of the phenomenon in the modern world.

However, it is probably not as common as the present spate of literature and the surge of interest in the subject might seem to imply. One of the exorcists in Malachi Martin's book says that "out of every hundred claimants there might be one genuine case."³ A French Roman Catholic expert on possession, Henri Gesland, reported that from 1968 to 1974 he was consulted in 3,000 cases of suspected possession, and that he believes that out of the 3,000 there were only four that he could consider to be genuine. Such restrained estimates would surely seem to indicate, however, that the evidence must finally overwhelmingly point to the fact that sometimes human beings actually do become demonized.

In contrast to the questioning attitude of Gesland, Martin quotes the German psychologist Oesterreich as saying "that 'possession has been an extremely common phenomenon, cases of which abound in the history of religion.'"⁴ This, however, gives a wrong impression because Oesterreich, who wrote a book on possession (*Die Bessessenheit*) in the 1920's, did not believe that actual demons took possession of human beings. He considered possessed people to be neurotics and the supposed demons that possessed them to be nothing more than an aspect of their own personalities. Strictly speaking, therefore, in our terms we ought to say that Oesterreich himself does not believe that there are any demoniacs at all, but only many people who believe themselves or who are believed by others to be possessed of demons.

It is obvious that there are many neurotics who imagine themselves to be possessed. Michelet, for example, records the case of a nun in France who declared that she had three devils, one was a good-natured Catholic devil, the second was a bad devil, a freethinker and a Protestant, and the third was the demon of impurity. Michelet says that she forgot to mention the demon of jealousy.⁵ In Baroja's study of witchcraft we are told that there was a proliferation of cases of possession in Spain in the late 1600's. He believes that it was provoked by "too much reading of books on witchcraft and demoniacal possession written by influential theologians."⁶ We may be in danger of the same sort of thing today.

When Gesland accepts only four out of 3,000 alleged cases as genuine, it is clear that statistically speaking he agrees almost fully with Oesterreich, even if on the philosophical question of the possibility of true demonization they are poles apart. For this reason also the Roman Catholic Church insists that before any exorcism can be performed legitimately, the subject must first of all be examined by medical doctors and psychiatrists to weed all those who suffer from one sort of neurosis or another. Malachi Martin speaks of a neurological condition called "Tourette's syndrome," which manifests some of the typical symptoms of devil possession, such as "profanity, obscenity, grunts, animal noises, facial contortions and which he considers to be a disease involving a chemical abnormality in the brain."⁷ The disease yields to drug treatment. From that Martin concludes that it can not be possession. Whether this is a proper conclusion may be questioned, since there seems to be a widely held opinion that the onset of possession may be occasioned by drug use. If the use of certain drugs can make it easier for the devil to invade the personality, then it could conceivably also be true that the use of other drugs might inhibit the activity of demons.

While we must be on our guard against a naive and gullible attitude, it seems to me that the evidence presented to demonstrate that there is such a thing as devil possession today is so overwhelming that it is more difficult not to believe than to disbelieve. Only someone who is predisposed to deny the existence of the supernatural would have a good logical premise on which to base his rejection of the evidence. On the other

hand it also seems well established that much of what appears to some people to be demonization is neurotic imagination, which may be encouraged by leaving the impression that possession is a common occurrence.

CASES

In 1968 Kregel's publishing house reprinted a book dealing with the subject of demon possession which had first been printed in 1894. The author was John B. Nevius, a man who had served as a Presbyterian missionary in China for almost forty years. Nevius says in his book that when he first came to China in 1854 he brought with him "a strong conviction" that a belief in demons, and communication with spiritual beings, belongs exclusively to a barbarous and superstitious age, and at present can consist (coexist?) only with mental weakness and want of culture."⁸

After about twenty years Nevius was convinced by his experiences that devil possession was rather common in China and that the coming of Christianity had a tendency to reduce the number of demoniacs in a region. He therefore wrote letters to other Christian missionaries asking them to supply him with information concerning possession in their area. In his book he cites many cases which were reported to him as a result of this letter, and he says that he consciously used only material for which he had the personal testimony of intelligent observers.

Even more striking is the evidence presented by Malachi Martin in his book *Hostage to the Devil*. Martin, as we have already noted, is a Jesuit professor. In *Hostage to the Devil* he tells the story of five exorcisms based on actual tape recordings made at the exorcism sessions. He writes,

The following five cases are true. The lives of the people involved are told on the basis of extensive interviews with all of the principals involved, with many of their friends and relatives, and with many others involved directly or indirectly in minor ways. All interviews have been independently checked for factual accuracy wherever possible. The exorcisms themselves are reproduced from the actual tapes made at the time and from the transcripts of those tapes.⁹

The first story he tells is that of Marianne K., a young Polish Catholic girl in New York who gradually slipped into an unbelievably depraved and immoral life. The facts as they are recorded by Martin are utterly revolting. As an example of her depravity we might only mention that she refused to see her parents, and when her mother left a food package at the door of Marianne's apartment, the girl sent her mother's gift back to her in a dripping and smelly package in which she had mixed excrement and urine with the food her mother had left.

Marianne had a married brother to whom she had been very close. When he came to New York he went to visit her. On his mother's insistence he took with him a crucifix, which she wanted him to leave somewhere in the apartment. When Marianne left the room, he placed the crucifix under the mattress of her bed. According to Martin's account,

No sooner had Marianne returned and sat on the edge of the bed than she turned white as chalk and fell rigidly to the floor, where she lay jerking her pelvis back and forth as though she were in great pain. In seconds the expression on her face had changed from dreamy to almost animal; she foamed at the mouth and bared her teeth in a grimace of pain and anger.¹⁰

In this state she was taken to her parents' home, where she remained for weeks in a comatose state, but when the parish priest came she had "terrifying fits of rage and violence." She was examined by doctors who could find nothing organically wrong with her. Almost unbelievably a psychiatrist "pronounced her normal within the definition of any psychological test."¹¹

Marianne's parents finally asked the diocesan authorities for permission to have an exorcism performed. The exorcism lasted for nineteen hours before the demon was finally cast out and Marianne returned to normal. The record of the exorcism taken from the actual tape recordings made at the time is so coarse and so blasphemously diabolic as to be frightening. What struck me, however, as being of particular significance is the fact that the exorcist was a Hebrew scholar and the girl spoke to him in Hebrew during the course of the exorcism.¹² I wish Martin had investigated the question of whether she had ever come into contact with the Hebrew language in her college training.

The second case described by Martin is that of a priest, who had adopted a thoroughly naturalistic theology and who began to change the words of the liturgy under compulsion, so that instead of "This is My body," he would say instead "This is My tombstone." While the record as Martin gives us of this possessed priest does not contain the same kind of obscenity that is found in the case of Marianne K, yet when we are told that instead of "This is My blood" he would consecrate the wine with the words "This in My sexuality," we surely recognize this as a type of obscenity that is even more depraved than the mere spouting of four-letter words. He would baptize babies in the name of "the sky, the earth, and the water." Side by side with his service in the Catholic church he conducted another type of worship for a congregation in a rented apartment. In the regular worship service he found it almost impossible to make the sign of the cross, and finally once when he was saying mass he was catapulted away from the altar and thrown to the floor of the sanctuary. It was then that his superiors finally came to the conclusion that he was possessed. The priest who tried for two years to exorcise the devil became possessed himself for a time, and the case is particularly interesting because it illustrates how the dogma of evolution serves the devil's purpose.

The third of Martin's examples is that of a man who had gone through a sex change operation. At the first attempt at exorcism the officiating priest was physically attacked by the demon and was hurled across the room and slammed against the wall. The account in some ways is reminiscent of the sons of Sceva recorded in the book of Acts (19:13-16). At the final exorcism session some weeks later, after the Priest had recovered from

the attack, an unbelieving psychiatrist was present. One of the witnesses later testified that the expression on the face of the psychiatrist changed, from one of business as usual, to incredulity, to impatience, and finally to fear. The psychiatrist regained his composure and interfered with the exorcism with results that terrified the whole group present, especially the psychiatrist. It is also interesting to note that when the spirits finally left the possessed person they said of the psychiatrist that the exorcist could not have him. They asserted, "We already have his soul. We claim him. He is ours. And you cannot do anything about that. We already have. He is ours. We needn't fight for him."¹³ Martin believes that the psychiatrist may have been a case of "total possession," for which there is no cure.

We can not, in the time available to us, discuss in any detail the two other cases described in Martin's book, but one of the cases might be mentioned because it differs markedly from the other four. It is a case of what Martin calls "familiarization." In familiarization, according to Martin, the physical violence, the stench, the social aberrations and moral degeneracy that is characteristic of other forms of possession are absent. The "familiar" seeks to live with the victim, but does not take over his personality. Martin says that the intelligence of familiars is very low, and that they are bound by rules and are in strict dependence on a "higher" intelligence. Nevertheless it is clear that they are evil, and in the case described, the familiar twice almost convinced the possessed person to commit suicide. At the same time, however, the victim, who was a radio announcer, received a great deal of help from his familiar who called himself "Uncle Ponto."

SYMPTOMS OF DEMONIZATION

The question of how demonization differs from mental illness is one that is very important. We have already noted that the hierarchial authorities of the Roman Church do not authorize exorcisms at the present time unless the candidate for exorcism has been pronounced psychologically normal by competent examiners. Martin tells of a young boy who was treated for epilepsy for a period of years and finally was sent to a hospital for treatment. After thorough examination he was declared nonepileptic and completely healthy, but when he returned home the "dreadful disturbances began all over again in a much more emphasized way." The attacks ceased only after the boy was exorcised by the same priest who exorcised Marianne K.¹⁴

In Kurt Koch's book *Occult Bondage and Deliverance*, the Christian psychiatrist, Alfred Lechler, discusses the distinction between disease and the demonic at some length (pp. 133-190).

It is striking to note as one reads the literature on the subject how the same themes occur again and again whether the background is Chinese or American, whether the author believes in the supernatural or not. The symptoms remain the same. T. K. Oesterreich, for example, says that the typical distinguishing marks of possession remain constant through the ages. He writes,

The descriptions by the New Testament writers bear the stamp of truths even if they should prove to be partially or even in every case unhistorical. They are typical pictures of conditions correctly reproduced.¹⁵

CHANGE IN PERSONALITY

One of the symptoms that is regularly noted is that there is complete change in the personality of the possessed person. In the early stages of possession this may seem to be a normal change. A young man or young woman, for example, may at first manifest nothing more than juvenile rebellion against authority, which may be viewed by many as a part of maturation process.

The type of change that takes place varies greatly. Some may become ecstatic while others become morose and even suicidal. Between attacks the afflicted person may seem to be completely normal. Up to this point there is no special reason to suspect demonization.

Together with the change in personality there is often a pronounced change in facial expression. At one moment the eyes may be normal and the next a pleasant face will be replaced by a grimace that can only be described as diabolical. There may even be a rapid series of changes in appearance.

At the beginning, it seems, the invading spirit will usually, pretend to be only another side of the patient's personality, but eventually the spirit will begin to speak of the possessed person as a distinct individual. Many times the spirit, though he is using the voice of the patient, will speak of himself in the first person, to other people in the room in the second person, but will use the third person when speaking of the one possessed. Often the plural of the first person is used. Malachi Martin says that during an exorcism the spirit always makes a special effort to pretend to be the possessed person, but as this pretense begins to break down, the filth and violence increases, until finally, at what he calls the breakpoint, the spirit for the first time speaks of the possessed in the third person.

Unger believes that this use of the third person is one of the marks by which possession can be distinguished from insanity. He says that an insane person may believe that he is someone else, but in possession two personalities are clearly in evidence.¹⁶ This is not the case in cases of multiple personality. It seems that when one personality in such instances is replaced by another, the consciousness of the first personality is completely blocked out.

CHANGE IN VOICE

In very many cases of demon possession there is a remarkable change in the voice quality of the possessed person. This is a phenomenon that is repeatedly mentioned, perhaps because it is so obvious. Robert Peterson, who was a missionary in Borneo says that at the new year's ceremony Chinese priests actually pray for demons to enter their bodies, and when the priest enters into the possessed state his voice no longer comes from his throat but from his stomach.¹⁷ This may also be related to the flatulence which is mentioned by many

writers in connection with demonic seizures. Paterson also speaks of a possessed woman whose voice in the possessed state came from deep in her stomach,¹⁸ and he lists as a symptom of possession “a voice not apparently emanating from the vocal chords.”¹⁹ He says that even though he had often counseled mentally ill people, he had never heard this kind of speaking from any of them.²⁰

Kurt Koch tells of a young boy who displayed the symptoms of epilepsy but who spoke in a deep voice and said, “We are three.”²¹ He also quotes Oesterreich as saying that a voice may suddenly change from soprano to bass²² in a way that is beyond all explanation of medical science.²³ The German psychiatrist, Dr. Alfred Lechler, lists a “double voice” as one of the symptoms of possession.²⁴

It is, however, not only the pitch of the voice that is changed. Some observers speak of the unearthly quality of the voice that issues from the patient. Martin speaks of a “horrible voice,”²⁵ and several times he speaks of a voice or voices that make themselves heard in the exorcism room which seem to issue from nowhere in particular. In one place he describes the voice as mourning for an ineluctable sorrow.²⁶

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Coupled with this change in voice is a phenomenon that might be classified as speaking in tongues. The Roman Catholic Ritual of Exorcism lists as one of the peculiar symptoms of devil possession “when the subject speaks unknown languages with many words or understands unknown languages.”²⁷

That this actually happens seems to be borne out by the tape recordings made at Roman Catholic exorcisms, and it is a phenomenon often mentioned in the discussion of possession. We have noted that Marianne K., whose case is described by Malachi Martin, spoke in Hebrew, (she also spoke in Latin) and Robert Peterson speaks of a possessed woman in Borneo who was able to speak in Malay, even though she had never learned that language and was unable to speak it when she was normal.²⁸ Kurt Koch sees such speaking in tongues as evidence that there is a sharp distinction between insanity and possession. He writes,

A mental patient will never be able to speak in a voice or a language he has previously not learned. Yet this is exactly what has happened and still does happen in many cases of possession.²⁹

Something very similar is reported by Nevius who says that a Chinese Christian who had some experience with possessed people told him that people who cannot sing and those who are unable to compose poetry are able to do so with ease when in a state of possession.³⁰ We may be reminded here once more of what was said about Mohammed in the previous lecture.

This is something that we might keep in mind also in assessing charismatic speaking in tongues.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Another symptom that is met frequently is physical violence. The acts of violence may be performed by the possessed person, or they may be acts of violence suffered by the possessed. The phenomenon is seen in the Scriptural accounts of possession. It will be remembered that the possessed priest whose case is described in *Hostage to the Devil* was thrown backward from the altar. Many concrete examples of such violence are found in that book. For example, in the case of Marianne K., the neighbors heard sounds of violence from her apartment for four or five hours until they finally overcame their reluctance to become involved and called the police. When the police broke down the door, they were met by a stomach curdling stench and a freezing temperature even though it was the middle of summer. The room was in complete chaos and the girl was lying on her bed with her eyes open in a coma and with blood dripping out of her mouth. When the ambulance arrived she suddenly recovered and in a normal voice assured everyone that she was all right, explaining to the Police that she had fallen while fixing the curtains.³¹

This manifestation of physical violence is mentioned by practically all the writers who deal with the subject of possession.

SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH

Closely related to the physical violence that is characteristic of many cases of possession is the superhuman strength that is displayed by those possessed. The Gadarene demoniac seems to be a typical example of the sort of thing that is still met with today. A Roman Catholic exorcist is always accompanied by several strong men whose duty it is to hold the patient in order to keep him from doing violence to himself or to the exorcist. But often even strong men find it very difficult to control even a frail girl or a child. Such supernatural strength is listed in the Roman Ritual of Exorcism as one of the major indications of possession, and it is repeatedly mentioned in the literature. Kurt Koch, for example, says that it often takes three or four strong men to hold down a woman or even a child,³² and he tells of one case in which three adults were hardly able to hold down a ten year old boy.³³

A rather strange occurrence which does not indicate supernatural strength in the possessed but would seem to indicate a completely independent force involved is described in connection with one of the exorcisms treated in *Hostage to the Devil*. Four strong men were simply unable to lift the body of the patient from the floor to which he had fallen until he exorcist commanded the demon to cease pinning him to the ground.³⁴

OBCENE LANGUAGE AND MORAL DEPRAVITY

Another symptom of possession mentioned often and demonstrated in *Hostage to the Devil* is the obscene language employed by the subject. Many years ago I once asked a fellow pastor in the Missouri Synod who served as chaplain in a mental hospital whether he thought that there might be cases of demonic possession today. He told of a girl who appeared at times to be perfectly normal but whose eyes would suddenly without warning be filled with a look of indescribable hatred and from her lips would come a torrent of obscenity. He

said that she used all the dirty words he knew and many which he had never heard before; but, he said, I could tell that they were filthy even though I did not know what they meant.” He also said that he knew that she could not have learned all those words in her environment. Perhaps this is another case of knowledge of a foreign language. I know also that I do not recognize many of the evidently obscene words in Martin’s book. The depravity manifested here can only be described as pure, diabolic evil.

Joined with this obscene language one often finds that the life of the possessed becomes one of indescribable moral depravity.

OPEN HATRED OF CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS

Together with this immorality goes an open hatred against Christ and all sacred things. Luther says in the Large Catechism that the devil can be driven away by making the sign of the cross. The study of demon possession would seem to underscore Luther’s words. We have noted the reaction of Marianne K. when her brother hid a crucifix under her mattress. Both Protestant and Catholic writers note this aversion to all sacred things. Blasphemy against Christ and the Holy Trinity seems characteristic of demon possession. Nevins, for example, says,

Prayer or even the reading of the Bible or some Christian book, throws the patient into a paroxysm of opposition and rage; and persistence in these exercises is almost invariably followed by the return of the subject to the normal state.³⁵

In heathen countries, on the other hand, the demons often appear to be very religious and urge the people to worship their idols.

KNOWLEDGE OF SECRETS

A final mark of demonization is the knowledge of secret things. Possessed people often know when the pastor is coming or if he has entered the house even if they are in a different room. Such knowledge often leads to paroxysm of violence.

During exorcism the spirits often taunt the exorcist by reminding him of secret sins which he had committed many years before, and openly proclaiming those sins to the assistants of the exorcist.

IMMEDIATE CURE

One of the characteristics of possession that would be in harmony with the conclusion that a case has been correctly diagnosed as actual invasion of the personality of a human being by another personal being is found in the repeated observation that after a successful exorcism there is an immediate cure. All the abnormal and supernatural manifestations disappear many times after an open spoken announcement on the part of the demon or demons that they are leaving. While such a radical change in behavior might be reconciled with the concept of autosuggestion or hypnosis, yet when it is coupled with the symptoms on the basis of which the diagnosis of demonization is made, it surely points also to the correctness of the conclusion that devil possession is one of the facts of life.

POLTERGEIST PHENOMENA

Closely related to the demoniac possession of persons is the possession of places. Stories of haunted houses are common in America but even more common in Europe. I suppose that all of us are inclined to write off such stories as the pure products of an overactive imagination. While we surely ought to be on our guard against naive credulity, yet the conclusions of trained observers would seem to indicate that some of these accounts are based on actual occurrences that defy a natural explanation. Parapsychologists usually speak of such “hauntings” as “poltergeist phenomena.” A researcher in this field, who does not believe in the existence of spirits, nevertheless says,

The reality of this ghostly force is still controversial; but, to many of those engaged in parapsychological studies it is thoroughly documented, and its existence is beyond dispute.³⁶

The German word *polter* means to “cause noise by knocking things about.” A poltergeist, therefore is a ghost that knocks objects around in a noisy way. The phenomenon is aptly named. According to reports that occasionally appear in the newspapers and that have often been investigated, strange and unexplained events take place as a result of haunting by a poltergeist.

Unusual noises are heard for which there is no explanation. They are described as moanings, groanings, scratching, pounding, rapping, and even actual speech. Dishes rattle or even fly around the room. Books whose source is obscure fall or are thrown. Sometimes they fall slowly in apparent violation of the law of gravity, or they fly in a curved pattern that cannot be accounted for by any of the laws of motion. When the rocks are picked up, they are found to be either unnaturally hot or cold. Heavy furniture is moved without anyone being near it. Objects mysteriously appear or disappear. The temperature of a room may be mysteriously raised or lowered. Fires, for which there is no apparent cause, may be kindled, and sometimes floods of water appear from nowhere. Sometimes apparitions are seen which are identified as previous tenants in the house or castle, very often people who have been murdered or committed suicide. Strong odors often manifest themselves.

Many of those phenomena are associated with spiritism and devil possession. Martin, for example, says that in the presence of a possessed person

Objects fly about the room; wallpaper peels off the walls; furniture cracks; crockery breaks; there are strange rumblings, hisses, and other noises with no apparent source. Often the temperature in the room where the possessed happens to be will drop dramatically. “Even more often an acrid and distinctive stench accompanies the person.”³⁷

Even people who accept the supernatural find it difficult to believe that such things really happen and that they are caused by spirits, or, if they do suspect that they might be true, they may find it difficult in this materialistic age to admit to such secret doubts about the closed character of this universe of ours.

But the explanations for the cases that cannot be accounted for naturally, given by those who deny the spiritual origin of the phenomena, are even harder to believe. Because the unnatural occurrences often are associated with specific individuals, especially children, and because the strange happenings often cease when the person with whom they are associated is removed from the house, or are even transferred to his new residence, it is concluded that there is a mysterious force in the individual involved. Some scientists speak of "disassociation" as an explanation. According to this view, frustrations or resentments in the child become motivating forces that operate outside the child in a way that would seem to indicate that they have a separate existence.

To deal with the problem, sometimes spiritistic mediums are engaged to contact the poltergeist and persuade it to leave. Sometimes they appear to be successful. In heathen countries offerings and sacrifices made to the spirits sometimes seem to remove the annoyance. In Christian countries the houses are exorcised and the spirits are commanded to leave in Jesus' name. The Catholic Church has a special ritual for the exorcism of places. This too is said to bring an end to the "haunting" in many cases.

THE CAUSES OF DEVIL POSSESSION

Not much is said in the literature about the causes of devil possession. In a general way, of course, we must say that when Adam and Eve listened to the suggestions of Satan in the garden they opened the door to the influence of the devil in the lives of their descendents.

The dogmaticians also see a close connection between the ability of the devil to enlist men in the service of sin and what we today call devil possession. In fact, they view all unbelievers as being, in a sense, devil possessed. They have Biblical justification for this view. For that reason also the old Lutheran liturgy of baptism contained an exorcism which survives only in our question, "Do you renounce the devil with all his works and all his ways?" Our brethren in the LBK in Sweden, because of the widespread denial of the existence of the devil and original sin, reinstated the exorcism as a protest against that unbelief.

While it is difficult to pinpoint specific causes for demonization in its extraordinary form, it would seem that the consent of the possessed is somehow necessary. Some people, who become possessed, consciously permit and even invite the devil to make use of their physical and mental faculties. It is a rather common practice for witch doctors and heathen priests to invite demons to take over control of their minds and bodies.

Those who have made a study of demoniac possession often speak of the use of drugs as factor in the onset of the affliction. Experimentation with divination and spiritism are also often in the background. Even exorcism of others may contribute to the possession of the exorcist. The possessed parapsychologist in *Hostage to the Devil* seems to have started down this road by the practice of something that sounds very much like Transcendental Meditation.

It seems also that when the devil seeks to gain possession he makes all kinds of promises or threats to the intended victim. The persons approached may not be fully aware of the nature of the temptation, and yet, after exorcism they often admit that they knew that it was something evil. That at least tacit acceptance of the condition of possession is necessary is asserted by Martin, who writes, "At every new step and during every moment of possession the consent of the victim is necessary, or possession cannot be successful."³⁸ This at least in the case of Christians, agrees with the Scriptural injunction, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jn 4:7).

There is one feature in the onset of possession that I wish I had paid more attention to from the beginning. I do not know whether it is significant, but in a number of cases people who later appear to have been possessed had spirit playmates when they were children. Edgar Cayce's secretary, reports that in his childhood he played with fairies and elves.³⁹ This point is also made in the novel *The Exorcist*.

EXORCISM

In all cultures attempts are made to cure devil possession by means of exorcism. In heathen countries this is done by magic spells mid charms or by inflicting pain on the possessed person.⁴⁰ Something similar to this we meet in the apocryphal book of Tobit, where a smell of the burning liver and heart of a fish drives the demon away (Tob 6:16). Josephus tells of exorcisms which he had witnessed in which incantations were used that had supposedly been composed by Solomon (Antiq. VIII, 2).

In the Bible, exorcism is a rather simple process. The Savior and the apostles spoke short word of command to the demons and a cure immediately followed. It would surely be indicated by all that we know of the matter from Scripture that if exorcism is to be practiced at all, it ought to be still such a simple affair. The German expert on possession K. Oesterreich said that in certain areas of the foreign mission field, "Christians have the courage when faced with possessed persons, calmly to command in the name of Christ a evil spirit to depart, for it is a matter of course to them that the demon will then leave the unfortunate person."⁴¹ Nevius also records a number of instances in China in which possession was cured by prayer in the name of Jesus.

Most of the exorcisms which have come to the attention of the general public in our time have been performed by Roman Catholic priests. The case of exorcism described in the novel *The Exorcist* is based on an actual case in which a Roman priest exorcised a Lutheran boy. This is also the case in every one of the exorcisms described by Martin in *Hostage to the Devil*.

In times gone by, every Roman diocese had an official exorcist and this is still true today in most major dioceses according to Martin. Before any exorcism may be legitimately performed, however, the exorcist must have the consent of the bishop. Before such permission is given the subject must receive a thorough medical and psychiatric examination to establish the fact that neither physical nor mental illness is involved.

When permission is given and a place for the exorcism has been chosen, the room is prepared for the actual rite. It is recommended that all movable objects be removed from the room and that the windows be covered or boarded up. Only a bed or couch and a small table on which are placed a crucifix, candles, holy water, a prayer book, and a relic or picture of a saint are left. In many modern exorcisms a tape recorder is used to preserve a complete record of the session.

The exorcist is usually accompanied by an assisting priest and four laymen whose duty is to hold down the victim if he should become violent. Martin says that the assistants must be people who are able to endure foul and obscene language, blood, excrement, and urine, and that they must be prepared to have their darkest secrets screeched in public. These, he says, are routine happenings in exorcisms.⁴² They must also be persons of great stamina for a Roman exorcism is a long-drawn-out process, lasting for many hours, some times for several days. Often, too, the exorcism sessions are repeated over a period of weeks or months. One case recently reported in *Time Magazine*⁴³ was carried on for ten months. During the course of the exorcism forty-three tapes were made of the sessions.

The Roman Church has an official ritual of exorcism which need however not be followed strictly, since according to Roman doctrine, the rite is not a sacrament and therefore its efficacy does not depend on the exact repetition of the forms but depends rather on the faith of the exorcist. The exorcist says a mass before the exorcism begins. The "Litany of the Saints" is recited by the exorcist and his assistants, after which the spirit is summoned and commanded in the name of God to make himself known. Gospel selections are read and the exorcist lays his hands on the patient with a prayer for his recovery. The evil spirit is then directly addressed and special note is taken of words or phrases which cause the most violent reaction so that they may be repeated often to cause the demon as much distress as possible. The Athanasian creed is recited and psalms are read.

When the pretense of the spirit has been broken down, he is asked for his name and then finally he is commanded to leave and never return.

It will be evident immediately that a Roman exorcism bears little resemblance to the simple biblical accounts of the casting out of devils. While the biblical reports are a clear demonstration of the power of the name of Jesus, the Roman rite lays far greater stress on the power of the exorcist. It is true that the name of Jesus is considered to have great power but it is difficult to escape the impression that it appears to be used almost like a magical incantation, especially in view of the Roman doctrine that the efficacy of the rite depends upon the authorization of the church authorities and the faith of the exorcist.⁴⁴ One thing that is made clear by every one of Martin's cases is this that in the final analysis the ultimate success of the exorcism depends on the staying power of the exorcist. Martin says that there are six stages that are passed through in exorcism. The one immediately preceding the expulsion is called the "clash," which he says is a struggle of will between the priest and the demon to force the demon to give its name.⁴⁵ The relation between this approach to the Roman doctrine of salvation will be obvious.

One other great difference between biblical and Roman exorcism is indicated also by the title of Martin's book. The title "*Hostage to the Devil*" has reference to the Roman view that the priestly exorcist offers himself literally as a hostage to the devil in order to fight in behalf of the exorcisee the battle he cannot fight for himself. The Roman doctrine of the sacerdotal office is clearly mirrored in that conception.

Coupled with that sacerdotalism is the theme that recurs often in Roman exorcisms, namely, that in performing exorcisms a priest suffers physical or psychical damage. In the book *The Exorcist* the priest performing the exorcism dies. In one of Martin's cases, the priest himself becomes at least partially possessed. Such conceptions surely do not accord with the biblical doctrine that Christ has destroyed the power of the devil over his people.

That may not mean that a Christian cannot be possessed. That question we may never be able to decide this side of eternity. But we can rest assured that a Christian who fights this battle in the faith that Christ has set us free from the old evil foe will be victorious finally over every diabolic onslaught.

He can harm us none.
He's Judged; the deed is done,
One little word can fell him.

Endnotes: (Lecture IV)

1. Rudolf Bultmann, "A Reply to the Theses of J. Schniewind," in Hans Werner Bartsch, *Kergma and Myth*, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1961, p. 120.
2. David Farren, op. cit., p. 88.
3. Malachi Martin, *Hostage to the Devil*, New York, Reader's Digest Press, 1976 p.298.
4. Martin, op. cit., p.11.
5. Michelet, op. cit. p.171.
6. Baroja, op. cit., p.138.
7. Martin, op. cit., p.11.
8. John B. Nevius, *Demon Possession*, Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1968, p. 9.

10. Martin, op. cit., p. 24.
11. Ibid., p.58.
12. Ibid., p. 59.
13. Ibid., p. 62.
14. Ibid., p. 246.
15. Ibid., p. 35.
16. Unger, *Demon Possession*, p. 103.
17. R. Peterson, *Are Demons for Real*, Chicago, Moody Press, 1972, p. 16.
18. Ibid., p. 52f.
19. Ibid., p. 116.
20. Ibid. p. 117f.
21. Kurt Koch, *Occult Bondage*, pp. 8f.
22. Ibid., pp. 216f.
23. *Christian Counseling and Occultism*, p. 251.
24. Ibid., p. 256.
25. Op. cit., p. 241.
26. Ibid., p. 244.
27. Martin, op. cit., p. 460.
28. Op. cit., p. 117.
29. *Occult Bondage and Deliverance*, p. 58f.
30. Nevius, Op. cit., p. 58.
31. Martin, op. cit., pp. 55f.
32. *Christian Counseling*, p. 217.
33. Ibid., p. 251.
34. OP. cit., p. 305.
35. Nevius, op. cit., p. 194.
36. Raymond Byless, *The Enigma of the Poltergeist*, West Nyack, New York, 1967, p. VI.
37. Martin, op. cit., p. 10.
38. Ibid., p. 436.
39. Carter, op. cit., p. 73.

Nevius, op. cit., p. 54.

Kurt Koch, *Christian counseling*, p. 250.

Op. cit., p. 12.

Op, cit., p. 16.

Time, Sept. 1976 (108,10) p. 68.

Martin, op, cit., p. 459

Ibid., p. 21.

THE OCCULT

Lecture V: SATANISM

The final stage in involvement with the occult is Satanism, the actual overt worship of the devil. What may have begun as curiosity about the reliability of astrological predictions may easily end in actually falling down before Satan to worship him.

THE PREVALENCE OF SATANISM IN THE MODERN WORLD

Devil worship in spite of the publicity which it is receiving at the present time, is not something new under the sun. Through the ages devil cults, such as the Himoko cult in Japan, have maintained themselves more or less openly in heathen countries. Baroja says that the devil has been worshipped and is still worshipped today in the Basque country of Spain.

But in our time Satanism has become more bold and visible. A name that keeps recurring in the literature on Satanism is that of Aleister Crowley, a depraved and debauched Englishman, who found delight in shocking his fellowmen, who called himself the wickedest man in he world and whose own mother called him the great beast whose coming was foretold in the book of Revelation.² His motto by which he lived was, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law." The account of his depravity is a boring recital of drug abuse, pornography, homosexuality, fornication, witchcraft, and ends with a miserable death in 1947. He founded a religion, which he called Crowleyanity, and which is today being revived. According to Wm. Peterson, Crowley has "done more to popularize Satanism in this century than any other man."³

Since most Satanism, however, is still carried on more or less in secret, it is impossible to gain a comprehensive picture of the prevalence or the nature of this type of worship. From time to time evidence of satanistic practices are uncovered by the police and reported in the newspapers. Perhaps the most celebrated case is the Manson warder of Sharon Tate. There seem to be indications that the people present in that house with Sharon Tate and murdered with her may have been engaged also in Satanistic practices. It is known that Manson claimed that he was an incarnation of the devil and openly asserted that all the women associated with him were witches.

Many other murders and the apparently ritual killing of countless animals are viewed by the police as evidence of devil worship. There seems, for example, to be no other explanation for the large number of dog bodies drained of all blood that have been found in Northern California.⁴ One visible manifestation of the prevalence of Satanistic practices is to be found in the fact that almost all of our larger cities have a Satanistic bookstore. It is almost impossible also to distinguish clearly between Satanism and witchcraft at times.

The sociologist Marcello Truzzi speaks of two types of Satanism found in America today, which he calls "solitary" and "group" Satanism. Concerning the first type he says that we know very little because it is almost always secret. Group Satanism he again divides into Gnostic Groups, which consider the devil an angel to be worshipped, sex clubs, which practice the black mass, narcotic groups such as the Manson family, and the Church of Satan. He says also that most of the literature on Satanism is unreliable, but I have the impression that at least one reason for his opinion lies in the fact that he would consider any report of the supernatural to be unreliable.

THE CHURCH OF SATAN

The Church of Satan is by far the most visible of all the Satanistic groups. It was founded in 1966 by Anton Szandor La Vey. The church is incorporated under the laws of California and has received tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. By 1969 La Vey was claiming 7,000 contributing members. Wm. Peterson's book, *Those Curious New Cults*, which was copyrighted in 1972, reported that the church had 10,000 adherents. The individual congregations are called "grottos," and in 1969 Tiryakian reported that La Vey expected to have grottos in every state by 1971.

La Vey calls himself the high priest of Satanism and has received a great deal of free publicity both from the press and the television networks. He played the part of the devil in the film *Rosemary's Baby*. He has written a number of books, the best-known of which is *The Satanic Bible*, which reportedly outsells the Holy Bible in some bookstores. Hundreds of thousands of copies have been sold, and last summer the tenth printing was being offered for sale by booksellers.

Edward J. Moody investigated the Church of Satan by participating in its worship services for two years. He found that many of the members exhibited pathological behavior, homosexuality, sadism, masochism, and transvestism. He says that all novices who applied for membership demonstrated a high level of anxiety in their lives and that 85 percent came from broken homes. Almost all of them had experienced failure in love, business, or social relationships and had tried other forms of the occult such as astrology, the Tarot or spiritualism, before turning to Satanism.⁵ Those scientific findings are surely of some significance also for the church.

Strangely enough, La Vey denies the objective existence of Satan, and holds that the Christian churches have been able to maintain their existence only by pretending that Satan exists. Yet he holds that man need some kind of ritual to satisfy natural urge to worship; but at the same time he maintains that the only honest form of worship is that which admits that the object of worship is a myth.

One would suppose that such a program would be self-defeating, but C. S. Lewis said something to the effect that one of the most effective lies of the devil is to convince men that he does not exist. We might say of La Vey's brand of Satanism what W. A. Hooten said of evolution, namely, that it frees men from religious inhibitions and fears which make them socially tolerable. And therein lies much of its appeal for sinful men. La Vey openly champions the crassest kind of self-indulgence by assuring man that God, who is only, a mythological being, does not care what they do and the devil as a personal being does not exist. At the same time he holds that both God and Satan exist in the sense that they are names that we use to denote naturalistic forces in the universe.

La Vey summarizes the principle teachings of his church in the so-called "Nine Satanic Statements," namely

1. Satan represents indulgence, instead of abstinence!
2. Satan represents vital existence, instead of spiritual pipe dreams!
3. Satan represents undefiled wisdom, instead of hypocritical self-deceit!
4. Satan represents kindness to those who deserve it, instead of love wasted on ingrates!
5. Satan represents vengeance, instead of turning the other cheek!
6. Satan represents responsibility to the responsible, instead of concern for psychic vampires.
7. Satan represents man as just another animal, sometimes better, more often worse than those who walk on all fours, who, because of his "divine spiritual and intellectual development," has become the most vicious animal of all!
8. Satan represents all the so-called sins, as they all lead to physical, mental, or emotional gratification!
9. Satan has been the best friend the church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years!

La Vey delights in blaspheming the God of the Bible and ridiculing the teachings of Christianity. I debated with myself whether one ought even to repeat the diabolical blasphemies that are found in the *Satanic Bible*, but perhaps you ought to hear a few of his blasphemies to see the depth of moral depravity that he represents and also the moral decay of a society that accords respectability to such men. He speaks of the "watery blood of your impotent mad redeemer," "the worm-eaten skull" of Jehovah, and says that the crucifix

symbolizes “pallid incompetence hanging on a tree.” One is reminded of the blasphemies of demoniacs, and it may be that La Vey is a person who might be called “totally possessed, in whom none of the symptoms of violence usually associated with possession are found because there is no part of his personality still struggling against the devil’s will.

His moral teachings are, for the most part, an unimaginative but blasphemous reversal of Christian principles. He asks, “Why should I not hate mine enemies?” and “Is it natural for enemies to do good unto each other?” “Love your enemies and do good to them that hate and use you — is this not the despicable philosophy of the spaniel that rolls upon its back when kicked?” He answered his own questions by saying, “Hate your enemies with a whole heart, and if a man smite you on one cheek, SMASH him on the other!... He who turns the other cheek is a cowardly dog!” The *Satanic Bible* has its own set of beatitudes, one which reads, “Blessed are those who believe in what is best for them, for never shall their minds be terrorized — Cursed are the ‘lambs of God,’ for they shall be bled whiter than snow.”

La Vey advocates complete devotion to the gratification of the flesh. The virtues of Satanism, according to him, are the seven deadly sins of the church. Envy and greed, for example, are the motivating forces of ambition, without which very little could be accomplished. Lust is necessary to insure the propagation of the human race. With such arguments he seeks to persuade men that what the church has called sin is really good. Satanism, he says, “represents a form of controlled selfishness. This does not mean that you never do anything for anyone also. If you do something to make someone for whom you care happy, his happiness will give you a sense of gratification.” Thus even altruism, for La Vey, is only another form of selfishness.

On the other hand, he ridicules magic if it is understood as a spiritual power. He opposes the use of drugs because they really interfere with self-gratification in the long run. He defends the movement against the charge that it encourages sex orgies and extra-marital affairs by saying that such activities are not recommended to those to whom they do not come naturally. He says that a Satanist would never perform a human sacrifice unless such a sacrifice would release the magician’s wrath and free the world of an obnoxious person who deserves to die. La Vey, for example, claims responsibility for the death of Lawyer Sam Brody, on whom he pronounced a curse because of his influence over Jayne who was a member of La Vey’s Church of Satan. He evidently did not intend to kill Jayne Mansfield who was decapitated in the accident that killed Brody.

Thus while La Vey ridicules magic if it is understood to be a spiritual force, he nevertheless believes in magic as the employment of natural forces to obtain what is unavailable to you by normally accepted methods. Half of the *Satanic Bible* is devoted to instruction in the performance of magic and the incantations and spells that are used. La Vey believes that when a group of people together will a certain thing to happen, then, if the magic is properly worked, the desired result will come to pass. The invocation to Satan which is spoken at the beginning of the magic ritual is, according to him, only intended to elevate the emotional pitch of those participating in the ritual, since magic is essentially the release of emotions that act as independent forces against or in behalf of the objects toward which they are directed.

THE BLACK MASS

Associated with Satanism through the ages is the so-called “black mass.” Because the ritual of the black mass was in times past performed in secret, the origin of the custom is not clearly known, but it can be traced back to the middle of the 17th century in France. In the 18th century it was practiced in England, and has become part and parcel of modern Satanism in America.

The ritual of the black mass is too vile to be described in detail. The altar at a black mass is the naked body of a woman. The chalice is filled with wine which is mixed with the blood of a cat or some other animal or person and sometimes also with the urine of a prostitute. The wafer is often made of bread heavily laced with drugs. The crucifix is displayed over the altar upside down. If possible, a defrocked priest officiates at the mass. The Scriptures are read backwards. In fact, everything conceivable is done to parody and ridicule the Lord’s Supper.

The black mass usually ends up in a sexual orgy. The mass is used to break down whatever inhibitions the participants may have to the most depraved and unnatural sexual perversions. Wm. Peterson quotes an occultist as saying that “the wife swapping clubs that are springing up in middle class suburban neighborhoods across the country are increasingly being converted into Satanic covens.”⁶ When we realize that some of the members of our congregations have become involved in that sort of activity, we must surely recognize that Satanism is not something so far removed from us as to constitute no danger to our people, who ought to be warned to resist the beginnings.

A Protestant evangelist, who has preached in the Milwaukee area, has told of his own involvement in Satanism as a high priest of the cult.⁷ For him involvement began with the smoking of marijuana and a desire to be accepted by a group of young people he met at the university. His story would seem to indicate that we need not only warn our young people against the kind of teaching that they will meet in the secondary schools of our country but also against the kind of people with whom they might come into contact on the campus.

THE BIBLE AND DEVIL WORSHIP

Before we leave the subject of Satanism we ought to say at least a few words about the Bible and devil worship. If my memory serves me well, the only passage in Scripture that speaks of overt worship of the devil is the account of the temptation in the wilderness, where Jesus was tempted to fall down in worship before the devil.

But we ought not to forget the words of Paul, when he says, “The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils (demons) and not to God” (1 Co 10:20). Paul says earlier in the same letter that an idol is nothing in this world (1 Co 8:4) and the Bible often speaks of idols as lying vanities. Yet there is no reason why we say that Paul is employing figurative language when he says that the Gentiles offer sacrifice to devils, and perhaps Milton’s practice of giving the devils in *Paradise Lost* the names of false gods mentioned in the Old Testament is closer to the truth than we sometimes realize. In the various forms of the occult we may actually be seeing demons at work seeking worship for themselves. In heathen countries the demons of possessed persons often actually make a demand for worship and sacrifice price for the cessation of violence and suffering.

In that same vein, when Paul speaks of “seducing spirits” and “doctrines of devil” (1 Ti 4:1) may we not assume that the false doctrines that plague the church are actually “inspired” by evil spirits intent upon leading God’s people away from the truth? As we have seen earlier, there is some evidence that Mohammedanism is such a demonic religion. We might also ask whether it is necessary for us to assume that the angel Moroni in Mormonism is a pure product of Joseph Smith’s imagination. In that connection some light may be cast on what Paul says here by a story told by Andrija Puharich in his book on Uri Geller. Puharich says that in 1951 he had a meeting with a Dr. Vinod from India. Vinod went into a trance in which he spoke in a deep sonorous voice in perfect English, although normally he spoke with an accent in a high-pitched soft voice. Among other things, Puharich quotes Vinod as saying,

Remember, all this is a real guidance from God. God is nobody else than we together, the Nine Principles of God. There is no God other than what we are together. And just for once in your lifetime believe this to be the truth. If God ever spoke, if God ever made an instrument of a human being — it is now that he has made it; and look upon this as the most precious moment in your lives. These are God’s words.⁸

Puharich was then told by the voice that came out of Vinod’s mouth that if mankind was to be saved it would take the cooperative efforts of man and the “nine principles of God” which were revealing themselves to him through Vinod. The great lie of the devil is again clearly discernable.

While Satanism shocks us we ought to remember that the occult in all its ramifications is not the most dangerous deception of the devil. Spiritism, divination, magic, witchcraft, possession are only spectacular examples of something far more subtle and far more dangerous that goes on every day all around us. It is still true, as St. Paul reminds us, that the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe (2 Co 5:4) and that those who oppose the pure doctrine have fallen into the snare of the devil who takes them captive at his will (2 Ti 2:26). The daily sins to which the devil constantly tempts men and the false doctrines by which he leads them astray, entirely apart from all occult manifestations these lead far greater numbers to destruction than real or imagined supernatural occurrences.

Our strongest weapon against all the wiles of the devil is the Word of God in which God has revealed to us all we need to know about the secret things of the supernatural world. Children of God who know that they have a God who loves them and who governs the world in such a way that all things, even the sorrows and the tragedies of life, work together for good for those who love God, will not need the doubtful kind of assurance about the future that can be offered by astrologers and diviners of every sort, even if they may be right in 75 per cent of their predictions. Children of God who have learned to pray in childlike faith, “Thy will be done,” will not seek to frustrate that will by charms and incantations. Those who know that in his Word God has revealed all that we need for our instruction, hope, and comfort and that he has in that same Word told us all that we need to know of that “Undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns,” will not seek unto “wizards that peep and that mutter” in spiritistic trance. Those who have learned to believe that the promises of forgiveness and salvation are universal and sure will not need the assurance to be found in human experience, even in such spectacular phenomena as speaking in tongues and healing miracles, especially when they know that these supernatural signs of the Holy Spirit’s presence can be mimicked and have been mimicked by the devil.

Our best defense against the modern explosion of the occult is therefore not more knowledge of the occult on our part or on the part of those whom we teach, even though we as shepherds of God’s people ought not to be ignorant of the devices of the devil. Neither is it enough to tell our people that involvement in the occult, depending on where we draw the line in our definition, either is a clear violation of God’s commands or can very easily become that. Nor is our defense against the wiles of the devil to be found in this that we learn to “live close to Christ,” as *Christianity Today* said in an editorial a few months ago,⁹ for even occult involvement is seen by some as coming closer to Christ.

As in our dealing with every type of human depravity, the best weapon is the gospel of God’s redeeming love in Christ who has come to destroy all the works of the devil and whose death and resurrection has torn the veil before the holy of holies so that we now have a clear view into the heart of that hidden God who revealed himself to Moses as the God who forgives sin and the God who punishes sin and has found a way to do both in one and the same act on Calvary’s holy mountain. Those who have come to know that mystery, which was hidden and kept secret since the world began as Paul says (Ro 16:25), will be able to curb that sinful curiosity that forgets that “the secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever” (Dt 29:29).

THE CHRISTIAN (PASTOR) AND THE OCCULT

If a Christian pastor is truly to serve as the shepherd of the flock that God has entrusted to him in the modern world, he can scarcely ignore completely the intense interest in the occult. We certainly ought to learn to recognize it in its various forms, so that we may be able to warn our people against occult involvement.

In dealing with the matter in general, however, we might want to keep in mind the words of Moses, “The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever” (Dt 29:29). The occult is really only another name for the secret things, the supernatural, of which only God has true knowledge. In speaking of these things we ought therefore once more remind ourselves that we can have true knowledge of the supernatural only from the revelation of God that we have in the inspired and inerrant Word of our God. This means, of course, that we will be careful not to be guided by our own notion of what is possible or impossible on the one hand. And on the other, that we will pay close attention to exactly what the Bible says.

CAN AN UNBELIEVER CAST OUT DEVILS?

There are many questions that are asked repeatedly to which the Bible does not give a direct answer and with which we ought to deal most carefully lest we give an answer based more on logical argument than on God’s Word. In pastoral care and concern we should also always be aware of the implications of such questions and the answers which we give to them. More is often involved than just satisfying someone’s curiosity. For example, I began the study of the occult with the notion that no unbeliever could ever cast out a devil, since Christ says in the Gospel that if Satan cast out Satan (Mt 12:26),¹⁰ his kingdom can not stand. When we then read of apparently successful exorcism performed by heathen sorcerers or by Roman Catholic exorcists operating in large measure, with prayers to the Virgin and to the saints, we seem to be forced to the conclusion that apparently competent witnesses have been deceived or that they are practicing deception.

But it may also be that we have not been alert enough to the exact wording of the biblical statement concerning the casting out of devils. For us, who have fought a great battle in the past decades for the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the exact wording of Scripture ought to be important and significant. It should be noted that the Bible never speaks of exorcism as being an exercise by which *Satan* is cast out. There is also no passage dealing with exorcism which speaks of *the devils* being cast out. When the Bible speaks of the casting out of Satan this is always a reference to something far greater than exorcism. Jesus cast out or cast down the devil or Satan by his death and resurrection, which freed us finally from all the power of the devil, and the exorcism miracles in the Gospel serve their intended purpose when they point us to the victory over Satan at the cross and the open tomb.

The AV version confuses the issue by using the word “devil” where the original has the word “demon.” The so-called “devils” who are cast out are always described as “spirits”, “unclean spirits” or “demons.” In the light of that usage it may not be pedantic to point out that Jesus did not say, “If Satan cast out demons, his kingdom can not stand.” We might therefore ask whether it is inconceivable that the devil, who is portrayed in the Bible as the father of lies and as the ruler of the evil angels or demons, does sometimes order his inferiors to obey an exorcist if it suits his evil purpose to do so.

After all, the Bible does tell us that when the Antichrist is revealed his coming will be “according to the working of Satan” with all kinds of “miracles and signs and lying wonders” (2 Th 2:9). Are we to understand the “lying wonders” of the Roman church to be lies in the sense that they do not really take place but are pure invention? Or are they ever truly supernatural occurrences that come to pass through the power of Satan in the service of the great lie of salvation by works, which he introduced into the world when he persuaded Eve that her happiness did not consist in what God had done for her but in what she could do for herself? And if the miracles of the Roman Church are done by the power of Satan and serve the purposes of Satan, would Satan be casting out Satan in a Roman exorcism if he ordered one of his own to leave a body in which it had taken up residence?

What is said about Roman exorcism could also be said about exorcisms that are performed by heathen priests or Spiritistic mediums or magicians whether they be Jews or Gentiles. Jesus seems to imply in his remarks to his enemies in Matthew chapter 12 that Jewish exorcists were able to cast out demons. Are we to assume that these men were servants of God who used the power of his Word to control evil spirits? Josephus says that they used incantations invented by Solomon, which we can hardly understand to be part of God’s revelation. If the devil can through such apparent miracles attract men away from God’s revelation, it would only be another way of manifesting his diabolical cleverness, about which the Bible leaves us in no doubt.

On the other hand, we also know that Catholic exorcists together with the names of the saints also use the name of Jesus and side by side with their prayers to Mary, they also address prayers to the Triune God. We know that the Word of God is effective even when used by wicked men. The name of Jesus and the biblical doctrine, which is stressed in the Ritual of Exorcism, that Christ has come to destroy the power of the devil and has actually destroyed it by his death and resurrection are surely terrifying to the devil even when they are proclaimed by men who deny other basic truths of Christianity. Could there therefore be exorcisms in Jesus’ name? Luther did not believe this was the case. In his *Tischreden* he is quoted as saying that the Roman exorcists were charmers or sorcerers and that the devil left the possessed when exorcised by them in order to bring the people into greater bondage.¹

All of this illustrates once more how careful we must be in evaluating the occult and in making statements concerning the subject.

CAN MIRACLES EVER BE DONE IN SUPPORT OF FALSE DOCTRINE?

After the first lecture in this series I was asked whether it is correct to say that God will never permit any miracle to be performed to support false doctrine. If we mean by “miracle” any supernatural event that defies explanation on the basis of purely natural causes, without reference to the power behind the “miracle,” I would doubt very much if such an axiom can be supported by Scripture. Can we say beyond question that of the magicians of Pharaoh were nothing but trickery? Or is it possible that we are here dealing with spiritistic apports? When Moses in Deuteronomy 13 spoke of signs and wonders performed by false prophets, must we assume that these miracles are pure fraud and that nothing supernatural is involved? And we might ask again, when Paul spoke of the miracles, the signs and the lying wonders of Antichrist, must we assume that these, too, are the products of pure deception and involve nothing more than the lies with which the servants of Satan deceive those whom they seek to win to their false doctrine?

Such questions are also very relevant when we deal with the charismatic movement. Can we really say beyond question, as we are often tempted to say, that tongues and healings are always nothing more than autosuggestion? Can we really say beyond question that the Holy Ghost never gives men the gift of tongues or of healing today? Or can we say without question, the way we say that Jesus is our Savior, that the devil could not mimic the Pentecostal miracles of the early church?

Thank God, we do not need to answer those questions. “The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever.” What this means, of course, is that the revelation of God, as we have it in the Scriptures, must be and remain the only norm by which all occult or supernatural events must be judged. Instead of saying that God would never permit a miracle to be performed by a false teacher in support of false doctrine, we ought to say that any miracle, real or imagined, that is performed in support of false doctrine is not from God. In other words, it is not a divine miracle but Satanic witchcraft. When we are told, for example, that the world’s leading spokesman for Pentecostalism, David du Plessis, teaches that Luther was wrong and the Roman Church right on the doctrine of justification,¹² we ought no longer to be surprised if the miracles and signs and lying wonders that support Anti-Christ are also found in Pentecostalism.

CAN A CHRISTIAN BE POSSESSED

Another subject that is often debated is the question of whether the devil is able to possess the body and mind of a Christian. Our dogmaticians make a sharp distinction between *bodily possession* and *spiritual possession*. Some modern writers make a similar distinction when they speak of demonic obsession and demoniac possession.

While the dogmaticians are agreed that spiritual possession is impossible in the case of a Christian, they are not unanimous in the opinion that a Christian cannot be possessed in a bodily way. You know better than I what Prof. Meyer’s opinion was on that question. In his notes, however, he quotes Quenstedt, who says that the subject of possession is not only the unbeliever but also occasionally a pious man, and that in his secret counsel God sometimes permits also upright men to become possessed.¹³ Hoenecke, on the other hand, seems to deny this possibility.¹⁴ Franz Pieper, however, agrees with Quenstedt and says, “Also children of God may suffer this affliction.”¹⁵ As evidence he cites the Gadarene demoniac. The biblical account, however, allows us to look upon the conversion of this demoniac as taking place after his deliverance. Quenstedt cites the case of the possessed child, of whose faith, however, the Bible says nothing at all. Dr. Walther in his *Pastorale* quotes, apparently with approval, the advice that in free moments the possessed may be given the Lord’s Supper and that the possessed should be assured that they are not accountable for the blasphemies uttered in the paroxysms of possession.¹⁶

My own personal opinion is that we can not answer this question dogmatically. The only biblical account which, in my judgment, would come close to giving an answer is that of the woman who had a “spirit of weakness” in Luke 13, of whom Jesus says that Satan had bound her for eighteen years. The expression “to have a spirit” is used of a clear case of possession earlier in Luke’s Gospel (4:33), but there the spirit is defined as “the spirit of an unclean demon.” The deaf and dumb spirit spoken of by Mark (9:17) is also later called “unclean spirit.” The description of the woman in Luke 13, does not enable us to say beyond question that she was demonized, although Jesus’ remark that she was a daughter of Abraham indicates that she was a believing child of God. While the matter therefore must remain an open question in dogmatics, I would be inclined to agree with Dr. Walther that, we can assume that also believers can be possessed, but that they should be comforted with the assurance that the Lord Jesus has taken away their sins and will not hold them accountable for obscenities and blasphemies which they have uttered involuntarily. On the other hand, they should be reminded of the promise of God that says, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

THE DEFEAT OF THE DEVIL BY CHRIST

We can be certain that in dealing with the occult, properly defined, we are dealing with the lies of Satan. If no direct spirit agency is involved and the claim to supernatural knowledge or power is a fraud, the purposes of the devil are still being served. The astrologer who operates with clever psychological tricks and whose pronouncements are pure deception is still doing the devil’s work in directing the attention of man away from God’s grace to material wealth and success and the source of happiness.

When, however, remarkable and unexplainable results are achieved through the various forms of divination, magic, witchcraft, and spiritism, we may be with justification suspect that we are dealing with the intrusion of evil spirits into our material world. Believing Christians ought to welcome with open arms the

efforts of men to demonstrate the fraudulence of the occult, if those efforts proceed from the premise that only that which is natural can truly exist. By the same token they ought to recognize the danger of dealing even in play or for curiosity's sake with the occult.

In fact, we may view all practitioners of the occult as being to some extent possessed by the devil, either consciously or unconsciously, either voluntarily or in an involuntary way. The spiritist medium who calls upon the spirits of the dead is actually inviting demons to come and speak through her. The practitioner of astral projection who visits places far away and can report in detail what he has seen is opening his mind to demonic forces that may eventually take over complete control. One of the demoniacs whose case is reported in *Hostage to the Devil* after his recovery said,

Of myself, I could not see things happening hundreds of miles away, read the future, see the past, peer with minute detail into people's minds. I could give the illusion of these only by being prompted by someone who could see from a great distance, could read the future, had a detailed knowledge of the past, could peer into people's minds.¹⁷

But above all else, in all our dealings with the occult we ought to keep in view the teaching of Scripture that Satan has been defeated by the Son of God who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil and that we, too, are enabled by Christ to defeat him with the blood of the lamb and the gospel we proclaim. If our study of the occult has prompted us to look more consistently to Christ as the source of our strength and to pray more devoutly "Let thy holy angels be with me that the old evil foe may have no power over me," it will not have been a waste of time.

Endnotes: (Lecture V)

1. Baroja, op. cit., pp. 229f; 256f.
 2. Peterson, *Those Curious New Cults*, p. 92.
 3. Ibid., p. 93.
 4. Gary Wilburn, *The Fortune Sellers*, Glendale, Calif., G/L Publications, 1972, p. 146.
 5. Tiryakian, op. cit., p. 224f.
 6. *Those Curious New Cults*, p. 98.
 7. Mike Warnke, *The Satan Seller*, Plainfield, New Jersey, Logos International, 1972.
 8. Puharich, op. cit., p. 254.
 9. "The False Angel of Light", *Christianity Today*, XX, 19 (June 18, 1976), p. 22.
 10. Cp. Mk 3:26 ("If Satan rise up against himself"); Lk 11:8 ("if Satan also be divided against himself")
 11. Quoted by Walther, *Pastoraltheologie*, St. Louis, Concordia, 1906, pp. 294f.
 12. *Christian News*, 9, 42 (10/25/76), p. 3.
 13. Middler Dogmatics Notes, p. 90.
 14. Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelische - Lutherische Dogmatik*, Milwaukee, Northwestern Publishing House, 1909, II, 296.
 15. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, St. Louis, Concordia, 1950, I, 509.
 16. Walther, op. cit., p. 295.
 17. Martin, op. cit., p. 403f.
-