

The Bible

Wicked Spirits

and Believers

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Introduction

One of the most often repeated statements among Christian leaders in 1972 was the declaration, "We are living in an occult explosion."

In 1957 the theology of Neo-Orthodoxy was evaluated with the following warning.

An even more distressing option haunts the neo-liberal formula. The encounter on which it relies may be equally serviceable for a resurgence of demonism ... And a philosophy of revelation which abandons the relevance of all objective evidences, and which excludes any test for truth, on the ground that special revelation is paradoxical and supraconceptual, cuts itself off in advance from any rational means of discriminating God from Satan, as well as of detecting Satan in the role of an Angel of Light, (1)

In 1969 an excellent evaluation of the theological scene in America was summarized in the harshest manner possible.

There are indeed many alternatives to the authoritative Biblical revelation and the internally consistent world-view which accompanies it. Unfortunately, the empirical evidence confirms the Biblical warning: those who repudiate the knowledge of God end by not understanding anything, and by subjecting themselves, in one way or another, to the power of darkness . . . modern man is no more immune than the ancient Hebrews to the Biblical principle that the alternatives to worshiping the true God is to worship idols - or demons. (2)

In a recent bibliography on the occult, compiled by a recognized Christian scholar, 42 volumes were listed. The purpose of the bibliography was to present books helpful for Christians. It is highly significant that of the 30 volumes which had publication dates - 19 were published in 1970 or later.

1. John F. Walvoord (ed.) Inspiration and Interpretation. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957. p. 268.
2. Harold O. J. Brown The Protest of a Troubled Protestant. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969 pp. 201,207.

Dr. Arnold Wilson, a Los Angeles psychiatrist doing research into occultism, has stated the upsurge in witchcraft has increased rapidly in the last three years.

In many cases, the persons interviewed said that their interest had been aroused by seeing the movie Rosemary's Baby. Anton La Vey, who played the role of the Devil in the movie, calls Rosemary's Baby the "Best paid commercial for Satanism since the Inquisition." The great outpouring of witchcraft and Satanism since their release indicates that this novel and later movie acted as a triggering mechanism for many potential adherents to the craft, showing them a fantasy world that they thought only existed in dreams, demonstrates the openness of thought now prevailing throughout American culture. (3)

The ending (of the movie) has the heroine accept to her bosom the offspring that was implanted within her by the Devil. The witch-leader, Castavet, cries out in triumph: "God is dead and Satan lives: the year is One, the first year of our Lord, Satan! The year is One, God is done!" (4)

Dr. Huston Smith, professor of philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has described a unusual seminar class which was recently held in that well known institution.

... I cannot recall the exact progression of topics, but it went something like this: Beginning with Asian philosophy, it moved on to meditation, then yoga, then Zen, then Tibet, then successively to the Bardo Thodol, tantra, the kundalini, the chakras, the I Ching, karate and aikido, the yang-yin, macrobiotic (brown rice) diet, Gurdjieff, Meher Baba, astrology, astral bodies, auras, UFO's, tarot cards, parapsychology, witchcraft, and magic. And underlying everything, of course, the psychedelic drugs. Nor were the students dallying with these subjects. They were on drugs; they were eating brown rice; they were meditating for hours on end; they were making their decisions by I Ching divination, which one student designated as the most important discovery of his life; they were constructing complicated electronic experiments to prove that their thoughts, via psychokinesis, could effect matter directly.

3. Arthur Lyons The Second Coming, Satanism in America» New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1970. pp. 198,199.
4. John P. Newport Demons, Demons, Demons. A Christian Guide Through the Murky Maze of the Occult. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1972. p. 17.

And they weren't plebians. Intellectually, they were aristocrats, with the highest average math scores in the land, Ivy League verbal scores, and two to three years of saturation in MIT science.(5)

In 1971, one of the most well known evangelical scholars in America on the subject of demonism, wrote a second volume as a serious warning to the church.

The scope and power of modern occultism staggers the imagination. Millions are unwittingly oppressed and enslaved by the occult. No wonder mental and emotional problems increase at an alarming rate. Unless the reality and purpose of Satan and demons are acknowledged, some of these problems will not be solved ... Even in evangelical circles, where Satan and demons are recognized as existing, an atmosphere of make-believe prevails with regard to the extensive influence these malevolent spirits exercise against the human race. Though tacitly, the unscriptural idea is widely entertained that demonism presents no serious threat to the Christian today. The general truth that Christ defeated Satan and demon powers at Calvary is popularly presented (Colossians 1:13), but the believer's need for constant reliance upon God and use of spiritual armor is left unexplained. Consequently, the intensity of spiritual conflict and the disastrous results of defeat are little recognized, and many believers fall victim to Satan because they are not aware of his presence! Casting out demons, binding the forces of evil, and loosing victims from Satanic enslavement are continuing needs, not activities relegated to the ministry of Christ and the early Church. (6)

5. Vernon C. Ground. "Understanding the Neo-Mystical Movement." Christian Heritage Magazine, January, 1973. (Quoted by Andrew M. Greeley, Come, Blow Your Mind With Me. Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1971. pp. 27, 28)
6. Merrill F. Unger Demons in the World Today. A Study of Occultism in the Light of God's Word. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1971. pp. 18,188.

I. The Biblical Warning.

The Scriptures are replete with warnings concerning the involvement with the enemy. These warnings fall roughly into two categories. The one category constantly reminds us that through the Fall of Man, the nature of sin and its effects, man is already deeply entangled with the enemy. The second category warns us not to actively or passively cooperate with the Devil and his kingdom in any way. In both of these areas we are told to resist the Devil.

A. The Nature and Effects of the Fall of Man.

It is vitally important to recognize the clear Biblical teaching that we are fallen people. In the Garden of Eden, Eve was led into deception by Satan. She responded to his lies and insinuations (II Cor. 11:3; I Timothy 2:14). Her disobedience to God was an act of obeying Satan. Adam followed her in disobedience. By this most serious of all deeds the human race was alienated from God and made vulnerable to Satanic enslavement. The seriousness of the Fall is clearly demonstrated in the fact that it took the Crucifixion of the Son of God to break this Satanic hold and to redeem mankind. The Lord Jesus Christ described His death and suffering as related to " . . . The power of darkness" (Luke 22:53). (See also Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14,15; I Peter 3:22; I John 3:8; Revelation 12:11).

Through the Fall and the entrance of sin the human race became susceptible to the manipulation of the enemy. Satan has taken full advantage of his opportunity.

The Bible is very explicit in its description of Satanic control over the non-Christian. They are said to be related to the enemy as a son is related to his father and to be characterized by his demonic attributes (John 8:44; Matthew 13:38). The non-Christian is open to deception

(I Timothy 4:1; Rev. 12:9); his mind has been blinded (II Cor. 4:4); he lives according to the pattern prescribed by Satan (Ephesians 2:2,3); he is involved in the power of Satan (Acts 26:18); his conscience may be hardened demonically (I Timothy 4:2); he may be led into a form of religious fanaticism (I Timothy 4:1-3; I John 4:1-3) into immorality (Mark 1:23-27; 5:2); he is susceptible to demonic suggestion, manipulation (John 13:2); invasion (Matthew 4:24; 8:16, 28,32; 9:32); and even Satanic inhabitation (John 13:27)!

Even the body is vulnerable to Satanic attack. The Scriptures clearly distinguishes between ordinary sickness and the influence of demons (Matthew 4:24). Such physical disabilities as deafness (Mark 9:25), blindness (Matt. 12:22), inability to speak (Luke 11:14), and back trouble (Luke 13:11-16) are attributed to the work of the enemy.

Although the Christian has been given a new nature in his regeneration (II Peter 1:4; II Cor. 5:17) it is shockingly true that he still has the old nature (Mark 7:21-23; Romans 6:1-13,19; Galatians 5:16-21) which is so susceptible to the enemy that witchcraft is referred to as one of its manifestations. The believer's body is also vulnerable to Satanic attack (II Corinthians 12:7; Philippians 4:21; I Corinthians 15:50-54).

The believer who assumes the viewpoint that he is free from the effects of the Fall is on dangerous ground indeed! Even a most cursory reading of the Bible indicates that Christians can be made the object of demonic suggestion (I Chronicles 21:1); opposition (Zechariah 3:1,2); and temptation (I Thessalonians 3:5). They may be devoured (I Peter 5:8,9); deceived (James 1:22,26); hindered in service (I Thessalonians 2:13); ensnared (II Timothy 2:23,26); spoken through by the enemy (Matthew 16:15-23); used to defile a local church (I Corinthians 5:1-7); be physically hindered (II Corinthians 12:7-10);

and invaded by the enemy (Acts 5:1-11). (7)

The evident Biblical distinction between the Christian and the non-Christian is that the former has been delivered, through regeneration, from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13). The hold of Satan has been broken in his life. He can resist the Devil! This is why Peter asked Ananias " . . . Why hath Satan filled thine heart . . .? " (Acts 5:3)

B. The Nature and Effects of Sin.

The way whereby Satan was able to lay hold on the human race in the beginning was through the avenue of sin (II Cor. 11:3; I Timothy 2:14). The same is true today. The Bible is emphatic in insisting that the one who sins is thereby relating himself to the Devil (I John 3:8-10). The Apostle Paul lists a number of prevalent sins to which Christians are particularly vulnerable and inserts the warning "Neither give place (Opportunity, foot-hold) to the Devil" (Eph. 4:27). When we sin we do just that – give him a place in our lives!

While it is undoubtedly true that all sin opens the door for Satanic influence, some sins are listed in the Bible as having particular significance in this regard. Hypocrisy (Acts 5:1-11); an unforgiving attitude with its judgmental suspicion (II Cor. 2:1-11); inconsistency (I Timothy 3:7); and pride (I Timothy 3:6) are pointedly related to the enemy.

7. This is the position taken by the illustrious Heinrich A. W. Meyer in his eleven volume commentary on the New Testament Greek Text.

Peter recognizes the scheme of Ananias as the work of the devil, who as the liar from the beginning (John 8:44), and original enemy of the Holy Spirit and of the Messianic kingdom, had entered into the heart of Ananias (Comp, on John 13:27; Luke 22:3), and filled it with his presence. Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, Acts of the Apostles, p. 105).

The same interpretation is given by John P. Lange in the commentary Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scripture (Acts, pp. 86,87); and by R. C. H. Lenski in his Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles, p. 197.

The most serious sin of all is that of deliberately choosing to cooperate with the Devil. The act of seeking information, help, entertainment, protection or revenge from or by demonic forces is described in the Bible in the darkest terms possible with the pronouncement of appropriate judgment. (Exodus 20:1-5; 22:18,20; Lev. 20:6,27; Deut. 5:25,26; 13:1-11; 17:2-7; 18:9-14; 28:15-68; 29:16-29; I Cor. 10:14-22). The Scriptures remind us that King Saul died because of his disobedience to God. His sin of seeking information from the Witch of Endor is specifically mentioned (I Chron. 10:13,14).

Perhaps the most important passage of all is that found in the Decalogue (Exodus 20:1-5). There we are reminded that idolatry will cause a judgment which will continue to the following generations (Lev. 26:39; Isaiah 65:7; Jer. 16:11; Daniel 9:16; Amos 7:17). There is no greater idolatry than that of turning from God to the Devil! Idolatry can therefore be applied to all forms of occult involvement. These verses are not empty threats. When a person makes a bargain with the Devil, that bargain gives the enemy and his forces permission to work in the life and the ancestral line of their victim!

The pastoral counselor dealing with cases of occult involvement knows it can often be traced back to three or four generations.(8)

This may be one of the reasons young children are invaded by wicked spirits. The Bible refers to the invaded daughter of the Syrophenician woman as a "young daughter" (Mark 7:25). The account of the wicked spirit which the disciples could not cast out is stated to have been in the boy from the time he was a child (Mark 9:21). It is interesting to see that Origen (185-253), one of the early Church Fathers, writes of the presence of demons

8. Merrill F. Unger Demons in the World Today. A Study of Occultism in the Light of God's Word. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1971. pp. 192. (See Kurt E. Koch Christian Counseling and Occultism. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1965, pp. 262-264.)

in children and that the cause of this is to be referred to a reason that predates the birth of that individual.

This too, I think should next- be inquired into, viz., what are the reasons why a human soul is acted on at one time by good (spirits), and at another by bad: the grounds of which I suspect to be older than the bodily birth of the individual . . . And again, on the other hand, it is shown beyond a doubt, that some have been possessed by hostile spirits from the very beginning of their lives: i.e., some were born with an evil spirit; and others, according to the credible histories, have practiced divination from childhood. Others have been under the influence of the demon called Python, i.e., the ventriloquial spirit, from the commencement of their existence. (9)

Today every form of the occult is flourishing. Even Christians think little of playing with the ouija board, reading their horoscope, practicing extra sensory perception, muttering an incantation, cooperating in the act of levitation, attending a seance, going to a fortuneteller, interpreting their dreams from occult literature, dowsing for water, and joining a secret society. Such sins of idolatry not only bring the judgment of God but gives permission to the enemy to do his work of destruction. This work of destruction may continue in the ancestral line until some Christian will obey the Scriptures and aggressively do battle with the enemy. (10)

9. Origen, "Origen De Principiis" The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Buffalo: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1855. Vol IV, pp. 336,337.

10. Dr. Kurt E. Koch in his book Christian Counseling and Occultism gives many illustrations of the serious effects of occult involvement.

II. The Biblical Provision.

One of the reasons for the Incarnation and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ the Eternal Son of God – was to destroy the work of the Devil and to set His people free, (Hebrews 2:14,15; I John 3:8).

Jesus Christ came into the world as our Representative (Galatians 4:4-6) and triumphed over Satan in His Temptation (Matt. 4:1-11; Romans. 5:12-19). He defeated our enemy in His Crucifixion (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14,15; I John 3:8). In His Resurrection and Ascension our Savior was seated at the right hand, of God in victory over Satan (Eph. 1:19-23; 2:5,6; Heb. 1:13; I Peter 3:22).

This victory, which can be described in a few words, is acclaimed by the Biblical writers as of major importance. The Apostle Paul spoke of the defeat of Satan as a public exhibition and humiliation of all demonic forces.

And then, having drawn the sting of all the powers
ranged against us, He exposed them, shattered, empty
and defeated, in his final glorious triumphant act!
I Colossians 2:15 (Phillips)

Therefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He
led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.
Ephesians 4:8

The picture, in these verses, is that of a might} warrior who is returning from battle in victory. He has completely conquered his foes. He enters his capital city at the head of a triumphant procession. Chained to his chariot are the defeated enemies. They are publicly humiliated. In the procession are wagons filled with the spoils of his victory. His soldiers throw the tokens of their leader's conquest to the triumphant crowds lining the streets.

This defeat of Satan by the Lord Jesus Christ has been imputed to all those who have received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. It is overwhelming but true – all believers share in Christ's victory. The practical benefits of the atonement, in regard to all demonic forces, are part of the rights and privileges of all Christians.

This victory over Satan is an authority delegated to true believers. The early disciples recognized that the demons were subject to them in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 10:17). We are told to resist the Devil on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ (Eph. 6:16; I Peter 5:9). In approaching this whole matter of freedom from Satan we are instructed to deliberately choose to find our strength in the Lord and His provision (Eph. 6:10). In this regard it is interesting and instructive to see that not even Michael the archangel rebuked the enemy in his own strength and office but said "The Lord rebuke thee." (Jude 9).

Satan and all his demons are defeated. This truth is of paramount importance for the believer.

. III. The Biblical Exhortation.

The Christian has been brought into living union with Jesus Christ. One of the benefits of this most important relationship is that of victory over Satan and his demonic kingdom.

The Scriptures describe the believer as having died with Jesus Christ in His Crucifixion (Gal. 2:20; 6:14); and as participating in His Resurrection and Ascension (Eph. 2:5,6). When Jesus Christ died, arose and ascended He did so as our Representative (Gal. 4:4,5; Eph. 2:5,6; Col. 2:10-15). In these passages the most intimate reference is made of the relationship between those represented and the Lord Jesus Christ. We are said to have been "quickened together ... raised together . . . made to sit together with Jesus Christ" (Eph. 2:5,6).

It was the specific goal of the Apostle Paul to live so that he could experience the power and benefit of this work of Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:10). He prayed that the people of God would know the power provided through the Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension and the Day of Pentecost (Eph. 1:16-23; Col. 1:9-29). His ministerial endeavor was to bring believers to the knowledge of their position in Jesus Christ and the practical outworking of this in their daily lives (Romans 1:6-14; et al.).

Through the atonement and the experience of regeneration, the believer has been set free from all legal relationship with Satan. He no longer "belongs" to Satan (Eph. 2:1-4; Col. 1:13). Power has been made available to him so that he can be free in the area of daily practice and experience. This power, however, must be understood and appropriated by faith into his daily practice. The grace and deliverance of God can only come to us through the knowledge and the practice of the truth (John 8:32). The believer, though taken out

of the kingdom of darkness and delivered from Satan in salvation, may still be seriously hindered in his Christian experience if he does not know the meaning of Christ's victory, and does not, aggressively practice that victory.

The pattern for the believer's life is found in the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. When our Savior was tempted by the Devil, He resisted the enemy by refusing to accept his insinuations and temptations and by taking His stand on the truth (Matt. 4:1-11). This negative and positive character of His resistance of the enemy is important. Paul told the church at Corinth to refuse the temptation to exclude the repentant brother from their midst for in doing that they would be giving Satan the advantage (II Cor. 2:1-11). He counseled the believers at Ephesus not to give Satan a foothold in their lives (Eph. 4:27). The very connotation of the word "resist" is "to set in opposition", "to oppose" (I Peter 5:8). The instruction in the classic passage in Ephesians includes both of these facets. We are told to "stand against the wiles of the Devil", to "withstand", to "stand" and to "quench the fiery darts of the wicked." The positive emphasis is found in the protective armor (Eph. 6:10-17). Both of these would seem to be found in aggressive prayer (Eph. 6:18).

In the Garden of Eden Eve did not reject the insinuations and declarations of the enemy and she did not take her stand on the truth (Genesis 3:1-6).

To summarize the Biblical material we see that it is necessary for the believer to steadfastly and honestly reject, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the insinuations, accusations, and temptations of Satan, affirm the truthfulness of the Word of God, live in obedience and fellowship with God, maintain the armor provided by God against Satan, and in particular utilize

the Shield of Faith and the Sword of the Spirit whereby the representative of Jesus Christ is brought into the believer's life and made his own (1 Peter 5:8,9; Matt 4:1-11; Eph. 6:10-18). The Scriptures are emphatic that this is something that must be done, it must be practiced and not just talked about! Peter stated that the resisting of the enemy must be done with sobriety, vigilance and steadfastness (1 Peter 5:8,9).

The promise to the believer is that of freedom (James 4:7).

IV. The Biblical Counsel

The Scripture is exceedingly clear that Jesus Christ has defeated the enemy and that the believer is free from Satan in his salvation relationship and may be free from him in his daily practice. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to defeat the enemy (I John 3:8); He said "It is finished" on the Cross (John 19:30); in the Great Commission He said that all power in heaven and earth was His (Matt. 28:18); and He gave to His Disciples power over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19). When the Christian understands and practices these truths in fellowship with God – he will be free!

However, what if a person doesn't know these truths – and therefore cannot practice them? Will he be free? No, he will not! The grace of God, the Fruit of the Spirit and freedom is only promised on the basis of the experiential practice of the truth by decisions of faith and love (John 8:32; Romans 6:11-14; Galatians 5:6; Hebrews 11:6).

Jesus Christ took our old sinful nature to the Cross and dealt with it there. This is so forceful in the Bible that we are described as being "dead to sin" (Romans 6:6-8). However, will this victory over sin become the daily experience of the honest and serious Christian – who does not know these truths and who does not know how to put them into practice? The Apostle Paul states "No." We must know the truth (Romans 6:16,17) and we must honestly and consistently put it into daily practice (Romans 6:11-13,16-19).

This principle applies in all the areas of Christian practice. Jesus Christ defeated the world (John 16:33; Gal. 6:14.) and made it possible for the believer to live free from the world system (II Cor. 6:14-18) with great personal happiness (John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; Romans 14:17; 15:13; Gal. 5:22,23; I John 1:4).

The Christian, however, must know this – must renounce the world – and daily practice personal separation in a most aggressive manner – or he will not be able to live a separated life for God's glory.

The Biblical principle of the necessity of knowledge and practice, is pointedly emphasized by the Lord Jesus Christ in His conversation with the woman of Samaria. He said to her, ". . .If thou knewest . . . thou wouldst have asked" (John 4:10). However, she did not know and therefore did not have the living water.

When a Christian is not taught about the enemy he is by that token made much more vulnerable to Satanic attack. No amount of piety, sincerity, prayer, sacrifice, surrender, or Christian service can take its place. The plan of God is that the Christian be taught by the Church (Romans 12:3-21; I Cor. 12; Eph. 4:1-16). When that is not true for a Christian, it is a rare person indeed who is able to attain to an understanding of his victory over Satan – in the practice of daily life – by himself. Yes, we read about our victory in the Bible. But, the practice of victory is almost always gained from being taught.

Today it is a rare church indeed that teaches its people about the work of the enemy. What little teaching is done is almost always left in the form of theory. That a person can have victory over the enemy may be clearly taught without teaching a person how to achieve this. Too often the practice of the Christian life is relegated to the trilogy of "Read your Bible – pray – and attend Church." The necessity of this is beyond dispute. However, the Christian needs to be specifically told how to resist the enemy and how to put on the armor.

The case of the believer who has not been taught his union with Christ is sad indeed. If he does not know how the four deeds of God (Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost) apply to the four commands concerning the old nature, new nature, resisting Satan, and being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:22,24,27; 5:18) then he will not have the grace and power of God in the measure intended by God. And, in addition to this lack of divine provision, he will be made unusually susceptible to the work of the enemy to rob him of the little he may have by way of spiritual blessing.

A person in this condition may need special counsel and help.

Conclusion

A. A Personal Testimony.

For many years the Biblical material related to Satan and his power was quite theoretical to me. When I became a Christian I read the Biblical accounts concerning the enemy and was glad that I had been delivered from him. During the years of training the same relationship held but in an intensified way. I became more and more aware of the power of the enemy and of the greatness of the believer's deliverance. However, it was still largely a matter of theory. The only practical application was manifested in an increasing attitude of thanksgiving to God for salvation, in an occasional sermon on the unbeliever's enslavement to Satan, and to a warning now and then to believers concerning the relationship of sin to Satan.

During those years my reading would often turn up incidents and statements which I could not understand or accept. The well known book, War on the Saints caused me considerable concern. This is an account of some of the truths about the enemy which was learned by the writers Jesse Penn-Lewis and Evan Roberts through the Welsh revival and the Satanic counter-revival which followed it. The first edition was published in 1912. The book was written to indicate how the enemy can reach devoted Christians!

The testimony of such men as Dr. V. Raymond Edman, then President of Wheaton College, was quite upsetting.

Theory says, no: but the facts say, yes. It is theoretical that a demon cannot possess a body in which the Holy Spirit dwells. However I know true Christians who were truly demon possessed and who were delivered in answer to prayer given in the name of the Lord Jesus. (11)

(11) Russell Meade Victory Over Demons Today. Chicago: Christian Life Publications, Inc., 1962. p. 35.

The account of such men as Johann Blumhardt who worked for two years with a Christian in direct confrontation with wicked spirits was something of a mystery to me. I had a tendency to discount such material. This remarkable story, told by Blumhardt himself, has recently been republished. (12)

My attitude toward the enemy remained as indicated above until a few years ago. Then a woman came for counseling with a remarkable account of strange thoughts, obsessions and incapacitating fear. She related to me that her parents were spiritists. They had taken her to the seances when she was a child and instructed her to pray to the spirits so she could be a medium. As she grew older, she was instructed how to depend upon certain spirits to help her in her school work. She related to me the names of some of these and one in particular which seemed to have been given the responsibility of caring for her. When she was a teen-ager some neighbors took her to church and she accepted Jesus Christ as Savior. From then on things became increasingly difficult for her. The problems intensified as she gained a deeper understanding of the Christian life and sincerely attempted to live the Christian life.

At first my reaction to this woman was one of disbelief. My evaluation was — if her story were true, then she could not be a Christian. However, as time went by and I came to know her as a person, I had to accept her testimony of salvation as true. But I still discounted much of the story and rejected the thought of demonic invasion.

Some months later Rev. Ernest B. Rockstad of Andover, Kansas was in Grand Rapids and I invited him to my home for the evening. I had known about this man's work with people who seemed to be under Satanic attack. From what I had

12) Johann Blumhardt, Blumhardt's Battle, A Conflict with Satan. New York: Thomas E. Lowe LTD., 1970.

learned from this woman who had been raised to be a medium. I wanted to question Rev. Rockstad about his work and in particular about a number of Bible passages. I invited some other people to come to the home that evening and among them was the woman with whom I was trying to counsel.

In the course of the discussion Rev. Rockstad said he had a tape which was an account of working with a person. When we started to listen to the tape, the woman I was counseling with started to act strangely. She could not keep from falling forward into a "sleep." Her actions caused me some concern. I shut off the recorder and tried to talk with her. Finally I asked her if she wanted Rev. Rockstad to try to help her. She consented. To my amazement and consternation he addressed the wicked spirit that was causing her to react as she was. When he began to speak to the wicked spirit, the woman straightened up with something of a jerk and a different sounding voice than her own started to give short replies to Pastor Rockstad's questions. After confessing his name and a couple of other things which I missed – my heart was beating too rapidly – Ernest commanded the wicked spirit to leave the woman. Again there was the jerk and the woman then opened her eyes and looked about with a bit of embarrassment.

The next morning I took Rev. Rockstad to catch his plane. I was still in too much of a shock to ask him important questions. That afternoon the woman came to my study. She seemed relieved to know that her real problem had been brought out into the light. She asked me to help her. I immediately refused and pled my total ignorance. She would not accept my refusal.

From the moment of my refusal, I was deeply convicted by the Holy Spirit that my choice was a wrong one. The thought persistently cut through my fear and reluctance – that I had been called by God to be His minister – and I had no right in refusing this woman help.

From that day on God has quietly brought to me people with similar problems.

He has never failed to supply the wisdom, the strength, or the time. He has used these folk and their past to teach me. Christianity has become much more practical in all of its facets.

To date I have worked with 36 people – 22 women and 14 men. Of these 29 are now living normal lives and the remainder are still coming for help. Some come for an hour a week and some come once or twice a month.

The great need in the life of all those who have come for help is that of understanding the Biblical meaning and the practicality of their union with Jesus Christ. This is where most of the time is spent. The individual must learn how to accept and to practice the Christian life. Sin must be thoroughly confessed and forsaken. The obedience of faith and love must be understood and implemented in all areas of life. The ministry of the Holy Spirit to glorify Jesus Christ must be recognized as primary in all facets of experience. All of this must become a part of the daily life of the subject and constantly kept in focus through an increasing involvement with God in prayer and Bible study.

The expelling of wicked spirits is not the key. The key is the truth – the Person of Jesus Christ.– and what it means, to give Him His rightful place in the context of Biblical Christianity and the extreme practicality of daily life. It is often necessary to expel wicked spirits and the resultant freedom is often dramatic. However, this is only a negative response to the need.

B. Observations.

Within these last few years many books have been written by Christians in regard to the occult explosion in which we find ourselves . What I have read in some of these books and from what I have learned by experience, the following observations have become increasingly important.

1. The tendency toward denial of the subject or obsession with the subject.

Neither of these reactions are Biblical. It is very disquieting to see mature believers, and sometimes Christian leaders, making statements and taking positions which only betray ignorance. Godly men, who in any other area of thought would quietly study the Bible, pray, seek information, and then present a carefully worded statement – are instantly assuming a dogmatic position based on human reason and fear. Such men tend to use irrational illustrations to bolster their position. "I knew about a person who believed that and he went insane." "A belief like that could split a church." These are only two examples. I also know people who got married and went insane. I also knew some churches that were split on the controversy of the Northern Baptist Convention. Should we quit marriage? Should we not have pointed out the fallacy of the Convention? What will it take to get God's people to ask the question, "Is it Truth?"

It is even more disconcerting to see godly pastors obsessed with expelling demons. They come to see the working of the Devil behind every criticism of their ministry and behind every disturbing thought or bodily ache.

These reactions to Biblical truth would make one believe that the evangelical believer, and particularly the evangelical pastor, has an insidious enemy of great wisdom working against Him!

2. The identification of Biblical demonology with the charismatic movement.

It is sad to say that almost all the books that are being published today on the subject of demonology are written by those in the charismatic

movement. This will immediately lead the evangelical, not in that movement, to reject the teaching. Many of the people in our churches today could be greatly helped by some careful counseling. And, as never before, there is an overwhelming need to inform our people in the Sunday School class and the pulpit. The message of Christ's victory over the demon world can only be given by a Bible believing individual. It is the evangelical leader today who could be the key to this serious situation. However, if the enemy can get us to think that the charismatic movement and the Biblical message concerning demons is one and the same – then it will lead the evangelical to discredit both. This will not be the first time such strategy has been tried.

3. The need for a Biblical context.

No book that I have read on the subject of demonology gives anything that faintly resembles the Biblical context. It is boldly clear in the Bible that it is necessary to first of all give Jesus Christ His rightful place in one's life – before one can successfully resist and be free from the enemy. To do this is not a matter of saying words built on a snap decision. To honor God, in the Biblical sense, takes time, involves study and understanding, demands honest and sincere confession, renunciation, restitution, and forsaking of sin. It demands a learning process concerning the work and will of God and how this is implemented in very practical decisions of faith and love. You cannot resist the Devil from a position of the flesh! The Biblical context revolves around two great commands which are implemented by four other commands. The brief outline is as follows.

a. The Primary Command of Instruction: Matthew 22:37

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

- 1). The implementing command: "Put off the old man," Eph. 4:22.
- 2). The implementing command: "Put on the new man," Eph. 4:24.

3). The implementing command: "Neither give place to the Devil," Eph. 4:27.

4). The implementing command: "Be filled with the Holy Spirit," Eph. 5:18.

b. The Primary Command of Expression: Matthew 28:19.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you "

The believer, if he is to be free from the enemy, must learn the meaning and the background to these practical exhortations and commands. He must understand Who God is – what it means to love Him – why he should love Him – and what it means to do so. He must learn the meaning of the Crucifixion in both areas of salvation and sanctification – what his depraved nature is all about – and what it means to put the old nature off each day in harmony with the Crucifixion. He must grow in an understanding of the Resurrection and his new nature – the Ascension and how to resist the enemy – and the Day of Pentecost and the walk in the Spirit. And, it is necessary to learn how to express all of this – in obeying the Great Commission.

This is the necessary context of freedom. If this would be taught in our churches – then it would be only the rare situation in which it would be necessary to expel demons.

However, people do not know this simple Bible teaching. They, therefore, live without the fullness of God's grace and joy. They become involved in a great number of questionable activities that dull their spiritual sensitivities. They live with unconfessed sin in their lives. They may even become involved in some form of the occult. Their response to God and His Word and His Church may be very lethargic indeed.

Such individuals may stand in need of special help – particularly if there has been occult involvement in their ancestral line.

What people need today – they have needed in every day – namely, the whole council of God!