

# **Christ Supreme over Satan: Spiritual Warfare, Folk Religion and the Occult**

**By Vivienne Stacey**

## **Preface**

For years I have wanted to write a book on spiritual warfare, so when the Masihi Isha'at Khana requested a work on the subject it seemed the time to begin. For the first eight years of my service in Pakistan I had no experience at all of the effects of occult practices and the opposition of demons. Such matters had not entered into my Western theological studies or into my Eastern experience. I was almost totally unprepared for what I found and experienced when I spent two months in a Punjabi settlement in Thal. I had gone there to learn Punjabi, village customs and superstitions. I found myself involved in a mini-revival. The village was mostly made up of Christian settlers from the Gojra area, who had accepted the Government's offer of land for economic refugees. There were about eighty families in this new village. With their own hands, they had built the village including their mud and timber church. During the summer of 1962, the Holy Spirit of God brought many of these Christians into a new experience of the power and presence of Christ. They gathered for worship and prayer every night in a different home. Satanic forces also manifested themselves – the practice of white and black magic, inexplicable bloodstains, sudden fears, the nightmarish and palpable presence of evil. I was aware of the cosmic encounter of good and evil which goes on around us all the time. Here were those principalities and powers over which Christ had triumphed in his cross (Colossians 2:15).

The following year I spent two and a half months in the Rahim Yar Khan District. It would be hard to explain apart from demonic

supernatural powers the conflict into which several of us were plunged as we sought to preach the gospel of Christ in the villages of the Rahim Yar Khan area. From then on in different places and in different countries I have been thrust into similar situations. Pakistani and foreign friends have shared their experiences along these lines. I am indebted to them for what they have shared and recorded to help me in the writing of this book. I am also indebted to those who have prayed for me in the writing of this book. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Ruth Coggan for her encouragement and constructive criticism.

As far as I know there is no other Christian book published in Pakistan on this subject—no practical handbook describing the principles of spiritual warfare against Satan and his hosts. It seems to me (and to the publishers) that there is a need for a practical book describing Biblical teaching on these matters. We need practical answers to such questions as:

- How do we know if someone is demon possessed or not?
- If so, what can be done about it?
- Can a house be haunted by evil spirits?
- If so, what need to be done to cleanse it?
- How does one distinguish between what comes from human perversity and what is directly satanic?
- Where does superstition end and the demonic begin?
- How does one distinguish between mental illness and satanic obsession, depression, oppression and possession?
- What underlying animistic practices affect the Christian community in Pakistan?
- Why do Christians visit Muslim pirs or saints?
- How does “folk” or “popular” Islam affect the church and its ministry?
- How can Christ’s victory over evil be manifested through his church?

- Are there special prayers, scriptures, and services that could help us in this warfare?
- When God delivers people from the bondage of Satan what teaching should be given to them so that they know how to stand in the evil day? (Ephesians 6:10-18)

Some of my friends both Pakistani and expatriate will not agree with the need for such a book as this. Some would class much of what I will describe as being superstition, for which the cure is more education and biblical teaching. Others would hold a certain kind of dispensational view of the Bible which relegates all such power encounters to the first century of the Christian era. Others are so influenced by Western secular and “scientific” thinking that they do not consider the subject relevant to the twentieth century.

To those who hold these views I would point out that on more than one occasion Christ commanded his followers to suspend judgment. I invite all who doubt the relevance of the subject to suspend their preconceived ideas, prejudices and disbelief and read carefully and prayerfully with the Bible at hand, the following pages. This is by no means an exhaustive study and I shall be grateful for comments, case histories and further information from readers of this English edition.

However, I conclude this preface with a solemn warning. Let not anyone deliberately involve himself or herself in occult practices—for experimentation, for curiosity, for fun or just to see if anything will happen. The Bible clearly forbids believers to be involved in witchcraft, magic, sorcery, fortune-telling and related practices. Superstitious activities like opening the Bible at random to find guidance, retaining a piece of the communion bread and taking it home in the hope of bringing blessing to the house or wearing charms are also not worthy of those in whom God dwells by his Holy Spirit.

“Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts...Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers...”  
(Malachi 3:1,5)

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## **CHAPTER ONE: CHRIST CLEANSSES BUILDINGS**

A friend of mine once told me of an incident when she was a child growing up in South America. Her father was away on an evangelistic tour and her mother was alone in the house with the children. Some thieves planned to rob the house but when they came near it they saw several men in white guarding the house and so they desisted from their evil plan. Later they enquired from my friend's parents about their guards. There were no human guards. The occupants of the house never saw them. Presumably they were angels—"ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation" (Hebrews 1:14). In the *United Bible Training Center* where I worked for twenty years we had no regular watchman. Generations of students prayed diligently that God would send his guardian angels to protect us and I am sure he did. With our physical eyes we are not often permitted to see the hosts of the Lord but the Bible gives clear teaching about their presence.

In the book of the prophet Zechariah 2:5, we read about a wall of fire around Jerusalem: "For I will be to her a wall of fire round about, says the Lord, and I will be the glory within her." Once I saw a wall of fire. Three of us were living for ten days in a village near Rahim Yar Khan conducting evening meetings for Christians and visiting Muslim and Christian homes during the day to share the good news about the Lord Jesus Christ. We were aware of opposition to our message and learned that some local people were using magical powers to bring to nothing our efforts. The conflict between good and evil, light and darkness, the hosts of the Lord and the powers of hell grew very fierce. We were acutely aware that we were not fighting "against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). We knew the victory was the

Lord's and we asked him for grace to stand during those evil days. One night at about 2 a.m. I went outside to the bathroom. At the door of our one-roomed house I stopped and gazed. I could see a wall of fire. I knew that it was not a light of this world and I deliberately noted details about it. The wall was six feet high. One portion of it could not be seen as a building in the middle of the village square blocked the view. The wall of fire continued for several feet on the other side of the building. Thus, I estimated the length of the wall of fire and noted where it started and where it ended. Some minutes later when I returned to the room the wall of fire was no longer visible.

In the morning one of my companions and I went to see whose compound it was that had had this divine protection. We had been praying especially for a family engaged in devil worship that they would repent, come to Christ and be saved. Unknown to us they had left their former house and walled garden and were now living in the area marked by the wall of fire. We visited the home and announced that salvation had come to this house. One of the family then and there accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. One by one other members of the family did so over a period of months. One might enquire why such a vision was given. Perhaps it was so that in the fierce conflict with satanic forces involved sudden and severe illness, black shapes going through our room, the shaking of my bed, a horrible nightmare, strange knockings and inexplicable blood stains, we might know that all was not evil and that ultimate victory belonged to God. Sometimes the Lord encourages his servants with visions as he did the apostle Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:9,10), and the servant of Elisa (2 Kings 6:15-17). Sometimes Christians do not seem to be so protected or encouraged. We are in an area of mystery. By faith we know that the angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them (Ps. 34:7) and that whatever happens occurs only by God's permission as the story of Job clearly shows (Job 1:11, 12). Sometimes a building is so invaded and infested by evil powers

that a radical exorcism is needed. My most outstanding experience in this area was in connection with a house in Muscat in the Sultanate of Oman. The house was purchased by Peter Zwemer, brother of the famous missionary Samuel Zwemer, about 1893 for a very small sum as the local Arabs thought it was haunted and did not want to live in it. Through the years some of those who lived in the house had troubles which might have had satanic origins. Peter died at the early age of 29. One missionary died under strange circumstances, perhaps having committed suicide. Another was mentally ill and had to leave. Another couple departed greatly discouraged. The Arabs until recently still considered the house haunted saying that evil spirits frequented the main staircase and the roof in particular. When I heard that Muslim Omanis reckoned that a house occupied by Christian workers was possessed or haunted I was full of indignation. Some months later when I was flying into Muscat on my second visit the Lord clearly commissioned me to deal in his name with this situation.

How does one set about fulfilling such a commission? My visit was to last eight days and I would be staying in the “haunted” house with an American nurse. At supper the first evening I broached the subject. I asked my hostess to tell me more about her house and why the Arabs considered it to be possessed. She was surprised that I raised this subject as she herself was planning to ask my advice about some demon-possessed patients. I said I would pray for her and with her about the patients but that I had no commission to deal with people but only with the house. I explained that I could only proceed if we were in complete agreement and on condition that if either of us needed the other’s help we would call each other by day or night. Also when we were free from our other work we would take all possible opportunities for prayer and Bible study together. We generally managed to spend two or three hours each day praising God, praying and reading the Bible. We read through the whole of Isaiah. Muscat is surrounded on three sides by mountains and on the fourth side by

the sea. One evening my companion and I were praying on the roof when suddenly she called out: “Look at that rock. It is illuminated.” I could see nothing except the black outline of the rock. Three times she saw it illuminated. The third time I also saw the rock illuminated by a heavenly light. Immediately I said: “Yes, despite the presence and power of evil, these mountains are full of the hosts of the Lord” (2 Kings 6:15-17).

My first task had been to find out what was really wrong with the house. Diagnosis is all-important. I asked the Lord to show me and I took practical steps to find out where evil particularly dwelt. I meditated and prayed in various parts of the house—in the kitchen, the sitting room, on the stairs. Several nights I was driven out of my bedroom by satanic forces. Even kneeling by my bed I found it too terrifying to stay. One night I called my companion. We prayed together and I spent the rest of the night sleeping on the floor in her room. Throughout the eight days I rarely slept for more than an hour at a time and never for more than five out of twenty-four hours. The Lord gave me extra strength and I was able to pray and meditate and carry out my normal program of Bible teaching and evangelistic meetings with Pakistanis in the area around. One night all hell seemed to be let loose and I decided that I would read in the sitting room Isaiah’s servant song about the death and victory of the Lord Jesus Christ (Isaiah 52:13-53:12) and praise God whatever happened. I knew that the local people claimed that sometimes they “saw” spirits on the roof and so another day I set out to watch and pray on the roof.

At that moment the Lord clearly warned me that if I went on the roof I would be killed. Then the words of the communion service came to my mind: “Preserve the body and soul unto everlasting life” and I knew I was safe provided I did not go on the roof at that time. For some days I had prayed specifically that I might know what spirits inhabited the house and its environs (it had a small garden). The answer was clear—spirits of suicide, depression and

fear. I commanded them in Jesus Christ's name that they should go. There was no clear proof that the spirits had gone and there were still other manifestations of demonic activities. One night I found my companion nearly choking. I asked her permission to put my hands on her throat and neck and to pray in Jesus' name. Immediately she was all right. She had heard a strange noise between her bedroom and the sitting room. The next day I dusted all the objects in the wall cupboard of the sitting room some of which were souvenirs from Africa. She enquired what I was doing and I explained that I was praying over each object that it would be cleansed through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. She then joined me in this exercise. Some weeks later she wrote to explain that she had found one object that was probably the cause of some of the trouble in her room—a curved Omani dagger which had been used to ward off evil spirits from a mother and baby. She had taken it from the patient, hidden it in her room and forgotten about it.

Before I left Muscat I was able to tell her that the house was cleansed through the power and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and that any subsequent evidence of evil would be attacks from outside and could be repudiated and repulsed in the name of Jesus Christ. No longer would the Arabs have reason to note that a Christian home was the dwelling place of evil spirits. On return to Pakistan I wrote confirming this and quoting Isaiah 60:18 in regard to her house: "You shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates, Praise." The Lord also had his therapy for me after this long struggle. I had the opportunity to go weekly for six weeks in a row to a communion service. The Lord ministered to my body, soul and spirit as I heard again the words when I took the bread: "The body of the Lord Jesus Christ which was given for your preserve your body and soul unto everlasting life." Truly Jesus Christ protects and cleanses.

The following Principles clearly emerge from the incident I have just recorded:

- The Lord's commissioning is needed for each episode of such a ministry.
- The ministry is a team ministry and is built on the Lord's commissioning, prayer, praise, Bible study and obedience.
- The Lord gives discernment and guidance when he sees it is needed.
- The deliberate challenge to Satan and his demons brings a back-lash and fiercer conflict for a while.
- The victory is Christ's and rests on his word, his authority and faith in who he is.
- The Lord sometimes gives visions to encourage and strengthen his servants.
- The glory is the Lord's alone. He alone will be exalted. His glory he will not give to another (Isaiah 48:11). Praise was an integral part of the whole episode.
- It is not wise to talk unnecessarily about such happenings. Only now after more than eleven years have I shared this experience apart from a few occasions when I was especially constrained to speak.

Obedience to Jesus Christ's command and the cleansing which followed proved to be the basis for future fruitfulness and blessing in Oman. A year later I returned to Oman for a Bible teaching ministry and stayed in the same house. There was great peace and serenity and much freedom to expound the scriptures. The Lord strengthens us physically and spiritually for what he commands.

In Saudi Arabia I was once the guest for dinner of a Christian Pakistani couple and their two small children. They had lived in Riyadh, the capital, for several years and had all kept fit and well. A few months previously they had moved to their present house and had all been sick off and on. The little girl was especially

unwell. My host and hostess asked me what I thought about the situation. I replied that the sickness could be due to natural causes like a contaminated water supply or that it might have a satanic origin due to evil powers inhabiting the house. At this one of the other guests laughed and I knew that I could not proceed to explain more. I promised to pray for the family. I shared the problem with the couple with whom I was staying and we specifically prayed for healing and for the Lord's victory. Unexpectedly I visited the home the next day. The scoffer was not present. The little girl was still ill. I suggested to the parents and the three other visitors that we should join together as a team and pray for cleansing in each room of the house. Accordingly we went from room to room and prayed for the casting out of evil and for cleansing through the blood of Christ. We then praised God and prayed for those who used the particular room and for its special uses. In the kitchen we prayed for the one who cooked, for those who ate the food etc.

A Muslim neighbor visited this home a few hours after this service of exorcism. She exclaimed in astonishment: "your little girl is now well and your home has a different atmosphere. What has happened?" The lady of the house told her of the power of the Lord Jesus Christ and how a group of believers had prayed and that all evil had been expelled. This proved an effective way to share with her the good news of Jesus Christ's victory over sin and evil.

#### ***SUGGESTED PRAYERS FOR EXORCISM FOR PLACES***

*God, the son of God, who by death destroyed death, and overcame him who had the power of death, beat down Satan quickly. Deliver this place (room, house, church) from all evil spirits; all vain imaginations, projections and all deceits of the evil one; and bid them harm no one but depart to the place appointed for them, there to remain for ever. God, Incarnate God, who came to give peace, give peace. Amen.*

*In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, Son of the Most High God, I bind you, evil spirit(s), and command you to leave this place (etc.), to harm no one, and to go to your own place, never to return. Amen.*

**SUGGESTED PRAYERS TO USE AFTER EXORCISM**

*The blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be in this place always. Amen.*

*Visit, we beseech you, O Lord, this place (etc.) and drive far from it all the snares of the enemy. Let your holy angels dwell here to preserve us in peace, and may your blessing be upon us evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*O God, the Father Almighty, we humbly entreat you for this house (place); for all who live here; and for all things in it. Grant, Lord, to those living here such earthly and heavenly blessings as are necessary for the maintenance of life; and so control what they desire that they may be able to receive your mercy. Bless and hallow this place (house) and let angels of light dwell within it to guard it and all its inhabitants; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## **CHAPTER TWO: CHRIST DELIVERS PEOPLE**

Let us first look at the principles which emerge from a study of the Lord Jesus Christ's deliverance of the man with an unclean spirit in Mark 1:21-28. Then we can turn to a study of his dealings with other evil spirits. Finally we will analyze a few contemporary case-histories of people troubled by evil spirits to see what we can learn for the exercise of the church's ministry of deliverance today.

Mark writes of the Lord Jesus Christ and his disciples: "And they went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God'. But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him'. And the unclean spirit, convulsing and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, 'What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him'. And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee" (Mark 1:21-28).

From this incident recorded in the gospel according to Mark we should note that following points:

- Jesus Christ taught and acted with evident authority (Mark 1:22, 27). All authority in heaven and on earth had been given to him by God (Matthew 28:18). The ordinary people of Capernaum were astonished at his authoritative teaching and commands.

- Probably this authority in Jesus Christ’s teaching and presence drew the possessed man to the synagogue and precipitated a power encounter (Mark 1:23, 24).
- The man had an unclean spirit or “the spirit of an unclean demon” (Luke 4:33). Evil spirits can generally be categorized e.g. a dumb spirit (Luke 11:14); a spirit of divination (Acts 16:16); a spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:11).
- The unclean spirit within the man, not the man, spoke to Jesus Christ (Mark 1:24).
- The unclean spirit recognized who Jesus was—Jesus of Nazareth, the Holy One of God (Mark 1:24).
- The unclean spirit tormented and severely troubled the man he possessed. He convulsed him and cried with a loud voice when he was rebuked (Mark 1:26).
- Jesus Christ commanded the unclean spirit to be silent, that is, to be muzzled, and to come out of the man (Mark 1:25).
- The conflict was intensified but the unclean spirit came out (Mark 1:26).
- Jesus Christ knew that he was dealing with one spirit not several, despite the spirit’s reference to “us” (Mark 1:24, 25).
- Jesus Christ had to face the question of publicity (Mark 1:28).

A study of the seven other accounts of the deliverances by the Lord Jesus Christ of possessed individuals endorses these principles and adds to them. The accounts, sometimes found in only one or two, or in all three of the synoptic gospels, are:

- The record of Mary of Magdalene from whom seven devils were cast out (Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2).
- The healing of the woman bent double (Luke 13:10-17).
- The deliverance of the epileptic boy (Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43).

- The casting out of the dumb spirit (Matthew 9:32-33; Luke 11:14).
- The deliverance of the man with a blind and dumb spirit (Matthew 12:22).
- The deliverance of the man with many demons (Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-33).
- The casting out of an unclean spirit from a syrophenician girl (Mark 7:24-30).

Besides these individual exorcisms there are other general references to exorcisms in the synoptic gospels; Mark 1:32-39 cf. Matthew 8:16 f.; Mark 3:11 f.; Luke 4:40 f.; Luke 6:18; Luke 7:21; Matthew 4:24.

Further principles emerging from a study of Jesus Christ's ministry and not noted in the analysis of the first incident (Mark 1:21-28) are:

- The repetition of the command to the evil spirit to come out of the person. In Greek the imperfect tense of the verb "come out" is used in Mark 5:8 to indicate repetition.
- New Testament exorcisms were mostly carried out publicly wherever the need for them became apparent, for example, in the synagogue (Mark 1:23) or in the open air. One exorcism was carried out when the sufferer was absent (Mark 7:24-30 compare Matthew 15:21-28).
- The necessity of a person's being filled with the Holy Spirit after being emptied of evil. The Beelzebul controversy as recorded by Luke implies this (Luke 11:14-26)
- Jesus' exorcisms relate closely to faith and prayer (Mark 9:19, 29; see also Matthew 17:17, 20; Luke 9:41).
- Jesus' rapid, accurate diagnosis is a striking feature of his authority, and his "doing all things well" (Mark 7:37).

Correct diagnosis is essential. Jesus delegates some of his authority and gives his Holy Spirit to guide, but without a conviction about the diagnosis it is unwise for a Christian to engage in a ministry of exorcism. In fact, it is highly dangerous to do so. The following section from the booklet *The Christian Ministry of Deliverance and Healing* (A report from the York Group) is very helpful on this matter of diagnosis. Great caution is urged.

Medical analyses as well as alternative spiritual ministries such as counseling....should be considered.... Before exorcism is decided upon. There may well be cases in which exorcism is the primary or even 'first-resort' treatment; there will be others in which it forms a part of a lengthy process of caring. (p. 7)

In addition to diagnostic ability the spiritual gift of discernment is needed. Discernment may be given to the Christian worker through reflection, consideration of the factors of a case, prayer, or intuition. As the booklet just mentioned says:

The Spirit-filled pastor must be willing at times to take risks and humbly commit his ways to the Lord.... Just as such a person discerns whether or not the Holy Spirit is at work in a person (in view of his behaviour, attitude and character, as seen in the light of Scriptural guides), so too he discerns whether or not an evil spirit is at work in him...Bizarre behaviour, attitude and character are not in themselves indications of demonic activity. But if they are allied to strong antipathy (even if only occasional) to Jesus and the 'things of the Spirit', or if the person has been dabbling in occult practice of any kind, including fortune-telling etc., then there may be a strong initial presumption of demonic origin of the disease. (p. 8)

In 1977 I was a guest for a few days of some expatriates in a large city of Pakistan. As two of us were sitting at lunch the Christian headmistress of a girls' school rushed in and said: "Please come and help us straightaway. One of the girls is demon-possessed and

I don't know what to do." My hostess asked me to come. We found the Pakistani matron at the bedside of a fourteen year old girl who was one of the schoolchildren living in the girls' hostel. Her parents were away working in the Middle East. I asked for some background information and was told that the family had been involved in some occult practices and that sometimes the girl was troubled by evil spirits. Sometimes she would behave normally. At other times she would behave like a very young child and her speech would be slurred. Sometimes she would be hysterical and at other times apparently unconscious but with her eyes open and staring. I was informed that she was possessed by four demons. The group looked to me for leadership and guidance in this situation which was having a disturbing influence on the school and hostel.

First, I wanted to make my own diagnosis. The girl was not fully herself. Two of us stayed with the girl through the remainder of the day, all night and through the next day and night. We took it in turn to watch and pray. She still had attacks. We knew that the victory belonged to Jesus and realized that there were three possible explanations for these attacks—fresh possession by other spirits, counterfeit attacks or else that the original four demons had not yet left her. We had no doubt about Jesus' ultimate victory. However, although the girl was responsive to biblical teaching it was not until weeks later that she accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour and entered into a personal relationship with his. This delay together with the influences from her family background and the fact that there had been a history of magical and occult practice on the compound of the school and hostel probably made this a very stubborn case of demon-possession. There were other struggles to be endured and other cleansings to be done and other victories to be demonstrated and for several months the Lord's servants were tested. Eventually all was clean and calm.

In this case the diagnosis was easy but the deliverance took a long time. I now turn to a case in which the diagnosis took several weeks but after that the deliverance was speedy. The elder of a village church in the Punjab came to my colleague and me for help telling how his daughter had seen a demon exorcised at the Sialkot Convention and how from that time on she herself was troubled by strange shapes and fear. We asked to meet the girl and other members of the family. The elder himself was a very godly man. On meeting the daughter we were unable to determine whether she was demon-possessed or just oppressed or suffering from some other trouble. We promised to pray and seek the Lord's guidance and to meet the family. After two weeks we decided to seek the help of the Christian Pakistani lady doctor whom the girl had met at the convention and whom she had seen exorcise a demon. When the doctor arrived to see us we shared the problem with her and prayed together. The doctor went off to the girl's home to see if she could help. The two of us who were left behind continued praying we arrived at the conviction that the girl was demon-possessed and so we specifically prayed for the girl's deliverance. Later we learned that the doctor had commanded in Jesus' name that the evil spirit leave the girl at the very time when we had been praying together specifically for this. After this the girl was spiritually nurtured and taught and as far as I know has never had any further trouble of this sort.

A further question is how one knows if a person is demon-possessed or just oppressed by the demon or demons or Satan? Or whether they are degrees of the same thing. Can a believer in Jesus Christ in whom dwells the Holy Spirit be demon-possessed? When is demon-possession temporary and when is it permanent? There are no easy answers to these questions. If answers are not forthcoming one can look for guidelines. It is wise to have a reverent humility about some of these matters. In each individual case we need to seek wisdom and guidance and to act only when we know we have received these gifts. Certainly the purpose of

deliverance from demonic possession and or oppression is that the individual might become filled with the Holy Spirit. Exorcism as an isolated act can be dangerous to all concerned. It does not bring honour to God. If there is preparation beforehand, counseling, teaching before and after and if the act of exorcism is seen as part of the deliverance of the whole person and his healing then truly the gospel is proclaimed and confirmed by signs and wonders. Exorcism can be the means that God uses to bring someone into the fullness of salvation. Without discernment and the work of the Holy Spirit more harm than good may be done. So correct diagnosis and a knowledge of the will of God in each case is essential. We may well ask: "Who is sufficient for these things?" "Our sufficiency is of God" and he never fails to give wisdom to those who ask in faith (2 Corinthians 2:17; 3:5; James 1:5).

However let no one get involved in such matters without a clear call from God and without the support of other believers.

### **CHAPTER THREE: ANGELS AND DEMONS**

The origin of evil has puzzled theologians and philosophers as well as many other people. The Bible gives no clear-cut answer. It is not the purpose of the Bible to answer every query that man can present. Once I met some educated members of the Christian community in Pakistan who were obsessed with the question: “Who was Cain’s wife?” I had to ask them what difference it would make to them spiritually if they knew the answer. Would it help their growth in faith and spirituality? Why then is it worth spending hours speculating about that for which there is no final answer and from which no spiritual profit is derived? Too often people have expected the Bible to give answers on matters which are not its purpose to give. The apostle Paul clearly sets forth the purpose of the sacred Scriptures in his second letter to his younger colleague Timothy: “the sacred writings are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:15-17). We find in the Bible only that knowledge which leads us to know God better.

#### ***ANGELS***

God in his wisdom has not given us a full account of the origin of evil. Everything that he created was good (Genesis 1:31). Angels are in a position a little higher than man (Hebrews 2:7). Angels are not eternal; only God is eternal. We do not know from Scripture exactly when God created the angels but we know that he created them. In Psalm 148:2, 5 we read: “Praise ye him all his angels, praise him all his host... Let them praise the name of Jehovah; for he commanded, and they were created.”

From the Bible we learn the following facts about angels:

- Angels are not human beings. Human beings will be like the angels but are not and will not become angels (Matthew 22:30). However, angels have intelligence and will (1 Peter 1:12).
- Angels do not have bodies although they sometimes appear in bodily form. They are spirits free from the laws of matter and space (Hebrews 1:7, 14).
- Angels are a host, not a race or a species. Had they been a race the sin of the first angel would have contaminated all of them just as Adam's sin affected the whole human race. As angels belong to a host not a race, each is responsible for his own sin and will be judged for it. Angels live for ever. They are not male or female and do not marry (Luke 20:34-36).
- Angels know more than men but they do not know everything (Luke 1:34).
- Angels are stronger than men. They are superhuman (2 Peter 2:11; Matthew 28:2).

### ***THE FALL OF ANGELS***

God created everything perfect. Some of the angels rebelled against God. They sinned (2 Peter 2:4). They were proud and exceeded their privileges (Jude 6). Satan was the leader in this rebellion. The fall of Satan and the angels who followed him in rebellion occurred before the fall of man since Satan through the serpent tempted Eve and then Adam. Angels must have had free will--the ability to sin or not to sin--to rebel or not to rebel--with no bias in either direction. Why some of them chose to sin is hinted at but not categorically stated in the Bible. Excessive ambition and the desire to surpass God may be reasons. Selfishness, murmuring, discontent and greed were probably other ingredients in the causes which led to the fall of some of the angels. Their fall resulted in

the loss of their original holiness. They became corrupt in nature and conduct. Some of them were cast into hell and chained there to await the day of judgment (2 Peter 2:4). Some of them oppose the work of good angels (Revelation 12:7-9). After their final judgment they will be cast into the eternal lake of fire (Matthew 25:41).

### ***DIFFERENT KINDS OF ANGELS***

There are good angels and evil angels:

#### **Good Angels**

The word 'angel' means 'messenger'. They are "innumerable" as the writer to the Hebrews says (Hebrews 12:22). Included among the good angels are:

*Cherubim*: Cherubim is the plural of cherub in Hebrew. When God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden he set the cherubim to guard the way to the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). Two cherubim were depicted on top of the ark in the tabernacle and temple (Exodus 37:7-9). The psalmist describes God as enthroned upon the cherubim (Psalm 99:1).

*Seraphim*: Seraphim is the plural of seraph in Hebrew. They are only mentioned in one passage in the Bible—in Isaiah 6:2, 6. They stand around God and lead the heavenly worship.

*Archangels*: Archangels are only mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and in Jude 9. In Thessalonians the apostle Paul describes how the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will be heralded by the archangel's call and the sound of God's trumpet. Jude refers to the dispute between the archangel Michael and the devil about the body of Moses. Gabriel is the only other angel mentioned by name in the Bible. He is not called an archangel.

*The angel of the Lord*: The Angel of the Lord is often mentioned in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament.

### **The work of Good Angels**

- They worship and praise God in heaven (Revelation 5:11, 12).
- They protect God's people (Psalm 91:11).
- They deliver God's servants (Daniel 3:28).
- They interpret God's will to men (Daniel 10:5, 11).
- They guide God's servants (Acts 8:26).
- They encourage God's servants (Acts 27:23 and 24).
- They carry out God's judgments on individuals (Acts 12:23).
- They carry out God's judgments on nations (2 Samuel 24:16).
- They will share in events connected with the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:31; 13:39; Revelation 21:12).

### **The part of angels in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ**

What we read in the Bible of the assistance of angels in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ confirms the importance of their work. Today many Christians underestimate the help given by good angels to believers. Angels are described as 'ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation' (Hebrews 1:14). They also played a part in the ministry of the Saviour—the giver of salvation.

- An angel called Gabriel told the virgin Mary that she would become the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38)
- An angel reassured Joseph, telling him that "that which is conceived in her (Mary) is of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20).
- Angels announced to the shepherds the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem (Luke 2:8-15).
- Angels ministered to the Lord Jesus Christ after his temptation by the Devil in the wilderness (Matthew 4:11).

- An angel strengthened the Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43).
- Twelve legions of angels would have come to the aid of the Lord Jesus Christ had he asked his Father for such help (Matthew 26:53).
- An angel rolled away the massive stone from the tomb of Jesus Christ and spoke to the women who came early in the morning to the tomb (Matthew 28:2-7).
- Two angels may have been present when the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven (Acts 1:10, 11).
- Angels will return with him when he comes a second time (Matthew 16:27).

### **Evil Angels**

- Some evil angels are confined to hell (Tartarus) until the judgment (2 Peter 2:4). These angels did not keep their own position and were punished in this way (Jude 6).
- Some evil angels are not confined to hell and are able to move through the universe supporting their leader Satan in his fight against good angels, God's people, God's purpose and God himself (Romans 8:38).
- Demons are evil spirits (Matthew 8:16). They are probably fallen angels. What is indisputable on the basis of the Bible is that demons are part of the "hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).
- Satan or the Devil is the leader of all the forces of evil by whatever name they are called—demons, spiritual hosts of wickedness, evil angels, unclean spirits, principalities, authorities, powers, the world rulers of this present darkness, thrones and dominions (Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 6:12).

## **The work of Evil Angels and Demons**

- God sometimes uses them to judge an evil nation (Psalm 78:49).
- They try to separate believers from the Lord Jesus Christ and his love (Romans 8:38, 39).
- They fight against good angels (Revelation 12:7).
- They help Satan in his purposes and plans (Ephesians 6:12).
- They spread false teaching sometimes using the same vocabulary as is used for true teaching but giving it different meaning (1 Kings 22:21-23; 1 Timothy 4:1).
- They inflict disease. Dr. Luke records several case histories in which the direct cause of the illness is from Satan and his followers (Luke 9:37-42; 13:11-16). The Bible does not teach that all disease is the direct work of Satan and his followers.
- They sometimes cause mental disorders (Luke 8:26-35).
- They entice many people into moral and sexual impurity. Some of them are called unclean spirits (Luke 4:33, 36).
- They can possess people and animals (Luke 8:2; Mark 5:8-14). Evil spirits can also inhabit objects but this appears to be rare and there is no biblical record about such possession. In Pakistan a mirror was inhabited by an evil spirit from another country. In Christ's name it was cast out. I have only ever read of one modern account of an object being inhabited by a demon.
- They can oppress people (1 Samuel 18:10).
- They are sometimes used by God to deal in judgment with individuals (Judge 9:23; 1 Samuel 16:14).
- They will be particularly active at the end of the world (Revelation 9:1-12). In the end like Satan their master they will be judged and cast into the eternal fire of hell (Matthew 25:41). Believers will have a share in the

judging of evil angels (1 Corinthians 6:3). Good angels will be present in heaven (Revelation 21:12).

In the study of angels we need to make sure that we appreciate how significant is the part played by angels in the divine scheme of things. Western Christians have tended to underestimate or disregard this whole biblical area. They have often forgotten what allies we have in the spiritual sphere in the good angels and what enemies we have in our spiritual warfare—not only in the world, the flesh and the devil but in the form of evil angels and demons. Those Easterners who have studied theology in the West or who have mainly studied textbooks produced in the West have sometimes not fully appreciated the weight of the biblical evidence nor the place of angelology and demonology in relation to the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. A.H. Strong in his *Systematic Theology* writes on page 453:

Like miracles angelic appearances generally mark God's entrance upon new epochs in the unfolding of his plans. Hence we read of angels at the ... giving of the law (Galatians 3:19); at the birth of Christ (Luke 2:13); at the two temptations in the wilderness and Gethsemane (Matthew 4:11 and Luke 22:43); at the resurrection (Matthew 28:2).

It could be that the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is very near and we must expect an intensification in spiritual warfare as the spiritual hosts gather for the last battle. The Christian can take heart however fierce the conflict may become. "Over against the evil spirit who thus accuses God to man and man to God, stands the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, who pleads God's cause with man and man's cause with God" (A.H. Strong, p. 454). The dove will prevail over the serpent; the Spirit of truth over the father of lies; the life-giving Spirit over the murderer; God over Satan and all his hosts.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: THE DEVIL'S NAMES**

Let us now start to examine the biblical teaching about the Devil and his works. It is salutary to remember that one of the purposes of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ was that he should destroy the devil and his works (1 John 3:8).

### ***THE DEVIL***

The Devil has personality. He is a person. He generally takes the initiative and meets us. We can look for him and find him. He tempted the Lord Jesus Christ not just after his baptism but all through his life (Luke 22:28; Hebrews 5:7). The death struggle on the cross followed by the resurrection was the final blow to the Devil. It was the bruising of his head and the destruction of his works (Genesis 3:15). What the Devil has done from the time of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ until now is but the death-throes of a conquered foe. Now he is like a chicken running around after its head has been cut off.

For those who do not believe that the Devil is a person he does not appear to be a person. He is too clever. He does not want direct encounters when he can accomplish his purposes by more subtle means. I believe in the Devil because:

- The Bible teach this.
- The Lord Jesus Christ believed him to be a person and an enemy.
- I have personal experience of his temptations and attacks.
- There is evidence in the world at large of his activities.

## ***THE NAMES AND TITLES OF THE DEVIL***

Names and titles are important in the biblical record. Names represent the reality of the person who bears the name—his quality of being and doing. The Devil has at least 20 names and titles. There are his proper names e.g. Apollyon; his metaphorical names e.g. serpent; those names which describe his activities e.g. liar; those name which relate to his dominion e.g. god of this world; and those names which describe his methods e.g. angel of light.

### **Devil**

The word “devil” means “slanderer” or “accuser.” The Devil slanders God to men and men to God. He slandered God, for example, by suggesting to Eve that she would not die if she ate the fruit of the forbidden tree (Genesis 3:1-4).

### **Satan**

The word “Satan” means “adversary.” Satan is primarily the adversary of God and secondarily the adversary of men (Job 1:6; Luke 22:31).

### **Apollyon**

Apollyon is the Greek name and Abaddon the Hebrew. In Revelation 9:11 we read of Apollyon as the king over the demonic locusts. The name Apollyon means “destroyer.” In the Old Testament the name Abaddon denotes the depths of Sheol and means “destruction” (Job 28:22).

### **Beelzebul or Beelzebub**

The exact meaning of this word is not known. In the Bible it only occurs in the incident of the confrontation between Christ and those who accused him of having a demon and exorcising by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons. The incident is recorded in each of the synoptic gospels e.g. Luke 11:18,19. The name Beelzebul was probably taken from the name of the

Philistine god of flies mentioned in 2 Kings 1:2 as Beelzebub. It was applied by the Jews to Satan. Beelzebub may mean “Lord of the dwelling” i.e. of the heavenly habitation or “Lord of dung” i.e. of idolatrous abomination.

### **Leviathan**

In Isaiah 27:1 the prophet in an apocalyptic section deals with eschatology or the last things. “Leviathan”, “serpent”, “dragon” possibly indicate Assyria, Babylon and Egypt or names of powers of evil or of the Devil.

### **Lucifer**

(Isaiah 14:12 Authorised Version) The name Lucifer is only used here in the Bible. Lucifer is the Latin for “Day-star” i.e. the morning star, literally “light-bearer”. The verse was addressed to the King of Babylon perhaps as a type of the Devil. As Lucifer the Devil is depicted as an angel of light. Many translations of this verse do not use the name Lucifer but use Day Star.

### **Belial or Beliar**

The term is used in the Old Testament with the meaning “worthlessness”. We read of the “sons of Belial” in Judges 20:13 the Authorized Version and the Revised Version but the Revised Standard Version does not use Belial but speaks of “base fellows”. Belial is used of the Devil in the Bible but only once in the New Testament, that is, in 2 Corinthians 6:15. Beliar is the Greek for Belial.

### **Serpent**

In the Garden of Eden the Devil appeared to Adam and Eve in the form of a serpent (Genesis 3:1). In Revelation 20:2 he is referred to as “that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan”. Serpenthood emphasized his cunning and guile.

**Dragon**

The Hebrew word “tannin” seems to refer to any great land or sea monster. It is generally used of some kind of serpent or reptiles as in Isaiah 27:1. The only use of the word in the New Testament is metaphorical. It is applied to the Devil (Revelation 12:9).

**Deceiver**

The Devil deceived Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-6). Deception has been one of his main stratagems throughout human history. He lulls people into unconcern. He is so successful in deceiving some that they do not believe that he exists.

**Tempter**

In Thessalonians 3:5 is an obvious reference to the Devil who tempts men to wrong actions.

**Murderer**

The apostle John describes the Devil as “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). He was bent on the destruction of man, the crown of God’s creation.

**Liar**

In the same verse, that is, John 8:44, the apostle John calls the Devil a liar and the father of lies. He lied to Eve in the Garden of Eden. He lied to the Lord Jesus Christ as he tempted him in the wilderness. Lies and hatred of truth mark his activity.

**The accuser**

In Revelation 12:10 the Devil is called the accuser” the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.”

**The evil one**

In his first letter the apostle John writes that the whole world is in the power of the evil one (1 John 5:19). In the Lord’s prayer an

alternative translation of the Greek is “deliver us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:13).

#### **The god of this world**

2 Corinthians 4:4 does not mean that the Devil who is described as “the god of this world” is in full control on the world. God is in full control but the Devil is permitted to exercise some control and he is at the root of all the evil in it. He seeks man’s worship even as he tempted Jesus, the Son of God, to fall down and worship him. For such worship he promised all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. When man will not respond to a direct invitation to worship the Devil he rules through whatever man takes into his life instead of God, for example money or mammon.

In Luke 16:13 mammon is personified as a deity, devotion to whom is shown in “covetousness which is idolatry” (Colossians 3:5). Mammon is a Semitic word for money or riches.

#### **The prince of this world**

In the gospel according to John we read: “Now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John 12:31 A.V.). The price or ruler of this world here referred to is clearly the Devil. The casting out of the prince of this world must be explained in the light of the next sentence: “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself”. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and his resurrection from the grave are the means by which the Devil’s power over the nations is broken. In condemning the Lord Jesus Christ, the Devil, “the ruler” or “the price of this world”, condemned himself (John 14:30; 16:11). In these last two verses in the gospel according to John some Muslims see a prophecy of the coming of Muhammad.

#### **The prince of the power of the air**

“The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). This prince who has

some spiritual dominion in the world is the Devil. Natural man is subject to the energizing of the powers of evil controlled by the spirit which has the Devil as its source. He is, therefore, a child of disobedience.

**Angel of light**

(2 Corinthians 11:13-15). The Devil sometimes disguises himself as an angel of light. In a subsequent chapter we will examine in detail those counterfeits of the devil which may seem divine until they are closely examined on the basis of the Bible.

**Roaring lion**

(1 Peter 5:8). John Calvin declares that Peter compares the Devil to a lion as though he were a savage wild beast. Peter calls believers, therefore, to be sober and watchful.

Having listed the names and titles of the Devil we can now look at some biblical material about him in terms of what he does. Since he cannot attack God directly, he attacks man, who is made in God's image. Each of the following references describes a different activity of the Devil against man. Look up each reference and then write the action or activity in the space next to the reference.

- John 8:44
- Matthew 4:1
- 2 Corinthians 12:7
- 1 Thessalonians 2:18
- Luke 22:31
- Zechariah 3:1
- Luke 13:16
- John 13:27
- John 8:44
- 2 Corinthians 11:3
- 2 Corinthians 11:3

1 Peter 5:8  
Matthew 13:19  
Job 1:6-12  
2 Corinthians 4:4  
James 4:7

See the next page to check your answers.

***ANSWERS TO THE EXERCISE ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE***

John 8:44...The Devil lies.

Matthew 4:1...The Devil tempts.

2 Corinthians 12:7... The Devil harasses.

1 Thessalonians 2:18... The Devil hinders.

Luke 22:31...The Devil sifts.

Zechariah 3:1 ... The Devil accuses.

Luke 13:16...The Devil accuses.

John 13:27...The Devil enters into a person.

John 8:44...The Devil kills.

2 Corinthians 11:3...The Devil deceives.

2 Corinthians 11:3... The Devil leads as tray.

1 Peter 5:8...The Devil devours.

Matthew 13:19...The Devil snatches away the word of God.

Job 1:6-12...The Devil tests.

2 Corinthians 4:4...The Devil blinds the mind.

James 4:7...The Devil flees. Basically he is a coward. He knows he is defeated.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: THE DEVIL'S WORKS**

After studying the Devil's names and titles and their meaning we must now take a closer look at his works. Christians and others can easily become involved in satanic works in their desire to know the future, to gain success, to know how to plan for the future and to prove innocence or guilt. This is wrong. Here is a biblical list of what God has forbidden and what is therefore directly motivated and helped forward by the Devil. "There shall not be found among you any one who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, any one who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard or a necromancer. For whosoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord" (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). Part of our difficulty with this passage is its archaic language. We need to turn it into modern speech. A paraphrase might be: "There shall not be found among you...one who uses divination, reading the future by means of geomancy, or examining the organs of a sacrificed animal or bird; using augury which includes palmistry, astrology, fortune-telling, reading tea-leaves, using ouija board etc. There shall not be found among you an enchanter who recites spells or makes love potions etc.; a charmer, reciting charms or secret sayings; a wizard or a witch; a spiritualist, a necromancer, fore-telling the future by consulting with those who claim to be spirits of the dead; a consulter with a familiar spirit, that is, a medium controlled by a spirit."

Every form of idolatry and magic mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:10, 11 with the single exception of human sacrifice is to be found tainting the visible church in Pakistan today. There are other idolatrous practices also present which are not listed in this particular passage but which are included in the general meaning of it. Let us now try to define these works of the Devil listed in the Deuteronomy passage in the context of our present environment.

**“Any one who burns his son or daughter as an offering or who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire”**

This can refer to human sacrifice which is a violation of God’s commandment “Thou shalt not kill”. It can also refer to trial by ordeal which was certainly practiced in the Middle Ages in Europe to determine whether someone was innocent or guilty. Many witches were tried in this way. If the accused person survived the ordeal they were “proved” innocent. As far as I know this not practiced now in Pakistan.

**“Any one who practices divination”**

Divination is another name for fortune-telling. It is an effort to gain knowledge of future or unknown events. Divination today is practiced in many ways including:

**Crystal gazing**

This includes crystal ball gazing and mirror gazing. It is a form of fortune-telling whereby messages from the spirit world supposedly appear on the ball or mirror in visual form. A vision of distant or future events is said to be given. Any kind of fortune-telling is wrong for a Christian.

**Astrology**

Astrology is a form of fortune-telling based on the supposed influences and positions of the stars, moon, sun, and planets on human affairs. Events can be predicted by charting the positions and movements of heavenly bodies. Interest in astrology is widespread and some Urdu daily papers have sections on it. Nawa-e-Waqt has a special section on this subject every Friday. For a personal account by someone who was involved in astrology see the Appendix at the end of this book. Included in astrology is the use of horoscopes. Any kind of involvement is astrology is wrong for a Christian.

**Horoscope**

A horoscope is a scheme showing the disposition of the heavens at a certain moment especially at a person's birth. Use is made of this scheme in foretelling the future. Any use of any kind of horoscope even in fun is wrong for a Christian.

**Cartomancy**

Cartomancy is fortune-telling by means of cards. The cards may be ordinary playing cards laid out, and interpreted along set lines or at the whim of the fortune-teller. Using cards in this way is sin for a Christian.

**Palmistry**

Palmistry or chiromancy is fortune-telling by means of an examination of the hand. An examination of various lines on the hand and the size and shape of the hand, palm and fingers is said to provide knowledge of the future, especially concerning life span, success or failure and general traits of character. A palmist is said to "read" a client's hand. Palmistry is very widespread in Pakistan and takes place openly in the bazaars. Even as a joke or in fun reading of the palm is wrong for a Christian.

**A Soothsayer**

A soothsayer is one who practices soothsaying which is a form of fortune-telling through the interpretation of dreams, visions, omens and other phenomena. Soothsayers are sometimes said to have familiar spirits that reveal the interpretations. Christians need to be on the guard against this subtle kind of fortune-telling. All dreams and visions need to be tested by the Bible and its teaching.

**An Augur**

An augur is one who practices augury. Augury is fortune-telling through the interpretation of omens, portents, entrails of animals, patterns of tea leaves, flights of birds, casting of lots or dice or by any other chance phenomena. For a Christian all augury is sin.

**A Sorcerer**

A sorcerer is one who practices sorcery or magic. Sorcery is a form of magic in which attempts are made to control or direct spirits. Not even as a joke or as an experiment should Christians be involved in magic.

**A Charmer**

A charmer is one who is involved in charming. Charming is done by magical means. It involves bewitching, enchanting, casting spells, conjuring and incantation. It attempts to use the power of evil spirits to obtain certain results such as diagnosis and healing of diseases in people and animals. It can be used to find lost articles, in providing protection against danger, misfortune, or harm. The fact that lost articles can be found by using magic does not justify it in any way. Christians should not be involved in any of these practices.

**A Medium**

A medium is temporarily or permanently controlled by one or more evil spirits as a result of his own volition. The one or more spirits communicate with or respond to people through the medium generally when the medium is in a trance during a séance. A séance is a meeting for exhibition or investigation of spiritualistic phenomena. Some mediums consider themselves to be servants of truth not realizing that in actual fact demons communicate through them with other demons who claim to be the spirits of those who have died.

**A Wizard**

A wizard is one who practices black magic or sorcery and who is skilled in "hidden things". Black magic is always used for harmful purposes like obtaining revenge whereas white magic is used to try to help individuals. Both and all types of magic are sinful and forbidden by God.

### **A Necromancer**

A necromancer is one who practices a form of fortune-telling. Demons described as spirits of the dead are conjured up or invoked. The purpose is generally to obtain information or to learn about the future. 1 Samuel 28:3-25 gives us an example of necromancy. The witch of Endor conjured up a demon representing the prophet Samuel.

The seriousness of all these sins is clear from many verses in the Bible e.g. Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:26; Leviticus 20:27. It is not only a serious matter to practice these hidden arts, that is, to be a sorcerer or a witch or a medium. It is equally contrary to God's word and will to consult such people. "Do not turn to mediums or wizards; do not seek them out, to be defiled by them" (Leviticus 19:31). See also Leviticus 20:6.

Occult practices are condemned in the New Testament also. "Now the works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery... those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21). All the sins described in Deuteronomy 18:10, 11 are an abomination to God. St. John, writing of the heavenly Jerusalem, says: "Nothing unclean shall enter it, nor any one who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:17).

For any engaged in these and similar practices there is only one way out—repentance and cleansing through the blood of Christ, the Lamb, even Jesus. He alone can destroy the works of the Devil and set the prisoners free.

## **CHAPTER SIX: THE FASCINATION OF THE OCCULT**

Now that we have described some of the works of the Devil which are so prevalent today, it would be well to consider the reasons that people, even those who belong to the Christian community, get involved in them and do not renounce them.

### **Curiosity**

Some especially young people and older children get involved in occult practices out of curiosity. This applies particularly to the practice of using a ouija board which may seem like a harmless game. Their motive is often curiosity to find out about the future and to see if there really is any power in the ouija board or not. The ouija is a board with the letters of the alphabet on it together with a small heart-shaped board on casters at two points and a vertical point at a third one. Questions are asked and answers are given in the affirmative or negative. The board takes its name from the French word “oui” meaning “yes” and the German word “ja” meaning “yes”.

### **Interest**

Interest is something deeper than idle curiosity. People are naturally interested in themselves, therefore an activity which supposedly gives a greater understanding of man and his life may draw genuine interest. This temptation must be resisted otherwise one will get enmeshed.

### **Research**

In some cases idle curiosity deepens into interest and leads on to research. Here the question of motive arises. Research can be carried on in order to obtain greater power in the supernatural world and it may lead to domination by the Devil.

**Fashion**

At various periods and in various cultures it has become fashionable to pursue the occult. In the West at present it is fashionable to delve into Eastern occultism, yoga, following certain gurus etc. “Yoga”, which means “union”, includes various physical and psychical exercises. In the West the “exercise” aspect of yoga has been stressed without much emphasis on the mystical or occult side which is designed to achieve union with God. The physical and the occult are not so easily divided. Some yoga is combined with astral projection. Yoga being so fashionable as an exercise for the body and because it cannot be divided from what it traditionally is leads people into the occult often without their realizing it. It is one of the snares of the Devil.

**Spiritual Vacuum**

As some people have no living faith or vital relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ they have a spiritual vacuum in their lives whether they realize it or not. This lack or gap is the main reason why they start indulging in the occult. Man is created as a being belonging to the physical world like the animals but also to the spiritual world like the angels. He lacks full satisfaction if he does not cater for the “spiritual” part of his being.

**Fear**

Most people are very afraid of evil, the future and death. The writer to the Hebrews speaks about the Lord Jesus Christ and the deliverance he gives to people from the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14, 15). “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.” Those who do not find deliverance from this fear of death through the Lord Jesus Christ often seek it in other ways. They go to religious practitioners, for example, pirs or “holy people” to obtain especially blessed flags to hang on their buses or

taxis or gift of a sheep or goat or an offering of money to a faqir or sorcerer in return for help in a certain problem or for better health for a child.

Some practices observed in Bannu in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan are:

The relatives of a Muslim patient who was extremely ill were found sacrificing a goat and dividing the meat among the other patients in the hospital. The dying patient had put her hand on the head of the goat before it was slaughtered. The goat was sacrificed so that the patient might live (April 1977).

The mother of a Muslim Bridegroom was dressed in very shabby clothes “to keep off the Evil Eye” (May 1978). The bride had a black cross on the cheek also “to keep off the Evil Eye”. A male infant was deliberately placed in the lap of the bride for her to look at and handle. This was to ensure fertility.

In order to placate evil spirits and the Devil and to neutralize evil influences like the Evil Eye some people are more absorbed with the things of the Devil than with God. There is widespread fear of the Evil Eye or “buri nazar”. A boy is sometimes dressed as a girl so that the evil spirits will not take an interest in him or so that no jealous enemy will cast an evil eye on him. This has been observed in the Punjab.

A live chicken was sacrificed and the blood dropped on the patient in labour “to make the pains come faster”. This practice was observed in a village near Kabul in July 1976. This could be just ignorance and superstition but it might be an effort to appease evil powers.

**Superstition**

The border line between actual occult practices and superstitious customs is somewhat blurred. Often a knife is placed by the head of a Pathan baby boy. The reason given on one occasion was that this was done to make the boy “a brave Pathan”. Was it really done to ward off evil spirits or was it done for both reasons? Superstition can lead people into the occult.

**The need for guidance**

At one Christian hospital in the Punjab some item had been stolen and various people were under suspicion. In order to clear up the matter some of the nurses decided to use a ouija board to find out who the thief was. They got the answer “no” to each question until the final question when the answer was “yes”. The person so indicated turned out to be the thief and the matter was cleared up. A wrong means had been used to establish innocence and guilt. The nurses had opened their lives to satanic influences which might be hard to shake off without repentance and turning to Christ.

**Lack of biblical teaching**

It may be lack of biblical teaching that was one of the reasons that led to the incident just related above. I have never heard a sermon or Bible study exposition on the sins and dangers of the occult. Although Christians sometimes visit graves and give undue honour to dead religious leaders, obtain charms from Muslim pirs etc. This is rarely if ever declared to be wrong in the light of Scripture. Positive teaching on the true meaning of worship is needed as well as a denunciation of the sins of idolatry and magic. The spiritual diet of both the literate and the illiterate Christian is often woefully inadequate. In the congregations there is generally a lack of teaching and application. Lack of biblical teaching leaves people more vulnerable, more susceptible and open to the occult and to adopting the way of life of their neighbours.

**Misunderstanding of the supernatural**

Some people recognize a supernatural happening but are not aware that the supernatural has either divine origins or satanic origins. They are not able to distinguish between the true and the false, the divine and the devilish and so they get ensnared by the counterfeit and the satanic. I have expanded on this in the next chapter on True and Counterfeit.

**Wanting to get in touch with the dead**

Loneliness and boredom can lead people into experiments with the occult. Extreme loneliness and sorrow can motivate people to try to get in touch with the dead. Through a medium or a person who allows himself to go into a trance and to be taken over by a spirit the dead person appears to communicate. Certainly God would not allow believers to be disturbed in this way so probably the medium is communicating with an evil spirit who imitates the dead person's voice and answers questions displaying supernatural knowledge which has satanic origin. The fact that something appears to work and produces results does not make it right as we have already seen.

**Hereditary influences**

Some people are more susceptible to satanic supernatural influences than others because of their parents', or grandparents' or greatgrandparents' involvement in occult activities forbidden by God. The influences of the occult like those of their sins can affect one's descendants even up to the third and fourth generation (Exodus 20:5). Such people not only need to avoid the occult but to renounce it. Sometimes a believer has niggling doubts about what he might have been innocently involved with by his parents or grandparents as a child. Perhaps he was present for a séance or when a ouija board was used. As a school child he might have joined others in fun in something connected with fortune-telling. Or the believer may have fears for which there seems to be no explanation. All this calls for renouncing any connection with the

occult. It is sometimes helpful to have a service of laying on of hands. The troubled Christian joins in fellowship with two or three other believers and he renounces in prayer any known or unknown connection or contamination with the satanic or occult and asks for forgiveness and cleansing through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The others putting their hands on him pray for his deliverance and for blessing on him, praising God that nothing from the past can now affect him. It was not for nothing that some baptismal services have included the question for the one about to be baptized “do you renounce the devil and all his works?”

### **Bad company**

“Bad company ruins good morals” (1 Corinthians 15:33). The apostle Paul here quotes a proverb which occurs in the works of the Greek writer Menander. The Greek word “ethe” can mean manners or habits as well as morals. Paul quotes the proverb to illustrate the point that the wrong kind of company, in this case those who deny the resurrection, may corrupt good Christian habits. Likewise, close association with those experimenting or deliberately practicing magic and the hidden arts can lead to disaster and should be avoided.

### **Financial gain**

Many religious practitioners, faqirs, pirs, sorcerers, witches etc. make money out of the practice of the occult. Those who sell charms to ward off evil spirits; those who tell fortunes; those who read palms; those who control those who can do these and other things make large sums of money. Dr. Luke records an incident which well illustrates the matter of financial gain (Acts 16:16). The apostle Paul commanded the spirit of divination to leave the girl and it did. Then her owners were very angry as their hope of gain was gone. Vested interests are often behind idolatrous worship and magic. In Ephesus, a silver smith called Demetrius made silver shrines of the goddess Artemis. He and other craftsmen made much profit out of this trade (Acts 19:23-27), Al

across North Africa jewelers have on display in their shops silver ornaments depicting the hand of Fatima. These items are worn to ward off the Evil Eye or evil spirits or disease. It is obviously in the financial interests of some to endorse these customs, beliefs and superstitions.

### **The attraction of the forbidden**

Just as for Eve the Devil made the forbidden fruit seem attractive so today the forbidden and the hidden have a magnetic attraction for some people and this leads them into occult practices (Genesis 3:6).

### **Disobedience**

Some knowing that the Bible strongly condemns sorcery and magic deliberately and willfully follow the Devil, even engaging in Satanism or worship of the Devil. In the first chapter I have describe how in a village near Rahim Yar Khan a Christian evangelistic team came across a family which practice evil worship.

### **Desire for power over others**

Desire for power over others sometimes leads people to get involved in satanic practices. The magician has great power and can dominate people and influence situations. In the village that I mentioned above and in Chapter One some magician tried to drive us out of the village by supernatural means. He or she must have hated the daily preaching of the gospel. The opposition included a nightmarish demonic attack which was the most horrible almost palpable encounter with evil that I have ever experienced. Through prayer and fasting, through praise and worship, through the power of the blood of Jesus we won through and saw God's working in the village and lives changed. This was a power encounter—the Devil's power and God's power. The Devil's power should not be underestimated but neither should it be overestimated. God's power is greater. Jesus Christ is both Lord

and Victor. By the Holy Spirit God's power indwells the believer. "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"(1 Corinthians 15:57).

### **Immorality**

Gross immorality is often linked to occult practices. Sometimes it is difficult to know which leads to the other and how they are connected. Some magical rites include sexual orgies.

### **The sanction of religion**

There are various religions which give no teaching against satanic practices but include them in their systems. This is true of popular or folk Islam and Christianity. In a hospital in Bannu in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan, the following custom was observed in February 1977. A dessicated plant said to have been brought "from the Haj" was placed in water and the water fed to the patient in labour. Meanwhile the relevant passage of the Qur'an was read, probably Surah 19:23-27, which describes the virgin Mary enduring the pangs of childbirth near the trunk of the palm tree. God had provided a rivulet and Mary was told to shake the trunk of the palm tree towards herself, let the ripe dates fall on her and then she was to eat and drink and be consoled. The practice is said to relieve the pains of childbirth, and the "plant" is said to be part of the tree to which the virgin Mary clung when she was in labour.

### ***CONCLUSION***

Sometimes people become involved in magical and occult practices for several of the above reasons or for other reasons which are not listed here. The Bible is very clear in its denunciation of such practices as we have seen in the Old Testament reference in Deuteronomy 18:10, 11. It is not surprising that when God worked in power by the Holy Spirit in Ephesus "the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. Many also of those who

were not believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the value of them and found it to come to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily” (Acts 19:17-20). Three years ago in Pune in India a doctor came to personal faith in Christ. However, she only found full deliverance and peace after she destroyed her books on magic. Before her conversion to Christ she had acted as a medium and had foretold the future to some individuals who came to her. In her case destroying her books on magic was part of renouncing the Devil and all his works.

Whenever a Christian has had any known connection with occult practices of any sort he or she should confess it, repent and renounce it turning to Christ to find forgiveness and new life and power.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: TRUE AND COUNTERFEIT**

The Devil can appear as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). He is a master of imitation and counterfeit. He counterfeits manifestations of the power of God. He imitates in order to deceive and impress, and to gain allegiance. He produces signs and wonders and miracles. He uses visions, dreams, voices and prophecy. He quotes the Bible. It is not surprising that those who are not born of the Holy Spirit are led further into the Devil's clutches. It is alarming that those who are born of the Holy Spirit and who belong to Jesus Christ are sometimes deceived and drawn away from the real to the imitation, from the true to the counterfeit, from the divine to the demonic. We are to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation (Mark 14:38).

What is clearly supernatural fascinates and attracts. It is vital to know the origin of the manifestations of the supernatural—is it from God or is it from the Devil? The natural or unregenerate man will find it hard to distinguish. In fact, he may not be concerned to distinguish. Some of the Pharisees with their hardened hearts reached the ultimate in blindness when they accused Jesus Christ of having a demon and by the power of the prince of demons casting out demons (Luke 11:14-23). This was to confuse the Holy Spirit with the Devil, to see black as white, to utter that blasphemy for which there is no forgiveness (Luke 12:10).

At times of revival, outpourings of the Holy Spirit are followed by signs, wonders and miracles. The basic question is the question of origin. Is this miracle performed by the power of the Holy Spirit or by some other power? Let us look at the true and the false and try to describe the differences between them.

## **Prophecy**

The prophet Joel wrote: “I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28). The Bible speaks of true and false prophets.

The marks of the true prophet are:

- The prophet is inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- The spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet (1 Corinthians 14:32).
- What the prophet prophesies is accurate.
- What he declares does not contradict what God has previously revealed.

A False prophet can have these marks:

- The prophet speaks under inspiration of supernatural powers.
- The spirit of the prophet is not subject to him but his mind and faculties are taken over when he receives or gives his messages.
- What the prophet says may or may not be accurate.
- What he says can contradict what God has already revealed.

Moses wrote: “if a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder which he tells you, comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known...you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul (and) that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death” (Deuteronomy 13:1-5).

### **Dreams**

God may speak to someone through a dream as he did to Joseph on several occasions much to the chagrin of his brothers (Genesis 37:5-11). Joseph also had the gift of interpreting dreams and was able to interpret Pharaoh's dreams as well as those of his chief butler and chief baker (Genesis 40:8-23; 41:15-36). In this age when most Christians who can read have free access to the Bible it seems that God does not use dreams so often. A church worker whom I know was involved in helping dozens of people escape slaughter at the time of the partition of India and Pakistan. She had a large house near the border in which she received those who were fleeing for their lives. Each night she went to bed early and in dreams God gave her guidance for the next day in how to help the particular group. When the emergency passed she no longer received guidance in this way. One may be tempted to seek an interpretation for a dream. The dream may be natural and so there is no need to try to interpret it. The dream may be supernatural in which case it should be determined if it is from God or Satan. The tests can be:

- Is the dream disturbing, nightmare-like? If so it is not from God.
- Is there any particular reason for God to speak through a dream rather than through the Bible, prayer, the counsel of Christian friends and circumstances?
- Do subsequent events validate the dream and its interpretation as being from God?

### **Visions**

God spoke to Peter in a vision (Acts 10:9-16). Its divine origin was confirmed when the Holy Spirit spoke to him commanding him to accompany the three men who would come. The men reported the reason for their coming and how God had spoken to Cornelius also through an angel in a vision. The whole account in the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles records God's

dealings with the Gentile Cornelius and the Jew Peter and how the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit.

Paul crossed into Europe to preach the gospel because God so guided him through a vision (Acts 16:9, 10). Paul decided to extend his stay in Corinth because of a vision (Acts 18:9-11). At his conversion on the Damascus road Paul saw a vision of Jesus Christ (Acts 26:19). Some say that God does not speak through visions today as we now have the whole Bible available and all that we need is found in that. However, God is not bound, and He may choose to reveal truth through visions nowadays too. Sometimes people are unlikely to believe without a dramatic revelation. It is significant that out of fifty recent converts to Christ from Islam in Pakistan over half had had a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ. The vision together with the word of God and the life of Christ seen in a person were the main factors in bringing them to faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

In my own experience I have found that the Lord uses visions. The Lord revealed Himself in a vision at my conversion when I was a university student. Years later when I was spending two months in the Rahim Yar Khan area and our team was experiencing much opposition the Lord gave me a vision of himself coming to the village that evening to save someone. After that several repented and came to him. The purpose of the vision was encouragement like that given to Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:9, 10). In Muscat, the capital of the Sultanate of Oman, I had a third vision. Its purpose was again encouragement and a guide to strategy. In the *Supplementary Notes* of her book *War on the saints*, Mrs. J. Penn-Lewis writes:

Divine visions come without anyone seeking them. They have a definite purpose. They are never abortive and they co-exist with the active use of the mind and faculties. Satanic visions demand a passive state, are broken by mental action, are frequently contrary

to truth and are fruitless in result. They destroy rather than build up reliance on God. (p. 302)

### **Voices**

The voice of God can be heard through man's conscience. The spirit of the man who is spiritually alive recognizes God's voice. When he speaks through the Bible God's voice never confuses or dulls the mind or perplexes a man so as to hinder clearness of judgment and reason. The true voice of God does not make a demand of unreasoning obedience to it, irrespective of the man's free will. In the Bible it seems that God's voice was sometimes heard externally like a human voice as on the occasion when God called the boy Samuel in the Temple (1 Samuel 3:2-14). At Paul's conversion his companions heard a voice but saw no man (Acts 9:7). Writing of the Devil's voice Mrs. Penn-Lewis states:

It is usually loud and comes from outside the person. It is frequently imperative and persistent, urging to sudden action. Confusing and clamorous, or subtle in suggestion; producing fear through its insistent demands, making the man a slave to supernatural power. (It) may also be distinguished from the voice of God by its sometimes trivial objective, and fruitless results when obeyed.

A mature Christian friend of mine related to me this recent experience. She obtained a seat in a mini-bus to travel from Rawalpindi to Lahore—a six hour journey—and had just sat down when a voice said to her: "You will be killed on this journey". She recognized the voice of Satan and immediately started praying, rebuking him in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. She then prayed for protection through the power of Jesus Christ for the vehicle, each passenger, the driver and herself. After some time she stopped praying and started to read. Then about half way to Lahore they came to a small town and the Holy Spirit gave her a quiet conviction that an accident would occur soon and that she should protect her head. So she took out her cardigan and put it

near her head. Close to a teastall the mini-bus swerved to avoid a horse and cart and turned over into the ditch. The glass window near her head shattered into thousands of pieces but she was protected by the cardigan which she had put over her head. The three passengers in the rear were shot out of the back doors which had burst open. No one was seriously injured but all were shaken up. The external voice came from Satan; the internal conviction came from God. What would probably have been a fatal accident was mitigated by the power of God who was responding to the prayer of his servant.

### **Use of the Bible**

The Bible is constantly used by God who inspired it. The Devil also uses it. A young man was taken by an older Christian to visit a man “of great faith”, in Lahore. The man of “great faith” was able to open the Holy Bible at random read a verse, close the book and start shaking and then answer any question that was put to him. He answered with supernatural knowledge. God who created us in his image always appeals to our reason and mind as well as to our faith. Many Christians assumed that because he used the Bible what he said must be divine in origin and emanate from his “faith”. However, the Bible can be used in a magical rather than spiritual way. It is the Devil who inspires its magical use. The Bible is not meant to be used in this random way and as a starting-off point for securing knowledge that is either unnecessary for us or that God does not want us to have. This man’s power came not from God but from the Devil. The Devil uses holy scripture for his own purposes as we see in the account of the temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in the gospel of Matthew chapter 4 verses 1-11. He used it out of its context neglecting logic and reason. The demons also have a correct theology (James 2:19). “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder.” Religious leaders can be extremely well acquainted with the holy scriptures and still have no personal relationship with

Jesus Christ (John 5:39, 40). Christians need to beware of people like the man I have described.

### **Exorcism**

As we have already seen, the casting out of evil spirits can occur by the power of God or by the power of Satan. In Muscat I have heard Muslim exorcists casting out evil spirits from people or attempting to do so. It would appear that the spirits do leave but often they return later to trouble, torment and possess the person. The Lord Jesus Christ cast out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit but He recognized that some of his acquaintances cast out demons by some other power (Luke 11:14-23). We read an account about some Jewish exorcists in Acts 19:13-17. When they decided to adopt the name of the Lord Jesus as part of their exorcism rite saying: "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches", the evil spirits answered "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" The exorcists were then attacked and wounded by the demon-possessed man. The Lord Jesus Christ will not give his power to those who will misuse it.

### **Devil-dancing**

At the time of the Hindu spring festival of Vasaki I once witnessed devil-dancing on the outskirts of the town of Zafarwal in the Punjab. About thirty people danced in honour of the Devil for several hours each night. The nearer one got to the scene the more palpable was the presence of evil. We had to pass near where the dancing was held in order to get back to our lodgings after attending some Christian meetings in the town. It was no morbid curiosity which drew us to witness so terrible a scene but simply that there was no other path to our destination. Such dancing originates from Satan as it is part of the worship of him. It is the counterfeit of dancing before the Lord. King David danced in God's praise and honour (2 Samuel 6:16). Michal, his wife, despised David for this free expression of his feelings of worship

in making merry before the Lord. God vindicated David and punished Michal with barrenness (2 Samuel 6:20-23).

### **Speaking in tongues**

Speaking in tongues is a gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:10). On receiving a filling of the Holy Spirit sometimes a person is given the gift of speaking in tongues. Satan has counterfeited this gift also and it is important to distinguish between the divine and the satanic, between the true and the false. Speaking in a tongue of which the speaker has no prior knowledge is an ability that members of various religions have acquired. When the Holy Spirit gives this gift it is to help the individual believer in his personal worship and to use in public as a way of edifying or building up the believers, provided there is someone present with the gift of interpretation of tongue. Also tongues are a sign for unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22).

### **Miracles**

In the Bible more miracles occurred when the confrontation of light and darkness, goodness and evil was at its greatest—in the time of Moses, of Elijah and Elisha, and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus' disciples had the power to perform miracles through the Holy Spirit. Paul worked miracles and even today especially in the times of revival as in Indonesia in the 1960s we heard on good authority of miracles performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. A few years ago I heard of one widow and her child in a rural area of Afghanistan who day by day were supplied with food like the widow whom Elijah visited and stayed with (1 Kings 17:8-16). This Afghan woman had come to faith in Jesus Christ and despite great hardship found that her needs were miraculously supplied when the natural means ran out. However, just as Pharaoh's magicians could imitate Moses' miracles so today Satan can produce counterfeits. (Exodus 7:8-12).

### **Healings**

Healing can be included in the category of miracles but merit fuller discussion. God uses the skill of doctors and nurses and adds divine wisdom if they seek it. At other times he performs a miracle for which there is no explanation other than that he willed it. In this he sometimes uses the cooperation of a believer who may temporarily or permanently have received a gift of the Holy Spirit—the gift of healing (1 Corinthians 12:9). Sometimes Satan makes someone ill and God sends a servant of his to pray with or for that person and so heals him. In 1962 I lived for two months in a village in Thal. God was mightily at work in the Christian congregation at that time. One day a member of the teenage girls' prayer group was very ill with high fever and her father called the Deaconess and me to come at once. When the Deaconess and I exchanged thoughts on the matter we found we were both convinced that this illness was directly from Satan. We talked to the girl about the fact that her illness was from Satan and told her that the Lord Jesus Christ could heal her. We asked if she believed this and if we might lay hands on her head when we prayed. She was so ill that we did not know how much she understood but we knew she was a believer. Laying our hands on her head we prayed in Jesus' name for her healing and she was healed immediately. The whole village was amazed and we got numerous requests that we should come and pray for the sick. We had to explain that we had no other commission from God to rebuke Satan and pray in like manner for all the sick in the village.

Sometimes Christians go do Christian or Muslim “holy” men and ask for treatment for their sickness. Sometimes they are healed after taking a verse of the Qur'an or the Holy Bible and soaking it and then drinking the water. The question arises whether this is a divine dealing or whether it is satanic. The mechanical and ritualistic method proclaims it to be not of God and therefore satanic.

## **Guidance**

Mrs. Penn-Lewis contrasts divine and satanic guidance in this way:

Divine guidance (is) through the spirit and mind...spirit and mind (are) brought into one accord in harmony with the principles of the Bible. Satanic guidance by supernatural voices, visions, leading, drawings (is) dependent on the passivity of the mind and reason, and takes place in the sense-realm as a counterfeit of the true in the spirit. Divine “leadings” are in the spirit; and demand the co-operation of the man in every faculty of mind and spiritual intelligence...The will is always left free to choose and act. The true “leading of the Spirit” is never out of accord with the principles of God’s Word. Satanic “leadings” and impulses demand passive surrender of mind and body. They are compulsory in effect, and all-compelling; and “compulsion” from the supernatural realm indicates the work of deceiving spirits. (*War on the Saints – Supplementary Notes*, p. 302).

## **Surrender**

We can surrender to God. This is a simple yielding of spirit, soul and body to do his will and be at his service. God asks for our full co-operation in the intelligent use of all our faculties (Romans 12:1, 2). There can be “a passive yielding of spirit, soul and body to a supernatural power to be moved automatically, in passive, blind obedience, apart from the use of volition or mind. Evil spirits desire control of a man, and his passive submission to them.”

In conclusion we can see that God respects man whom he has made in his own image. He appeals to the will, spirit and mind. The Devil appeals to the senses and puts a premium on experience—on the inward rather than on the exalted and all—glorious God. We are to set our minds on the things which are above and which are eternal (Colossians 3:1). Our spiritual experiences are to lead us nearer to him and we are ever to remember the Giver more than the gifts.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: FOLK RELIGION**

In the chapter about the fascination of the occult we have touched on folk religion. The subject is vast and merits a chapter of its own. We have to distinguish between the high or ideal religion of the books—the Qur’an in the case of Islam, the Old Testament in the case of Judaism and the Bible in the case of Christianity—and the actual practice. Sometimes we are in danger of comparing the ideal of one religious system with the degenerate practice of one of the others. Sometimes we categorize people into followers of the “high” or “ideal” form of a religion in “popular” or “folk” into their systems without being aware of any inconsistency. Sometimes the community practices overlap. I once met many Hindus going to a Muslim shrine in Pune in India. Here in Pakistan some members of the Christian community go regularly to church services and even take part in Holy Communion but when there is great trouble or sickness in the home they visit a Muslim pir at his shrine. Folk religion appeals to the “natural” man in his sense of need. Christians are tempted to be squeezed into the mould of those around them especially if they are nominally Christian and not born again and renewed by the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:1,2).

An example of folk religion would be the mechanical use of holy books for magical purposes. The book is almost or actually worshipped (bibliolatry) and verses from it are used as incantations supposedly for the blessing or cursing of particular people. I have heard a verse of the Bible used continuously in this way. Again God’s names can be used in an automatic way in order to try and secure blessing, protection, healing or revenge. In Acts 19:13-17 we have an example of this sin recorded in the Bible. Some itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were possessed with evil spirits. The results were disastrous and the exorcists were themselves afflicted

by the evil spirits. They had seen the miraculous power of the Lord Jesus Christ manifested through the apostle Paul's ministry and thought that by using the name of this Jesus whom Paul preached they could exercise control over men and spirits.

Another clear example of the practice of folk religion comes from the record of the Old Testament. The Jews, while committing all manner of sins, were relying for their acceptance with God on the fact that the holy Temple was in their holy capital city of Jerusalem. They thought that an automatic repetition of the phrase "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord" would save them and their city from God's judgment and from destruction. The prophet Jeremiah rebuked them for this deviation from true devotion and worship and denounced the possibility of the presence of a holy building becoming an automatic insurance against judgment (Jeremiah 7:1-15). Automatic repetition of the names of God and of holy phrases does not influence a holy God and it can harm the one who practices it.

After these two examples from Christianity and Judaism let us look at Islam. At present we are getting a clear definition of folk or popular Islam from the modern rigorous conservatives especially from the Wahhabis who denounce it. Muhammad ibn 'Abd-al-Wahhab (1704-1792), the founder of the movement called Wahhabism and other reform movements today the practice of folk Islam is very widely spread. Much folk Islam is very widely spread. Much folk Islam has come through the influence of the Sufis or Muslim mystics. Bishop John Subhan was himself a Sufi before he accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and became a Christian. In his book *Sufism: its Saints and Shrines* he devotes a chapter to the subject of the veneration of Sufi saints. He wrote:

The belief in Awliya, (singular wali, literally, a friend) saints, is common among Muslims, and is a direct outcome of Sufi teaching. While the Sufis, in virtue of being God's chosen people, are looked upon as the elect of the Muslims, the saints, in virtue of

being God's 'friends', are regarded as the elect of the Sufis. The biographies of these saints, their miracles, their teaching, and legends concerning them are not merely sought out and eagerly studied but their names and more popular sayings are on the lips of about seventy per cent of the followers of Islam. People of every class among the Muslims invoke their names in hours of distress, and pilgrimages are constantly made to their tombs and shrines. In fact, there are many Muslims who pay more attention to the saints than to the obligatory duties of their religion. (page 103)

We have to bear in mind that Subhan wrote his book in 1938 and revised it in 1960. It was written with "Special reference to India and Pakistan" as the subtitle of the second edition shows. However, things do not seem to have changed much. Father M. Geijbels wrote an article in the July 1978 issue of the *Muslim World* (Volume 68 No. 3) on *Aspects of the veneration of Saints in Islam with special reference to Pakistan*. Geijbels writes:

Examining the religious attitudes of people in Pakistan, we notice that they can roughly be divided into two groups: 'people of the mosque' and 'people of the shrine'. Those in the first group are predominantly rational and traditional in the manifestation of their religious beliefs and practices. They generally adhere, at least theoretically, to the articles of faith and the fundamental practices of the 'five pillars'. The members of the second group follow their emotions more readily than their reason and show a lack of concern for orthodoxy or orthopraxy. The distinction obviously should not be applied too rigidly, since life cannot be divided into watertight compartment. Yet it cannot be denied that shrines and saints occupy an important place in the life and devotion of many people in Pakistan...

Pakistan is covered with shrines... The shrines in Pakistan are either of deceased saints, places where a living saint resides, or a combination of the two, because the actual, living pirs are often considered to have inherited their 'sainthood' from their forefathers, who are usually buried in the same premises where the present pir resides or holds court... In popular belief the power of

the saints is very great. They can perform miracles (karama, plural karamat, literally, 'favour')...

It seems that the saints fulfill a three-fold function in the religious needs of people, namely, teaching (irshad), intercession (shafa'a) and the bestowing of blessings (rahma). While pirs impart religious instruction to their followers, it is our impression that this instruction is mostly restricted to an inculcation of the elementary teachings and practices of Islam and that they do not often engage in profound theological interpretation or spiritual counseling.

Murray T. Titus in his book *Islam in India and Pakistan* (Revised reprint 1959) has a chapter entitled *Saint-worship* (pp.137-152). He writes:

...to the masses the belief in saints, and their ability to grant requests, fulfill desires, and perform miracles is still a real, positive and practical belief...The belief in the miraculous powers of saints to help and to heal covers almost the whole category of human need...The graves of saints are visited by litigants seeking victory in law cases; by the farmer who has lost a horse; by the woman who desires a child; by the father who seeks healing for his sick boy; by the merchant who desires prosperity in business; by the hunter who wants a luck day; by the gambler, and even by the thief. (p. 138)

I have quoted at length from Subhan, Geijbels and Titus as they are authorities on these matters. However, from my thirty two years of living in Pakistan and from wide traveling in the subcontinent, Middle East and North Africa these observations are confirmed in my mind. Folk Islam is widespread and it affects those of other communities as well as its own. Many Muslims agree that the power to perform miracles (karamat) is a sign of the blessing of God.

In one Christian hospital in the north of Pakistan most of the patients have first sought healing through religious and

supernatural means. They have been to a pir or other religious practitioner to obtain amulets. Often a verse from a holy book is written on a piece of paper and put inside the amulet. The power of the sacred language (Arabic) and the divine words themselves are believed to give blessing and, it is hoped, healing. If eventually the healing is not given, the religious practitioner will give permission to the patients to go to the Christian hospital and say that after a few weeks they will be healed. In such cases the credit for the healing goes to the religious practitioner unless the patients see some clear demonstration of God's power in the Christian hospital and the Christian staff.

In this matter of folk religion there are two problems facing Christians. Often nominal Christians get involved in the folk practices of other communities and also develop their own brand of folk religion within their community. This is the sin of conforming to this world of which the apostle Paul writes and forbids in Romans 12:2. The other problem is that the wonderful power of God is not seen by all as much as it could be if Christians obeyed Paul's second plea that believers go on being renewed by the Holy Spirit and transformed in their lives. Sometimes the power of the Holy Spirit is seen by patients and others as God answers the prayers of his servants and does miracles in healing and changing lives. Let me give an example.

In a frontier town of about sixty thousand people most people are Muslims, there are a few Hindus, some scheduled castes and about one hundred Christian families. Many of the Christians are nominal in their faith. Like some of their Muslim neighbours they visit Muslim shrines and pirs, obtain charms to ward off evil spirits and the Evil Eye. One such nominal Christian woman came to Christ and found new life. She started to share her faith in the institution where she works. She also set about ridding her house of charms and pictures connected with idolatrous worship. After removing all offending object she whitewashed her home. She

then invited a group of believing Christians to have a service in her house. She wanted a service of cleansing, and prayer for herself, her husband, children and extended family. The believers were not sure how God would lead them. They taught by heart a verse from the prophet Isaiah 60: "You shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise" (verse 18). Sometimes she had been in danger from satanic influences and so they encouraged her from 1 John 5:18-20 and Psalm 105:12-15. A Muslim neighbour was present. She is now studying the Bible. Others listened to the service. After praying for the cleansing of the rook, the group praised God, teaching the five small children how to respond when Christ is described. The leader said: "Jesus Christ is King" and all present replied: "Praise be to him" and then the leader said: "Jesus Christ is Lord" and the reply by the whole group was: "Praise be to him." Other declarations were made followed by the same response. In the courtyard after prayer for cleansing the leader said: "God is great" and the group responded: "Praise be to him" and then the leader said: "God is our Father: and the group said: "Praise be to him" and so on. On the roof after praying for cleansing the leader said: "The Holy Spirit guides" and the group answered: "Praise be to him". Then the leader said: "The Holy Spirit is divine" and the group responded: "Praise be to him" and so on.

Many in the neighbourhood could not fail to hear these declarations and praises. Before this happening and even more so since, the woman of the house has had opportunity to talk about her living faith with her neighbours of all communities. The power of God is being seen in a transformed life and gradually God is changing the home. Instead of fear there is praise.

As Christians we have been hesitant to engage in a more public ministry of intercession despite all that the Bible says on this subject. Also we rarely expect God to do miracles and so we limit his working by our lack of faith. He is merciful and sometimes works despite our lack of faith. We put our stress on teaching

biblical material but we often do this in a very Western way. Our teaching would be sought after and listened to if it could be seen more clearly that God answers our prayers and works miracles through the community of those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ. If Christians living in other communities or in close touch with those of other communities were known to be more prayerful and prayed more for and with others especially in the exercise of a Christian healing ministry more of Christ's power might be seen and recognized. Perhaps we should develop more private and public forms of worship and intercession related to our environment. When groups of Christians deliberately pray with others or for others for specific matters, and this is known and God answers, he is glorified and people come to make known their needs, problems and fears. If the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is seen as a God who heals, delivers from evil powers, gives peace in crisis, and demonstrates his power in answer to believing prayer, Jesus Christ may be accepted as the greatest of all pirs. Christians who show in their own lives the power of the Holy Spirit can convincingly point to the living Christ as the true answer to human need. As a result of miraculous signs and clear answers to prayer others will join in listening to teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ or will request it.

One helpful book on this subject recently published is *Blessing in Mosque and Mission* by Larry G. Lenning. The author examines the concept of "baraka", that is, blessing, in Islam and Christianity. He notes the power of blessing that Abraham received from God. Jesus of Nazareth was one on whom rested the blessing of God and who shared it so abundantly with others (Acts 2:22-24). The Holy Spirit anointed the Lord Jesus Christ for his three fold ministry of preaching and teaching, healing and serving. Power and blessing were demonstrated. The church has now received the responsibility—and the anointing—for this ministry (Luke 4:18 and 19). In his sixth chapter Lenning describes ways through which blessing is communicated—through the spoken word i.e.

through benedictions, greetings, and beatitudes; through sacred acts e.g. laying on of hands, healing, ordination, imparting of the Holy Spirit; ritual meals, anointing. Later Lenning warns that:

...the Church must be careful to distinguish between blessing (baraka) that has its source in God and animistic baraka. This is often difficult because both types carry the connotation of power. While this may seem to be an obstacle, it can become an opportunity, because a “popular” Muslim’s sensitivity to power may impel him to accept the blessing of God in Jesus Christ and discover new and eternal life. (pp. 113-114)

Lenning argues that the Christian church has through worship, ritual and liturgy many opportunities for giving the blessing of God to all. A revived and a renewed Church can indeed be the means of God’s blessing—an instrument that the Holy Spirit can use. A church which is not revived and renewed is generally unable to distinguish the place of power and of blessing because it has forgotten in experience and theology how great God is. Those who fail to experience the blessing that has its source in God are often drawn into other paths in seeking blessing—it is generally the path of folk religion.

## **CHAPTER NINE: CHRIST THE VICTOR**

In spiritual warfare the Lord Jesus Christ is the Victor. Apart from him there is no victory. Apart from him there is no victory. The Reverend Michael Green in his book *I believe in Satan's Downfall* gives a graphic illustration of how we can have victory in Christ. He describes a fire in the large treeless tracts of grasslands in Canada. There seems to be no escape as the mighty fire approaches, burning and destroying everything in its path. The only way a man can escape is to start a small fire near where he is standing and to produce an area of burnt ground. If he stands in the middle of the burnt ground the approaching fire will not envelop him and he will escape. Jesus Christ has become our burnt ground. If we rely on him and his work for us on the cross and seek refuge in him we will escape in that great and terrible day. The Lord Jesus Christ has become a refuge from the destruction which the Devil has caused. He was manifested so that he might destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8). The ultimate and final victory was won on the cross. Jesus is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 5:6, 9, 12). Jesus Christ, who is the Lamb of God and the eternal Word of God by his incarnation, death and resurrection manifested the eternal purposes of God. He, by his death and resurrection saves us from our terrible enemy, the Devil. The focus of the Devil's defeat and the climax of Jesus' victory is seen in Jesus' voluntary death on the cross and in his resurrection on the third morning. Sin and death have been overcome and are defeated of foes.

In Colossians 2:13-15 the apostle Paul writes to the believers in the city of Colossae "You, who were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having cancelled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing to his cross. He disarmed the principalities and powers and

made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.” Let us look at the parts of these verses which particularly apply to our situation.

**“You, who were dead in trespasses” (v. 13)**

We are all born dead. We breathe, move, eat, drink, sleep, grow, think and feel but even so we are spiritually dead. It is possible to remain dead, cut off from the living God, all one’s earthly life. Once I was shown over Sialkot Jail by the Superintendent. I asked to see the three prisoners who were condemned to death. They could talk, walk around their cells, eat, think—they were just like the rest of us except that they were as good as dead. The death sentence had already been passed. Apart from a miracle there was no hope for them. In a week that which had been declared in court would be enacted at the gallows. Spiritually we are all in this position. Only a miracle can save us. The miracle that can save us from perishing is Jesus’ death and resurrection. We can continue in our condemned cells, that is in our trespasses and sins or we can walk out free. “He who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God” (John 3:18). If we accept the Lord Jesus and believe in what he has done for us, repenting of our sins, God saves us. We who were dead are made alive in Christ.

**“And you, who were dead...God made alive together with him” (v. 13)**

God raised Jesus Christ from the grave thus confirming Jesus’ life and showing his approval of him. As the prophet Isaiah declared many centuries before the event: “It was the will of the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand” (Isaiah 53:10). Those who recognize and confess their desperate condition and cry to Jesus for mercy will find in him a refuge. The power of the Holy Spirit will give them new life. They will rise from spiritual

death. Jesus has risen from the grave to die no more. Those who believe on him are united with him in his death and resurrection and will never die spiritually.

We are born dead—subjects of Satan, citizens of his kingdom but through the Lord Jesus Christ we can be born again and become friends of God, members of his kingdom. Jesus himself said to a very religious God-fearing man called Nicodemus: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). A man’s spiritual birth, like his physical birth, is God’s gift. He did not choose his physical birth but he can refuse his spiritual birth. As Jesus said in the same gospel, this time speaking to the Pharisees: “you search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life” (John 5:39, 40). We can also ignore God’s arrangement for our salvation, in which case we will not benefit from it. We can despise it and so remain dead in trespasses and sin. I remember reading about a very poor old woman who was crouched by a tiny fire trying to heat some porridge on a small stove. She hardly had enough fuel to keep the fire going. A relative visited her and seeing her plight tried to help her by giving her some money to buy more food and fuel. After he left she happily burnt the currency notes for fuel not recognizing the value and potential of the rupee notes. She did not refuse the gift but she seriously underestimated it. Many do not reject Jesus Christ; they just underestimate him.

Consider two men. They both pray regularly, read the Bible every day, go to Church once a week and live apparently decent lives. Both are respected in the community. One remains dead in trespasses and sin because he does not think a new birth is necessary even though Jesus says with emphasis that it is. The second man is convicted of sin and is conscious of God’s holiness. He casts himself on the mercy of God, asks that his sin and is

conscious of God's holiness. He casts himself on the mercy of God, asks that his sins be forgiven and that he might be given new life in Jesus. He has reached the point of spiritual birth. He is born a second time—not of the flesh this time but of the spirit. He receives the Holy Spirit to dwell in his life. He now has the seed of a new life in his being. The seed grows, matured by prayer and the study of the bible, nurtured by fellowship with other believers. He is accepted by a holy God because God's Spirit now dwells in him. What he does in the power of the Holy Spirit God accepts for God cannot deny himself. Sometimes the second man grieves the Holy Spirit within him and needs again to seek forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ. This is not new birth for spiritual birth like physical birth is only given once and he already has this. The Holy Spirit will not depart from him but the man can limit God's work in himself. Before his spiritual birth there was no direct and living link between him and God. "He was dead"—the line of communication had not been repaired and was dead. After his spiritual birth the line can be temporarily out of order but it cannot be completely disconnected beyond repair. The first man whatever he does remains dead. He may be trying to make himself good enough to accept Jesus Christ but he can never succeed. His only hope lies in realizing his desperate condition. He is not seriously ill or dying—he is dead.

**“You were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh” (v. 13)**

Our trespasses—deeds of sin—are but the evidence and proof of our state of sin. We are sinners therefore we sin. It is not that we do sins and therefore become sinners. We are born in a state of sin. We are born dead in the uncircumcision of our flesh. God made the repentant sinners in Colossae alive together with the Lord Jesus Christ, 1) having forgiven all their trespasses at the moment they trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ and 2) having cancelled the bond or written agreement which condemned them under the legal demands of the law and put them under a debt that they could never pay by

their own efforts. The deeds of sin were forgiven, the legal charge, condemnation and punishment were cancelled. The bond was set aside—made useless and powerless. It was nailed to the cross. The nails went through the hands and feet of Jesus Christ. It was he who took responsibility for the bond and all it implied. He was condemned, he was punished, he bore not just the actual sins but the sinful state of man in his own body on the cross. “He became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Also he gave the death blow to the devil and his followers. He took away all their weapons. He openly showed them up for what they were. He triumphed over them on the cross—the place where they thought that they would destroy him.

**“He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in his cross” (v. 15)**

You can have an encounter with a demon who was present when Jesus Christ died on the cross. Every demon you meet was present then. Every demon was fatally wounded and defeated then. In Jesus Christ’s name and power you, if you are “in Christ”, can command the demon to go to the place reserved for his eternal judgment at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will then trouble no one else before then or ever. The Devil himself was present when Jesus Christ died on the cross. He was in effect destroyed at that moment. How is it, then, that he has any power now? You may have seen a recently beheaded chicken still running around. The Devil is like that. He has no power at all over those whom God has made alive in Christ unless they make some concession to him by not walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). They were dead and are now alive; the Devil was alive but is now as good as dead.

## **CHAPTER TEN: GOD'S ARMOUR**

In spiritual warfare we need to put on the whole armour of God as the apostle Paul declares in his letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 6:10-18). In his letter to the Romans (Romans 13:14) he uses another metaphor and commands: "put on the Lord Jesus Christ". Whoever thought of putting on or wearing a person? Sometimes the Old Testament illuminates New Testament imagery and theology. The prophet Isaiah speaks of being clothed with the garments of salvation—surely not so different from wearing the Saviour. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall exalt in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of Salvation, he has covered me with the garments of Salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10). The victory of the shepherd David over the giant Goliath also depicts for us what St. Paul writes in Ephesians chapter 6. Let us, therefore, examine that Old Testament story in 1 Samuel 17:28-18:5.

The Israelite army was massed and in battle order on one hill; across the valley on another hill the Philistine army was in a similar state of war alert. How frightened the Israelites were when they saw the Philistine champion parade up and down. He was a giant, over nine feet tall, called Goliath from the city of Gath. "He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he wore plate-armour of bronze, weighing five thousand shekels." (This was about 157 pounds). "On his legs were bronze greaves, and one of his weapons was a dagger of bronze. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and its head, which was of iron, weighed six hundred shekels (19 pounds); and his shield-bearer marched ahead of him" (1 Samuel 17:5-7 NEB).

The Philistine champion taunted the Israelite troops: "Why do you come out to do battle, you slaves of Saul? I am the Philistine champion; choose your man to meet me. If he can kill me in fair

fight, we will become your slaves; but if I prove too strong for him and kill him, you shall be our slaves and serve us. Here and now I defy the ranks of Israel. Give me a man,' said the Philistine, 'and we will fight it out'" (1 Samuel 17:8-10 NEB). Despite their previous experiences of God's help and deliverance the Israelites were very afraid.

Goliath kept up this psychological warfare for forty days and paraded every morning and evening in front of the Israelites. Then one day David, the youngest son of Jesse, appeared on the scene. His father had sent him with food supplies for his three soldier brothers and their commanding officer. He was instructed to deliver the rations and then return home with news of their health. David reached the military camp just as the Israelite army was taking up battle positions and raising its war cry. David left the supplies with the store keeper and ran to the battle line to greet his brothers. While he was talking to them Goliath emerged and the Israelites ran away in terror. David enquired about the whole situation and queried who this uncircumcised Philistine was that he should defy the army of the living God. Then David was told about this giant who came out every day to defy the Israelite army and to challenge it. They reported that King Saul was offering a large reward to the man who would kill the giant and he would give his daughter in marriage to that man and exempt his family from military service. David's elder brother, Eliab, taunted him when he heard David talking and enquiring about this matter. In anger he accused him of neglecting his sheep in the wilderness and coming away only to see the fighting. What David had said reached the ears of King Saul. The king summoned him and David said: "Do not lose heart, sir, I will go and fight this Philistine'. Saul answered, 'You cannot go and fight the Philistine, you are only a lad, and he has been a fighting man all his life.'" (1 Samuel 17:32, 33 NEB). David then related to Saul his experiences as a shepherd in killing lions and bears. He claimed that the Lord who saved him from the lion and the bear would save him from the

Philistine. King Saul then sent David against the Philistine. He gave him his own tunic, coat of mail and sword. Then David said that he could not make use of untried armour and weapons so he took them off. Instead he picked up his stick, selected five smooth stones and put them in his shepherd's bag. With sling in hand he walked out to meet Goliath. Goliath in derision said: "Am I a dog that you have come out against me with sticks?" (1 Samuel 17:43 NEB) He cursed him and threatened to make him prey for the birds and beasts. David answered him: "You have come against me with sword and spear and dagger, but I have come against you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the army of Israel which you have defied. The Lord will put you into my power this day; I will kill you and cut your head off and leave your carcass and the carcasses of the Philistines to the birds and the wild beasts; all the world shall know that there is a God in Israel. All those who are gathered here shall see that the Lord saves neither by sword or spear; the battle is the Lord's, and he will put you into our power." (1 Samuel 17:45-47 NEB).

The story of how David killed Goliath is well known but maybe what it teaches us about spiritual warfare needs to be analyzed. Satan can seem as frightening, powerful and arrogant to the Christians as Goliath did to the Israelites. Goliath saw himself as the representative of the Philistines and called for an Israelite who would represent his people. It was Goliath versus David just as it was Satan versus Jesus. What happens to Goliath happens to his people and what happens to David happens to the Israelites. The issue of battle decided by representatives was quite a usual custom in those days. What happens to Satan happens to all who follow him and what happens to David's greater son and lord, Jesus Christ, happens to all who follow him. Alan Redpath in his interesting book on David entitled *The Making of a Man of God* writes:

David here is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, who overcame Satan at Calvary, and also a picture of every child of God who is being made one with him through faith and obedience. Christ is the Head and we are his body, and therefore if he has won the victory over Satan, so have we” (p. 24).

Redpath draws several parallels from the story of David’s encounter with Goliath and Jesus’ with Satan. He often compares David and Jesus. I am indebted to his for some of these ideas which I will try to summarize.

- David was sanctified by the Holy Spirit. After the prophet Samuel had anointed him as the future king of Israel “the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward” (1 Samuel 16:13). Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit at his baptism at the beginning of his public ministry (Matthew 3:16, 17).
- David was sent by his father from his home to the battleground (1 Samuel 17:17 N.E.B.). Jesus was sent by God his Father from his heavenly home into this sinful world to destroy Satan and his works. “The Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world” (1 John 4:14).
- David was mocked by his brothers (1 Samuel 17:28 N.E.B.). He was despised and counted unworthy for the battle. Jesus was also mocked and he was despised and rejected by men (Isaiah 53:3).
- David like Jesus had been tested before this encounter with Goliath. He had killed lions and bears in the wilderness as he watched his father’s sheep. Jesus had overcome Satan in the wilderness during the forty days of fasting. Throughout his life he was tested and tempted (Hebrews 5:7, 8). Personal conflict and victory had prepared both David and Jesus for the public battle-David’s against Goliath in the valley of Elah and Jesus’ against Satan on the cross outside the city of Jerusalem.

- David put his trust in God. David said to Goliath: “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel...that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give you into our hands” (1 Samuel 17:45, 47). Jesus likewise committed himself to God and God vindicated him (Luke 23:46; Romans 1:4).
- David triumphed by trusting in spiritual principles and weapons. He renounced the ways of the world. Saul wanted to dress David in his own armour to make him as like Goliath as possible. David renounced the whole idea. He knew that it was useless to imitate Goliath (Zechariah 4:6; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5). He trusted in God’s ways and in God’ Spirit. So it was with Jesus. Jesus could have called for legions of angels to fight for him. He chose the divinely appointed way to conquer (Matthew 26:53; Philippians 2:6-11).
- All the Israelites shared in David’s victory over Goliath just as all Christians can share in Jesus’ victory over Satan.

If today we would be victorious over Satan we must like David renounce worldly methods and weapons and enter into the benefits of Jesus’ victory. In the New Testament the apostle Paul gives us the same teaching and lessons that we find in the story of David and Goliath. Let us look closely at this key section on spiritual warfare in the letter to the Ephesians 6:10-18. Early on in his letter to the Ephesians Paul has spoken of the Holy Spirit. It is in the context of Christ and the Spirit that we must think of our warfare. We are to put on the armour of the One God. The Trinity is mentioned in Chapter 1. God the Father blesses believers with all spiritual blessings in Christ and the gifts and power of the Spirit are made available to them at once on their union with Christ—to be appropriated and re-appropriated. The Holy Spirit is God’s seal on

the believer, thus showing the personal sign of the owner. The Christian belongs to God—not to Satan. Again in 2:18 the Trinity is mentioned. Both, that is Jew and Gentile, as believers have through Christ access in one Spirit to the Father. In 4:3-5 believers are urged to maintain the unity of the Spirit. There is one Spirit, body and hope; one Lord, faith and baptism; one Father of all. Provision is made for the believer to be victorious in his union with the One God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Throughout the letter Paul stresses that the believer is in Christ and in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:21 in Greek, the original language in which it was written, ends with the words “in the Lord”, while the next verse ends with the words “in the Spirit”. Man’s abiding in Christ and Christ’s indwelling in man by the Holy Spirit belong together as the parable of the vine and the branches teaches us in the Gospel according to John chapter 15. It is the constant assumption and in some cases, like Ephesians 3:16, the specific emphasis of New Testament teaching that strength for the Christian life comes by the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. So easily by our words spoken in anger or by our thoughts harboured in bitterness we can grieve God. We are commanded not to grieve the gentle dove-like Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). In Ephesians 5:18 the present imperative Greek tense means “go on being filled with the Spirit”. Victory over depression and joy in the daily routine of life are found not by drinking wine but by the irrepressible Holy Spirit of God who is willing to go on filling us provided we do not grieve him or sin against him.

So it is with a deep experience of relationship with the triune God that we continue as soldiers of God. It is not surprising that after such instruction and towards the end of his letter Paul is ready to give his teaching about spiritual warfare. When he wrote or dictated his letter he was himself a prisoner chained to an armed Roman soldier. His circumstances gave him the suggestions for the imagery. He was not literally suggesting that the Christians put on his spiritual armour piece by piece. He rather saw it as one

covering or protection. A singular noun is used for the word “armour” in the Greek. He was urging the believer to put on Christ—to put on Him rather than it. We must be clothed in Him if we are to overcome Satan. David trusted in the power of the living God and defeated Goliath. In Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit we also cannot be defeated. We wrestle not against fleshly Goliaths but against the evil powers that control Goliaths. Also the flesh and blood that Satan uses should not become the object of our enmity. We are to hate Satan but not those whom he uses. We are to love our enemies and pray for them that oppose us and persecute us.

David said: “It is God that girdeth me with strength...He teacheth my hands to war” (Psalm 18:32, 34). The great Puritan writer John Owen wrote (*Works* 11, p. 110 ed. Gould): “We that can do nothing in ourselves, we are such weaklings, can do all things in Christ as giants.” So God supplies us with a sevenfold panoply. The sevenfold reminds us of seven, the perfect number, signifying perfection. The panoply or armour of God is a complete and perfect defence and equipment for warfare. It is Christ himself. Each believer is involved in this warfare. Paul changes the picture from soldier to wrestler for a minute to state that “we wrestle”—you and I. We are not alone in the battle, or in the wrestling.

Now let us look more closely at this passage Ephesians 6:10-18, examining it verse by verse although by no means fully.

Verse 10. It is the armour of God, the armour that he himself supplies. Be strong—the Greek present passive tense suggests a continuous strengthening which makes us powerful.

Verse 11. The devil uses deceit as well as force. The “picture is not of a march, or of an assault, but of the holding of the fortress of the soul, and of the Church for the heavenly King” (Moule).

Verse 12. Our wrestling is not with flesh and blood but with the Devil and his instruments.

Verse 13. Having done all. The Greek verb for done implies achievement in war or in the Grecian games.

Verse 14. Your loins girded with truth identifies the soldier as being on duty, having girded up his undergarments so that he can put his armour on—the breastplate of righteousness.

Verse 15. Shod with the preparedness of the gospel of peace.

Verse 16. The shield of faith.

Verse 17. The helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit.

The items are described in the order the soldier would use in putting them on. When we think of “putting on Christ” we remember:

- His truth—he requires truth in the inward parts—integrity and sincerity
- His righteousness—he requires righteous act. Neglect of a righteous act, a sin of omission leaves a hole in the armour.
- His peace—the peace he gives in our hearts despite all pressures (John 16:33)
- His faith—the faith he gives, reliance on God
- His salvation—the provision for saving us from the sins of the past, giving abundant life now and eternal security
- His Spirit—who interprets the Scriptures for us and points us to Christ.

In verse 18, St. Paul commands all prayer at all times, with all perseverance and for all saint. The armour is to be put on with prayer. There is no holiday in this war. Like Nehemiah and his

followers when they were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem we are to work with one hand, holding our weapon in the other-always in a state of watchfulness and readiness for we never know when our enemy will attack. So we are to stand firm and having done everything to stand. Standing firm, giving no place to Satan is in itself victory. Satan is not here tempting us to do wrong but is attacking us because we are doing right. We are to stand and not flee. As Gerstner writes: "When tempted to do wrong, flee as Joseph did before Potiphar's wife; when threatened for doing right, stand as Daniel did before Nebuchadnezzar's den of lions."

When we join with others to help in a ministry of deliverance we will be attacked. Those delivered will be attacked. I have known illiterate as well as literate people to benefit greatly from learning this passage in Ephesians by heart and also other Scriptures which can be used in the hours of assault as Christ himself used the Scriptures in his temptation and in the hour of death.

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN: TEACHING AFTER DELIVERANCE**

Jesus Christ warned about the dangers of empty spaces. The house swept clean unless it is filled with something good will be reinhabited by evil powers. The cleansing may have provoked the evil powers and so they will try to return in greater numbers and force. The Devil cannot stand before the authority, the name, the blood and the praise of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is very important that a person who has been delivered from evil powers or has been involved in some way and has found release should be helped to stand against any attacks of the Devil. Some things he needs to learn immediately and put into effect. In addition he needs a longer time of teaching so that he may grow in Christ and continue victoriously in his Christian life. There are certain biblical lessons, doctrines, passages of Scripture and verses which will be of particular help to him. I am, therefore, outlining four Bible studies which can be used by and with such a person. How he studies them depends on whether he is literate or not. However, the illiterate person can be greatly helped through teaching on cassettes.

### **Bible Study 1**

#### ***THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST***

Passage to be studied: Matthew 28:16-20.

Memory verse: Matthew 28:18

Key thought: The Lord Jesus Christ has all authority

Outline of study:

- Who arranged this meeting? (Matthew 28:16).
- Who attended this meeting? (Matthew 28:16).
- When was this meeting held?
- When the disciples saw Jesus what did they all do? (Matthew 28:17).
- What did some of the disciples do? (Matthew 28:17).

- Do you think they doubted who Jesus was or his resurrection from the grave or his power? (John 20:27, 28).
- To how many of his disciples did Jesus speak? (Matthew 28:18).
- Did Jesus preach a sermon or just engage in intimate conversation? (Matthew 28:18).
- How much authority does Jesus have? (Matthew 28:18).
- Who gave Jesus this authority?
- Give an example of Jesus' authority over:
  - a storm (Luke 8:22-25).
  - Sin (Mark 2:1-12).
  - Death (John 11:43, 44)
  - Rulers (John 19:11)
  - His church (Matthew 16:18).
  - The Devil (Matthew 4:10, 11).
- Does Jesus delegate any of his authority? (Matthew 28:19).
- What is the meaning of the word disciple?
- Who makes disciples? (Matthew 28:19).
- Into whose name are disciples to be baptized? (Matthew 28:19).
- What teaching is to be given? (Matthew 28:20).
- In Matthew 28:18-20 pick out:
  - Jesus' promise
  - Jesus' command
  - Jesus claim
- What are the four parts of Jesus' command?
- Is Jesus Lord of all the lands, nations, tribes and peoples?
- Is Jesus Lord of all the days and all the months, and years and centuries?

#### PRAYER

We praise you, O Lord Jesus Christ, for all your authority.

We praise you, O Lord Jesus Christ, for your authority over nature.

We praise you, O Lord Jesus Christ, for your authority over sin.

We praise you, O Lord Jesus Christ, for your authority over death.

We praise you, O Lord Jesus Christ, for your authority over rulers.  
 We praise you, O Lord Jesus Christ, for your authority over the church.  
 We praise you, O Lord Jesus Christ, for your authority over the Devil  
 We praise you, O Lord Jesus Christ, for your authority over us.  
 We praise you, O Lord Jesus Christ, for your authority over  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Amen. So be it.

**Bible Study 2**

***THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST***

Passages to be studied: Matthew 1:18-23 and Colossians 1:15-23.

Memory verse: Matthew 1:21.

Key thought: There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

Outline of study:

Read Matthew 1:18-23 and answer the following questions:

- Who normally chooses a name for a baby?
- Who chose the name for Mary's son?
- How did Joseph and Mary know what name to give the child?
- What does his name mean?
- Why was this name given?
- What other name was the child given?
- Who prophesied that he would have this name?
- What does this other name mean?
- What other names do you know for the child?
- Praise him using as many names as you can remember.
- Read Colossians 1:15-23 and do the following:

Make a list of what is said about the Lord Jesus Christ in this passage?  
Describe the meaning of each item on your list.  
Praise the Lord Jesus Christ for all that he is called in this passage.

PRAYER

Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ,  
    You are the image of the invisible God.  
Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ,  
    You are the first born of all creation.  
Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ,  
In you and through you and for you all things were created, in  
heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or  
dominions or principalities.  
Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ,  
    You are before all things.  
Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ,  
In you all things hold together.  
Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ,  
You are the head of the body, the church.  
Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ,  
    You are the beginning.  
Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ,  
You are the first born from the dead, that in everything you might  
be pre-eminent.  
Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ,  
That in you all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.  
Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ,  
That you have reconciled all things to God whether on earth or  
heaven, making peace by the blood of your cross.  
Praise be to the one God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen. So be it.

### **Bible Study 3**

#### *THE BLOOD OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST*

Passage to be studied: Revelation 12:7-12.

Memory verse: Revelation 12:11

Key thought: We overcome the Devil by the  
blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Outline of study:

- Who fought whom? (Revelation 12:7).
- Who is Michael? (Revelation 12:7).
- What names and titles are given to the Devil? (Revelation 12:9, 10).
- What does each name or title signify? (Revelation 12:9, 10).
- How do believers overcome the Devil? (Revelation 12:11).
- Why is Jesus called the Lamb? (1 Peter 1:18-20)/
- In what ways is the Passover Lamb a type or picture of Jesus? (Exodus 12:5, 6, 12, 13).
- What does John the Baptist say about the Lamb of God? (John 1:29).
- What does John the Apostle say about the Lamb? (Revelation 5:6-10).
- How are we cleansed from all sin? (1 John 1:7).
- How are we equipped to do God's will? (Hebrews 13:20, 21).
- Why will the attacks of the Devil increase? (Revelation 12:12).
- To whom does the final victory belong? (Revelation 17:14).

#### **PRAYER**

We praise you, O Lord God, that we are washed from our sins by the blood of the Lamb.

We praise you, O Lord Jesus Christ, that day by day you cleanse us through your blood.

We praise you, O Lord God, that we can overcome the Devil by the blood of the Lamb.

Praise be to the one God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

#### **Bible Study 4**

#### ***THE PRAISE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST***

Passage to be read: Psalm 136 (One group reading the first part of each verse and the second group reading the response).

Memory verse: Hebrews 13:15.

Key thought: If God is God, where is his praise?

Outline of study:

- Can we praise God without a pure heart? (Psalm 51:10, 15).
- Is praise a gift from God? (Psalm 51:15).
- Should we praise God every day and in every situation? (Psalm 34:1).
- How are Paul and Silas examples of those who praised God in this way? (Acts 16:23-25).
- Can we praise God acceptably without the help of the Holy Spirit? (Isaiah 61:1-3).
- Can we praise God acceptably if we do not know the Lord Jesus Christ? (1 Peter 2:5).
- Can we praise God acceptably with our lips only? (Mark 7:6, 7).
- Why is the praise of children often acceptable to God? (Matthew 21:16).
- What does it mean to call the doors of a house “Praise”? (Isaiah 60:18).
- Is praise for God alone? (Isaiah 42:8).

#### **PRAYER**

...in the name of the one God, Father,

Son and Holy Spirit.  
Leader: God is our Father  
Response: We praise you, O God our Father.  
Leader: God is our Creator  
Response: We praise you, O God our Creator.  
Leader: God is our Sustainer  
Response: We praise you, O God our Sustainer.  
Leader: God is our Helper  
Response: We praise you, O God our Helper.  
Leader: God is our King  
Response: We praise you, O God our King.  
Leader: God is our Lord  
Response: We praise you, O God our Lord.  
Leader: Jesus is our Shepherd  
Response: We praise you, O Jesus our Shepherd.  
Leader: Jesus is our Saviour  
Response: We praise you, O Jesus our Saviour.  
Leader: Jesus is our Master  
Response: We praise you, O Jesus our Master.  
Leader: Jesus is our Lord  
Response: We praise you, O Jesus our Lord.  
Leader: The Holy Spirit is our Comforter  
Response: We praise you, O Holy Spirit, our Comforter.  
Leader: The Holy Spirit is our Guide  
Response: We praise you, O Holy Spirit, our Guide.  
Leader: The Holy Spirit is our Life-Giver  
Response: We praise you, O Holy Spirit, our Life-Giver.  
Leader: The Holy Spirit is our Lord  
Response: We praise you, O Holy Spirit, our Lord.  
Glory be to the one God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen. So be it.

## **APPENDIX: ASTROLOGY**

### **ASTROLOGY WAS MY HOBBY A PERSONAL ACCOUNT BY OSWALD CHAKRAVARTY**

#### **Books and charts**

At the age of 15 my uncle began to teach me the fundamentals of astrology. After a few months studying books and horoscopes, a friend showed me his hand. Instead of looking at his palm I decided to cast a horoscope for the time at which he questioned me. He was very surprised to find that even without looking at his hand I could tell him many things about his past. I predicted that he would get a job in a factory. He did not believe me—but a few weeks later he came to congratulate me on my accuracy! Such incidents encouraged me to study astrology still further.

Then God made me spiritually alive and for a few months my interest in astrology died down. When I asked some friends whether I should continue to practice it, they said that astrology was scientific and that there was nothing wrong with it, but that it could be used to help people. They could not have been more wrong.

Now I studied astrology from many books. When anyone came to consult me, I used to make a chart for the time of the question and consider all the astrological factors which showed up in it. I would meditate on these factors, keeping the question in mind. Ideas would come into my mind, which I noted down. Suddenly, the answer would be on my tongue.

My predictions sounded strange to me and I wondered how they could possibly take place. But the things I said came true!

By now I was completely absorbed in astrology. Looking for the astrological cause for everything filled my waking hours.

Although I did not notice it, the Bible had become a bore and I did not like to pray. The only things which interested me were astrology, palmistry and numerology. Soon Tantra was added to my reading list.

### **Surprises**

One day in 1970 my teacher at college showed me his palm and I was able to tell him what he wanted to know. Then he told me that his father was an astrologer, and invited me to his home.

His father was indeed a successful part-time astrologer. Whenever he used his powers of prediction he worshipped gods of the various planets in order to appease them. Otherwise, he said, they would have a bad effect on the astrologer and his family.

He then revealed that his own brother had been unable to pass his final examinations because of practicing astrology. When he gave up astrology for a time and worshipped the gods, his powers of concentration gradually returned and he eventually got through his examination.

This reminded me that I, too, was unable to pass my examinations at the first attempt. The books agreed with the remedy suggested by the astrologer but I knew that to worship other gods would be directly to disobey the first two of the Ten Commandments: You shall have no other gods before me, and you shall not make for yourself a graven image...you shall not bow down to them or serve them. So I did not worship the planetary gods.

In those days I became very irritable. At times there was such a storm of evil thoughts in my brain that I thought I was going mad. Sometimes I even felt like killing people and used to lock myself in my room until the urge died down.

I also suffered from headaches, hypertension and nervousness. After I had used the power of predicting the future for anyone, I used to feel very tired and weak.

Another startling fact was that many of those who consulted me slowly developed an aversion to the Bible, Jesus and all the things of God. I just could not understand what was wrong, as I had been telling them things which proved correct.

### **Hobby my master**

One day, a boy who used to travel to college and back with me seemed to me to have a peculiar look in his eyes, as if he were going to die very soon. Next day, when the two of us were standing with a teacher at the bus-stop, a speeding truck knocked the boy down and ran over his head, killing him instantly.

A month later, I was talking to another friend when I noticed that he had the same peculiar look in his eyes, as if he would die the next day. Next morning the newspapers reported that he had been killed in an accident. Now I was scared. A fearful power had appeared in me and I was helpless to get rid of it.

Sometimes the thought of killing myself came into my mind, but the spirit of God showed me that this was an absurd thought and that I should seek release from it. It was as if I was no longer master of myself, but a slave to some powers which were trying to destroy me. I had started with astrology as a hobby, but now it had become my master. I longed for release.

Then I thought of the astrologer who had advised me to leave astrology. I went to him again and he told me I must give up astrology for a while and worship the gods of the planets.

Now I knew that I was in a fix and could not escape from Satan's clutches on my own. I tried to pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, but it

was very difficult even to get down on my knees to pray. But God was merciful and when He saw that my desire to be freed was real, He put a desire in my heart to study the Bible.

First, I passed my final examinations and then I was able to get down to more serious study of the Bible. After some months I found that I had given up astrology. I had the courage to turn away the people who came to consult me. They were very surprised, but I knew the evil effect of using powers which God has forbidden us to use:

There shall not be found among you...any one who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur,...for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord. (Deut. 18:10-12 RSV)

### **Books burnt**

In December 1971 I developed a strong urge to burn all the occult literature I had. But I did not want to—after all, I had spent hours preparing those notes and charts. So I put the thought away from my mind. Two weeks later the same thought came back to me: that I should burn all my occult literature. So I prayed to Jesus that if this thought was from him it should remain, otherwise it should fade away.

After another month the urge was still there, so I took out all my charts and burned them. But that night there was no sleep, only an even stronger urge to destroy every last trace of astrology, which meant even my carefully prepared notes.

Next morning I took the step of burning everything. As everything burned up, I felt as if a burden had been lifted from me. Now studying the Bible and praying was a very interesting and lively affair, because my obedience to Christ had restored my friendship with him.

At this stage I made a fresh commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and was very happy. My headaches, nervousness and storm of confusing thoughts had stopped. I now came across this verse in Leviticus (20:6 RSV):

If a person turns to mediums and wizards, playing the harlot after them, I will set my face against that person, and will cut him off from among his people.

This is just what had happened to me. God had set His face against me. My experience confirmed the truth of this verse.

Now that I had left the works of Satan and turned to God, the things which had been predicted about me did not come true. Now my future was in the hands of that Person who can change the future easily. He had forgiven my past and taken control of the future.

After some months, however, I again looked at somebody's palm, told the past and also predicted a few things. That night and the next morning I did not want to pray or study the Bible. When I noticed what was happening I asked God for forgiveness and decided never again to read a person's hand or horoscope.

As I look back, I see that my spiritual life had been crippled by astrology. Jesus has forgiven me and healed my body, soul and spirit. In fact he has given me a new spirit which wants to expose the deceitfulness of doubting and not obeying the Bible, which has been written for our good.

Praise and thanks be to Jesus, the Almighty Lord, for his love and power and for delivering me from what had once so completely mastered me.

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