

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 Himiko 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.¹

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 the 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 murder 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 as 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 top 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 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 per cent 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 men need some kind of ritual to satisfy a 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 men 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 answers 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 of 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 else. 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 Mansfield 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 in a sexual orgy. In fact, 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 in Satanism 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" (I Cor 10:20). Paul says earlier in the same letter that an idol is nothing in this world (I Cor 8:4) and the Bible often speaks of idols as lying vanities. Yet there is no reason why we should say that Paul is employing figurative language when he says that the Gentiles offer sacrifices 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 devils" (I Tm 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 Cor 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 Tim 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 traveller 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 best 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 (Rm 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 also 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 well 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 verbally inspired and inerrant Word of our God. This means, of course, that we will be careful not to be guided by our own notions 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 exorcisms 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 devil's being cast out. When the Bible speaks of the casting out of Satan this is always a reference to something far greater than any exorcism. Jesus cast out or cast down the devil or Satan by His death and resurrection, which free 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 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 they 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.¹¹

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 whether such an axiom can be supported by Scripture. Can we say beyond question that the "miracles" 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 dogmatists make a sharp distinction between "bodily possession" and "spiritual possession." Some modern writers make a similar distinction when they speak of demonic obsession and demonic possession.

While the dogmatists 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 an "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 men away from God's grace to material wealth and success as 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 not 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 which 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.

FOOTNOTES

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. Meddler 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.