

8-1-1933

Demoniacal Possession

Theo. Graebner

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Graebner, Theo. (1933) "Demoniacal Possession," *Concordia Theological Monthly*: Vol. 4 , Article 80.
Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol4/iss1/80>

This Homiletical Help is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

nicht den Mut verlieren und vom Predigtamt ablassen, wenn wir nicht gleich Früchte sehen. Die Frucht kommt zu ihrer Zeit. Wir haben den Mund aufzutun, und Gott wird zu seiner Zeit Glauben wirken. Wenn wir hier mit Bestrebung unsererseits eingreifen wollen, dann können wir bloß Schaden anrichten. Luther sagt: „Deshalb sollen wir das törichte Vertrauen ablegen, als ob wir etwas vermöchten, dem Worte bei dem Zuhörer mitzuhelfen; vielmehr wollen wir anhalten am Gebet, daß er allein ohne uns das am Zuhörer ausrichten wolle, was er durch den Lehrer redet; denn er ist es, der da redet, und er ist es, der da hört und alles in allem wirkt. Wir sind seine Geräte und Werkzeuge, die weder etwas empfangen noch geben können, wenn er selbst es nicht gibt und empfängt.“ (IV, 626.) So sagt auch der Apostel 1 Kor. 2, 3: „Ich war bei euch mit Schwachheit und mit Furcht und Zittern.“

(Fortsetzung folgt.)

Demonic Possession.

I.

By demonic possession is meant the state of being possessed by the devil. The demoniacs of the gospel-story are familiar instances.

Just what is possession?

The Swiss scholar Maximilian Perty has given us the following lucid description: "Possession is that awful condition in which man appears to be seized by a foreign and evil being, which during the attacks controls the body of its victim as if it were its own possession, maltreats and tortures this body in every possible manner, causes the features to become distorted into a ferocious mocking, sometimes diabolical distortion, and — this is characteristic — causes the victim to express disrespect for religion in a bold, cynical manner. The phenomena of bodily possession are so dreadful and at the same time so strong that but a little acuteness of observation is needed in order that the true relation may be recognized and also the unjust diagnosis of abnormal states, as if they represented possession, might be avoided. Possession may be assumed on three grounds: hatred of religion, the power of divining secret things, and psychic phenomena. Persons thus afflicted know about the sins of those present and in the most reckless manner publish such information. They also recognize the spiritual power of those who resist them (as in the case of Jesus), know their thoughts, hence are able also to understand unknown tongues and are able even to utter in such tongues some few words or sentences. At the same time the bodies are propelled by invisible forces, and there are phenomena of light and sound. The native of Gadara who was possessed (Luke 8, 26—39) shows the character-

istic marks of possession: 1. By the sight of Jesus he becomes victim of an outburst of rage. He recognizes in Jesus his opponent, but also knows the divine nature and sacred mission of Jesus. 2. He has supernatural strength. He breaks his chains and escapes into the desert. 3. The evil spirits, recognizing that the end of their activities is soon at hand, ask permission to pass into the herd of swine. Jesus permitted this, possibly in order to put an end to their activity so far as human souls are concerned."

The criticism is made that with our present advanced knowledge we cannot accept such a story as that recorded by Luke as actual fact. We are told that Jesus was only humoring a notion of the time in seeming to recognize the existence of such demons and that He only acted a part which was not real in seeming to cast out what was not in. This view has been properly characterized by one of the greatest of expository preachers, Dr. Alexander Maclaren, as "unworthy of the sacred narrative and a reflection on the sincerity of the Teacher before whom we all bow." It would be more candid and more reasonable to say at once that Jesus was mistaken.

The Rev. H. G. Wood, M. A., contributes to *Peake's Commentary* a bit of literature which deals with those miracles in which Christ claimed to cast out devils from devil-possessed lives. "Many of the stories related of Jesus," says Mr. Wood, "are stories of the healing of demoniacs, and in some of the cases of the cure of disease the disease is attributed to evil powers (for example, Luke 13, 16). From Mark's gospel it appears that the driving out of demons was an essential part of the proclamation of the Kingdom. Jesus Himself clearly believed in demons and saw a proof of the nearness of the Kingdom in the downfall of their power. He apparently accepted the popular diagnosis of disease as due to demonic influence. But for faith," he adds, "this raises the question of the limitations of the knowledge of Jesus." (Peake, p. 663.)

Now, the question here raised — "the limitations of the knowledge of Jesus" — is one from which the human mind might well shrink. The power of Christ registers itself in visible signs, but the mind of Christ — what is its height and depth and what the sweep of its knowledge? What method shall we use when we address ourselves to that task?

As a matter of fact, however, Mr. Wood, using the methods of the Higher Criticism, undertakes this task with great confidence, and he is able to report that the problem of the relation between the human soul and the unseen powers of evil was one which "the limitations of the knowledge of Jesus" made too difficult for Him. In His diagnosis of this particular problem He blundered; He misread the facts. The "limitations" of His knowledge made it possible for Him to mistake some ordinary trouble of the brain or of the nerves for a case of

satanic possession. As a result Jesus Christ is revealed in the gospel as making Himself ridiculous by going through the form of casting out a devil when no devil existed;

Now, it is certain that Jesus Christ gave to the business of casting out devils a large place in His public ministry. He claims such a miracle as one of his credentials. "If I, by the finger of God," He said, "cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you," Luke 11, 20. He had a formula in working this miracle which expressly recognized that some tormenting spirit had invaded a human soul. In St. Mark's gospel, in the very first chapter, the story is told of a man in the synagog with an unclean spirit; and Jesus "rebuked" the evil and tormenting spirit, saying, "Hold thy peace and come out of him." The same formula is used in the deliverance of the devil-possessed wretch in the tombs. "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit," said Christ. He endowed His disciples with a measure of this power; to the Twelve, when He sent them on the first missionary errand, He gave "power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases."

It will be remembered that, when standing in the presence of Festus and Agrippa, Paul challenged doubt for his credentials. "Why," he asked, "should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" And it may be asked with equal confidence, "Why should not Christ cast out devils?" It was the very purpose of His redeeming work; He has been doing this very work in this troubled world for over two thousand years; He is doing it to-day.

Bishop Gore, writing on this subject, says:—

"People glibly say that Christ shared the delusions of the age as to the existence of evil spirits. Well, He certainly talked of evil spirits. He certainly looked out upon the evil of the world, and He saw in it a rebel will behind men's will. 'An enemy,' He said 'hath done this.' But I have yet to learn what is the superior wisdom which can say that that estimate of things is wrong in spite of and in the face of the experience of all the greatest saints of God. I do not think," adds Bishop Gore, "He was deluded. I see no right that men have to assume the sort of omniscience which should declare Him in this respect deluded. I believe His word."

The answer to the "accommodation" theory has been well stated by Prof. George Parks Fisher of Yale University in his small, but invaluable *Manual of Christian Evidences*:—

"The opinion has been adopted by not a few Christian scholars that the language of Christ on this subject was uttered simply by way of accommodation to a prevalent belief and in order to effect the cure of those who were under the influence of it. In other words, He entered into the idea of the persons thus afflicted with disease—humored the delusion, as it were—as a means of causing their recovery and of assuring them of it. Their mistaken belief was harmless, from a religious point of view, and Christ was under no

obligation to disabuse them of it, any more than to instruct them on the causes of disease in general and to clear their minds of other medical delusions.

"Christian scholars to whom this solution is not satisfactory are content to accept as real the fact of demoniacal possession at that epoch when the minds of men were oppressed and distracted by the inward conflict with evil. It was an extraordinary crisis in the spiritual life of individuals and of society. *Too little is known of the supernatural world to warrant a dogmatic denial of the possibility of such an influence exercised by evil spirits.*"

In his *Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament* (Calw, 1908), A. Schlatter describes the case as of actual "possession" by demons who had a clear recognition that Christ was the Son of God and who for that reason feared Him. "Those who are possessed speak as instruments of the spirits who are filled with the fear of hell." Schlatter shares with B. Weiss (*Das Neue Testament, mit fortlaufenden Erläuterungen versehen*, Leipzig, 1907) the view that the evil spirits regarded the activity of Jesus against them as premature and hence arbitrary. "The evil spirits recognize Jesus as the Son of God, chosen to be the Messiah. . . . Well do they know that on the Day of Judgment they will be irretrievably ruined in hell. But He is not to deliver them over to torment prematurely."

B. Weiss expresses a similar opinion in the seventh edition of *Meyer's Commentary*, which he has edited. The preference of the demoniacs for tombs as dwelling-places he explains as follows: "They live there under a delusion which makes them afraid of men, because the tombs correspond to the darkness of their melancholy. . . ." And as for the attitude of the demons toward Christ: "The demons, by the power of their higher knowledge, immediately recognize in Jesus the Son of God, chosen to be the Messiah, and know that He has come to destroy the kingdom of evil. . . . Since, however, this is to occur only after their work is complete, they complain that He has come prematurely to deliver them over to the terrors of hell."

Th. Zahn's view (*Evangelium des Matthaeus*) is that "here the specific nature of demoniac possession comes to its clearest expression. . . . Those who are possessed are mentally diseased and, according to Mark, are cases of extreme insanity. But the true meaning of the account is not that those who are afflicted have in their delusion identified themselves with the demons by whom they believe themselves to be controlled, but, on the contrary, that actually existing demons have taken possession of the whole psychophysical organism so completely that the ego of the patient can no longer utter even a cry for freedom." Zahn rejects the interpretation that Jesus began with the patient as a physician would do; he points out that Matt. 8, 32 and 12, 25—30 show that Jesus shared the view of a real demon possession.

II.

Bodily possession is not a rare, but a common observation of missionaries in heathen lands.

A missionary in the Methodist Church is quoted by the author of *China Inside Out* (Abingdon Press), a narrative of Chinese religious conditions at the present time, as authority for the existence in China of cases of demoniac possession similar to those described in the gospel narrative. In a remote village a Chinese missionary was called to a house in which a Chinese woman lay upon a couch, writhing in rage and fury, frothing and screaming in a terrible fashion. The people of the village regarded her as being possessed of an evil spirit. For three days previous to the coming of the missionary she had repeatedly exclaimed, "Some one will come to drive me away." After looking earnestly at the poor woman for a few minutes, the Chinese pastor said very emphatically, "You must leave in the name of the Lord Jesus," whereupon he sang a hymn, read a passage of Scripture, and began to pray. During the prayer the woman suddenly became quiet and after the prayer was perfectly normal. The astonished people of the village, on beholding the miracle, besought the man to remain among them, but he proceeded at once on his journey. So far as is known, the woman never relapsed. A number of such cases scattered over a wide area are reported by missionaries. Some of them are close copies of the unfortunates of the gospel narrative; many of them have been cured in answer to prayer. Dr. Miller, the author of *China Inside Out*, comments in the following way on the treatment of these cases: "Unusual manifestations of good often arouse strange activities of evil. When Jesus was upon earth, such cases occurred. The coming of the Christian faith to China has created a somewhat similar situation here, and it is not strange that similar manifestations of malignant possession should be found."

Facts which seem to support the same view are pointed out by David Kelly Lambuth, of Vanderbilt University. He gives some citations from the letters and reports of American missionaries. "Since the conditions of life and work on the Christian frontier in the Far East," comments the editor of the *Independent*, "are similar to those of the early days of Christianity, this article throws some light upon New Testament narratives. In China the same effect of the environment upon the missionary has been observed." The citations, with Mr. Lambuth's comments, are as follows:—

"A peculiar sense of the presence of an evil spirit is evidenced thus:—

"In a country where the evil spirit is so dominant and so tangible one comes to a vital sensation of his presence.

"Certainly I am more conscious of the real presence of the

devil in Korea than in America. Many of the missionaries have been acutely conscious of his palpable presence in the very room with them.

"The consciousness of a real personal devil is as vivid as the sense of God's presence, though infinitely removed in kind. In Korea you feel him in the atmosphere."

"More important testimony is offered in the evidence of belief in possession by devils, a belief that has fastened with a peculiar and tenacious grip upon the people of Korea, so that one writer calls the country 'the haunted house among the nations, afflicted with the delirium tremens of paganism.' 'The Christians, too,' says one missionary, 'hold to the possession by evil spirits.' 'Demonic possession in that country,' says another, 'becomes a thing too evident to doubt.' 'Thousands of people,' says a third, 'are slaves to evil spirits,' while another describes a woman, 'possessed of many devils,' and still another tells of 'miracles performed, the crazy made of sound mind, the devil-possessed set free.'

"At the service was a young man demoniacally possessed, made dumb by his indwelling spirit for three years. After long prayer and a command to the spirit to depart, it left him, and he began to read aloud."

"Another was 'a man with every symptom of demonic possession, in whom, upon catching sight of the preacher, the demons began to rave.' Again prayer brought 'a marked change over the demoniac.' He slept that night, the first for many days, and in a vision saw that God had 'driven the evil spirits out of his heart and home.' . . .

"No more complete avowal of belief in demonic possession than the following could be required:—

"In our work in Korea we are continually coming in contact with the most extraordinary cases of apparent demonic possession and cure, containing all the phenomena that characterized demonized minds in the days of Christ."

"Another writes pertinently:—

"If you had lived in the midst of the native quarter with me and heard at midnight the cries of terror of those appealing to the evil spirits for help or being tortured by them, veritable possessions by devils would then seem no impossible thing to you.' There is little reason to doubt that this diagnosis of the case is correct; for under circumstances such as these it would indeed be the unusual man that went his way unmoved."

Miss Harrison, working under the China Inland Mission, says:—

"If Christians who know the power of the Cross should go and challenge the mediums, or rather the powers speaking through the mediums, commanding them in the name of the Lord to declare themselves, they would confess, though much against their will, that they are demons." She gives a typical case from her own experience:

"We have recently been helping a young woman who for many years has been tormented by demons, to fight through to freedom. When it began speaking through her, attempting to deceive us into thinking it was the young woman herself speaking, we demanded of it an answer to the question, 'Who are you?' It tried evasion, but held to it, replied, 'I am, I am,' several times, and then changed to 'We are, we are,' and finally to 'We are demons.' Asked, 'How many?' evasion was again tried, but the Lord has given to His servants authority over these spirits, so they have to obey, and we got the answer, 'Five.'

"The woman is now better."

Miss Carmichael, a missionary worker in the Tinnevely district of East India, places the following experience on record:*—

"We were seated on the floor of a fashionable residence. Its owners were members of one of the higher castes. The walls were decorated with the emblems of various idols. We were conversing with some of the young women, and they appeared interested [in Christianity]. An old woman entered, and immediately silence fell upon the group. She sat down and began a conversation, but there was not much progress. We began to sing a hymn, and the woman mumbled to herself—then suddenly she became the object of a seizure such as I have never witnessed. She cried, 'Let me sing! Let me sing!' And she did sing. It was a song bewailing the hopelessness, folly, and shame of idolatry. Then, however, foreign thoughts began to rise to the surface. The excitement of the old woman was like that of a maniac, her upper body moving up and down, while her fury seemed to increase. With her fist she made manacring motions before our eyes. Then her body seemed to lengthen. One moment she would appear to dart forward, then again she was held by an invisible power. How long this lasted I do not know. The clenched fist of the terrible old woman was continuously waving over her head, and without interruption a monotonous melancholy song came from her throat in a hoarse howling. Meanwhile darkness had fallen, and the oil lamp gave an unsteady, changing light. We were like under a hypnotic spell. The women in whispered hints revealed that they knew what was going on—a demonstration of invisible powers that ruled in the darkness of this world.

"Finally, the woman collapsed, every limb of her body quivering, her glittering eyes still directed at us. She tried to speak again, but was not able to do so. We departed quietly, realizing that we had been close to the spot where Satan has his throne."

† Sometimes these satanic seizures take hold of greater numbers and occasionally rise to the importance of an epidemic. Such was the *bilo* contagion which affected large numbers of heathen inhabitants of Madagascar in 1860 and again in 1910. A writer in the Norwegian paper *Lutheraneren* describes the disease as follows:—

"The attacks come with great suddenness and cause the afflicted to act like a victim of a mania. They leap into the air with wild screams and gesticulations, perform an uncanny dance, sometimes climbing walls and precipices inaccessible under normal conditions; sometimes they utter exclamations which they later explain as the effect of the promptings of spirits. Others again show extreme fright. They run panic-stricken and blindly over the roughest kind of ground, often rushing into water, where they drown if rescuers are not immediately at hand. A missionary related that he spoke to a young woman who had been a victim of the disease, but had now recovered. She said that during the seizure she was hardly conscious of what was going on; that she felt herself completely in the power of the demon and had to perform what it demanded of her, even though it should be suicide. When asked whether she felt any bodily pain, she said, 'Indeed, I felt as if I had fire poured out through my entire

* I have retranslated this from a German version of the account.—G.

body, especially in the head.' She also said that her attacks came once a day, sometimes oftener, and would sometimes last twelve hours. The remarkable thing is that the bilo disease never attacked any inhabitants that had been converted to Christianity."

Indian medicine-men have confessed after their conversion to Christianity that their supernatural or abnormal powers of clairvoyance and clairaudience were achieved by "praying to the devil with all their might." Not the spirits of the departed, but demons from the pit spoke and acted through them.

III.

This brings me to the subject of Spiritism and the evidences of demoniacal possession discernible in some of its phenomena.

Admittedly a large percentage of spiritistic claims is based upon elaborate systems of trickery and much on self-deception. But after eliminating all manifestations produced by fraudulent means, there remains as a fact which cannot be successfully contested the supernatural or at least non-human origin of some of the genuine phenomena. These, however, are not based on communion with the souls of the departed, but must be accounted for as the work of evil spirits. In such cases the mediums accordingly represent true instances of possessions. Of this we have an authentic instance in the Book of Acts, chap. 16, 16—18. Research in the modern history of Spiritism discloses examples startlingly parallel to this and to the examples in the gospels in which evil spirits were able to make the human tongue a vehicle of expression. As far back as 1877 Dr. L. S. Forbes Winslow wrote in *Spiritualistic Madness*: "The mediums often manifest signs of an abnormal condition of their mental faculties, and among certain of them are found unequivocal indications of a true demoniacal possession." Mr. Dal Owen, himself an ardent Spiritist, was constrained to write years ago: "There are more reasons than many imagine for the opinion entertained by some able men, Protestants as well as Catholics, that the communications in question come from the powers of darkness and that we are entering on the first steps of a career of demoniac manifestation, the issues whereof men cannot conjecture." Dr. B. P. Randolph, author of *Dealings with the Dead*, was eight years a medium. He gives his opinion of it in the following words: "We read in Scripture of demoniac possession as well as of abnormal spiritual action. Both facts exist, provable to-day; I am positive the former does. A. J. Davis and his clique of Harmonialists say there are no evil spirits. I emphatically deny the statement. Five of my friends destroyed themselves, and I attempted it, by direct spiritual influences. Every crime in the calendar has been committed by mortal movers of viewless beings. Adultery, fornications, suicides, desertions, unjust divorces, prostitution, abortion, insanity, are not evils, I suppose.

I charge all these to this scientific Spiritualism. It has also broken up families, squandered fortunes, tempted and destroyed the weak. It has banished peace from happy families, separated husbands and wives, and shattered the intellect of thousands." (*Religious Delusions*, Coombs, p. 151 f.) Who is not reminded of the description of the demoniacs by such instances of mediumistic seizures or fits, as the following, written by Sir William Crookes, (a believer in Spiritism): "After witnessing the painful state of nervous and bodily prostration in which some of these experiments have left Mr. Home, — after seeing him lying in almost fainting condition on the floor, pale and speechless, — I could scarcely doubt that the evolution of psychic force is accompanied by a corresponding drain on vital force." Mr. Stainton-Moses, claimed by the Spiritists all over the world as the highest authority on the subject, wrote of himself as follows: "The hand tingled, and the arm throbbed, and I was conscious of waves of force surging through me. When the message was done, I was prostrate with exhaustion and suffered from a violent headache at the base of the brain." Another spiritistic writer makes the following confession: "For seven years I held daily intercourse with what purported to be my mother's spirit. I am now firmly persuaded that it was nothing but an evil spirit, an infernal demon, who gained my soul's confidence and led me to the very brink of ruin." (*Facts and Fallacies of Spiritualism*, Rev. G. S. Seaman, p. 6.)

Since rational speech is the highest gift of God to man, it is not surprising that Satan should abuse and disorganize in a most fiendish manner this supreme endowment of humanity. In the disturbance variously called "gift of tongues," "ecstatic speech," "speaking in tongues," we therefore are justified in recognizing a mark of possession whenever it occurs in connection with religious phenomena not originating in the Spirit's operations through the divine Word of God. We find the gift of tongues among various medieval sects, some of which would have a secret diabolical ritual. We find it among the Shakers of the eighteenth century, who would either talk in unknown tongues while performing ritualistic dances, in which sometimes men and women danced naked together, or, at other times, would be struck suddenly mute and remain in this condition for a week, an experience called "dumb devils."

The Irvingites record similar experiences. Robert Baxter's *Narrative of Facts Characterizing the Supernatural Manifestations*, etc., London, 1833, records in detail the experiences of Edward Irving, leader of the movement. Irving would have seizures which caused him great distress of mind and of which he himself is on record: "The things I was made to utter flashed in upon my mind without forethought, without expectation, and without any plan or arrangement, — all was the work of the moment, and I was as the

passive instrument of the power which used me." Baxter also records his observation of an eye-witness: "When utterance broke from him instead of articulate words, nothing but muttering followed, and with this an expression of countenance most revolting."

The early history of Mormonism is not without examples of demonic abuses of human speech. It would happen that "a man arose in meeting to speak and was seized with a kind of paroxysm that drew his face and limbs in a violent and unnatural manner, which made him appear to be in pain, and gave utterance to strange sounds, which were incomprehensible to his audience." "Sometimes their faces, bodies, and limbs were violently distorted and convulsed until they fell prostrate on the ground." (Quoted by A. Mackie in *The Gift of Tongues*, p. 218.)

Two things are characteristic of this phenomenon: Those acting under such an impulse are constrained by an inner inexplicable compulsion to speak in short, broken sentences, expressing unmeaning sounds and words. The other characteristic is the rapidity of utterance. There is usually a perfect torrent of words, uttered with an energy that is superhuman.

Has there been an actual use of unknown languages? Mackie, at the close of his scholarly investigation, does not think so: "In no case is there substantial evidence of any sort that the persons who claimed to speak by inspiration in other languages actually used other languages. The testimony is universally that of the person who claimed to have spoken in the 'other tongues' or of interested witnesses. Whenever men of any linguistic knowledge have investigated the phenomena, they have united in testifying that the language spoken was indeed unknown."

Also the phenomena that go with the gift of tongues point to a diabolical origin. Usually the "jerks" of the Shakers and the "falling exercise" of various abnormal sects are closely connected with sexual perversions. Mackie sums it up thus: "The fruits of the tongues movement are ignorance, selfishness, conceit, dishonesty, fornication, adultery, unnatural vices, and blasphemy. If these be the works of the Spirit, then we know not what or who the Spirit is or what or who God is."

IV.

The most famous instance of demoniacal possession in modern times is the case of Gottlieb Dittus, a girl of twenty-five, who in 1842 became a parishioner of Pfarrer J. C. Blumhardt of Moettlingen, Wurttemberg. Blumhardt describes with meticulous detail the attacks to which this girl was subjected and also the treatments and final cure. From every standpoint it is probably the most horrible case in the history of demonology. After reading his account, one is left with a feeling of astonishment, not that the girl finally was liberated

of the demons that ensconced themselves in her poor body, but that Blumhardt and his elders did not go stark raving mad when they witnessed the closing scenes of the possession. Concerning the truthfulness of the account there cannot be the slightest doubt. Any biography of Blumhardt will contain the story in outline. There is nothing like it in literature.

An Episcopal clergyman, writing in the *Living Church* of March 28, 1921, places on record the following:—

"A few days ago there came to me a woman of fifty-five, large, robust, and apparently in good physical health. Several years ago, she said, her husband and she had rented their house at a New England seaside place to some Spiritualists who were desirous of holding a camp-meeting there. Since that period the woman claimed to have been 'possessed' by spirits. The manifestations were that her voice, from having been clear and of high pitch, had degenerated into a hoarse and halting whispering. Her breath was at intervals almost cut off, resulting in gasping periods. From time to time, in voices wholly diverse from her own, either originally or as modified by the 'possession,' she would utter longer or shorter speeches in languages totally strange to her. Connected discourses were common.

"Upon her second visit to me, after going over her statements very carefully and making up my mind that she was a genuine case of possession, I took her into the chapel of my parish church, and after praying for the power to cast out evil spirits, I brought her to the altar rail and began to say the traditional sentences of exorcism. At the first word she was seized with a convulsive shivering. One of the sisters who work in my parish knelt beside her and supported her, reciting a litany and ejaculatory prayers continuously throughout the process of exorcism. The whole process occupied an hour and ten minutes.

"Successive convulsions shook this woman, as many, I should estimate, as a hundred times. After about twenty minutes there appeared to be a stoppage of the process, which had been repeating itself. This marked, as it would appear, the successive ejections—I can think of no word that more exactly describes it—of demons, or spirits, from her. Then, as I say, the process stopped. The convulsions continued, but the relief and temporary quiescence after each one, which had been the regular sequence down to that time, ceased. The convulsion became more and more violent, and a deep throaty voice, apparently coming from the region of the woman's stomach, began a rapid utterance, increasingly loud and distinct, in what appeared to me (with my limited knowledge of Romance languages, which includes French, Spanish, and Italian) to be in medieval Italian. It was unmistakably a 'man's voice.'

"The process was the same in every one of the hundred or more castings out. The body would be convulsed, the face would be twisted into an appearance which I can only describe as 'devilish,' heavings of the body and choking groans would ensue, and then, with a rasping sigh, apparently the demon, or spirit, would go out. Once, in a terrible convulsion, the whole body became rigid as it had at the time of the speech in what I took to be the Italian of the Middle Ages and a shorter oration in what I imaged to be Hindustani was made.

"At the end of an hour and ten minutes it would appear that the last demon, or spirit, came out, and the woman collapsed; but, although nearly prostrated by the prolonged physical strain, during all of which she perspired freely and in which tears ran down her face, to be, from time to time, spasmodically wiped away by her, in the brief intervals between the castings out, she was entirely normal, merely exhausted. I then said appropriate prayers over her and communicated her with the Sacrament. Afterwards, with my help and the sister's, she arose and sat for a few moments in the chapel and then came to the room where I am accustomed to meet people for interviews, accompanied by the sister. She said that she was relieved of the horrible load which she had borne for years, very, very tired, but at peace for the first time in years. After resting a short time with the sister in attendance, she went to her home.

"I have had occasional practise in exorcising before this time, but such an experience, the casting out of a veritable legion of demons, I had never previously encountered. The entire process bore every mark, so far as I know, of the typical casting out of a multitude of possessing spirits from the one subject, as recorded in the various documents bearing upon that subject, which are still extant and which have come under my eye.

"If I have correctly interpreted this case,—and I have every reason to believe that I have done so,—the one chief point which occurs to me as of primary value, is the demonstration of the harm done by Spiritualists in arousing and assembling the discarnate spirits with which they dare to deal. May God keep all His people from such visitations and indwellings of the powers of darkness and evil and grant us, who are set apart for confounding Satan and all his works, light and power to dissipate them and destroy their noxious and horrible activity!"

Dr. I. K. Funk, who attracted much attention through his devotion to the investigation of psychic subjects, cites the case of a Chicago physician of high repute, who, he says, professes to have cured several cases of hopeless insanity by working upon the theory that a large percentage of insanity is caused by obsession by evil discarnate intelligences. Dr. Funk says:—

"A few weeks ago in Chicago, Dr. Carl A. Wickland, an intelligent and respectable physician of that city, residing at 616 North Wells Street, gave me a number of personal experiences which have convinced him that obsession by evil discarnate intelligences is the cause of a large per cent. of insanity, over one half, he thinks. Through his wife, who is a non-professional 'sensitive,' or 'medium,' he has made hundreds of investigations and has applied many ingenious tests to prove the identity of these so-called foreign intelligences. He claims to have cured many cases of insanity by working along this theory—some who were pronounced hopelessly insane. We may laugh at this; but is there solid ground for *a-priori* dogmatic conclusion that hypnotism may not be a fact between a spirit out of the flesh and one in the flesh, as it is a fact between two persons in the flesh? A few years ago we nearly all ridiculed hypnotism as wholly charlatanism or illusion. Obsession was common enough in Christ's time. Many an insane one Christ and His disciples cured by 'casting out devils.'"

There are other practitioners throughout the world who believe and practise as does Dr. Wickland. Perty makes the following significant remark: "The laws of this strange condition are not known to us. However, one thing is quite certain—we have in such cases not simply the abnormal psychological states called dual personality or phenomena of the mind. Such explanations do not suffice. The recorded facts compel that we assume the activity of supernatural occult forces." Whether therefore in a given instance we have a case of possession may not always be so easily decided. That such conditions are more than a creature of imagination and have actually been observed is a matter of record not only in the Scriptures, but also in the experience of our present age.

As stated by Andrew Lang in his *The Making of Religion* (1898), the characteristic marks of demoniacal possession are these: 1. "the automatic, persistent, and consistent acting out of a new personality; 2. possession of knowledge and intellectual power not owned by the patient [in his normal state], not explainable on the pathological hypothesis; 3. complete change of moral character in the patient."

Some cases diagnosed as epilepsy or one of the forms of insanity are actually cases of demoniacal possession. G. Raupert, in his criticism of Modern Spiritism, says: "Whilst studying the dreams and morbid ideas of the insane, I have had a very vivid impression that a malign, diabolical, or demoniac influence was concerned with them." But we shall not pursue this line of thought, as we have no data which could form the basis of a scientific analysis. Certainly, the clergyman who has the spiritual care of demented should not keep entirely out of sight the possibility of dealing with a case of possession.

Rev. G. H. Hilmer of Kimmswick, Mo., at my request has copied out the following from his diary of 1907, when he was a circuit-rider stationed at Nardin-Blackwell, Okla.:—

"In the summer of 1907 I traveled about with my ponies in search of mission prospects. In scouting the territory, I made no contacts, but I found every little town lodge-ridden, more lodges than days of the week. I passed a few deserted churches and chapels. As the Lord would guide me, I let my ponies go whither they listed. Thus I passed through the little town of H., Kans. I came to a place where the road ended before a cross-road. It was about dinner-time; two men were just finishing a load of hay. I approached these men for information as to any German-speaking neighbors. But I was given to understand that, if I were some kind of agent, I had better stay out of this community. The elder of these two men, who was the father of the other, said this with a Low-German accent. I answered him in Low German and informed him that I was indeed an agent of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then he smiled, stretched out his hand, and invited me to come along for dinner. He left his son to take the load of hay home and got into my buggy. Having reached

his farm home, he ordered his other son to take care of my team, and we went into the house. Not a word had been said about his family.

"We entered at the kitchen door. No sooner had I put my foot on the threshold than I was startled by a terrible scream and a deep moaning from a rear room of the house. We entered the dining-room; dinner was on the table. I was introduced to the farmer's wife and oldest daughter. They looked pale and embarrassed to meet me under such circumstances, but I assured them that I was a messenger of God to bring them the comforts of the Gospel. We sat down to eat; not a word was said. During the meal one could hear occasional thumps, which jarred the walls of the house, accompanied by weird sounds. After dinner the father took me into the back room to show me what the family had pent up in there.

"There sat in an old rocker a little girl about eight or nine years old. She had a bundle of rags in her hands, and she was twisting them and pulling on them in every way, moaning, foaming, screaming, rocking forward, violently jumping up in the air, taking an onset for the wall like a goat. The poor child had knocked all the hard wall plaster off as far as she could reach with her head. Her forehead was a mass of sores, now bleeding again. A pitiful, heartrending scene to behold.

"Her parents related the following: When little Catherine was about three months old, she got the whooping-cough with all its attending paroxysms and debility. For about two years after the child was subject to severe spasms. In her fifth year she developed chorea, or St. Vitus's dance. A number of different doctors treated her. Even child specialists were baffled and pronounced her case a mystery to medical science. At times her mind was entirely clouded. She seemed to be under supernatural control.

"I left and promised to be back in two weeks. In the mean time I organized a preaching-station at South Haven, Kans. I studied the case and wrote to a child specialist in Kansas. He came and examined the child. His opinion was that an evil spirit was vexing the poor little child. I conferred with some of the brethren. I remember that the Rev. Ph. Roesel was of the same opinion that we had to do with a real case of demoniacal possession, similar to the one recorded in Matt. 17, 15 ff., which cannot be cast out except by prayer and fasting, v. 21.

"On a later date the parents confessed that they had sinned grievously concerning this child and that the Lord was now visiting their iniquity upon their child. But they repented and humbled themselves, imploring the Lord to have mercy on them.

"A date was set for a family gathering and devotion on September 29, 1907. I explained the matter to those assembled and asked them to join me in fervent prayer. They consented. The child had at times shown supernatural strength. When I suggested to the parents that they take little Catherine out of her pitiful environments, they were afraid that I would lose control over her. But it turned out differently. I held her in my arms, and we all knelt down, tearfully imploring our merciful God and Savior to help this poor victim of the devil, since it was His child, which He had received in Holy Baptism. We actually felt the presence of the Lord in this sacred hour. Catherine became quiet; she seemed to be exhausted. But only for a short time. She pointed to the organ and to our surprise asked me to sing with her. She still remembered a few Christmas

songs, *Gott ist die Liebe, Ihr Kinderlein, kommet*, etc. I sang with her, and she sang with us, although her voice was hoarse and feeble. The family was overjoyed, tears streamed down their eyes, and praise and thanksgiving gave vent to our feelings when we all joined in singing *Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren*. Catherine's sore forehead healed up, her little room was replastered, and she became normal again. A few years later she still showed the awful physical effects of her vexation, but she was healthy and cheerful and praised the Lord every day."

In my own experience I have witnessed only one phenomenon that satisfied the marks of possession given by Lang. This was the case of a farmer's boy near Hay Creek, Minn. Reared in a Christian family and a faithful member of our Church, he had "spells," during which a voice not his own would speak through his tongue, uttering words of unchastity and profanity completely foreign to his speech otherwise; sometimes giving evidence of information that could not be accounted for by natural sources; sometimes interjecting words in his own character, complaining of the power that was in control of his members. He would then be convulsed and thrown about, a state of unconsciousness would follow, and then there would be a complete recovery, without any trace of the experience. The attacks always yielded to the Word of God and prayer.

THEODORE GRAEBNER.

Luthertworte über Einigkeit und Unionismus.

„Der innerliche Geist, sage ich, macht allein, daß man einmütig im Haus zusammenwohne; der lehrt einerlei glauben, einerlei richten, einerlei erkennen, einerlei prüfen, einerlei lehren, einerlei bekennen und einerlei Dingen folgen. Wo der nicht ist, da ist es unmöglich, daß Einigkeit sei. Und wo sie etwa ist, da ist es nur eine äußerliche und gestünchte. (Schrift wider Heinrich, König von England, 1522. XIX, 345.)

„Ich halte es nicht für ratfam, daß eine Versammlung der Anstigen wegen der Einigkeit in den Kirchengebräuchen angestellt werde; denn es ist eine Sache, die ein böses Beispiel gibt, wengleich man sie auch mit redlichem Eifer versucht, wie alle Kirchenversammlungen von Anfang an uns lehren. . . . Es folge also eine Kirche der andern freiwillig, oder man lasse eine jede bei ihren Gebräuchen; wenn nur die Einigkeit des Geistes im Glauben und im Wort erhalten wird, so schadet die Verschiedenheit und Mannigfaltigkeit in irdischen und sichtbaren Dingen nichts.“ (Brief an Nikolaus Hausmann vom 17. Oktober 1524. XVIII, 1984 f.)

„Die erste Tugend ist, davon oft die Apostel sagen, als St. Paulus Röm. 12, 16: ‚Habt einerlei Sinn untereinander‘, item Eph. 4, 3: ‚Seid fleißig, zu halten die Einigkeit im Geist durch das Band des