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SHORT TITLE

THE SATANIC IN ST. PAUL'S LETTERS

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THE SATANIC IN ST. PAUL'S LETTERS WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FALSE TEACHERS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

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June 1960

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A number of modern theologians have recently made the assertion that the one thing lacking in our present-day theology is a well-defined demonology. This has often been based on the assumption that because the world has changed since the beginning of Christianity, the satanic has changed also. But this is not necessarily so for, although the world may have changed, humanity basically remains the same. The reason that our times lack a clearly defined demonology is because Satan and all his evil angels have come to be regarded as belonging to an age of superstition and have no place in our modern and "enlightened" era. The absurd and neurotic stories of demons and devils, the superstitious and abominable ideas of a leering, cloven-hoofed Satan which grew up in the Middle Ages and later times has left our age with a certain apathy and scepticism towards the supernatural side of evil.

A vital and practical demonology is certainly necessary to sharpen our awareness of evil and the distinction between right and wrong. Our understanding of the satanic not only puts us on guard but also brings into sharp emphasis the real greatness of God's grace and deepens our trust in our Saviour. For this reason I have undertaken to investigate what St. Paul says about Satan and his followers in order to

find a vital and practical demonology for our day. The reason St. Paul is chosen rather than the other New Testament writers is that he more than the other writers is dealing directly with and writing explicitly about the problems that continually confronted the congregations, Christians, and teachers of his time and which still confront us today.

Because of the nature of the investigation the problems that arise cannot be dealt with exhaustively by giving the various opposing views. Indeed, many questions arise in this area, of which some can never be answered with any great amount of certainty. Only those questions which are not so much historical but rather have some special importance for our time have been discussed at length. Questions such as Satan's relationship to the believer and to sin, and his influence in the Church through false teachers have had to receive precedence over such problems as St. Paul's thorn in the flesh, and the possibility of Satan having inflicted physical suffering on the excommunicated one in I Corinthians 5:5.

When writing to his newly-formed congregations St. Paul did not have to explain to them who Satan was or what he stood for. He had already taught them according to what he had learned both from the Holy Scriptures and from the popular Jewish theology which he had oriented to a Christian perspective. In order to understand as they understood and to dispel the idea that St. Paul's demonology is just the

result of superstitious beliefs, it has been necessary to recapture the whole background from which the Apostle taught. I have therefore included a chapter on the names, definitions, and characteristics of Satan in which the Old Testament and the Pseudepigraphical backgrounds are discussed, and a chapter also on the satanic host where an attempt is made to answer the problem of what principalities and powers are and what is their sphere of abode. The relation of Satan to sin, the Christian and the Church has also been dealt with in another chapter. A chapter has been devoted to Satan's relation to false teachers in the Church, and another deals with the Apostle's reference to the Anti-christ and Satan's connection there.

In this study I have taken the traditional view that St. Paul wrote all thirteen letters. It may be noted here that in the Pastoral Epistles the Apostle takes a slightly different point of view in regard to false teachers, but this is not only natural under the circumstances but also necessary as he is no longer writing to congregations but to young men who are carrying on his work. Because they face the problems from a different angle, the Apostle must advise them from a different angle; but basically his advice is the same.

Few books have been written on the subject of demonology from an exegetical point of view and still less on false teachers. This has necessitated dealing extensively with primary sources, especially in the first two chapters. Never-

theless, there are many books which have been read to provide a necessary background to the subject. Most of the previous investigations have dealt quite generally with demonology or the work of Satan and, although not used extensively in the body of the thesis, have stimulated thought and led to new ideas.

CHAPTER II

NAMES, DEFINITIONS, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SATAN

St. Paul uses a variety of names for Satan, the enemy of God and man. Sometimes it is a name familiar to us from the Old Testament, sometimes the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament word, sometimes a word which merely defines the evil work of Satan. In one instance the Apostle uses a term which is not found in the Septuagint although it is used in the Hebrew Old Testament, and it appears that he makes use of it because of its popularity among the people at that time. Before a true understanding of the force behind these words as used by St. Paul can be gained, the whole Old Testament background and the usage of these words in New Testament times must be brought to mind.

ὁ βετανῶρ

St. Paul uses the term ὁ βετανῶρ ten times in his epistles for the adversary, destroyer, and tempter of mankind. It has an interesting etymology, being derived from the Hebrew verb, בָּטַן , meaning "to be or act as an adversary." Wherever this word is used it always has this general meaning; it is found mainly in the Psalms,¹ where the Septuagint always translates it with the verb ἐνδιὰβόλην. Elsewhere it is

¹Ps. 38:21; 71:13; 109:4,20,29.

found only in Zechariah 3:1, where the Septuagint translates it with ἀντικειθῆαι--a word which is used often by St. Paul with the idea of opponent, enemy.² The Hebrew Old Testament frequently has the noun, שָׂטָן, without the article, and it is interesting to note the various ways in which the Septuagint translates it. In I Kings alone the word is translated as ἐπίβουλος, ἑατᾶν, ἀντικείμενος. I Kings 11:14 is the only place in the Septuagint where ἑατᾶν is used, other than a marginal reading in I Kings 11:23. Here it means a specific human adversary who is called Hadad the Edomite. In none of these cases, however, does שָׂטָן mean Satan but always a human adversary. Twice (in I Chronicles 21:1 and Psalm 109:6) the noun without the article is translated by δαίβολος --the most common word in the New Testament for the devil or Satan. But in these two instances it cannot be judged from the contexts whether Satan or a human adversary is meant. The reference in I Chronicles 21:1 is especially interesting because in its parallel in II Samuel 24:1 Jahweh is mentioned instead of שָׂטָן. However, in Zechariah 3:1f. and in about thirteen places in the Book of Job שָׂטָן is found with the article where it undoubtedly refers to Satan and where the Septuagint translates every time with δαίβολος. The part Satan takes in the Book of Job is the beginning of the intensified role he plays in later Jewish literature

²Gal. 5:17; I Tim.1:10; I Cor. 16:9; Phil. 1:28; II Thess. 2:4; I Tim. 5:14.

and in the New Testament. He fits into the category of the $\text{בְּנֵי הַקְּדָשִׁים}$ and enjoys a privileged position among them. This phrase is not to be understood as meaning the sons of God but as god-like beings or angels. He has the great mission of going to and fro upon the earth to discover the faults and wrongs of men and reporting them to God. This makes him the adversary of men. But the weakness of Satan himself is seen in that he regards all men with suspicion and begins to accuse them falsely so that

from the accuser he becomes the destroyer, for the opposition which he shows towards men leads him to a like opposition to God, whose office certainly involves judging men, but whose chesed is always disposed to love them.³

In the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, a literature which dates from about 200 B. C. to 300 A. D., Satan becomes the power and prince of evil desiring to destroy the relationship between God and man. The Book of Enoch uses the plural satans referring to the whole satanic host which are otherwise known as the "angels of punishment" under the guidance and leadership of Satan.⁴ In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs the name of Satan is connected with wickedness,⁵

³Edmond Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, translated by Arthur W. Heathcote and Philip J. Alcock (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1958), pp. 71-72.

⁴All references in this thesis to the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament are taken from R. H. Charles, editor, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913).

⁵Test. Dan 5:6.

and hatred.⁶ The idea of the angels of the Lord or the angels of Satan meeting the souls at death as they leave the body is found here for the first time in Jewish literature.⁷ The Book of Jubilees prophesies that with the coming of the kingdom of the Messiah there will be "no Satan nor any evil destroyer,"⁸ but it says that the same thing was the case during Joseph's rule in Egypt.⁹ In other books the fall of Satan is described,¹⁰ and he is variously described as the personification of evil, seducer, and deceiver. No doubt many of these ideas were prevalent in Judaism in New Testament times.

Compared with the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Apocryphal New Testament, the canonical New Testament strikingly exhibits a balance and sanity that is entirely free of the extravagances of popular satanology with its absurd stories¹¹ and satanic transformations.¹² Satan is

⁶Test. Gad 4:7.

⁷Test. Asher 6:4.

⁸Jubilees 23:29; 50:5.

⁹Jubilees 40:9.

¹⁰E.g. II Book of the Secrets of Enoch 29:4,5.

¹¹E.g. "Acts of Pilate" and other writings in The Apocryphal New Testament, translated by M. R. James (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924).

¹²Louis Matthew Sweet, "Satan," The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, edited by James Orr et al. (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, c.1915), IV, 2693-96.

still the adversary of man but he is also the great tempter and destroyer seeking to separate man from his God and Saviour. The subtleness and deceptiveness of Satan is brought out clearly by St. Paul. In Romans 16:20 Satan brings about dissension and opposition to the true doctrine by creating false teachers who lead the simple-minded astray. This work of Satan reaches its height in II Thessalonians 2:9, where he becomes the cause and perpetrator for the most subtle evil of all--the work of the Antichrist. In I Corinthians 5:5 and I Timothy 1:20 he is the destroyer of the flesh in excommunication. I Corinthians 7:5 speaks of being tempted by Satan through lack of self-control, and Satan indeed tries to gain the advantage over the Christian (II Cor. 2:11) and often has success (I Tim. 5:15). St. Paul points out the subtle deception of Satan by describing him as one who disguises himself as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14). Satan's work is essentially the hindering of the work of God (I Thess. 2:18), and he does this to such an extent that St. Paul himself is continually harassed with a "thorn in the flesh" (II Cor. 12:7).

ὁ διάβολος

The word, *διάβολος*, is used eight times by St. Paul in his letters. Although not the most popular word for Satan in the Pauline letters, it is the most popular in the New Testament as a whole. As we have seen above, the Septuagint

uses this word to translate the Hebrew יָצַו in the Book of Job and in Zechariah, and יָצַו in I Chronicles 21:1 and Psalm 109:6. The Septuagint also uses διάβολος twice in the Book of Esther, once to translate גִּיָּז (8:1) from the verb meaning to tie, bind up, act hostilely to, and once for גִּזָּו (7:4). It is interesting to note that two verses later (7:6) the Masoretic Text again has גִּזָּו but this time the Septuagint translates it with ἐχθρός . גִּזָּו is otherwise used very frequently in the Old Testament and has the general meaning of adversary. In the two passages in Esther the διάβολος is Haman the wicked and slanderous Jew, and thus must be translated as enemy or accuser and not as devil.

In the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha devil is used interchangeably with Satan or adversary. Ideas which appear in the New Testament, especially the Pauline letters, are also found here. In the Wisdom of Solomon 2:24 the writer says: "By the envy of the devil death entered into the world, and they that belong to his realm experience it." In the Book of the Secrets of Enoch which was probably written during the first half of the first century A.D. we find for the first time a lengthy description of the devil:

The devil is the evil spirit of the lower places, as a fugitive he made, he made Sotona from the heavens as his name was Satomail [sic], thus he became different from the angels, but his nature did not change his intelligence as far as his understanding of righteous and sinful things. And he understood

his condemnation and the sin which he had sinned before, therefore he conceived thought against Adam, in such form he entered and seduced Eva, but did not touch Adam.¹³

The story of the Fall and the devil's part in it is a common theme in these writings, and the Books of Adam and Eve are entirely devoted to this. The devil is seen as the great tempter of Eve, and so the subtle temptation of man away from God and into sin becomes the great work of the devil. He has fallen and blames his fall on man, and so his desire is to cause man to fall also. The Books of Adam and Eve explain the devil's fall as coming about because he would not worship man (Adam).¹⁴

The devil's work of temptation is also emphasized in the Gospels and the letters of St. Paul. But, in addition, the word $\delta \alpha \beta \lambda \omicron \varsigma$ is used according to its derivation from the verb $\delta \epsilon \mu \beta \alpha \lambda \lambda \omega$ "to bring charges with hostile intent, either falsely, or slanderously, or justly."¹⁵ Thus the devil is the tempter, the slanderer and the liar who works in men's hearts to estrange them from God and to make them his disciples. Because $\delta \alpha \beta \lambda \omicron \varsigma$ is used as the name for the devil in earlier literature, the word must be translated as such in the Pauline letters unless the sense demands

1331:4-6.

1412:1-17:3.

¹⁵William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Cambridge: University Press, 1957), p. 180.

otherwise. Thus in Ephesians 4:27 *διαβόλος* does not mean a slanderer but the devil whose aim it is to stir up anger in the heart of one Christian against another so that strife ensues which creates dissension in the congregation. His aim is not only to separate man from God but also one Christian from another. So also in the Pastoral Epistles the condemnation and snare must be taken as of the devil rather than of some slanderer. But there is greater difficulty where the plural *διαβόλοι* is used, being always mentioned in a list of vices (I Timothy 3:11; II Timothy 3:3; Titus 2:3). Possibly the translation should remain as devils, the idea being not that they themselves are slanderers but that by their example they become children of the devil, and through them the devil tempts, slanders, and leads astray others from God. This would fit in with John 6:70 where Jesus calls Judas Iscariot a devil, and with John 8:44 where Jesus tells the unbelieving Jews that they are the same as their father the devil (cf. also I John 3:8; Acts 13:10; 5:3; 26:18; Revelation 2:9).

ὁ πειράζων

In spite of the emphasis on temptation by Satan in the New Testament, the word *πειράζων* is used only twice as a name for him--in Matthew 4:3 and I Thessalonians 3:5. The idea of Satan as tempter goes back to the Book of Job where God permits Satan to tempt Job in order to try him. This shows

the character of temptation and the position that Satan has in the world--that he is under God and can only do his evil work of temptation because God allows it to test man, to refine his faith, and to show to man that he must not rely on his own strength but on the power of God. Yet this does not excuse the devil, for the devil does not tempt man to strengthen him but to turn him from his faith and thus to cut him off from God.

St. Paul is well aware of all of this when he writes to the Thessalonians and tells them that he sent Timothy to them so that he might find out whether he had laboured in vain in preaching the Gospel to them, whether the tempter had somehow tempted them and led them back from their newly-converted state to a state worse than the first. The Apostle describes the position of Satan under God when he tells of the position of the Christian toward temptation in I Corinthians 10:13:

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way to escape, that you may be able to endure it. 16

¹⁶All Bible quotations in this thesis are from the Revised Standard Version, although in some cases slight emendations are made to bring out the full meaning of the text.

Βελιάρ

The word βελιάρ is used only once in the New Testament and that by Paul (II Corinthians 6:15). The context is not strong enough to give a conclusive answer as to its meaning and so it has been disputed whether it means Satan or the Antichrist. In order to find an answer the Old Testament must be consulted for etymology and derivation; and the later Jewish writings, such as the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the recently discovered literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls, must be consulted for current usage.

As the variant βελιάλ also indicates, βελιάρ is the transliteration of the Hebrew בְּעִלְאִי .¹⁷ This word is found twenty-seven times in the Masoretic Text; yet there is considerable doubt whether it can mean specifically Satan. Even its etymology is uncertain. The first part בְּעִ is generally taken to mean without. Some connect the other part with בְּעִי , yoke thus giving the meaning of the word as unbridled, rebellious; others connect it with בְּעִי , to ascend giving the meaning as without ascent, of the lowest condition; others again connect it with בְּעִי , to be useful and give the meaning as without usefulness, good-for-nothing. This last meaning has been taken generally as

¹⁷ "Belial," Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, prepared by John M'Clintock and James Strong (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, c.1895), 1, 732.

the most likely because the fusion of the two words would then be most easily explained.¹⁸ Yet the contexts in which the word appears seem to demand a stronger term than this. The Septuagint variously translates it with παράνομος (lawless, unlawful), λοιμός, λοιμή (plague, pestilence, any infectious disorder), ἀνομία (lawlessness), ἄφρων (senseless, crazed), λυπέω (give pain to, grieve), πονηρός (evil); and βελιάλ is also found in one manuscript.

Παράνομος and ἀνομία are used frequently and this has led some to think of a connection here with the Antichrist because in II Thessalonians 2:3,8 St. Paul calls him ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας and ὁ ἄνομος. Yet it cannot be said whether לְעִשְׂרֵי is ever meant as a proper name.¹⁹ Usually it has the adjuncts וְשָׂרִים and יְדֵי and this combination means something like wicked men.²⁰ But where the adjuncts are omitted the meaning becomes clearer. In Psalm 18:5 (and II Samuel 22:5) לְעִשְׂרֵי is paralleled with מוֹת, death, which in later literature at least comes under the power of the satanic (cf. Hebrews 2:14). In Nahum 1:11 and 2:1 לְעִשְׂרֵי,

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Edward James Hogg, "'Belial' in the Old Testament," The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, XLIV (1927-28), 56-58.

²⁰ KJV generally translates with sons of Belial, and the RSV follows Hogg in translating base fellows. Cf. also the parallels in I Sam. 30:22-- לְעִשְׂרֵי וְשָׂרִים וְיְדֵי and in II Sam. 16:7-- לְעִשְׂרֵי וְשָׂרִים וְיְדֵי וְשָׂרִים.

if not a name for Satan, is at least the name for a great evil power which is personified. However, in I Samuel 25:25 and Job 34:18 it seems to be used merely as a term for reproach like *ῥακά* and *μισέ* (Matt. 5:22).²¹ So the most that can be said of its meaning in the Old Testament is that it is a general term denoting the power of evil, which becomes intensified to mean the Evil One.

In the Pseudepigrapha the word Beliar is found very frequently and is often used interchangeably with Satan. In the Book of Jubilees we have the Old Testament phrase sons of Beliar (15:33) and in a prayer of Moses the spirit of Beliar plays the role of an accuser of men before God and as one that ensnares the people away from all the paths of righteousness in order to cause them to perish (1:20). In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs Beliar is the most popular word for the evil power who is vying with God for the hearts of men, but a Saviour is foretold who will come who will destroy Beliar. When the Lord departs from the heart of man, Beliar takes over; but when man lives righteously and the Lord dwells with him, Beliar flees from him.²² When man is ruled by Beliar, it is because he has forsaken the commandments of the Lord and cleaves unto evil

²¹"Belial," Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, p. 732.

²²Test. Dan 4:7; 5:1; Test. Iss. 7:7.

and follows his sinful inclination in order to please Beliar.²³ A close parallel to II Corinthians 6:14, 15 is found in Test. Levi 19:1, "And now my children, ye have heard all; choose therefore for yourselves either the light or the darkness, either the law of the Lord or the works of Beliar." This same contrast is found in Test. Jos. 20:2 where Joseph is prophesying that the Egyptians will afflict the Israelites after his death and he says: "The Lord shall be with you in light, and Beliar shall be in darkness with the Egyptians." The most commonly mentioned instruments of Beliar's evil powers are deceit and malice. All fornication and sexual lust is in the spirit of Beliar, and this also is one of his most powerful instruments according to Test. Sim. 5:3, "Beware, therefore, of fornication, for fornication is the mother of all evils, separating from God, and bringing near to Beliar."²⁴ But as long as man fears the Lord and loves his neighbour he cannot be smitten by the spirit of Beliar.²⁵ Then a Saviour is spoken of who will come and redeem the men from bondage to captivity from Beliar and make war against Beliar. This follows according to the Messianic prophecies:

²³Test. Iss. 6:1; Test. Asher 1:8; 3:2; Test. Naph. 2:6; 3:1.

²⁴Cf. also Test. Jos. 7:4; Test. Reub. 4:7,11; 6:3.

²⁵Test. Ben. 3:3,4.

In thee shall be fulfilled the prophecy of heaven [concerning the Lamb of God, and Saviour of the world], and that a blameless one shall be delivered up for lawless men, and a sinless one shall die for ungodly men [in the blood of the covenant, for the salvation of the Gentiles and of Israel, and shall destroy Beliar and his servants].²⁶

Finally when all the tribes turn to the Lord and are his people, the spirit of the deceit of Beliar shall be no more, "for he shall be cast into the fire forever."²⁷ In the Martyrdom of Isaiah 2:4 Beliar is called the "angel of lawlessness, who is the ruler of the world." This almost looks like a reference to the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2:3) but Satan and Beliar are used interchangeably here, and so it must be taken as a reference to Satan who is the ruler of the world.²⁸ In the Sibylline Oraoles 3:63 and 4:2 Beliar appears to be regarded as the Antichrist who will come out of Samaria.²⁹ In the Hebrew Fragments of a Zadokite Work 9:12 we are told that those who enter into God's covenant and do not keep it will be "visited for destruction through the hand of Belial." In 7:19 there is a striking parallel to II Timothy 3:8; Belial as Satan is

²⁶Test. Ben. 3:8. The brackets have been inserted by R. H. Charles to indicate possible later Christian interpolations. Cf. also Test. Zeb. 9:8; Test. Dan 5:10.

²⁷Test. Jud. 25:3.

²⁸Cf. John 12:31; 16:11; II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12.

²⁹This is believed to be a reference to Simon Magus or the returning Nero. The section is regarded by Juelicher and others as of Christian origin. See R. H. Charles, *op. cit.*, II, 371.

described as bringing evil to thwart good through the two Egyptian magicians, Jannes and Jambres, who according to Jewish legend were the magicians who withstood Moses, Exodus 7:11ff.³⁰

Other Jewish literature shows how popular the name Beliar or Belial became as another name for Satan. Although it is not found in rabbinic literature, yet it is used as the only name for Satan in the writings of the Dead Sea Sect. In the scrolls found in Cave I the word Belial is found thirty-four times. In the War Scroll (14:9) the present age is called the "dominion of Belial," but in the end Belial will be destroyed--"when the great hand of God is raised against Belial and against the whole army of his dominion with an eternal smiting" (18:1).³¹ Throughout there is the warring of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Wickedness. The Spirit of Wickedness or the Prince of Darkness is Belial.³² He is certainly looked upon as a personified adversary of God's people in the War Scroll and probably also in the

³⁰See Walter Lock, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, in The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924), p. 107.

³¹Miller Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: The Viking Press, c.1958), pp.287-88.

³²Theodor H. Gaster, The Dead Sea Scriptures In English Translation (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., c.1956), pp. 281-82.

rest of the scrolls.³³ The term Beliar is used frequently also in the New Testament Apocrypha, where it is just another name for Satan and sometimes for Death.³⁴

These references in extra-Biblical literature show that Belial or Beliar was probably the most popular name for Satan at the time of St. Paul, and the similar thought-patterns in St. Paul show that he was directly or indirectly familiar with it. The use of Beliar in II Corinthians 6:15 without any explanation demonstrates this. That Belial here means Satan can easily be maintained because of the very few instances in contemporary Jewish literature where it can mean otherwise. Thus Beliar or Satan would stand as Prince of all evil contending against the kingly Christ.

ὁ πονηρός

The term ὁ πονηρός, the Evil One, is used by St. Paul as a name for Satan in Ephesians 6:16. In II Thessalonians 3:3 it is uncertain whether it means "the Evil One" or simply "evil thing." The term is used frequently in the New Testament, and there are only two certain instances of the use of

³³Hans Walter Huppenbauer in his article "Belial in den Qumrantexten," Theologische Zeitschrift, XV (March-April, 1959), pp. 81-89, disagrees with this, especially in regard to the Hodajoth, where he says that Belial is the foolishness that a man says, the wickedness a man does, and the destruction manifest in judgment (p. 84).

³⁴Cf. Gospel of Bartholemew, Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Bartholemew the Apostle, and Acts of Andrew and Matthias in M. R. James, op. cit.

the neuter--in Luke 6:45 and in Romans 12:9--where in both cases it is directly opposed to τὸ ἀγαθόν. II Thessalonians 3:3 is possibly an indirect illusion to the Lord's Prayer. But there, too, the meaning is uncertain. However, as Lightfoot points out, a comparison with Jewish formularies leads one to favour the masculine rendering. Passages from the early rabbinical writings give evidence that the expression "the Evil One" was common.³⁵ The traditional interpretation of the passage in the Lord's Prayer seems to have been the same. The Greek writers, the early versions, and the Eastern Liturgies all point decisively to the masculine rendering.³⁶ Also the context of II Thessalonians 3:3 makes it seem likely that it refers to a person rather than a principle. In the previous verses St. Paul is exhorting the Thessalonians to pray for him and his fellow-workers so that they may be delivered from wicked and evil men. The whole chapter deals with evil men who with their evil words and deeds would draw others away from the tradition which they have received from St. Paul. Thus these men are doing the work of the Evil One,

³⁵E.g. Midrash Shemoth Rabbah, chap. 21: "God delivered me over to the Evil One," Midrash Debarim Rabbah, chap. 11: "The Evil One, the head of all Satanim," and Baba Bathra 16a where Job 9:24 is quoted, "the earth is given into the hands of the Evil One." Quoted by J. B. Lightfoot, Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), pp. 125-26.

³⁶Ibid.

Satan, and so this verse could well be translated: "But reliable is the Lord, who strengthens you and guards you from the Evil One." ὁ πονηρός occurs in I Corinthians 5:13 but there it is hard to say whether it refers to Satan or to the one whom they are to excommunicate (vs. 5).

ὁ ὄφης

St. Paul's reference to the serpent which deceived Eve in II Corinthians 11:3 has generally been taken as a reference to Satan although Satan is not specifically mentioned here. The passage referred to, Genesis 3:1-15, also has no reference to Satan; rather, the curse is put on the serpent which will have to crawl upon his belly and eat dust all his life. There are a number of references in the Old Testament to this curse; yet there seems no reference to the serpent being Satan. However, already in very early times the cunning and mystery of the serpent was associated with the satanic power. In the Semitic religions the serpent was the representation of chaos and death because it carried within it the poison that kills. But it was also associated with fertility cults.³⁷ Perhaps both ideas are inherent in the Paradise narrative. People at the time of St. Paul thought so and probably even St. Paul himself. Thus Genesis 3:15, if not a reference to Satan himself, at least

³⁷Jacob, op. cit., p. 282.

symbolizes in the serpent the satanic power which would militate against God's final work of redemption but which would be overthrown in the struggle. In Isaiah 27:1 the serpent is certainly the symbol of the evil power in the world, which the Lord will overcome when His Kingdom is established. Isaiah calls the serpent Leviathan and the dragon,³⁸ and the Septuagint translates τὸν δράκοντα ὄφιν φεύγοντα . . . τὸν δράκοντα ἔφιν ἐκολίον. It is probably to this passage that Revelation 12:9 and 20:2 refer when they say that an angel from heaven "seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is called Διάβολος καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς."

In IV Maccabees 18:8 a mother whose seven sons had been slain by a tyrant boasts of her purity: "No seducer of the desert, no deceiver in the field, corrupted me; nor did the false beguiling Serpent sully the purity of my maidenhood." In the Books of Adam and Eve, which are believed by some to be of Christian origin and which were probably written about the time of St. Paul, a story is told in which Eve stands on a rock in the River Tigris with the water up to her neck for thirty-seven days to show her contrition. Adam does the same in the River Jordan for forty

³⁸It is interesting to note that the Ras Shamra inscriptions have phrases almost identical with those of Isaiah: "When thou shatterest Leviathan, the fleeing serpent, and puttest an end to the tortuous serpent, the mighty one with seven heads." Julius A. Bewer, The Prophets (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1949), p. 69. Isaiah does not mention the seven heads of the dragon, but St. John does in Rev. 12:3.

days. While Eve is carrying out this penitential work, Satan transforms himself into an angel in order to deceive her and to cause her to leave the river (9:1). In the Apocalypse of Moses, which was written about the same time, Eve recounts how Satan appeared in the form of a good angel singing hymns to deceive her. He gets the serpent to lead her on by talking through the serpent till he gets her to eat the fruit upon which he has poured "the poison of his wickedness, which is lust, the root and beginning of every sin" (19:3).

St. Paul seems to have had these popular beliefs in mind when writing II Corinthians 11 for in vs. 3 he tells the congregation that he hopes he can present them to Christ as a pure bride to her one husband. But as the serpent deceived Eve, so he fears that they will be led astray. There is a definite implication of seduction here. Then in vs. 14 he speaks of Satan as one who deceitfully transforms himself into an angel of light. The idea in this whole context is that just as Satan in the form of a serpent sought to estrange God and man by deceiving Eve with great subtlety, so Satan's followers, his false teachers, use the same subtlety to deceive the Church. Romans 16:20 also is a clear allusion to the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 for St. Paul says: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." This reference also is found in the context of warning against false teachers.

The God of This Age

St. Paul also calls Satan ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου (II Corinthians 4:4) emphasizing the power of Satan over the elements of the world in which we live. This Age is that over which Satan exerts his influence--it is his kingdom as opposed to the Kingdom of God. St. Paul frequently uses it in this manner and the idea is also found in the Gospel of St. Luke. Jesus makes the contrast between the υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου and the υἱοὶ τοῦ φωτός in Luke 16:8 and 20:34. There the contrast between those who conform to the world and those who are the true children of God is emphasized. St. Paul expresses this same idea more intensively when in Romans 12:2 he exhorts the Christians not to be conformed to this age (τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ) but to be transformed into the new man, renewed in mind, so that they might approve what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. In I Corinthians 1:20; 2:6-8; and 3:18 St. Paul contrasts the wisdom of the age and the godly wisdom which the Christian has, and by way of contrast he says "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men," that is, than the men of this age--αἰῶν and κοσμός are almost synonymous here. He even contrasts uncertain riches of this age with trust in God who gives us all the riches we need (I Timothy 6:17). In order to deliver man from being under the influence of this evil age, under the influence of Satan,

Jesus gave Himself for man's sins (Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 2:2). For this God set Jesus above all creation, and because of His love for man He also raised the believer up into the heavenly places to sit with Jesus now and in the coming ages (Ephesians 2:1-7). St. Paul makes it quite clear that the Christian lives in this age but not of this age (Titus 2:12). Man comes under the influence and power of this age of his own free will and is willing to accept it when he loves it more than the things of God (II Timothy 4:10).

The phrase "god of this age" is peculiar to II Corinthians 4:4 but the same idea was expressed by Jesus in John 12:31 and 14:30 (ὁ ἀρχὼν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου).³⁹ Satan even claims this honour for himself (when he tempts) Jesus (Luke 4:6). The very emphasis on this present age shows the limitation of Satan's power. This is brought out more clearly in the phrase "rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away" (I Corinthians 2:6). The powers of Satan are already conquered by God (Colossians 2:15) and they finally will be destroyed with Satan after the resurrection of the dead, when Christ will destroy them and deliver the kingdom to God (I Corinthians 15:24). In using this phrase St. Paul

³⁹In the Dead Sea Scrolls the present age is also often called the dominion of Belial. Cf. Burrows, op. cit., p. 343.

is not expressing a "far-reaching dualism,"⁴⁰ for man can reject the true God and accept the "god of this age" but once he is under his power he cannot free himself without God's help.⁴¹

The Prince of the Power of the Air

In Ephesians 2:2 St. Paul calls Satan ὁ ἄρχων τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος, "the prince of the power of the air." This name is similar to the one above in that Satan is here depicted as the head of all evil, but the emphasis is different. Here the emphasis is more on the fact that Satan is the head or ruler over his host of evil spirits which, under the guidance of Satan, work in the "sons of disobedience." The designation ὁ ἄρχων is often used for Satan in the Gospels. In Matthew 9:34 (and parallels) and 12:24 he is called ὁ ἄρχων τῶν δαιμονίων, and in the Gospel of John he is known as ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). But in the Pauline writing this is the only occurrence. However, the plural is used in I Corinthians 2:6,8 where it probably refers to the satanic host and in Romans 13:3, where it appears to refer to mortal rulers. In the Gospels and Acts it frequently has the meaning of

⁴⁰Johannes Weiss, Earliest Christianity (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, c.1937), II, 603.

⁴¹Cf. Werner Foerster and Gerhard von Rad, "Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1935), II, 70-80.

earthly mortal rulers. In Revelation 1:5 Jesus is called ὁ ἄρχων . So the term by itself is entirely neutral and the context must determine its full meaning. The abstract ἐξουσία is used for the concrete "powerful hosts"⁴² and πνεύμα is the abstract for the "evil spirits" which work in the sons of disobedience. The terms are abstract and collective in order to suggest that the world-power of Satan as a whole stands in sharp contrast to God. As the evil power under the rule of Satan works in the sons of disobedience, so God works in Christ and the Christian (Ephesians 1:11,20; Philippians 2:13), and it is worth noting that the same forceful word (ἐνεργεῖν) is used in both cases.⁴³ So Satan is pictured here as being the ruler of the hosts of evil spirits that have their residence in the aerial regions surrounding the earth. An interesting parallel to this idea of being the ruling spirit of the air is found in Test. Levi 3, where it is stated that he who fears God and loves his neighbour cannot be smitten by the "spirit of the air, Beliar."

The study of these names and how they are used without any explanation even to the Gentile converts shows that they

⁴²William Graham, Lectures on the Epistle to the Ephesians (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, [1883], p. 126.

⁴³J. Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, 2nd Edition (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1909), p. 49.

were well known to the people in St. Paul's time. Nowhere does the Apostle explain what Satan is or describe at length Satan's work unless he is pointing out to Christians that they should beware of certain men or habits or pleasures through which Satan cunningly works. Purely speculative questions, such as how Satan fell or how evil entered the spiritual world, are not touched upon. St. Paul's theology is a practical theology. Moreover, it is seen how St. Paul makes use of current popular demonology if it does not contradict the Scripture of the Old Testament, and orientates it to a Christian perspective. In the New Testament Satan is emphasized as the tempter and adversary of Christ. In the Pauline letters, specifically, he is the great deceiver and adversary of the Christian.

Christ has overcome Satan and has put his principalities and powers beneath His feet. By turning to the Cross and Christ we can easily overcome this great power because Christ has already overcome it.

There are many views concerning these satanic spirits--whether they are real, active spirits or merely abstract terms for the power of evil, whether they have some special abode apart from the earth or are present merely in their human agents. St. Paul gives no direct answers to these

CHAPTER III

THE SATANIC HOST

Satan is not alone in his evil work of deceiving, tempting, and destroying. He has his host of wicked angels and powers who together with him are the rulers of this age. Together with him they stand in opposition to God and carry on their evil work in man so that there is continuous interaction of spiritual and human personalities.¹ With the aid of these powers the extent of Satan's activity is considerably increased, so that his evil is present and active unceasingly and untiringly in every locality on earth. No place can close itself off from Satan, for his host is legion. But with all this immeasurable power he is not almighty, for Christ has overcome Satan and has put his principalities and powers beneath Him. By turning to the Cross and Christ man can easily overcome this great power because Christ has already overcome it.

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¹ Merrill F. Unger, Biblical Demonology, A Study of the Spiritual Forces Behind the Present World Unrest (Wheaton, Ill.: Van Kampen Press, Inc., c.1952), p. 182.

questions, and so it is not easy to define the limits of the extent and purpose of demonic influence. Different views have been put forward to explain the origin of evil powers, but St. Paul did not deal with this aspect. He was writing to a people--whether in Crete, Colossae, or Corinth--who were quite familiar with the terminology used. But the popular demonology of that time is no longer comprehensible to us unless we also become familiar with the same terms, understand their background and environment in which they were spoken.

The Nature of the Satanic Host

St. Paul uses a variety of different terms in order to describe the satanic host. He speaks of angels, principalities, powers, dominions, authorities, thrones, demons, deceitful spirits, and others. Many of these names are merely abstract terms, but yet St. Paul seems to speak of them as being vitally active, personal forces and not mere passive, abstract principles.

St. Paul often speaks of angels (ἄγγελοι), and this term is frequently used in the New Testament both for divine spiritual messengers and also for the satanic followers in the spiritual world. St. Paul does not restrict his meaning only to bad angels as Richardson asserts,² but is in full

²Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers,

agreement with the New Testament concept which is based on the Old Testament usage. There also ἄγγελος is completely a neutral term and is usually qualified. The term ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ or κυρίου is frequently found and certainly means a divine messenger or servant. But frequently also the term is used of earthly messengers and ambassadors. Twice we have the phrase ἄγγελοι πονηροί (Psalm 78:19 and Isaiah 30:4 in the Septuagint) but it cannot be said with any certainty whether this refers directly to evil spirits or earthly messengers filled with the spirit of evil. Perhaps the two cannot be separated. Sometimes ἄγγελοι is used to translate the Hebrew אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם (Psalm 97:7 and 138:1) or the Aramaic אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם (Daniel 2:11). In the last passage the "gods" are described as those "whose dwelling is not with flesh." In Psalm 97 the אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא בָּשָׂר is set in a very different context: "Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship Him all ye gods." This may be compared with Psalm 96 where the gods of the heathen are called δαιμόνια. The Old Testament usage is further exemplified in the Book of Job where ἄγγελος means god-like being or angel of God. There is a close connection between the angels and Satan in 1:6 where the

c.1958, p. 209. Richardson bases his assertions mainly on I Corinthians 11:10; II Corinthians 12:7 and says angels are a kind of demon with whom the worshippers of the Mystery Religions have koinonia (I Corinthians 10:20f.).

angels (D'ἄγγελοι ἰσχυροὶ) come before the Lord, and Satan comes with them. The Apocryphal literature has many references to angels also but does not depart from the canonical books in meaning.

St. Paul's use of the term follows on from this. He mentions angels often without any immediate qualification, and it can usually only be discovered from the context whether they are good or bad. They are invisible beings which stand behind what occurs in the world whether they are serving Christ or Satan. Good angels are obviously meant in Galatians 1:8; 3:19; 4:14; II Thessalonians 1:7; I Timothy 3:16; 5:21. The Colossians apparently worshipped what they believed were good angels. But in II Corinthians 12:7 St. Paul says that in order to keep him from being too elated with the abundance of revelations which he received from God he has been given a thorn in the flesh, an ἄγγελος ἐκτενῶν. Chrysostom interpreted this angel of Satan as an earthly messenger of Satan in the person of Alexander the copper-smith (II Timothy 4:14)³ but more likely it was an unseen enemy, an evil power, which caused the Apostle deep humiliation and prostration, brought about by Satan to hinder St. Paul's work but used by God to check selfish pride. The

³R. V. G. Tasker, The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1958), pp. 175f.

angel is therefore a member of the satanic host carrying on his work on his own. Closely connected with this is the reference to angels in I Corinthians 4:9 where St. Paul pictures the apostles like men sentenced to death as spectacles in an arena reviled and jeered at by men and angels--the powers, physical and spiritual, opposed to Christ and His messengers.⁴ The believer who has put on Christ has received armour which is impregnable to these powers and thus by escaping from their influence shall in the end judge them (I Corinthians 6:3). Perhaps the most puzzling passage is I Corinthians 11:10, but it probably refers to good angels. St. Paul there says that in the assembly of the congregation woman should have a sign of authority on her head (that is, a covering as a mark of subjection) for the sake of the angels (*διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους*). As the issue here is the order of creation by which woman was created from man, one can assume that the angels are mentioned here because they guard this order. Olaf Moe remarks:

The angels are thought to have been divinely appointed by God to guard the natural order of things in creation, and they therefore might be offended if the women were to remove the sign of their natural subordination to man which the head-covering represented.⁵

⁴This combination, "men and angels," is found also in I Corinthians 13:1.

⁵Olaf Moe, The Apostle Paul: His Message and Doctrine, translated by L. A. Vigness (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1954), p. 105.

Belonging to the spiritual host are also principalities and dominions (ἀρχαὶ καὶ ἐξουβίαι). Here again St. Paul does not always make clear whether he is referring to evil angels or good angels. Often he uses the singular where the reference is clearly to a spiritual power; at other times the terms could mean earthly rule and authority. Ἀρχή on its own often means only beginning. The Old Testament use is equally ambiguous. There the term is used variously to denote earthly kingdoms, beginnings, princes, river tributaries or military companies. Perhaps the closest parallel to the Apostle's usage is found in Daniel 7:27 in one reading of the Septuagint. There it is said that all the ἀρχαί shall serve the Most High. A different reading of this same verse has ἐξουβία instead of ἀρχαί, showing how similar these words are in meaning. In the Old Testament ἐξουβία generally has the meaning of dominions, provinces, and sometimes the provincial rulers themselves (Daniel 3:2,3). St. Paul uses it in this last way in Ephesians 2:2, where Satan is prince of the ἐξουβία, the dominion, of the air, and in Colossians 1:13, where Christians have been delivered from the dominion of darkness. In both cases the ἐξουβία presupposes and incorporates the invisible evil powers behind it and which give to it its influence. St. Paul often couples ἀρχή and ἐξουβία. They are found thus coupled twice in the Gospel of Luke (in 12:11 and 20:20), but there they are usually taken as referring to earthly powers. This

seems to be the meaning that St. Paul gives them in Titus 3:1 where he reminds the Cretans to be submissive to these powers.⁶ But elsewhere in the Pauline writings the ἀρχὰ καὶ ἐξουβία appear to be some kinds of angels. In the Letter to the Colossians Paul writes to the congregation telling them not to be led astray by those who teach the worship of angels (2:18); they are to worship the Christ who is the head of all angels, of every ἀρχὴ καὶ ἐξουβία (2:10). For God through Christ has disarmed these angels (2:15). In fact, these spiritual powers are completely under the hand of God, for He created them through Christ and for Christ (1:16). The Apostle sees these angels as evil powers which have tried to solicit worship for themselves and have thus opposed Christ. Thus in His resurrection Christ is placed far above these principalities and dominions and has put them all under His feet (Ephesians 1:21). Then the end will come, when Christ has put all His enemies under His feet, has destroyed all the evil powers (πάντων ἀρχῶν καὶ πάντων ἐξουβιῶν καὶ δυνάμεων), and delivers the kingdom to God (I Corinthians 15:24). The powers described are not earthly powers but every demonic force which opposes the kingdom of God. How these demonic powers affect the

⁶Cf. also Romans 13:1-3 where ἐξουβία describes the earthly powers. On the whole, I would agree with Oscar Gullmann, Christ and Time, The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History, translated from the German by Floyd V. Filson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press,

Church is seen in the Letter to the Ephesians. They are powers seeking to overcome the Christian; but strengthened by the gospel the Church is to make known to "the principalities and dominions in heavenly regions" the manifold wisdom of God (3:10).⁷ It is to show this great wisdom by its action--the action of each of its members putting on the whole armour of God which makes them immune to the wiles of the devil and to the blows and subtleties of his principalities and dominions which are not flesh and blood but spiritual hosts of wickedness (Ephesians 6:11,12).

Another name used by St. Paul for the spiritual powers is δυνάμεις, power. This is often used with the terms already discussed. In the Old Testament this word is used for "hosts" in the term "Lord of hosts" although other words are also employed to translate the Hebrew phrase. The close connection between δυνάμεις and ἄγγελος can be seen in Psalm 148:2 where the psalmist says in a synonymous parallelism:

c.1949), pp. 194f. He believes that there are evil spiritual forces lurking behind these earthly powers, especially since they are heathen powers. But because God has given them authority in secular matters, they must be obeyed in secular matters. However, Paul's consideration here deals only with the earthly powers as governing powers.

⁷Cf. Charles J. Ellicott, A Commentary, Critical and Grammatical, On St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1862), p. 71. He says that the principalities and powers here are good angels because good angels would more naturally recognize the wisdom, evil angels the power of God.

"Praise Him, all His angels (ἄγγελοι), praise Him, all His hosts (δυνάμεις)." And so St. Paul can say (II Thessalonians 1:7) that Jesus is revealed from heaven "with angels of his host (μετ' ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ)". A similar use is also found in III Baruch 1:3, I Enoch 61:10, and Test. Abraham 14. In I Enoch we have the phrase, "all the angels of power, and all the angels of principalities" which has a similarity with Pauline phraseology. However, in the Gospels and Acts the word δύνάμις is never used in this sense but always as meaning power or miracle. St. Paul also uses it thirty times in referring to God's power and sometimes to earthly power, but when it is used with ἀρχή and ἐξουσία it always has the meaning of angelic host. However, in Pauline theology it is no longer the angelic host of the Lord but usually the demonic power opposed to God or Christ as in Ephesians 1:21; I Corinthians 15:24; and Romans 8:38.⁸

Other names occurring in the array of evil angelic hosts are θρόνοι (Col. 1:16), κυριότης (Col. 1:16; Eph. 1:21),

⁸Some see the angels, principalities, and powers as different orders of angels. Although he may have recognized this, St. Paul never makes the distinction, and so it is not necessary to discuss it here. Cf. Moses Stuart, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Andover: Gould and Newman, 1835), p. 395. Others make a distinction between good and bad angels in the angel-orders in Rom. 8:38, but this distinction is rather arbitrary and cannot be held because of the context. Cf. F. Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, translated from the French by A. Cusin (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, [1887]), pp. 124f.

and κοσμοκράτορες τοῦ σκοτοῦς τούτου (Eph. 6:12). The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha throws some light on the names. In the Testament of Levi 2-3 θρόνοι and ἔξουβίαι are angels who sing praises to God from the fourth heaven. In the different heavens dwell different orders of angels. The θρόνοι are of very high rank and have regal dignity, as the name implies.⁹ The κυριότητες also belong to these orders of angels in the Pauline context; otherwise κυριότης is used in its secular meaning of authority (II Pet. 2:10 and Jude 8). The phrase world-rulers of this darkness is found in Ephesians 6:12 but κοσμοκράτωρ occurs in rabbinical writings to designate the angel of death.¹⁰ This is most likely the way it is used here.

Closely connected with the angels are the spirits (πνεύματα). In I Timothy 4:1 St. Paul speaks of deceitful spirits (πνεύματα πλάνη) which will lead many away from the faith during the last days. Psalm 104:4 shows the close connection between angels and spirits, for there we are told that God makes his angels as spirits. That they can be both good and bad is seen from I Samuel 16:14ff. where, after the spirit of the Lord has departed from Saul, God sends an evil spirit upon him. So also in II Chronicles 18:18ff. where the

⁹Cf. J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, 3rd edition (London: Macmillan and Co., 1879), p. 154.

¹⁰A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, c.1931), IV, 550.

host (δυνάμεις) consists of spirits, and one of these spirits goes forth with the sanction of the Lord to be a lying spirit (πνεῦμα ψεύδους) in the mouth of Ahab's prophets. It is interesting to note that here the Lord sends the lying spirit, whereas in I Timothy 4:1f. false teachers who elsewhere are described as satanically-inspired are the agents of the deceitful spirits. Ultimately, however, it may be said that God sanctions these demonic spirits so that His Kingdom may be purged of luke-warm Christians, although this is not the present emphasis. In Ephesians 6:12 Christians are exhorted to put on the armour of God in order to fight against spiritual beings of wickedness (τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς τοῦ πάλου) in heavenly places. This is an explanatory phrase covering all the hosts of satanic powers already mentioned.

Summing up, then, it may be said that these names generally signify ruling powers carrying on the work of Satan in this world and age by accusing, deceiving, and tempting men away from God. Abstract terms are used in preference to concrete names to express the power and comprehensiveness of these beings. They are more than "laws of Nature" or "powers of destiny,"¹¹ they are spiritual forces which can only be reckoned with by an opposing spiritual force of truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God (Eph. 6:12ff.). These evil

¹¹C. H. Dodd, The Epistle to the Romans in The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1932), p. 146.

forces can be recognized in any thing, action, or person that is opposed to the will of God. Thus St. Paul sees these forces mainly at work in the evil flesh of man, in false teachers, and even in the realm of human government.¹² A government that in its legislation is not Christ-inspired is Satan-inspired. There is no strict neutrality, yet the Christian is to be submissive to this government in its secular legislation for, although unknown to them, God has given them the secular authority (Rom. 13:1-3). This had special meaning in St. Paul's day when the governing authorities, although not outwardly opposed to Christianity, were somewhat suspicious of it.

The Abode of the Satanic Host

The principalities and powers, the spiritual hosts of wickedness are given a special place of abode by the Apostle. It is an immaterial region sometimes described as the heavenly places (τὰ ἑπουράνια) and once as the air (ὁ ἀήρ). Here again St. Paul appears to be making use of popular beliefs of that time.

According to Genesis 1:6-8, heaven is a place. The firmament is described as dividing the upper waters from the lower waters from which the world below is separated. This firmament is the heaven, or at least the beginning of

¹²Cf. Unger, op. cit., pp. 181-82.

heaven, the foundation of all that is above.¹³ There is an echo of this in Psalm 148:4 where the psalmist says: "Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and the water that is above the heavens." This follows immediately after he has exhorted also the angels and powers, the sun and the moon, the stars and the light to give praise to God, thus showing the connection to the spiritual world. The term "heaven, and the heaven of heaven" in Deuteronomy 10:14 and I Kings 8:27 gave rise to speculation on the multiplicity of heavens in later times. The Jewish rabbis argued whether there were two, three, or seven heavens. In the pseudepigraphical literature the different heavens are enumerated. The Testament of Levi speaks of seven. The first is the waters above the firmament, where there are treasuries of fire, ice, and snow--the instruments for the punishment of wicked men. The second and third heavens are the abodes of the angels who are to destroy the hosts of Belial. The fourth heaven is where the "thrones and dominions" sing praise to God. In the fifth heaven are the angels who carry up men's prayers to the angels of the presence. The sixth contains the archangels who make propitiation to God for the sins of men, and the seventh heaven is the abode of God. It is believed that this account originally only contained three

¹³Ulrich Simon, Heaven in the Christian Tradition (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1958), p. 38.

heavens and that the others are Christian interpolations. The third heaven would then be where God is enthroned surrounded by His angels, and this is thought to be what St. Paul had in mind when he wrote II Corinthians 12:2.¹⁴ In 2 Enoch another description of the heavens is found. Throughout these heavens, too, there are different orders of angels--from those which are imprisoned in the second heaven awaiting judgment to the archangels which have their abode with God. In the New Testament *ἐπουράνιος* often appears to mean nothing more than spiritual, or that which is ruled by heavenly powers, or shall attain to heaven. But St. Paul seems to have this idea of a number of heavens in mind when he says that Christ sits at God's right hand in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:20), in the highest of the heavens, and it is to this highest place that Christ has raised His followers to sit with Him (Eph. 2:6). But also in these heavenly places dwell the principalities and powers (Eph. 3:10; cf. Test. Levi above), the spiritual hosts of wickedness (Eph. 6:12). Thus the heavenly places may have more than merely an "ethical, spiritual, or moral bearing"¹⁵ but may have been regarded as some actual sphere by the early Christians. Perhaps Satan and his evil hosts are confined to the first and second heavens.¹⁶

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 41-46.

¹⁵F. C. Jennings, Satan: His Person, Work, Place and Destiny (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope," n.d.), p.144.

¹⁶Unger, op.cit., p. 53.

The satanic host are also said to dwell in the air (Eph. 2:2). The context is too vague and undefined to make an explicit application of the meaning of this word. However, the term ἀήρ is used six times in the New Testament, three times in Pauline writings. Generally it has the ordinary meaning of atmosphere or air bordering on the earth, or the "lower and denser atmosphere" as opposed to the imponderable ether above.¹⁷ That evil powers dwelt in this lower atmosphere is a common idea in Jewish literature. They teach that "from the earth to the firmament, all things are filled with multitudes of spirits and their rulers;"¹⁸ and according to Philo, the air "is the abode of disembodied souls."¹⁹ Thus the dwelling place of the satanic hosts appears to be the lower heavens which has the physical designation of the lower atmosphere or the air surrounding the earth.

The Satanic and Heathen Religions

There is still one term to be discussed which is used by the Apostle for a satanic power only twice, but which has important implications for Christian missions to the heathen

¹⁷Robertson, op. cit., IV, 523.

¹⁸Pirke Avoth quoted by William Graham, Lectures on the Epistle to the Ephesians (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1883), p. 127.

¹⁹De Somniis 1:22 quoted by Ferdinand Prat (S.J.), The Theology of Saint Paul, translated from the French by John L. Stoddard (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., c.1957), II, 414.

as well as for daily Christian life. This is the word *συνμόλιον*. The main passage where this is used is I Corinthians 10:20f., where St. Paul is exhorting the Corinthians to shun the worship of idols and not to partake of their sacrificial meal, for the pagans who give sacrifice to idols are giving sacrifice to demons. Anyone who partakes of the sacrificial meal is thereby having intimate fellowship with demons--a fellowship which must only be had with the true Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (vs. 16).

In the Gospels demons are evil spirits which seem to be in some measure dependent upon being embodied either in man or beast,²⁰ and they are always the cause of a kind of insanity in man. However, in the rest of the New Testament a demon is usually connected with heathen idols and heathen worship, following on from the Old Testament usage. From early times the Jews had peace-offerings which symbolized mutual peace and amity between those who participated, both among themselves and also with God. The distinctive feature of this sacrifice was the sacred meal.²¹ It appears that in later times the Jews had a tendency to become universalistic in their religion and also made this peace offering to heathen

²⁰Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, Satan (Philadelphia: The Sunday School Times Company, c.1919), pp. 64-68.

²¹S. R. Driver, The Book of Exodus, in The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: The University Press, 1911), p. 207.

gods with the idea of appeasing them. This is seen in Isaiah 65:11 where the prophet speaks of "you who forsake the Lord . . . who set a table for the goddess of Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny." The Septuagint translation for goddess of Fortune is *δαίμόνιον* in some manuscripts, while others read *δαίμων*. The latter word is probably taken over from the Greek classical literature where it is almost synonymous with *θεός*, although later it was used to convey the idea of demi-god.²² The word *δαίμόνιον* has a similar meaning and is often used in the Septuagint for heathen gods (cf. Is. 65:3). The idea of worshipping false gods for the sake of appeasement is seen also in Deuteronomy 32:17 which St. Paul is quoting in I Corinthians 10:20. There in the Song of Moses it is said that they "sacrificed to demons and not to God, to gods they had never known to new gods that had come in of late, whom their fathers had never dreaded." Here *δαίμόνιον* is used to translate the Hebrew *לַשִׁדְדִים*, a loan-word from the Assyrians meaning protective spirit. The sacred-meal idea is lost in Psalm 106:37f., where the people sacrifice their sons and daughters to the *δαίμόνια* and to idols. Another interesting passage is in Psalm 96:5, where the Hebrew has: "All the gods of the people are things of worthlessness" (the word *דָּבָרִים* being used as a pun on *דָּבָרִים*). But the Septuagint translates

²²Prat, op. cit., II, 409.

things of worthlessness with δαιμόνιον. In other places where δαιμόνιον is used in the Septuagint (Ps. 91:6; Is. 13:21; 34:14) it has a general meaning of evil spirit or demi-god. In the Book of Tobit (6:8) δαιμόνιον is equated with πνεῦμα πονηρόν. Baruch also has references to demons but has the same use as the canonical books, 4:7 being a direct quotation from Deuteronomy 32:17. So the demons are the evil spirits of heathen gods which draw men away from the true worship of the one God Jahweh.

In the New Testament outside of the Gospels, the word δαιμόνιον bears the Old Testament sense. Thus in Acts 17:18 foreign divinities are called ξένα δαιμόνια ; James (2:19) speaks of demons having an intellectual knowledge of God, and the Book of Revelation has a number of references to demons, who together with idols are worshipped by men (9:20; 16:14; 18:2). It is with this whole concept in mind that the phrase "doctrines of demons" (I Tim. 4:1) should be understood. The doctrines are those instigated by evil spirits whose aim it is to draw man away from the true God to the false gods of wrong doctrine. Open apostasy is the demonic aim.

The sacred meal of the peace-offering seems to have been in the mind of the Apostle when he exhorted the Corinthians to "consider the practice of Israel" for "are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar?" (I Cor. 10:18). Through the peace-offering the Israelites became united with

Jahweh, and to celebrate a peace-offering with a heathen deity was virtually to reject the Lord Jahweh. So it is also with the Christian. The celebration of the Lord's Supper is a sacrament in which the celebrant becomes completely united with his Lord Jesus Christ, for the cup which he drinks is a communion in the blood of Christ and the bread which he breaks is a communion in the body of Christ (vs. 16). This whole communion or fellowship is something that demands absolutely and exclusively complete submissiveness and acquiescence and fervour for all that the Christ stands for and commands. This submission and fervour can only mean singleness of mind, and so there can only be one God, one truth, and one doctrine. All who hold this same singleness of mind are in fellowship with one another also. Thus there is no room for compromise. The Corinthian Christians could not be faithful to Christ and yet give obeisance to heathen gods even if it were only in the eating of meat offered in sacrifice to them and even if they only thought of the idols as dumb images (vs. 19). He who partakes of this pagan sacrifice enters into fellowship with demons--he drinks the cup of demons and partakes of the table of demons. This is a virtual rejection of Christ. There must be either one or the other, for there can be no duplicity. This may sometimes be a hard law to foreign missionaries but, nevertheless, St. Paul makes it quite clear that Christianity is an exclusive religion (cf. I Cor. 8:5). As there is no room for heathen

deities, so there is no room for different Christs or different gospels (Gal. 1:6ff.).

The subtlety of the satanic is certainly present in these demons clothed as seemingly inoffensive and passive idols. All too readily they lay hold of the Christian who thinks that he can take part without concern or injury in these heathen feasts for the sake of "fellowship" with his friends or relatives.²³ But this is not a true fellowship until the demonic powers make it so to the exclusion of Christianity. To the heathen their deities may be gods but to the Christian they are demons who bring about all the pagan cults and practices. Idolatry, therefore, is a satanic delusion.²⁴ The close connection with Satan can be seen in II Corinthians 6:15ff. where the Apostle urgently warns the Christians not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers and asks, "What accord has Christ with Beliar? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?" As, therefore, false gods are a manifestation of Satan, so those who worship them are

²³Johannes Weiss, Earliest Christianity (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, c.1937), I, 326.

²⁴Moe, op. cit., p. 162.

worshipping Satan and are in communion with him.²⁵ If it can be held, as some do, that some of the Corinthian Christians had been taking part in the sacral feasts of the Mystery Religions,²⁶ then this brings out all the more the deceit and aping of the satanic. For the Mystery cults were very similar to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. They had the same idea of communion with a once dead and risen deity, in whose fate the partaker receives a share through the sacrificial meal.²⁷ The power of the satanic in these false gods is seen in the fact that some have even believed that Christianity aped the Mystery Religions in regard to the sacrament. Satan and his demonic powers are still at work in false gods, in different gospels, and in different Christs. To have fellowship with them is to reject the true God, the true gospel, the true Christ. Yet under the names of "love" and "fellowship," which are used falsely, Satan continues to win Christians from their fellowship with the true Christ.

²⁵ Charles Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1891), p. 193.

²⁶ S. Angus, The Mystery-Religions and Christianity (London: John Murray, 1925), p. 128; Richardson, op. cit., p. 209.

²⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, translated by Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1951), I, 148.

CHAPTER IV

SATAN AND MANKIND

Satan, Man, and Sin

One of the biggest problems for a Christian is the problem of sin and his relation to it. But perhaps a bigger problem still is the inter-relationship of Satan, sin, and man. Is Satan the cause of sin or is man? If Satan can gain power over man to lead him to sin, is it not Satan in the final analysis that is responsible? These questions thus bring up the old question whether St. Paul had a dualistic concept of powers fighting for this world--the good powers of God and the evil powers of Satan. If St. Paul holds that Satan is ultimately responsible for man's sin, then he certainly is teaching a dualism and men become little chess-men on the chess-board of life moved to and fro by the contending powers of good and evil. But to St. Paul Satan is always the loser even though he is the god of this age. Then it may be asked whether God is not just a better chess player than Satan. To answer this question it is necessary to study St. Paul's references to the relationship of Satan both to the believer and to the unbeliever.

It is instructive to note that not once in his discussion of sin in his Epistle to the Romans does St. Paul mention its connection to Satan, neither when he describes the guilt of the heathen, nor the fall of Adam, nor the

desires of the flesh. In other places Satan is looked upon not so much as causing man to sin but as grasping every opportunity given him by man's sin to lead man to greater sin. Above all, St. Paul thinks of Satan in connection with sin in Christendom. He is the adversary of Christ and the Christian and seeks to destroy their work, therefore he is more concerned with the believer than with the unbeliever. While the believer is truly centered in Christ, Satan does not have much chance, for the Christian is then immune to him. But the moment that the Christian errs he is open to the fiery darts of Satan. As soon as he takes off the armour of God he has laid himself open to all the spiritual hosts of wickedness. To put off the armour of God is to turn from God. This is not the work of Satan, for the Christian has been immune to Satan. It is the Christian who of his own free will turns from God, and it is then, when he is adrift, that Satan catches him up and leads him to destruction.

It is when man is in an un-Christian situation that Satan tempts him (I Cor. 7:5), and so St. Paul forgives the repentant evil-doer in order that a genuine Christian attitude may be maintained by all, and Satan may not gain the advantage (II Cor. 2:11). For this reason Christians must keep out of any ungodly alliance, for then they are opening themselves up to Satan (II Cor. 6:15; I Cor. 10:20f.). So also St. Paul exhorts the Christians not to expose themselves to false teachers because they are thus exposing themselves to Satan

disguised as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14). The believer is never tempted against his own will, but through unrighteous anger or conceit he gives opportunity to the devil (Eph. 4:27; I Tim. 3:6). It is because of this that in describing the fight against the satanic powers in Eph. 6, St. Paul deals almost entirely with the armour of defence. He mentions only one weapon with which to attack and that is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (6:17). So it is not Satan that subordinates man to sin, but sin which subordinates man to Satan.¹ The believer's faith is undergoing a constant testing and refining. When the believer finds how easy it is to fall into sin, the stronger his reliance upon Jesus his Saviour becomes. The stronger he becomes, the more he becomes aware of the existence of Satan's retinue; but he also testifies all the more to the approaching termination of Satan's rule.²

The relationship of the unbeliever to Satan is looked upon in the same way as that of the believer; only the unbeliever in his rejection of God and his Redeemer has given himself to Satan and is now ruled by him. This is how the reference to the blindness of the unbelievers must be understood in II Corinthians 4:4. There the Apostle points out

¹A. Schlatter, Die Theologie des Neuen Testaments (Stuttgart: Verlag der Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1910), II, 235-36.

²Paul S. Minear, The Kingdom and the Power (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1950), p. 111.

that the gospel is not to be clothed in cunningness in order to convey it to the unbelievers; rather, the open statement of the truth is to be commended to their consciences in the sight of God. He goes on: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ." The god of this age is certainly responsible for the blinding of the minds of the unbelievers, but St. Paul is not doubting that he by his proclamation is touching and awakening the conscience of every man, so that he recognizes the truth that is shown him. It is when this man turns away from the truth that Satan blinds his mind; when he becomes obdurate towards God, his obduracy is changed to obduration. When man is not with God, he is with Satan; when he aligns himself with this age, he puts himself under the god of this age. Moreover, the whole emphasis of this passage is not on the fact that the unbeliever is blinded but that the great light of the gospel which demands that man observe it shines upon all and yet for many shines in vain. It is this that points to the frightening truth that the unbeliever is blinded by Satan.³ The passage deals with the effect of man's unbelief and not with the cause.

³A. Schlatter, Paulus der Bote Jesu, Eine Deutung seiner Briefe an die Korinther (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1934), pp. 527-28.

The responsibility of sin, then, is not taken from the shoulders of man and given to Satan. Man has his own grave responsibility to God for everything that he does whether he does it with Satan's help or not. Satan knows that he will get his own punishment. Nowhere does St. Paul say that Satan actually causes sin; rather Paul maintains that Satan is always waiting to catch the Christian off guard and to cause his little sins to grow until they obstruct the path back to God. With the unbeliever, Satan is always ready to strengthen his resistance when he is confronted with the gospel. As Christ gives the Christian strength to withstand the devil, so the devil gives his children of disobedience strength to stand against Christ. The Apostle is very careful not to confuse sin and Satan, and it is to be noted that he

talks about the significance of the Devil wherever it is of practical importance to put the Christians on their guard to watch the seriousness of a situation, but that he avoids mentioning the Devil wherever it might tend to weaken their sense of guilt and responsibility for sin.⁴

This leaves no room for any kind of dualism. Rather, St. Paul expresses the same truths as found in the parable which Jesus told about the unclean spirit which went out of a man and, finding no rest, returned to the swept and garnished

⁴Olaf Moe, The Apostle Paul: His Message and Doctrine, translated by L. A. Vigness (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1954), pp.153f.

house bringing with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself (Matt. 12:43-45). Rejection of God brings the greater damnation of obduration which Satan is eager to establish. Thus although Satan is already condemned by God, his presence nevertheless emphasizes the stark reality of sin. In his study of the concept of sin in St. Paul, Grundmann comes to this view:

Our examination of Paul's views leads to an important conclusion, viz. that, as in the case of death's dominion, all his references to demons and to Satan are meant to give actuality to his teaching about sin; they are not the outcome of dualistic speculation, but the testimony of one who sees sin as it really is.⁵

Satan and the Christian

Perhaps the greatest follower of Christ of all times has been the great Apostle himself, St. Paul. He of all men became a slave of Christ under the greatest handicaps. Not only had he been brought up in an opposing school of thought but he had been an ardent persecutor of Christians. As a Christian he turned this ardour to doing the work of Christ against the greatest obstacles. Not only was he regarded as a traitor by the Jews; but he was also at first regarded with suspicion by the Christians. Against these obstacles and many more he fought the good fight and ran the great race. For St. Paul knew that every obstacle which the devil

⁵Walter Grundmann, "Sin in the New Testament," Sin, Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Woerterbuch Zum Neuen Testament (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1951), p. 80.

put in his way could be overcome in Christ. So these satanic obstacles only became a means for strengthening and refining the Apostle's great faith, "so mightily does God work to make Satan's all bad work together for good to the faithful ones."⁶ This is brought out clearly in II Corinthians 12:7 where St. Paul speaks of the "thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan." What this "thorn in the flesh" is St. Paul does not say, and this has led to a variety of interpretations and conjectures. In fact, the whole life of St. Paul has been scoured in order to find possible meanings. Mostly physical diseases have been considered, such as fainting sickness, eye disease, and vocal disorders. It has even been suggested that the Apostle's thorn in the flesh was the curse of sexual desire. Perhaps physical infirmity of some sort has been the most generally accepted interpretation. The thorn or stake is said to imply "a sudden pain, calling back the thoughts from everything else, putting a stop to any exaltation of mood and replacing it with a sense of suffering and helplessness," while the buffeting of the angel of Satan implies rather "sudden prostration and humiliation."⁷ Others believe that the thorn is St. Paul's

⁶Edward M. Bounds, Satan: His Personality, Power and Overthrow (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, c.1922), p. 100.

⁷Allan Menzies, The Second Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, c.1912), p. 92.

consciousness of his bodily appearance and oratorical powers (II Cor. 10:1,10), of which he may have desired greater perfection. As Satan would have known of this selfish desire he would have attacked the Apostle at that vital spot.⁸

Another interpretation, first espoused by Chrysostom and recently taken up again, is that the angel of Satan is a personification of all the satanic powers that bring about opposition to the message that the Apostle preached. Tasker remarks:

As there is nothing which tends to elate a Christian evangelist so much as the enjoyment of spiritual experiences, and as there is nothing so calculated to deflate the spiritual pride which may follow them as the opposition he encounters while preaching the word, it is not unlikely that Chrysostom's interpretation is nearer the truth than any other.⁹

Yet none of these interpretations seem entirely satisfactory. For it is doubtful whether St. Paul who had suffered so much bodily harm and had fought against so much opposition would be brought so low again and again by just one of these. Schlatter says that if a medical man were to be called to give a diagnosis, he would have to be a psychiatrist, since mental torment is probably meant here.¹⁰ The angel of Satan

⁸G. Theodore Schwarze, The Program of Satan: A Study of the Purpose and Method of the Adversary (Chicago: Good News Publishers, c.1947), p. 214.

⁹R. V. G. Tasker, The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1958), p. 176.

¹⁰Schlatter, see note, p. 666.

is sent to strike the Apostle in the face (καὶ ἀφίξιεν) as a mark of degradation. As the messenger of the accuser he grabs hold of him and holds out his guilt to him. These blows in the face are a painful reminder of his true unworthiness, of how he had once persecuted Christ, how he had once hated Him. Yet all this has been forgiven and he has been shown the path of righteousness without any worthiness in him. This total unworthiness in the light of all that Christ had given him and the guilt that he felt at having once hated and persecuted Christ his Saviour was too much for St. Paul. It is the same progression that has been noted above: the Christian is safe so long as he remains Christ-centered; but as soon as he turns from Christ to his own pride, he has opened the door to Satan. This is what happened to St. Paul, for as soon as he became exalted in his own pride, Satan's angel would remind him of his former guilt in order to bring him to the depths of despair. It was only when he again turned to the Lord and prayed and the Lord had told him that His grace alone was sufficient that St. Paul's weakness was overcome. It was not for the healing of a sickness that he prayed but for the removal of a spiritual power, an enduring satanic accusation, which showed him his guilt and weakness. Only after he had prayed the third time was he shown that he required no other protection, no other source of power, but the grace of God. Once he realized this, the satanic power

became impotent.¹¹ Satan was trying to confuse the basic Christian doctrines of law and gospel, faith and works, in St. Paul's mind but he failed.

As in the case of the thorn in the flesh, Satan is ever working to hinder the workers of Christ, for they aim at destroying his kingdom and building up the kingdom of Christ. Thus when St. Paul is hindered from coming to the Thessalonians, he blames it on Satan (I Thess. 2:18). There is no reference to what this hindrance was, but it must have been a delay that brought no good. The close association with his recent outburst against the Jews who hindered his preaching of salvation to the Gentiles, may suggest that the Jews caused the satanic hindrance.

Satan and his innumerable hosts are always on the lookout for opportunities to lead the Christian astray, and every un-Christian action is an opportunity for them. For this reason St. Paul urges the Corinthians to forgive the penitent sinner "to keep Satan from gaining the advantage" (II Cor. 2:11). Here the opposition between Christ and Beliar comes out very clearly. The Corinthians are to forgive as Christ has forgiven them and not to continually accuse, for Satan will then accuse them. Christ is the forgiver and Satan the accuser; in the name of Christ one forgives the other, but under the influence of Satan forgiveness is denied and fellowship is broken down.

¹¹Ibid., p. 667.

But the Apostle is not ignorant of the devil's designs for he knows that if Satan succeeds in dispersing the congregation through hate and thirst for revenge he will come at the Judgment and accuse them before God. For this reason the Christian must be ready to forgive and forget with Christ.¹²

The cunning manner and the swiftness with which Satan grasps the opportunity opened up to him by un-Christian action or attitude is most vividly portrayed in the one word *παγίς*, snare. This was a favourite word in the Old Testament, and St. Paul uses it three times in his Pastoral Epistles. The snare was frequently used to catch birds and small animals and was very effective because it would catch the creature completely unawares. It was so swift that there was no chance of escape. This is how the devil works, and so the Christian must always be on guard. Not only in the Jewish religion but in almost all of the primitive religions gods and demons are portrayed as setting snares and nets to catch their enemies, so it would not be unusual for the Apostle to use the phrase *παγίς τοῦ διαβόλου*.¹³ In I Timothy 3:7 the instruction is given that a bishop must have a good reputation among outsiders "or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." This statement appears to be rather ambiguous but it is used as a counterpart to the previous

¹²Ibid., pp. 491-92.

¹³Joh. Schneider, *παγίς*, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: Vorlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1953), V, 595.

statement which reads: "He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil." St. Paul is probably thinking of the two extremes--of conceit which turns one from God, and dejection which causes self-reproach. In I Timothy 6:9 *παγίς* is mentioned in connection with *παραβυός* and *ἐπιθυμία*. They are mentioned as the sins into which those fall who seek to be rich. The snare of the devil is probably in the mind of the Apostle, as temptation and desires also are often mentioned as having their origin in him. The *παγίς* concept is brought out most graphically in II Timothy 2:26 where the Apostle exhorts Timothy to act gently with the false teacher, since there is a chance that he may repent and "return to soberness from the snare of the devil, after having been caught alive by him." The verb *ἀνανήψω* means "to become sober again" and implies that the devil intoxicates the teacher "to benumb the conscience, confuse the senses and paralyze the will."¹⁴ The verb *ἐκράβην*, meaning to "catch alive," is very descriptive of the action of the snare which catches its prey alive when it least expects it. Thus the devil works, and the only hope for those who have become his workers is that in a sober moment they grasp hold of the truth and place all their hope in Christ. Again there is the same progression--the

¹⁴Horton quoted by Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1957), p. 155.

un-Christian attitude or action leads one from Christ, and at that moment Satan seizes his opportunity.

Satan and the Church

The work of Satan shows itself in its ugliest and most devastating form in the Church, for there he works through those who call themselves followers of Christ. "With fair and flattering words" these pseudo-Christians do the work of Satan, "deceive the hearts of the simple-minded" and "create dissensions and offences in opposition to the doctrine" (Rom. 16:17-20). There is a subtle implication in this text that Satan works through his false teachers not only to bring about division but also to cause false amalgamation.¹⁵ Satan makes good use of extremes, for when some react against one extreme he cunningly leads them over to the other. He causes divisions to take place in the Church through all sorts of heresy and rivalry, so that the number of churches and sects become a stumbling block and an offence to the world. He leads them on to divide even over adiaphora. But there are times when divisions are necessary, for St. Paul exhorts the Roman Christians to avoid those who are in opposition to the doctrine which they have been taught. But it is in cases like this when God scatters that Satan tries to unite. Under

¹⁵Cf. F. C. Jennings, Satan: His Person, Work, Place and Destiny (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope," n.d.), pp. 106f.

the theme of the universal Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man Satan tries to draw Christ and Beliar together "by fair and flattering words." In order to bring about such amalgamation compromises are made with those who create dissensions and offences, and a compromise of the truth is a denial of the truth and a denial of the true Christ. For this reason St. Paul's only advice is: "Avoid them!"

When individuals in the Church turn from the true teaching and live wicked lives and remain unrepentant, they are to be "delivered to Satan." This seems like a very harsh judgment of excommunication in which the sinner is given over to the devil as eternally damned. But in the two cases where St. Paul uses this formula, I Corinthians 5:5 and I Timothy 1:20, a message of hope is added--that the sinner's spirit may be saved or that he may learn not to blaspheme. That the phrase did not have to be explained in either case points to the probability that it was merely a formula used in the Church. It probably originated in Job 2:6 where Job is delivered to Satan who is allowed to inflict bodily suffering on him to test the sincerity of his religion. Hence it became a formal phrase for passing sentence in the Church with the emphasis on testing the sincerity of their religion rather than the infliction of bodily suffering. Rabbinic writings offer an example of this use in Judaism: "God delivers to

Sammael, that is Satan."¹⁶ The citation originates in the third century but the formula was probably used before the time of St. Paul. Deissmann believes that the formula had its origin in the pagan religions of that time and that it was used in the Church in a solemn act of execration. He says:

The full meaning does not come out until the passage is read in connexion with the ancient custom of execration, that is, devoting a person to the gods of the lower world. A person who wished to injure an enemy or to punish an evil-doer consecrated him by incantation and tablet to the powers of darkness below, and the tablet reached its address by being confided to the earth, generally to a grave. A regular usage was established in the language of these execrations--a usage common in antiquity. The only difference between Jewish and pagan execrations probably lay in the fact that Satan took the place of the gods of the lower world.¹⁷

This idea has also been combined with the Job-origin¹⁸ but there seems no real connection, and St. Paul and Judaism very rarely took anything over from pagan religions. Taken as originating from Job the use of the formula is still not fully explained for St. Paul's time. In I Corinthians 5:5 the sin the man has committed is that he has been living with

¹⁶Quoted by Rudolf Bohren, Das Problem der Kirchengzucht im Neuen Testament (Zuerich: Evangelischer Verlag A.G. Zollikon, c.1952), p. 111.

¹⁷Adolf Deissmann, Light From the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World, translated by Lionel R. M. Strachan (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927), pp. 302f.

¹⁸Walter Lock, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, in The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924), pp. 19,20.

his father's wife. He remains arrogant and unrepentant and so he is to be removed from the congregation lest this little leaven leaven the whole lump. Therefore he is delivered to Satan "for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." There is not necessarily an antithesis here between flesh and spirit as meaning body and soul, but rather the flesh refers to his sinful lusts which led him to such incest as was forbidden both by Roman and the Mosaic law.¹⁹ In I Timothy 1:20 two men are mentioned as having made shipwreck of their faith by rejecting conscience, and so they are delivered to Satan "that they may learn not to blaspheme." Here the disciplinary measure carries out a paedagogical function. In both cases they are cast out of the Church into the sphere of Satan. Yet it is not for their condemnation but in the hope that such shock-treatment will recall them to the right frame of mind. St. Paul probably had in mind the effect that being severed from all the fellowship of the Church would have on the offender. This is the main concern in these excommunications, but he is also thinking of the Church. For such a purging is necessary to keep the Church pure. This formula with its primary meaning of testing faith together with the hope expressed was used in the excommunication to prevent any feeling of hatred on either side, for it must always be the calling of Christendom

¹⁹Bohren, op. cit., p. 108.

to save as it punishes. That the pronouncement of the sentence was an act done in the service of Christ was thereby made clear to all.²⁰

As the individual Christian's faith is tested and refined by temptation, so also is the Church purged and refined by dissensions and troubles. As the Christian finds his only hope in the complete reliance in Christ, so the Church finds its only hope and salvation in Christ to whom all principalities and powers have been subjected. Christ has stripped the satanic hosts of all their power and like a victorious emperor He makes a public show of them, triumphing over them as he leads them in his victorious procession (Col. 2:15). Hence history must never be looked upon by the Church as a tangle of indissoluble dilemmas but as a series of occasions for manifesting the power of God over all His enemies.²¹ With this confidence the Church must nevertheless remain watchful and be "wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil," for then the God of Peace will soon crush Satan under their feet. (Rom. 16:20). God gives the power so that Satan is crushed but it will be under the feet of the Church--the true believers--that the crushing will take place. That is, only a godly people can overcome Satan.

²⁰Schlatter, Paulus der Bote Jesu, p. 178.

²¹Miner, op. cit., p. 107.

CHAPTER V

SATAN AND FALSE TEACHERS

Wherever the Word of God is, wherever the Christian is, wherever the Church is, there is Satan also. This is in the very nature of the case; Satan is not adversary, accuser, or tempter of the unbelievers, for they are the members of his kingdom. His opponents are those of the other kingdom, the Kingdom of God. Satan's strategy in attacking this Kingdom is the most cunning and deceitful of all. For he moves into the outward organizations of the Kingdom and disguises himself as a member, he disguises himself as an angel of light. Moreover, he does not bring in his evil workers from the outside but gains his followers from these Christian churches who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ proclaiming half truths in order to destroy the real truth. St. Paul saw this working of Satan in the Church, and so hardly a letter passes from his hand without containing some warning against false teachers, Satan's deceitful disciples.

The Distinction Between False Teachers and Erring Brethren

Because there has often been much confusion in defining and distinguishing between false teachers and erring brethren, it is necessary to make a clear distinction on the basis of the letters of St. Paul. The question arises on the one hand whether everybody who deviates from a traditionally accepted view is necessarily a false teacher, and on the other hand, how far one can

go in the interest of Christian love in calling one who deviates from God's word an erring brother.

The times that the Apostle makes specific reference to erring brethren are comparatively few indeed, and when he does make reference to them it is not to any one who has erred in doctrine but who is guilty of disobedience, idleness, or some other sin. In II Corinthians 2:5-11 St. Paul speaks of one who has caused the congregation pain and disgrace. He does not explicitly say who the sinner is or what he had done, but II Corinthians 7:12 shows that there was one who did wrong and one who had been wronged. It was some wrong-doing that made Paul's return to the congregation impossible. The only reason why St. Paul mentioned it was to exhort the congregation to show a true Christian spirit of forgiveness and love toward the repentant one. There is no hint that the sinner had erred in doctrine or that he had departed from the faith, but rather that fact that he is repentant points in the opposite direction. In II Thessalonians 3:14,15 St. Paul mentions the disobedient person and how he is to be treated. He says: "If any one refuses to obey what we say in this letter, note that man and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not look on him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother." Here again it is not a matter of doctrine but of disobedience.

A study of the passages in which the Apostle clearly refers to doctrinal aberration must give the answer as to where the distinction between false teachers and erring brethren must be made. The first reference comes in Romans

16:17-20 where Paul speaks of those who create divisions and offences in opposition to the doctrine and deceive the hearts of the simple-minded. They are to be avoided and the Christians are exhorted to be wise and guileless, for then Satan will be crushed under their feet. These certainly are false teachers who are not serving the Lord but "their own belly" (vs. 18). In II Corinthians 11 teachers are mentioned who come in the name of the Lord preaching a different Jesus and a different gospel. Therefore they are described as the servants of Satan and false apostles. Here again "erring brethren" would certainly be a misnomer. The same is true also in Galatians 1:6-9 where they are also mentioned as teaching a different gospel, and the Apostle brings upon them the anathema. Colossians 2:18 speaks of those who insist on self-abasement and the worship of angels. They are described as conceited and their teachings are based on their own visions and not on the Word of God. Because of this they must be regarded as false teachers although this is not specifically stated, and there is no hint that they must be tolerated or admonished as erring brethren. In the passages so far mentioned, therefore, we have no reference to erring brethren.

In the Pastoral Epistles, however, where St. Paul gives advice on the attitude to be taken towards different teaching, the distinction is not so clear. In I Timothy 1:3-7 Timothy is told to charge certain men not to teach any different

doctrine, nor to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies "which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith." These men are not further characterized, but he goes on and mentions some who have swerved from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith and have wandered away into vain discussion, "desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions" (vs. 7). Because these men taught for their own intellectual satisfaction and not for the proclamation of the saving gospel, and because they lacked the three things necessary for Christian teaching, they certainly cannot be regarded as erring brethren and the only name befitting them is "false teacher." This is further brought out in verse 19, where the Apostle mentions two men who rejected conscience and made shipwreck of their faith with the result that they blasphemed. Such men as teachers are mentioned as being prevalent in later times to lead Christians from the faith. They are described as "liars whose consciences are seared" (I Tim. 4:2). The same attitude is taken towards these men who are more interested in their own scholarship and debating ability than in the right handling of the Word of truth in II Timothy 2:14ff. The godless chatter of these men leads people into more and more ungodliness. The servant of God must correct them with gentleness and hope and pray that they will repent, but he cannot treat them as erring brethren.

The same is true in Titus 1:10f. where the false teachers are called insubordinate men, empty talkers and deceivers.

The distinguishing marks of a false teacher, therefore, are that he is ruled by self interest in his teaching rather than by the will of God; he has turned from faith-direction to intellectual wrangling, and his insincerity leads him to teach a different Christ, a different gospel, a different spirit. False teaching, therefore, is not merely an intellectual erring or an insufficient knowledge, but it is an expression of a broken faith or a "denial of faith-obedience." (Versagung des Glaubensgehorsams)¹ St. Paul allowed different ways and manners of preaching but he who taught a doctrine different from that which had been preached was guilty of false teaching. If he did this in his own conceit and insisted upon it, he was to be dealt with as a false teacher; but if he did it in ignorance and was willing to correct the mistake on being shown, then he was to be classed only as an erring brother. This is the distinction that must be maintained against all odds. One can never consider the attitude of the world when making this distinction. The Apostle has made a precedent and we must abide by it. We need only ask what would have become of the Christian Church if he had shown

¹Leonard Goppelt, "Kirche und Haeresie nach Paulus," Gedenkschrift fuer D. Werner Elert: Beitrage zur Historischen und Systematischen Theologie (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, o.1955), p. 17.

more of what the world calls love and toleration.²

The Nature of False Teachers

The ugliest feature of the false teacher is that he works among Christians disguised as one of them. He thus shares with his leader, Satan, his supreme characteristics of cunning and treachery. As he disguises himself as an angel of light, he sets the fashion for his followers in the masquerade to deceive the believers. These teachers claim to be men commissioned by Christ and endowed with His Spirit; they are forever busy in supposedly Christian activities; and they pretend to be enthusiastic for Christ's cause. But in reality they are false apostles, deceitful workmen, and servants of Satan (II Cor. 11:13-15). They are no longer inspired by the Spirit but exhibit the nature and methods of him who has diabolically inspired them and for whose kingdom they are working.³ "They profess to know God, but they deny Him by their deeds; they are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good deed" (Tit. 1:16). The methods of the false teacher are nothing but a demonic aping and perversion of the methods of the Christian teacher. The false teacher affects

²Hermann Sasse, This is My Body: Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1959), p. 136.

³R. V. G. Tasker, The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1958), pp. 153f.

a piety that misuses the divine name, and he works with Bible texts, orthodox ideas and theological pretexts. As Satan dresses himself up as an angel of light, so his followers are the hypocrites who wear the garments of piety.⁴

Satan has won complete control over these false teachers, so that they have become his disciples. So completely does Satan work through them that when the Christian rebuts a false teacher he is rebutting Satan. When the Christian becomes wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil in confronting these deceitful workers, Satan is crushed under his feet (Rom. 16:20). The false teacher has been caught alive in the snare of the devil, captured to do his will (II Tim. 2:26). Besides learning their disguise from Satan, the false teachers also adopt his subtle and deceitful ways. For as the serpent deceived Eve so they try to deceive the children of God and by appearing to have wisdom they

insinuate by plausible suggestions and arguments the most destructive of all lies that men and women are not inextricably bound by the limitations of their creaturely estate; that they are not under an imperative duty to recognize and obey their sovereign Creator, but that they have it in their power to break their restrictive fetters, and give free expression to their instincts unbound by any revealed moral law.⁵

⁴Ethelbert Stauffer, New Testament Theology, translated from the German by John Marsh (New York: The Macmillan Company, c. 1955), p. 67.

⁵Tasker, op. cit., pp. 146-47.

The guile of the deceitful servants of Satan is such that "by fair and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded" (Rom. 16:18).

Perhaps one of the most deceitful traits of the false teacher is that he will try to overwhelm the believer by first proclaiming a number of truths; then, when he has gained the confidence of the hearer, he delivers the fatal jab which catches the hearer unawares. I believe it was Shakespeare who once said:

. . . oftentimes, to win us to our harm
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In Deepest consequence.

The false teacher's satanic cry is that he is not abandoning the gospel but that, on the contrary, he is bringing a more welcome gospel. He says his false teaching is not a defection from the Church, but rather a mission-reviving power of the true Church.⁶ The false teacher only needs one faulty link in the Christian's armour in order to make his flaming darts destroy the Christian. When it is demanded he will recognize all parts of the armour save one that is vital to salvation. He is always willing to accept true teaching provided that he is given a loophole by which he can destroy. Lewis Sperry Chafer sees this device clearly manifest in the world today, for he says:

⁶Goppelt, op. cit., p. 13.

When some recognition of the truth is demanded, it has been granted on the condition that that which is vital in redemption should be omitted. This partial recognition of the truth is required by the world today. . . . Thus there has grown up a more or less popular appreciation of the value of these moral precepts of the Scriptures and of the example of Christ. . . . The fact that the world has thus partly acknowledged the value of the Scriptures is taken by many to be a glorious victory for God; while, on the contrary, fallen humanity is less inclined to accept God's terms of salvation than in generations past.⁷

In II Corinthians 11:4 and Galatians 1:6,7 St. Paul calls the message which the false teachers bring a "different gospel." This different gospel is in no way a massive evident distortion of the real gospel; it can hardly be distinguished from the one true gospel. Just one seemingly harmless thing can change the true gospel into a different false gospel. This is what the Judaizers were doing all the time: they would explain the observance of the Mosaic law, to which the early Church held and which St. Paul also approved, as necessary for salvation. Just this one theory changed the whole proclamation of the Good News to another gospel. This is the satanic distortion of the one true gospel,⁸ and this is the way false teachers work.

Because the false teacher is self-centered rather than Christ-centered, the doctrines he teaches are not divine but are human and demonic. He institutes such laws as the prohibition of marriage and the eating of certain foods (I Tim.

⁷Lewis Sperry Chafer, Satan (Philadelphia: The Sunday School Times Company, c.1919), pp. 84f.

⁸Goppelt, op. cit., p. 14.

4:2). St. Paul was bitterly opposed to these practices not only because they conflicted with the divine ordinance but because of the serious implications they bore, for they were regarded as necessary. Throughout the Pastoral Epistles the Apostle continually warns that one should beware of becoming involved in godless myths and endless genealogies because these lead one astray from the Word of God and the result of that could be tragic. In Colossians 2:18 the human teaching of the conceited false teacher is self-abasement and the worship of angels. The former is aimed at belittling Christ's work of salvation and the latter is aimed at leading the Christian away from God by breaking the First Commandment. The false apostles have a false estimate of Jesus, and so they try to improve on the gospel by their human additions and subtractions and thus lead men to look anywhere else except to the cross of Calvary for their salvation. They even mislead men into thinking that the rites and ceremonies of the Church are in themselves the means of salvation.⁹

The usual marks of false teachers are a broken faith, a defiled conscience, and selfish pride. They have "made shipwreck of their faith" (I Tim. 1:19), they "are puffed up without reason" (Col. 2:18), their "consciences are seared" (I Tim. 6:21). Their selfish pride leads them to look only for gain in teaching (I Tim. 6:5; Tit. 1:11), and this

⁹Tasker, op. cit., p. 146.

striving for profit makes them incapable of faith and service. For service to the Church demands complete submission to Christ, and when selfish pride takes the place of this it annihilates all good.

These false teachers are doomed. At present they may be successful and may be enjoying the approval of the world, but St. Paul says that "their end will correspond to their deeds" (II Cor. 11:15). As they have tried to destroy the Word of God, so shall the Word judge them. As they have been the misleaders of men, so shall they become at last the misled; as they have deceived men with their false doctrine, so shall they finally be deceived themselves. They shall perish with Satan and suffer the eternal damnation.

The Attitude Toward False Teachers

It is the duty of every Christian to be constantly alert and ready so that he can recognize every false teacher, and God expects every man to do his duty. The attitude to be taken over against these false teachers by the layman and the clergyman differs slightly but only in regard to the action to be taken. Every Christian is exhorted by St. Paul to distinguish between the false and the true and to recognize a false teacher by his different spirit, his proclamation of a different Christ and a different gospel. Every Christian is to realize that behind every false teacher there stands Satan and his wicked host to aid and strengthen their mouth-

piece. For these reasons the Apostle exhorts the Christians to keep away from them.

It is striking how often St. Paul when speaking of false teachers and their teaching gives the terse advice: "Avoid them!" It is possible to value toleration so much that the clear-cut distinctions between right and wrong become impossible, but this laconic exhortation leaves no room for the toleration of false teachers. They are to be avoided, and the Christian is to strengthen himself by the study of the Word so that he may withstand them. Association with false teachers only weakens and destroys, and the Christian soon finds that he is making false compromises and becoming blinded to the truth. The child of light must take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead he must expose them (Eph. 5:11). St. Paul exhorts Timothy to "have nothing to do with godless and silly myths" (I Tim. 4:7), to "avoid the godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge" (I Tim. 6:20), "to avoid disputing about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers" (II Tim. 2:14), and to "have nothing to do with stupid, senseless controversies" (II Tim. 2:23). He also tells Titus to "avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile" (Tit. 3:9). The only weapon that God has given the Christian with which to combat the false teacher is the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6:17). This mighty

weapon is the only one that wards off the demonic power which stands behind every false teacher, and it is the only one that can overcome the power of unbelief.

It is necessary, says St. Paul, that the bishop "must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it" (Tit. 1:9). So the teacher is to do more than just avoid them; he is also to prove them false on the basis of Holy Scripture in order that he may silence them (vs. 11). But the confutation is to go no further than to correct the false teacher, and the Christian teacher is to avoid controversy and godless chatter which only confuses the issue and leads to more and more ungodliness (II Tim. 2:16). Moreover, the Christian teacher never opposes his adversary with hate and never enters into quarrels with him. For St. Paul tells Timothy that "the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness" (II Tim. 2:24f.). The reason he is to take this attitude is because he always entertains one hope, and that is that "God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will" (vss. 25,26).

CHAPTER VI

SATAN AND THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS

The Man of Lawlessness or, as St. John calls him, the Antichrist is a super false teacher. He is Satan's masterpiece which comes in the last days and which Satan sends in a final desperate attempt to overthrow and destroy Christendom. He has all the marks and characteristics of the false teacher, but they are exceedingly magnified. St. Paul only refers to this greatest manifestation of the satanic once, and that is in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, in the second chapter.

II Thessalonians 2 has often been called the "Little Apocalypse," and not without reason. Both the language and the subject of this chapter have close affinities with Apocalyptic literature. It is in this literature that the idea of the Antichrist has its roots and is most fully expanded. The idea has its beginning in the Book of Daniel where it speaks of one who "shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law" (7:25), who "shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall magnify himself. Without warning he shall destroy many; and he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes" (8:25). "He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods" (11:36). In the epistles of St. John

this Man of Lawlessness is comprehensively described as ἀντιχρίστος, one who aims at undermining and destroying the essential Christology. In the Revelation of St. John the Antichrist exhibits the same characteristics as St. Paul mentions. There the power of Satan is behind the Antichrist (12:9; 13:1f.), he opens his mouth "to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming His name and His dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven" (13:6); he performs lying signs and wonders (13:13f.; 16:14); and he shall finally be destroyed (17:8).

St. Paul variously describes this Antichrist as ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ ἄνομος, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, and ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ βεβαββα. Because St. Paul uses the words ἀνομία and ἄνομος to describe this fearful person, some have seen a connection here with Beliar (II Cor. 6:15) because the Septuagint often translates the Hebrew לְמַלְאָכִים with ἀνομία and παράνομος. But the later use of this word always associates it with Satan rather than the satanic counterpart of Christ. The epithets should merely be taken as meaning that the Antichrist is the very embodiment of lawlessness. St. Paul often employs ἀπώλειαν to describe the work of the satanic and the condemnation of those who follow him, and he often uses it in direct antithesis to the work of God and Christ. In Romans 9:22, 23 he says that God endures vessels of wrath εἰς ἀπώλειαν that he may then make known the vessels of mercy εἰς δόξαν. In Phil. 1:28

ἀπώλεια is directly contrasted with σωτηρία (cf. also 3:19f.). The Antichrist is also called ὁ ἀντικείμενος, a word which is used three other times in the Pauline Epistles. In I Timothy 5:14 it is used in close connection with Satan and probably refers to him. This would have its precedent in the Old Testament, for in I Kings 11:25 the Septuagint translates ἰφψ with ἀντικείμενος. The last epithet given to the Antichrist is he who "exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship." This is a free rendering of Daniel 11:36 with a few additions, and thus St. Paul links it up with the previous prophecy. With the use of these names and throughout this passage it seems that St. Paul is making a deliberate attempt to contrast this Antichrist with the real Christ. Whereas Christ came to fulfil the law, the Antichrist is the Lawless One; as there is a mystery of Christ (I Tim. 3:16, etc.), so also there is the mystery of lawlessness (vs. 7); as Christ is the power of salvation, so the Antichrist embodies the power of destruction; as Christ is revealed (Gal. 1:16, etc.), so also the Antichrist is revealed (vs. 8). Both have a παρουσία (vss. 8,9); and as Christ performed signs and wonders, so shall the Man of Lawlessness try to win men with lying signs and wonders. Because Christ is divine, the Lawless One will make a similar claim. Christ is the Son of God, but the Antichrist is the offspring of Satan. St. Paul has set up a whole Antichristology

as a counterpart of Christology.¹

The parousia of the Lawless One has not yet taken place in St. Paul's time, but its beginning, the mystery of lawlessness, is already found at the time of the writing of the letter. But for the time being there is one who is restraining him and preventing him from appearing. Only when this one has been removed will the Antichrist appear in all his deceitfulness. Then he will flourish till the parousia of the Lord, when he will be destroyed. The length of the period in which he will work his lawlessness in the world unrestrained is not told us, nor are we told when Christ will come again to destroy him. But the manifestations of the Lawless One are the doing of lying signs and wonders and the consequent deception of many.

St. Paul says that the Antichrist will so exalt himself that he will take "his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God." To take this literally as referring to the temple at Jerusalem is to misunderstand the Apostle and the whole method of apocalyptic. "Temple of God" is here used by St. Paul to denote the sphere of God's presence which is manifest in the believers. The Antichrist is to exalt himself in Christendom as divine lord. Moreover, that Apostle's attitude towards the Jewish temple at this time would not

¹Henry Hamann, "A Brief Exegesis of II Thess. 2:1-12 with Guideline for the Application of the Prophecy Contained Therein," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXIV (1953), p. 424.

be such that he would speak favourably of it, for Jesus has prophesied the destruction of the temple, and St. Paul himself knew that national Judaism was at its end (I Thess. 2:16).²

The Man of Lawlessness is not intending to put himself in a subordinate position to God but like his prototype, the false teacher; in his own deceit he places himself above God and assumes the position of God in the New Testament temple, the Christian Church.³

The coming of the Lawless One is sponsored by Satan, and as God was at work in Christ so Satan will work in the Antichrist. With the power given him by his satanic lord, the Antichrist works signs and wonders just as Christ had done on earth. This is just another instance of the demonic aping of the divine in order to destroy. As Christ used signs and wonders in order to give Christianity a start so Satan intends to use the same powers in order to give Christianity a finish, but he cannot triumph because he is doomed. The signs and wonders that his puppet shall use are fundamentally different from those of Christ, for they are ψεῦδος, falsehood. They will deceive those who have rejected the true God but the true believer will recognize his deceit.

With the coming of the Christ the Lawless One will be shown up for what he really is and "the Lord will slay him

²Ibid., p. 423.

³Ibid., p. 425.

with the breath of His mouth and destroy him." Here again apocalyptic language is used which was probably taken from Isaiah 11:4. As the false teacher is self-condemned by asserting himself as the authority, so the Antichrist has condemned himself and brings upon himself the inevitable punishment of destruction by Him whose place he has endeavored to usurp. Stauffer sums up the situation well:

In antichrist there is the final revelation of creaturely sovereignty. But the self-revelation of the demonic passes with historical necessity through self-advertisement to self-judgment. The powers hostile to creation that were set in action by the adversary come in the end to vent their fury against themselves. . . . The end of lying is in self-refutation.⁴

It has been noted before that God often uses false teachers in order to purge the Church. So in the last days through the evil work of the Antichrist there will be a final purge in which the true Church will be cleansed from those who do not believe the truth but take pleasure in unrighteousness. Here again God punishes obduracy with obduration, and He uses men's sin to punish them. The reign of the Antichrist brings out all the latent evil elements in the world and reveals them for what they are. Those who have rejected the truth are now made to believe what is palpably false. This is the ἀποστασία. It is worthy to note that the word God is placed in an emphatic position in order to emphasize the fact that it is not the

⁴Ethelbert Stauffer, New Testament Theology, translated from the German by John Marsh (New York: The Macmillan Company c.1955), p. 215.

overwhelming power of the Antichrist that brings this strong delusion, nor natural law, but that it is the result of divine judgmental action.⁵ Those who had refused to love the truth are now cut off from that truth, their only means of salvation.

⁵Leon Morris, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1958), p. 134.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to discover a well-defined demonology in the epistles of St. Paul that is of practical value in the Church today. Modern theologians have often said that our time lacks a practical demonology which would awaken Christians to the dangers outside the Church. With this in mind they have been ever ready to find satanic influence in such men as Hitler and others who have persecuted members of the Church in their striving for political power. But if the Church is to stand it cannot look for a practical demonology outside the Church. As St. Paul has shown, Satan and his evil hosts do not seek to attack the Church from the outside, for often an attack from without only serves to strengthen the Church by forcing it to offer united resistance. As far as St. Paul is concerned, Satan is always attacking the Church from the inside, and this is where he manifests his great power of cunning and deceit. This understanding of the satanic was of practical and vital importance to the Church at St. Paul's time and, in spite of those who say that we must form a new demonology to coincide with this modern age, we must ever be mindful of this same understanding of the satanic. It is still the same Word of God that Satan is attacking, and it is still the same Church of true believers that he is trying to destroy.

St. Paul's understanding of the satanic is already brought out in the names and definitions he employs for Satan. For in them the whole character of Satan is revealed. He is seen first of all as the adversary of God's people and their accuser before God. In this role he slanders the Christian and tries to win him away from his heavenly Father, tempting him as he had tempted Christ. Because he is condemned by God it is his desire to destroy the children of God and thus he becomes the prince of all evil contending against the kingly Christ. He is the very embodiment of evil and so those who partake of evil become his disciples. Because this age is evil, Satan is known as the "god of this age" and he who conforms to this age and is not transformed into the new man who is in Christ is ruled by the god of this age and must be condemned with him. In his fight against the kingdom of heaven Satan is not alone but is aided by innumerable hosts who are always at work in the sons of disobedience. Our present time is no different from that of St. Paul. We are still troubled with temptation, slander, the sinful pleasures of this world, for Satan is still at work and we still need to be reminded of his methods and characteristics.

Many have been led to look on St. Paul's demonology with a certain scepticism because they think they find there a host of little devils with all kinds of cunning powers which belong to a bygone age of superstition. But when the medieval spectacles are removed and a closer look is taken, one sees how real the satanic host is and how subtle is the power of

the devil in his bid to destroy the Kingdom. But one also notices that this same satanic host is already judged, already doomed, and he who yields to it suffers the same judgment. St. Paul also has an answer for the universalistic tendencies of our day. Behind every false god and idol there is, according to Paul, the power of the satanic, and every compromise with these is a denial of the one true God.

The modern man will find no dualistic concept in St. Paul's epistles. For the Apostle again and again points the sinner to his own guilt. The modern man looks in vain for a demonic power on which to place the responsibility for sin. For it is only when the Christian has turned from God, has discarded his armour, that Satan gains a hold on him. Any un-Christian attitude is an invitation to Satan and a temptation to forsake God. Hence the necessity of keeping our eyes fixed on God from whom comes our help. This applies to the congregation as well as to the individual Christian. The situation is the same today as it was in the time of St. Paul.

In this era of ecumenical movements both good and bad, when the emphasis is on unity and the actual situation is often confused with the desired result, it is necessary to study what St. Paul has to say on the dangers involved in the union of the true believers with those who teach what man's wisdom teaches rather than what the Word of God teaches. Especially in his letters to the Corinthians does the Apostle stress the necessity for true Christian fellowship; but he is at the same

time vehement in his censure of those who carry out the work of the Church's great enemy, Satan. They are traitors trying to destroy the Church which succours them. But the Christian of today must also note the distinction the Apostle makes between these false teachers and erring brethren. The false teacher spreads falsehood through his own conceit and insists on it, whereas the erring brother makes a mistake out of ignorance and is willing to correct it. The only way to keep the Church pure today is to follow St. Paul's advice and keep one's distance from satanically inspired false teaching. This is the Apostle's message to our time.

The picture that the Apostle gives us is not a black one except to the unrighteous. For he assures us that Satan and his evil hosts are already condemned, having been overcome by the power of Christ. Because of this the Christian can also overcome the satanic hosts so that God can use Satan to advantage by making use of him to test and refine the faith of the Christian. In like manner He also tests and refines the Church so that it is purified of those who do not love the truth, those through whom Satan works in order to destroy. The Christian knows that God has spoken the first word and that He will speak the last. He can face the truth because he knows that the truth can make him free and leads him to

salvation.¹ This is the vital and practical demonology which St. Paul teaches us and this is the teaching to which we must hold.

¹Olaf Moe, The Apostle Paul: His Message and Doctrine, translated by L. A. Vigness (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1954), p. 154.

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