

Two cases from a collection of Friedrich Balduin's responses
to a variety of issues of casuistry that came up in the
early 17th Century Lutheran Church
entitled,

*“Tractatus luculentus, posthumus, toti reipublicæ christianæ utilissimus: e
materiâ rarissime antehac enucleatâ, casibus nimirum conscientie:
summo studio elaboratus a Friderico Balduino et jam ad implendum
desiderium plurimorum post beatam authoris mortem in lucem editus”*

Cases II and III

Pages 715-721, 723-729

Translated by Joel Vogel

Case II

Pg. 715 - 721

Is it permissible for a Christian in good conscience to do works
of magic or to use the magic arts?

We are not speaking here of natural magic, which is from natural causes, and indeed not all are obvious, or miraculous works produced through hidden properties, from nothing, except from known causes. Sympathy is indeed among natural things, as between the magnet and the iron, that which draws to himself; it is also antipathia, as between certain men and cats: Thus medicine applied externally lifts only the particular sickness; the venom from a scorpion is extracted for applying to a scorpion blow; for a viper bite, an injection from the flesh of a viper.

There are many things in nature, which are not to be referred to as forbidden magic; therefore, it is permitted for them to be used in good conscience.

But we discuss such magic here, which is created by the virtue of God but is otherwise usurped by the devil; they are established by God, either to the inflicting or to the repulsing of any evil.

There are many today who preach about such magic, and they think that they are able to be used without sin. Among them are Cornelius Agrippa and Theophrastus Paracelsus: Agrippa wrote books about occult philosophy, four of which are about ceremonial magic, in which he names all operations of magic: Yet Wierus denies to be with that book of Agrippa, (whom he calls his teacher and host). *Libr.2.de prastig.damon:cap.5*. This is where he places the high point of that book. *Paracelsus* does not commend so much the most famous magicians, indeed not excepting those Egyptians from the time of Pharaoh, but also he writes that their skill is from God, and reluctantly considers that Scripture calls them with the more harsh word "Zauberer" *lib.15.de morb. invisb. p. 183*. With many sicknesses, incurable by natural medicine, he determines that they are able to be cured by magic. And though the reason is not unknown to the one cured, he is not denied. And even if the medicine and good thing is received from the devil, he still thinks that it is good. He shows to them, who will have been struck by the magic art, the way to be cured by magic. *Lib. de occul. Philos. p.289*.

At that place of the bell of Virgil, and the calling and repelling certain Hispanic devils, the mirror, and the magic in which all things are able to be seen, and the like he approves. *Lib.1. Philosophiaa sagacis cap. 4.* He makes six kinds of magic his own, among which he teaches one to make images and sculptures, of which are miraculous characters and figures, the heavens are imprinted by power, from which all things stand out, which the arranged instruments make out of natural things. He teaches to make other images, similar to these, with which they are destined to be inflicted and suffer whatever the images are. He calls the third one “Cabalam”, of which he relates the plan and the way impossible things may be accomplished, from certain characters, statues, figures, and other wonderful words. Indeed he teaches to be able to grant the magic of Cabalistica, that he is able to hear a voice from beyond the sea, that anyone living in the west is able to speak with anyone living in the east, and etc.

Today students to this magic grant the title of the greatest to Paracelsus, who praise him greatly, splendidly, they honor with the title of the light of nature. (as *Andreas Libavius contra Crollium pag.55.* He reviews the sum of that magic.) To instruct with foul spirit, so that they may attend to the ministries, to invoke the storms, to move the crops, to remove the head from men, and again to impose, to present a magic meal in one moment, to fasten the horns, to drink from the sieve, to cause the dead from long ago to stand, from three thrown javelins or from boulders hurled from the catapults, anything you conceal to make not visible, in visions to see all the past, present and the future, all made things, and spoken things, the known scripts, to cure over great distances, to converse with someone, when he is in Persia and you are in Hispania, to read scripts from him in the moon, when he is a thousand mile away, and many other things which are of this kind, which are able to be done from the place at Libavium.

Today many proclaim these skills, as pious, good and useful for men. Paracelsus also has defended some arguments, and he ventures to be free from the charge of forbidden magic, the refutation of which you see at *Dn. D. Daniele Sennertum de Chymicorum cum Galenicis et Aristot. Consensuc.13.p.371.*

We count these all as forbidden magic, and we are certainly persuaded, that no one with good conscience in him to exercise, or to be able to use, either in convenience or in inconvenience otherwise to be done, which to defend the very name of Christ, the

merciful God, he will have wished to retain the faith and the unblemished conscience, he ought to abstain from these skills absolutely.

Which to our opinion we have infallible foundation. God in the law has hindered: Sorceress is not allowed to live Ex. 22:18. Do not turn to magicians nor seek spiritists, for you will be polluted by them Lev. 19:31 and 20:6. The soul who turns to magicians and spiritists and fornicates with them, I will set my face against them and cut him off from the middle of my people. Similarly you see Num. 23:23. Deut. 18:10.

The origin of the magic skills is from bad spirits, with the saying from Clement Peter *lib.4. He considers: they have taught them with certain natural skills to obey.* Foremost among men, the son of Cham Noa has been brought, he has taught his own son Mesraim such skill, which the tribes have called Zoroaster: *Plinius lib.30.nat.hist.cap.11 Berosus and many other Gentiles as also Augustinus lib.21.de Civit. Dei cap.14.* They have called the prime magicians. Because of this notorious origin, Christians must have nothing to do with these skills. Sorceries are referred to among works of the flesh, which exclude man from the kingdom of God *Galat.5.v.20.* which is called in Greek *Θαυμαστικά*, of which are voice and natural venom, and fortune-telling, or anything that denotes magic skill, as we showed before.

Pious ones abandon all the works of the devil in baptism, and there is no assembly of Christ with Belial *2 Cor.6,15.* Now it is certain that works of forbidden magic are from the devil: because they are neither from the power of nature, nor are they made from the special help of God: always; the invocation of the devil approaches, whether silent or expressed, to which symbols and externals are made use of for a confirmation or a sign, as words, characters, images, or a thing from nature in which there is no power wholly producing those effects, which magicians are accustomed to produce.

Paracelsus writes *lib.1.philos.sagacis cap.6.* The nature of their own power is set in the words, as in herbs and roots: He says the images and characters are pyxes, in which the magicians of the stars keep their strength. But these holy images and characters have the marks and seals of the devil. Paracelsus, however, still accepts remedies from the devil against serious sicknesses, thinking it blameless: He is not able to make it true piety: Indeed all the works of the devil are mistrusted, which is seen to be useful with greatness, yet especially it harms. And even if it always might be greatly useful, it is

nevertheless against trust in God to petition help from the enemy. Therefore it is the most just cause, that we ought not use or pursue the magic arts, because they are of the devil, the devil is the inventor of them, and they have their own effectiveness from the devil.

The magic from Ethnicis has also been condemned: *Plato lib.11.de legibus*. He decreed capital punishment on the priests and soothsayers (thus they are called magicians, with witness *Josepho lib.2. anitquit: Judaic.*) who have killed a man with sacrifices, bands, enchantments, or other fortune telling, which law he wrote, λο'γον η'ος νο'μον ωζα θαπμακε'ις. Although it is still referred to among the customs of the nations Lev. 20:23. Nevertheless, those who are more wise have noticed the abomination of these skills: Therefore, it is prohibited in the words of the twelve tablets, and it is referred to among the notorious skills: and from *Virgil.l.3.Georg: sag a mala vocatur noverca*.

Even the civil laws condemn the magic arts as being of the devil. Namely *l. from the counsel of the Senate concerning the law of the murder of Cornelia* the punishment is held, on those who will make bad sacrifices, for example the detestable sacrifices of the magicians, but not of the pagans, as Accursius has delivered into the globes, when the author of the law himself might be a pagan, and *l.ult. about criminals C. they are judged to be worth of death*, who practice the magic arts, which law Philo Judaus connects with the law of God, Exod. 22:18. *He backs away from magic and witchcraft, they do a thousand evils with the modes of condemned arts, and those which have been intercepted on that day, he commands to be punished with death: as he sanctifies l. as far as about criminals C. as to when he might have uncovered the magic, immediately he petitions to the public.*

Lastly he approves the multiple damnation, which is brought on through the magic lately. The magic of man is able to fascinate the spirit, as the true religion is denied, it is associated with false things, before any cause is credible, as it is written about Simon Magus Acts 8:9. Who led away the Gentiles of Samaria saying, *himself to be someone great, all gave him their attention, from the smallest to the greatest saying: This is the power of God, which is called great. In Greek it is ἐξιστάνων τὸ ἐ"θνος*, overthrowing the minds of, or bewitching the Gentiles. Thus Elymas is to be full of

deceit, as an imposter used pain and health, *to turn the proconsul from the faith Acts 13:8. Likewise Paul wrote in Galatians, who cast a spell on you, that you might not obey the truth Gal. 3:1.*

The magic of man still binds spirits in other such things, as either you grieve in a certain place, or to love against one's will, or are forced to back away from anyone, with bargains for amorous love potions they have returned many insane and furious ones, repeatedly the spouses persecute with hatred in turn; The judges are bewitched sometimes in this way, so that they may not be able to help in part, he is then permitted to have the unjust cause.

The magic sends lethal sicknesses to the body, and other; he harms the body, from which you see *Chrysostomum in speech about beauty and wife*. Magic commits many thefts. Removing milk, money, clothing and the like with the miraculous skills, about which it may be seen in *Augustinus lib.8.de civ. Deic.19*.

Magic robs the spouses of fertility, induces sterility. Bodinus writes *lib.2.damónio.cap6*. to have stood out before the African family, *qua solo aspectu vel laudatione homines enecabat, quod Solinus, Memphodous, Plinius, Gellius et Isidorus etiam confitentur*.

Magic binds the eyes of man, so that it is made to seem very wonderful, which nevertheless they are not: It mocks the senses of man with reason and makes truth out of falsehood. Because of the rigor of the divine law itself, which indeed does not allow the trickster to live, he is worthy of punishment. Magic brings so many inconveniences with it: He who exercises and uses this wickedness, he is completely an alien to the name Christian. The worshippers of the magic arts object. *Usefulness*, which they do not have. In this way they say that we are able to flee from the devil, to beat sicknesses, to avoid the enchantments and to be free from the many dangers.

But in general it is known, that we are not to make evil so that good may happen Ro. 3:8. Our help is from the Lord who made heaven and the earth. Ps. 121:2. The middle of the helps are not forbidden; The devil sometimes goes with his worshippers, so that he may do harm with his magic. Casting out the sickness with medicine which is prepared by God, who is willing to honor us with medicine, is not to adore the devil. Into that opinion Chrysostomus writes, *to be a martyr, which medicine to be used for the*

curing of sicknesses of the witches, they are not permitted to persuade him. Pleasure, which he thinks to have from the magic arts. Such are the tricksters, who are seen to make many incredible things, to swallow up the smooth hay of the wagon, to cut the rock, to drink water from the sieve, to accomplish the art of making sweet meats, to represent dead persons from long ago, and the like, with which they delight both in themselves and one another. They are celebrated by anyone with wondrous speed, but these things do not happen without the work of the devil.

But this is not free and is not worthy of the pleasures of praise, which either is prepared from the office of the devil, or at least seems to be prepared. The holy man renounces all the works of Satan, whether or not they usefulness or whole delightment. Therefore, whoever does such works, or is delighted with them, he is opposed to Christ and is a minister of Satan. *Indeed his is not with me, Christ said, he is opposed to me. Luke 11:23.*

They are the worst of all, he who think that he is an imitator of Christ by doing things of magic. Indeed the Jews are not so great, who blaspheme by giving Christ the credit for his own wonders of magic. About which thing it is said, *D. Lutherus in Schemhamphoras tom.8. Fen. Fol.109. seqq. German.* But also Augustinius writes about these same Gentiles, who have cast, himself to have seen and gathered some writings of Christ from Peter and Paul, in these writings are the sum total of the magic arts, from which skill Christ, while he lived, produced so many and so great miracles. Augustinius refutes such blasphemy in *libr.1.de consensu Evangelistarum cap.9.n.10.* Because without doubt to these, they affirm those books that he himself has read, they do not make such miracles, they such things are contained in those books, and because Paul is an acquaintance of Christ, because Paul was made a friend to him after Christ's ascension into the heavens: And because the wonders of Christ have been predicted now from some time ago by the prophets, and among the signs counted to the Messiah.

Therefore there is nothing from the magic arts which are able to be excused or to be softened in so far as to the kind. From which hence, those who fear God, not unjustly they abhor with the whole heart.

Case III

Pg. 723 - 729

Are certain acts to be counted as magic, which through certain words cure sicknesses, or are seen to make other miracles?

Among all the ceremonies of magicians and witches, nothing is usual with the words, from which also the magic incantations are called, because they are used with songs with which still they think that they are able to bring down the moon from the sky, as Canidia at Horat. It is glorified, *I am able to remove the moon from the sky with my voices*. And Virgil unites in magic arts herbs and not blameless words: And how old people have been granted power from incantations, from that Poet consists the verse: *The cold in the plains is broken by singing to the snake*. Some strive to confirm that power of incantation by divine oracle. It is written in Ps. 58:4 "These are like the venom of a snake, as a deaf asp, and his ears are stopped up, which will not clearly hear the voice of the one enchanting, and no matter how wise the enchanter is.

And it is the general opinion of many, among them is Plato in Cratylus, Naturally to be placing names on things, because they may have natural power working in nature, but not all, truly, from which gods speak.

Hence in Papatu many things are found, which they deem words of Hebrew, (Which has been used as the language of God in sermons by the Patriarchs.) Alleluia, Hosanna, Sabbath, Ephata, these are to be retained in ecclesiastical hymns and in the Gospel, because the natural power belongs to them, previously might have been transferred into the Latin tongue.

They think this also to be the reason, because the exorcists used certain conceived words, and especially in the name of Jesus, the demons are expelled, because the strength and effectiveness of beating the evil spirits belongs with these words and with the voice of Jesus alone.

And because of this, that the words give effectiveness, they think to make angelic greetings and prayers now three times, now five times, now fifty times, and they repeat them often, because they think that the power is in the recitation of these holy words for the health of souls.

Indeed the most ancient doctors grant certain natural power to the words to the beating of sicknesses. *Plinius lib.28.nat. hist.cap.2* He refers to Homer, where Ilyssus stopped the flowing of blood from a wound of a foeminae with song. He refers to Theophrastus, where Ischiadicus is cured with songs: From Cato, the song shining forth on the members of the auxiliary troop: From Cararon, songs to be useful for gout in the feet. *Trallianus lib.9.cap.4.et Aetius lib.8.cap.50*. They write of bones that were thrust into the throat having been ejected through incantations. Pliny from the opinion of Atalus tells, with the advancing of this voice, two times, to hinder the power of the scorpion so that he is not able to brandish his blow. *Theophrastus Prarcelsus lib.1.Phil. sagac.cap.6*. writes, to use the powers of nature itself, as in herbs and roots. *Augerius Ferrerius lib.2.method.cap.11*. He grants much to the treatment of sicknesses through words, to him, which ancient doctors may have approved by trial. However, he does not give the effect to the words, but to the agreement of the minds, both in the doctors and in the patients: Indeed great is the power of the confident mind, and with the conspiring doctors. If, however, the sick one distrusts, or ridicules the value of the remedy, or if he has bystanders, who lift up the faith, and personally think little of the remedy, predicting it to not have power, because of his persuasion he may have a fighting back of another mind.

But the words which are used in one occasion, are not the words used in another. Some are significant, while others are not significant, and some are clearly foreign, as it is said from Quintus Sirens, I inscribed in a certain way with voice Abracadabra, and I spread over the enclosed paper, and with suspenseful neck, to cure hemitritaleum.

Certain words are good, others are bad: Bad ones are certain prayers, with which demons are called in to help. As from *Horatio about Canidia*, and from *Ovidius about Medea*. There are certain good ones, such as the name Jehovah, Jesus, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the name of the virgin, the twelve apostles, triune king, and other saints, the five wounds, and the passion of Christ, the seven words of Christ on the cross, the title of the cross of Christ, Ave Maria, our Father, etc.

These and similar words are sometimes proclaimed over a sick person, some are inscribed on paper or papyrus and hung around the neck, other times they are inscribed

on bread and butter, and thus they are presented to the sick person for swallowing, especially for those suffering from the bite of a rabid dog.

Sometimes they announce these words with a clear voice, (and frequently), other times they murmur quietly. The Prophet stretches out his finger *Esaias cap.29..v.3.* where Jerusalem is spoken of for extreme affliction: *You will be humbled, and you will speak about the earth, and about the ground, your eloquence will be heard, and your voice will be like a soothsayer of the earth, and your speech will mutter about the ground.*

These are their arts, which through words either they cure sickness, or they dare to cause other miracles, the emptiness of which is now uncovered, so that it appears, and hence to be counted as magic with out merit.

Therefore, knowing the principle, because the words of the things are known, but the natural things do not have its own natural effect, thus also the words. Indeed they have nothing in common with the things, but the noise is so great, dividing the word from the air, or of the inscribed letter on paper. But whether they signify these or those things is only from the will of man. From which the speech of man is not natural, although it may be said to be natural. But this or that idiom is not natural to be spoke, but rather it is out of habit, otherwise. Thus it is natural with all men one and the same, and the word is one and the same with all. Nor is the variety of the languages discovered to be so great in the earth. Therefore God made the mind of man simple by nature, so that he might be able to learn as much as he pleases of skills, (As Aristotle has compared his cause with the tabula rasa, *to which nothing might be inscribed, however, all things are able to be inscribed.*) thus indeed he made all to be without speech, so that all might be able to learn.

If therefore the words from him and his nature signify nothing, how much less do they affect anything in him or his nature, and thus they have no power of healing. This is the quality of all the principals which alter the bodies. The magnitude of power is nothing. However, the words pertain to the magnitude.

There is nothing so great as the power of imagination, as the producing of some words from a doctor, and a sick one who listens carefully, any new quality is sunk into the body of the sick one. No other reason is able to be given, for why power is not from

certain words, yet with so great certainty and definitiveness, advancing, and diligently secured, that effect follows.

The imagination is certainly an immanent thing, which to outside in the body, it is unable to work a foreigner, clearly sick.

Therefore, that which in appearance pertains to unknown words, and there is nothing significant, and if they are valid, they are valid from a pact with a demon. Indeed the author and inventor of these words is unknown to us, from which all significant names of his mode are nothing to us, they signify somewhat. They have effectiveness, if God permits, not from natural means, but from great strength, or from a pact and agreement with the devil, which first has taken that teaching from him, as all of them, which afterwards they wonder at and draw from those teachings. The demon fascinates with his illusions, so that they think that they make it through the words, with which the authors are perfected.

Because if the sacred words of Scripture are summoned, still there is no miraculous effect produced with them. But rather they abuse them, which under the appearance of piety they may deceive more easily. In the end they summon him, in whom neither the sayings nor the writings are divine. For from the sacred literature it is sufficiently taught from Paul, 2 Tim. 3:6 where he makes no mention of that effectiveness, which in curing sicknesses they pretend to have.

Therefore with wonderful works through words or pronouncements or things brought forth from the neck, having been made to be read and heard, and they are of the deception of Satan. As in singing to break snakes, and it is said in regards to the words of incantation to stop us ears. Even Plinius tells with derision saying: *Indeed there are not few (they believe) who sing to the snakes themselves, and this one understands them, collecting the song of Marsorum*, (For in Psalm 58 is written about the charming of snakes, they are said from the opinion of the commoners, accordingly God cursed the arts of the enchanters, Deut. 18:10, Esa 47:12) *Even from the pact and agreement which they make with the devil, which for his own arrogance, and for his own worshippers he prescribed both words, and characters and certain rites, which by summoning, he persuaded his worshippers, through the middle of these to have produced that effect, which either he produced from natural causes or from the works of the devil himself.*

Hence we did not doubt them, who through clear words or even through characters cure sicknesses, or venture to effect other miracles, themselves unskilled to collude with the devil, and of the list of magicians and enchanterers, who the Lord in his word cursed to be approached.

However, they object, (So that they are seen to be pious) indeed to have cured the sicknesses through the words of Christ and the Apostles, to have expelled the devil in the name of Jesus and God, to have bound his strength to the proclaimed word, from which the Gospel is called the strength of God, Rom. 1, the law to kill, but the Gospel is said to make alive.

Indeed the true GOD does not impart the truth with words or the strength of the words alone, and the natural effectiveness, thus as the effect from the letters and syllables, and the like, it may depend on the pronunciation, but the word proclaimed, and in proclaimed miracles, it is that organ through which God is effective in us. And therefore also he does not stretch forth his effect to all (Which may be necessary to make others, if the strength and effectiveness adheres to those letters) but in those which will have faith.

The name of Jesus in which demons are expelled, and in which we are baptized does not consider those letters and syllables which we say and hear, but the author of salvation, who comes on earth, so that the works of the devil are destroyed, and that he receive us into the pact of God cleansed from sin.

Then as far as the other account is concerned, in which God worked though the word, and in which the men work, or they strive to work. The word of God establishes all things: Nothing by the word of man, which is permitted from God himself, is able to produce anything, not even the smallest thing. God has advanced us with health, he has even cured sicknesses through the word. He has not bound himself to certain words and definite syllables, but with expressed words of his own will and the like is used. The magicians truly use certain and definite words to produce their own works, which are not from God, nor agree with the will of God. God acts through the word with rational creatures, and in general words we are accustomed to and not to inanimate things, but them which are able to hear, to secure the sense of the words. The magicians truly address inanimate things with his words. They charge with the fire, that they may not

burn, with iron that they may not wound, they dare to provoke lightening and the seasons with words. Which certainly all have nothing in common with using the word of the Lord, therefore they are called into help in vain.

Therefore with words naturally producing that power or changing, they may not have the thing in itself, which effect is followed, if when he may touch, it rises from a certain ancestor with strength, this is either from God or from the devil.

It rises from God, with him who makes along with his (God's) will. They are prayed for from himself, with the pact of the Prophets and Apostles, with the invocation of divine names they have proclaimed miraculous works, with God working in them and through them.

Truly magicians with their own words, incantations and swearings do not call upon God, even if they may be used with accepted prayers from Scripture, because they do not beseech the will of God. Indeed they work to produce things, which little is tested from God. Also the rites and the works, characters and signs that they make use of, with which God is offended, blasphemed, and ridiculed.

Therefore rather he calls on the devil, also to these effects which they produce they are ascribed. Which on account of this cause, anyone with piety must abhor these arts.