

Tales of the Darkside

I. Introduction

Light and dark? Pretty simple terms to understand when it comes to the natural, however their meanings become much more murky when they are applied to the spiritual. In this essay I will expound upon what the Bible has to say about the things that are light and the things that are dark. The reason why the distinction between light and dark is so much simpler in the natural sphere is that there, no one is trying to deceive us into thinking that that which is dark is really light, and that that which is light is really dark. Confused yet? Exactly the point. But fear not, dear reader, there is a way to have absolute confidence in your ability to discern between light and dark. That is the goal of this teaching, so that the student of the Word may be steadfast in all things, being able to discern both good and evil. In this age we live in, it is vitally important for the Christian to be well versed in discerning darkness, since it so completely pervades our society. Moreover most of it is subtle darkness, which to the ignorant can appear to be light. We will explore the structure and function of the kingdom of darkness, and how to recognize it, as well as how to overcome it, or better yet, how to avoid being led away by it in the first place. It is my hope that when we are done, the Christian will have 20/20 spiritual vision, and thus be more effective as a warrior in fighting the good fight of faith.

II. Foundation Scripture

Gen. 1:1-5

John 1:1-5

In the very beginning of God's dealings in the affairs of the earth we see the operation of darkness and light. We find in the Genesis account that the earth was without form and void and that **darkness** was upon the face of the deep. We then see that the very first creative act of the Lord was to bring in Light. Now this Light has already been characterized in previous teachings as the presence of the Lord Jesus in the earth realm. This is born out according to the genesis account of the apostle John. So it can be immediately seen that the concept of Light and dark is a spiritual one and not merely natural, although this does serve as an analogue.

In this entire teaching the cardinal rule to remember is as follows. ***Darkness can only exist and prosper in the absence of light.*** Meaning this, that darkness is not a counterbalancing force to light, in other words darkness is not the yin to light's yang. It only fills the void left by the absence of light, and immediately flees at the presence of light. This will be the most important fact to remember and will make it much easier to discern darkness in whatever form it may be hiding.

III. The Kingdom of Darkness

Let us now begin to understand the kingdom of darkness by laying out its origin, architecture, and cast of characters. How do we define darkness? Simply put, I would say that darkness is defined as anything which is contrary to the cause of light. Seeing as how darkness and light are antithetical to each other, their positions are polarized and opposite. This is quite good news since this makes it much easier to tell them apart. Moreover because of this

polarization it is only necessary to know the position of one of them to accurately fix the position of the other one. They will always be 180 degrees out of phase with each other. I have already established that the champion of Light is the Lord Jesus. So then, who do you suppose is the bringer of darkness? Well go right to the head of the class if you said Satan.

Well if this fact is so obvious then why would so many people willingly follow him into perdition? The answer is that they wouldn't, if they knew that it was him that they were following. But they are being victimized by his incredible ability to disguise himself as an angel of light, thus introducing just enough confusion and leaven to seduce the simple minded and the proud. This is the paramount reason that Christians must be well versed in the Word of righteousness, since it is through this that the Lord will reveal all of the things that make for light. With the exception of those who knowingly align themselves with the forces of darkness, most incursions into the darkside stem from man's misguided attempts at seeking to fill the void in his heart left from the fall in the garden. Man was fashioned with the intrinsic need to serve a master. God Himself has built this into us in the hope that we would grope for Him and find Him, and serve Him, though He is not far from any of us.(Acts17:27). Now when a man does not love the light, he will not seek it and thus he will remain in darkness where he is susceptible to delusion and the ready acceptance of the dark. (John3:19).

So then it becomes clear that light and dark are divided into two camps, each with a head and devotees, as well as a specific agenda. On the side of light, there is the Lord Jesus and His body on the earth, and these are the **only** sources of light on planet earth. On the other side there is Satan and his followers, both celestial and terrestrial, and the war is fought for the hearts and minds of men. (Eph. 6:12).

IV. The Characteristics of Darkness

Once again I remind you that the main attribute of darkness is its tendency to be exactly antithetical to the cause of light. That means that whatever stand that light takes, darkness will take a position exactly the opposite. We then need only know what God's stand on something is and then we will automatically know what the position of darkness is since it will be opposite. For example, we know that a characteristic of light is liberty, therefore the position of the darkside is bondage. Consider the following scriptural examples and understand.

John 10:10

John 8: 44-45

2nd Thess. 2:1-8

Gen. 3:1-5

The following is a list of characteristics of light and their counterparts in the dark.

God = Light	Satan = Darkness
Life	Death
Love	Hate
Liberty	Bondage
Order	Disorder
Truth	Lie
Natural	Unnatural
Wealth	Poverty
Health	Sickness

V. The Purpose of Darkness

If you think back to what I have taught you in the teaching on the Divine Nature, you will recall that one of the purposes for God sending Jesus to the earth was to carve out a people for Him so that He could be their God, and they could be His people. Well it should come as no shock to you that the devil would seek to thwart that process. In so doing he would ruin man's chance to be a witness for the "prosecution" by virtue of our willingness to praise the Lord being "6", and his refusal to do it even though he is "7". So then one of the main purposes of the forces of darkness is to distract mankind from the worship of the one true and living God, and to replace Him with a darkside substitute. Thus he interferes with God's efforts to gather a people to Himself, with whom He can enter into fellowship.

We as sons of men must realize that God has not appointed us unto wrath or destruction, but that these things are reserved for His first set of rebellious children, namely the sons of God, also known as the angels. Chief among these is, of course, Lucifer who was highly positioned within the economy of the Godhead. However he was not satisfied with this honor and sought to aspire to even higher positions. The problem was that he was already the anointed cherub who covers, and as such enthroned with the Most High (Psalm 80:1, 99:1). But that was not good enough. He wanted to elevate his throne above that of Gods. In pursuing this goal he succeeded in convincing fully 1/3 of the heavenly host to join him in rebellion against the Most High. Somewhere along the line the battle shifted to the earth realm and the forces of darkness sought to undermine the plan of God to use man to demonstrate His eternal glory and majesty.

A wonderful key to understanding how this celestial jousting must have taken place, can be found in the Bible where we are told of the Lord Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem shortly before His crucifixion (Luke 19:36-40). The people were shouting and praising His Name when the Pharisees rebuked Him and commanded Him to make the people stop. But He responded saying, that if the people would keep quiet, then the rocks would cry out in praise. Now of course this would have been strong testimony against them seeing as how it was their primary purpose to lead and guide the people in praising the Lord. So for something as inconsequential as rocks to have to fulfill that role is a powerful witness to the rebellion of the ones to whom that role was originally given. Now in similar manner to this, those who were charged to be ministering spirits, and flames of fire, those responsible to shout out the praises of God were loathe to do so. Consequently the Lord raised up some dust, and behold the dust did praise Him. This is why mankind is so hated by the forces of darkness. Since by our willingness to praise the Lord, being lower than they, we stand in stark contrast to their rebellion in refusing to give glory to their Creator, even though they, being perfect, should have known better.

In the Psalms we are told of the heart of God concerning man (Ps. 8:3-9). We find ourselves wondering how it is that we merited such a lofty position as being made in the image and glory of the eternal Godhead, and then given dominion over all the earth. In the beginning, when the Lord made Adam, He breathed into him the breath of life, and Adam became a living creature. This is the very spirit of man which came from God and returns to Him in death. It is by this spirit that we know of the existence of God. Consider it as a fragment of the essence of God that is placed in every man and binds us to the Creator. The Bible calls this the candle of

the Lord (Prov. 20:27) . Now not only does this candle search the heart of man, but man also uses it as a connection or beacon to God. This becomes especially important in our fallen state since it is the only presence of God that we are left with until we become born again. Now there are three things that we can do with this “beacon”.

- It can be misdirected and end up seeking out foreign gods, resulting in such things as idol worship and the like. Although the person may appear very religious, their zeal is misdirected toward vain pursuits which do not result in righteousness. (Acts 17:16-34)
- It can be extinguished which will lead to atheism, and subsequently to the horrible life of sin and debauchery which stems from an existence devoid of the presence of God. (Rom. 1:18-32).
- It can be followed and it will always lead one to the Lord Jesus resulting in salvation. (John 3:1-6).

Understand that although man was made in the image and glory of God, we now lack His nature because of the rebellion in the garden which resulted in sin entering in through Adam. Now once we put off the man of sin through the blood of the Lamb, even the Man of Righteousness, then we are complete in Him whose image we bear.

So then we can conclude that the purpose of spiritual darkness is to do everything that it can to distract and dissuade mankind from following his spirit into the fellowship of the Father, which is obtained through belief in His Son. If the forces of darkness cannot extinguish our search for the truth, then they will settle for the futility of life that comes from our being distracted into serving the wrong gods through empty, vain religion. (Col 2:18-23). They will use every means at their disposal, which is every means that we give them, to accomplish these goals. Next I will discuss with specificity the various mechanisms employed by the darkside in seeking to undermine the sons of men.

VI. The Tools of Darkness

The most important thing to consider in dealing with the issue of the forces of darkness is this. **You are absolutely sovereign over your own will and affairs.** There is no force in the universe that can interfere with your life or circumstances apart from your cooperation. Now, that cooperation may be active through allegiance, or passive through ignorance, but the result is the same. We can be overcome only if we allow it. Now this should come as good news seeing as how it is not possible to be hijacked by the devil, but that he is only capable of seizing the opportunity that presents itself through our own lack of spiritual diligence.

Having established this fact, let us now discuss the weapons of darkness, the main one being **deception**. Webster’s dictionary defines deception as: ***the act of representing as true what is known to be false.*** Another way to describe an individual who practices such things is as a liar.(John 8:44) Now this is the main tactic of the devil and his horde in their battle against mankind, and he has used it to great effectiveness from the beginning. Consider his first assault on mankind in the garden. He chose the weaker vessel (Eve)as any good tactician would do. He then proceeded to lie to her about the commandment of God regarding which trees were lawful to eat from and which were not. The thing that made this a sin of rebellion ,rather than one of ignorance, is the fact that both Adam and Eve knew full well what the command of the Lord was regarding this matter, yet they chose to listen to and act upon the lie, which of course had the promised devastating consequences. Of course finding man so willing to be disobedient

from the beginning that this tactic was successful, the adversary decided to continue to use it. It's such a devious plan, almost elegant in its simplicity.

What the devil does is to find out what God has said to man regarding any matter, then take the diametrically opposed position, and then try to pass that off as the truth. Now as bitter a pill to swallow as this is, it could do us no harm if we had not already poisoned the well through disobedience, which is our contribution to the equation. Remember that every man has the remnant of the spirit by which we search for God, and through which we know of Him and discern His truths. Now having known these things, if we reject these truths then we are given over to strong delusion resulting from a disconnection between the beacon of our spirits and the witness of the glory of His Creation. This leaves us in the untenable position of having no choice but to believe the lie. (2nd Thess. 2:11) Simply put, the lie fills the vacuum left by the absence of truth, and truth does not abide where it cannot prosper, and it cannot prosper where it is not believed. So then we see that the main plan of attack of the forces of darkness is to muddy up the waters through deceit, even to the disguising of themselves as the very messengers of light that they seek to destroy. (2nd Cor. 11:1-15). Remember the second most important point:

The best place to hide a lie is in the middle of a truth. A lie that is obvious is hard to fool anyone, but one that is buried within a truth can be very effective in deceiving the spiritually uninitiated. This tactic was most dramatically demonstrated during the time when the Lord Jesus contended against the devil in His time of testing in the wilderness. The devil had taken Him to the top of the temple and attempted to have Him prove Himself by jumping off. He assured Him of the divine protection available from the Father in the form of angelic intervention as spelled out in the correctly quoted section of Psalm 91. Now this fact was indeed a truth, but the intent of this admission was to ultimately foment a lie. If believed and acted upon by the Lord, it would have surely resulted in His ignominious death and disqualification to be our redeemer, thus condemning us to the eternal consequences of sin. Thankfully the Lord was wise in these matters and immediately saw through the deception. He correctly reasoned that although the promise of supernatural deliverance from danger was indeed promised in the holy Scriptures, it would not be applicable in the case of one foolishly testing God. By the way, notice how Jesus countered this deception by using the same Word of God, but this time in the correct spirit, by pointing out that it is not lawful to tempt God. Remember that the truth will always trump a lie.

VII. Doorways to Deception

Now just what is it that makes people so susceptible to being deceived? Well it's exactly the same sin that allowed Lucifer himself to become blinded to the truth and fall victim to error, namely, **pride**. Now this pride would be the sin of esteeming oneself more highly than one should. In the devil's case, he was not satisfied to be enthroned **with** the Most High, he wanted to be enthroned **above** Him. Amongst us humans, the main manifestation of pride is not believing and acting upon the Word of God. In other words, we tend to esteem the witness of our senses, other people's testimonies, and the traditions of men above the commands and promises of the Lord. Consider the following Scriptures and understand how dangerous it is to not believe and receive the truth when it comes along.

1st Cor. 1:17-31

2nd Thess. 2:9-12

2nd Cor. 4:1-4

In addition to pride there are the usual doorways that allow the devil access to our circumstances. These things last made their appearance in the teaching on healing where they were responsible for people being afflicted with sickness and disease. They are of course rebellion, ignorance, fear and unbelief. The following Scriptures will give some further insight into how these things hinder us in our walk with the Lord.

Heb. 3:12-19

1st Sam. 15:22-23

Hosea 4:6

Acts 17:16-31

You will notice that in all of these examples, the adversary could not have made any inroads unless we had given him place in our lives. This should actually be quite comforting knowing that our destinies are entirely under our control, and that we don't have to fall victim to the wiles of the devil if we don't want to.

VIII. The Darkside in Action

Moving on now in our discussion, let us explore some of the ways that the elements of darkness seduce us into the lie and ultimately undermine our faith. All of these mechanisms have the same theme. They are thinly veiled attempts to masquerade as elements of the light by counterfeiting the genuine move of the Holy Spirit. They are all easily perceived when viewed in context with the holy Scriptures. One must be careful, however, not to throw out the baby with the bath water. Meaning that if the church abandons the genuine move of the Holy Spirit because of the presence of the counterfeit, then the adversary has already won. So the bottom line is this. Follow the tenants of the Word for it is the power of God and the truth and it will not disappoint. Let us now press on to discuss some of the more popular techniques used by the enemy to deceive.

1. Divination:

In the old covenant this phenomenon was severely frowned upon by the Lord, and its practice was met with dire consequences, for good reason. It is powerfully seductive to the gullible, and its use is very effective at drawing away people into believing a lie that will ultimately destroy them. In the old testament there are a couple of words that are translated as divination. First there is the Hebrew word *puthon* (4436) from *putho*, which is the name of the region where Delphi, the seat of the famous oracle, was located. Traditionally a woman, the Delphic Oracle was called the Pythoness. Many would come from miles around to partake of her divining skills, and, for a price of course, she would consult her familiar spirit and tell them things of a personal nature. Then there is the word *qecem* (keh'sem) 7081, which means, *to determine by lot or magical scroll; divination (including its fee), oracle*.

Empirically, I would define divination as an attempt to interact with the spiritual plane, especially with regards to obtaining hidden knowledge on circumstances or events past present or future. It uses the mechanism of some physical artifact or prop, serving as a point of contact, but the use thereof, not being authorized by the Scriptures. This is the method by which most deception takes place, and it shows up in the form of mediums, fortune tellers, palm readers, psychics and the like. Now most of these are fakes and prosper only by duping

the gullible and ignorant. However, some of them are genuine and operate under the power of darkness to deceive. These are possessed by evil spirits known as spirits of divination or familiar spirits. They pass on information to their human hosts, usually through some sort of talisman, used as a point of contact to activate faith. There are many modern day versions of these deceptions, but at their core they are the same forces of darkness at work to deceive. Examples include tarot, crystal ball, palmistry, runes, and channeling.

At this time I will speak on a special form of divination that is particularly onerous. It is the phenomenon known as rhapsodomancy, which is seeking answers from a spiritual source by randomly opening books and reading wherever your fingers fall. The most dangerous form of this is called bibliomancy, where, you guessed it, the Bible is used as the divining tool. The reason why this is so damaging is that people would never suspect that the Word of God could be used to perpetrate evil. Remember the lesson from the Lord Jesus' wilderness experience, when Satan used the Scriptures to attempt to deceive Him into forfeiting His life. Take heed to this. The Bible is not a book of chance, but it contains words of life and Spirit. It cannot be reduced to the role of tarot cards, and those who attempt to pervert the holy Scriptures, do so at their peril.

2. Accursed Things

The Bible describes certain things or objects as being accursed. Now what exactly does this mean? The Hebrew word in question is *cherem* (2764), meaning; *a doomed object, a dedicated thing, things which are appointed to or which should have been utterly destroyed*. There is a difference between accursed things and the points of contact that we have previously discussed (cards, crystal balls and the like). Accursed things differ in that they are used as objects of worship or devotion, thus they serve as the empty, vain idols that ignorant men embrace and encourage others to do so. In so, they rob God of the praise and worship that belongs to Him alone.

Deut. 7:22-26

Josh 6:17-18, 7:1-26

The above mentioned Scriptures tell, in dramatic fashion, just how much God hates the notion of accursed things. One of the most insidious things about those objects which are accursed is that they contaminate anywhere they are located. Accursed things are one of the few things in creation that are not spiritually neutral. Most everything has no particular spiritual slant either light or dark, but they take on the characteristics of the possessor. A perfect example of this would be money. In and of itself, it has no intrinsic goodness or evil, but is an instrument of light or dark according to the heart of him who possesses it. Accursed things, on the other hand, are intrinsically evil, and they defile every environment that they come in contact with. They cannot be turned to the cause of righteousness by the good intentions of the user. Apparently once something has been deemed an object of and received the worship of men, it has become irretrievably set apart for destruction. We can conclude that the Most High is **very** serious about there being no other God before Him. He is unwilling to share that which is His alone with anything else; whether animate or not. Beside this, these objects are magnets for demonic influence and habitation since the forces of darkness will congregate anywhere that man is worshiping God amiss.

You see the most powerful point of contact with the spirit world is praise and worship. This is why these are so important to God, since they clear the way for fellowship between Him and

us. They provide the foundation for the relationship that He desires and ultimately sent Jesus to secure. If our worship is short circuited by being directed to the forces of darkness through the accursed thing, then the Most High is being robbed of that which He paid the most precious price to receive, namely His only Begotten Son. Based on this then, the only effective way to handle an accursed thing is to utterly destroy it. It cannot be cleansed and leaving it around will defile everything around it. You must also be vigilant not to be deceived by accursed things which masquerade as so called objects de art, especially if they are from a nation where the forces of darkness have a stronghold in the lives of the people. If you bring certain objects, like statues or masks, from demon influenced principalities like Haiti or certain South American, or African countries, you are unwittingly allowing those same forces of darkness to gain a foothold in your life.

Right about now you may be wondering what all of this has to do with us today, since we as such an enlightened society surely no longer engage in something as futile as idol worship. Well you would be wrong, for the people of God are severely hampered by the influence of accursed things. No place is this more dramatically displayed than in the Catholic church, which happens to be replete with all manner of accursed things. in the form of idols (statues of "saints"), Mary worship, and venerated remains. The demons are having a field day running rough shod through the hearts of all of those naive Catholics, rendering them futile in their spirituality, and devoid of any real hope in the Gospel. But worse yet, because of these things they are very susceptible to demonic harassment and outright possession.

Proof of this assertion is found in the fact that throughout the world most cases of possession are found in countries and locales with a very heavy Catholic influence. Notice also how many times there are appearances by a false Mary supposedly to dispense sage advice and warnings for mankind. However the Bible tells us that the dead know nothing and therefore do not speak (Eccl. 9:5-12). Believe it or not, Mary is dead just like all of the others who have fallen asleep in hope since the resurrection of the Lord. You really didn't think that the devil was going to announce himself as such, did you? Remember that he disguises himself as an angel of light, or in this case as the highly favored one of God, and why? That he might deceive many and draw them away from the truth. Understanding the role that accursed things play in these processes, we can now see why the Catholic church is so afflicted with demonic activity.

While I am on the subject of accursed things let me rattle your cages with this thought. Let me reveal to you what is the most accursed thing of all. Now this truth will not be readily accepted by many, seeing as how many of the children of God are hindered by tradition and have had their faith built upon a lie. But those who have ears to hear will be blessed by this knowledge. If you study the Scriptures carefully, you will see that the Bible makes use of the notion of the accursed thing sparingly. Most of the references to it occur in the context of the Achan incident during the battle of Jericho.

There is however another peculiar and profound reference to an accursed thing, and that is found in Deut 21:22-23. In the law of Moses, the people were instructed to make sure that anyone who had been hanged for wrong doing was buried before nightfall, since not doing it would result in the defiling of the land because of the following curious reason; ***that anyone who was hanged on a tree was accursed of God.*** Now at first glance this statement seems quite strange, since it is hard to imagine why God would care about any method by which a sinner was put to death. After all His primary concern is that the evildoer be removed from the

midst of the congregation, not by the mechanism of said removal. So then why would He single out that particular form of execution, to attach to anyone so dispatched, the dire label of being a thing that is set apart for destruction, in other words an accursed thing. If you are spiritual the answer should be burning right now in your belly. If not then we can find it in Gal 3:13, where we are told that Christ Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law by **becoming** a curse for us. Now the mechanism of that cursing was by being hanged on the "tree". Why? Because cursed is everyone that is hanged on a tree. So you see the Lord looking forward in time and seeing His Son hanging on a tree, having become a curse for us in taking upon Himself our iniquity, declared that particular method of death to be an accursed thing. This He testified to in foreknowledge out of the mouth of His prophet Moses. So Jesus' sacrifice on the cross provided the fulfillment of that which the Lord foresaw. And that which He foreknew, namely the death of His Son on the cross, He caused to be set apart as an accursed thing to this end, that it (the cross) would be there to fulfill its destiny to be that which caused to be accursed, He who although, had known no sin, was made to be sin on account of sin. So then it becomes safe to conclude that the thing which made Jesus accursed was being hanged on the tree, the act of which was made to be accursed because the Father foresaw Him there, thus completing the circle of prophesy.

Now what is the outcome of all of this mind bending logic? What is the most accursed thing of **all**? It is of course the cross, the symbol of all that is called iniquity and unholy, and the vehicle by which these things were removed from us and transported to Hades embodied in the Man Christ Jesus. If you are spiritually astute, you can now readily see, why representing the Son of Man and the kingdom of God with a cross, does great despite to the Lord Jesus since the cross was the way of defeat, symbolizing He who has become accursed. But the Lord Jesus has become a life giving Spirit, high and lifted up, with a Name more blessed than any other. So let us celebrate and be made partakers of the victory of the resurrection, not remaining in the perpetual state of cursing and defeat which is embodied in the symbolism of the cross. So if you must use some kind of symbol to represent the Lord Jesus, then use a throne, for that is where He is now, High and lifted up far above all power and might and dominion.

Now as startling as all of this may sound, and before you completely dismiss this as heresy consider this. The symbol of the cross was not commonly used as an icon of Christianity until several hundred years after the crucifixion, when like so many other facets of the Gospel message, the idea of the cross was melded together with pagan notions and symbols of idolatry. It was after two pivotal events that the cross became the defacto sign of Christianity. In the fourth century A.D. Constantine reportedly had a vision in which he saw a flaming cross in the sky with the accompanying words *en touto nika* , " by this conquer". It was during this time that he made a conversion to Christianity and embraced the cross as its symbol. The other propinquous event was the assertion that his mother Helena had found the true cross of the Lord Jesus buried atop the Mount of Olives. The point to all of this is this. The early church fathers, rather than concerning themselves with icons, were far more interested in demonstrating the symbolism of the cross in the form of a transformed life. This would be indicative of the complete redemptive work of the One whose death was made possible by the curse of the cross.

3. "White" Magic

More commonly called Wicca today, white magic has become quite pervasive in our society. However don't be fooled by its innocuous name. It is every bit as much an element of the darkside as overt Satanism. Wicca can generally be defined as follows: The art of divination accomplished by enlisting the aid of "elemental" spirits through command or friendship. White magic makes use of incantations, usually in the form of poetry, naming of spirits, and requesting their aid in matters which pertain to the issues of life, (money matters, love, protection power etc). The incantations are enhanced by using certain points of contact such as herbs, oils, incense and candles. Those who practice Wicca would suggest that their use of occult forces differs from that of those who practice "black" magic in that their intent is to produce benefits and not to do harm. They are of course greatly deceived and unaware that the "power" behind their magic is none other than Lucifer. There is no good in him, so therefore it is not possible to act in concert with him and have it produce a beneficial result. There is a basic rule by which all of these things may be judged. Any attempt to interact with the spirit realm by any means (including invitation, worship, or the use of points of contact), that are not clearly authorized by current biblical dispensational authority, are unlawful, plain and simple. So don't be fooled by white magic. Dressing up dung with silk and myrrh will not make it smell any better.

There are other forms of so called white magic that must be avoided. A brief overview of several will be discussed below.

- New Age movement: There is nothing new about this form of deception. The basic tenant of this movement is that God is depersonalized and relegated to some kind of all pervading force. Their belief is that we are all somehow extensions of that force and that by getting in touch with that "spiritual" side, we can achieve the beneficial outcome that everyone desires in their lives.
- Crystals: These inanimate objects are thought to be endowed with special powers to heal or bring prosperity or peace of mind. They are nothing more than points of contact to interface with the demonic forces, and any spiritual outcome will surely be designed to ultimately undermine the user, no matter how good it may seem at the time.
- Yoga: Physical exercise is beneficial to the body, but yoga adds the extra dimension of consorting with the spiritual forces in an attempt to accomplish some personal gain. Again because the methods that are used are not scripturally lawful, it becomes a form of divination.
- "Healing": Now the Word of God expressly provides for healing of the sick, and it is quite specific in the ways that it is to be accomplished. Biblical healing is always a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, and His purpose in doing it is to glorify the Name of Jesus. Any other supernatural manifestation outside of this is an element of the darkside. Examples of this phenomenon are psychic surgery, acupuncture, magic potions and the like.
- UFOs: In this very common recent development in the ongoing battle to deceive mankind, the devil and his horde, have resorted to disguising themselves as the friendly aliens from another galaxy, sent here to save us from ourselves. Their reasoning is that we are much more likely to accept them if we think that they are from **above** the earth, rather than from their true origin, which is from **under** the earth. The truth is that mankind is being duped into cooperating with the elements of darkness in their attempt to undermine us. The adversary is up to his same old tricks in trying to corrupt the seed of men, which has been his plan from the beginning. (see Dan. 2: 36-43). This is another example of the devil's tactic of hiding a lie inside

a truth, for they are truly extraterrestrial, meaning not of this earth. But, they are not benevolent beings who have come with our best interests at heart.

- **Astrology:** This is the art of attempting to divine the future by consulting the signs in the heavens. Specifically it involves the calculation of the positions of the various constellations and planets in relation to one's birthday. Now this practice was expressly forbidden under the law of Moses (Deut. 4:19), because it was a vain attempt to interact with the Most High by deifying the creation rather than serving the Creator through faith. This practice is just as unprofitable today as it was then, seeing as the Holy Spirit is the One who will reveal all truth to us. The only thing that we will get from the powers of the air are lies.

4. Black Magic:

This type of darkside incursion requires a very dark heart, and willful alliance with evil. It involves the act of knowingly, and with malice, aligning oneself with the powers of darkness to either inflict harm on others directly, or else to have one protected while he or she is perpetrating harm on others. People who engage in such activities are desperately deceived. They think that they control the forces at work, but in reality they are being used as hosts for the demons in order to manifest themselves in the affairs of men. The deeper in that you get, the more jeopardy you place your soul in. If such a one fails to repent in salvation, then the harshest of judgements await them in the fires of hell. This sin is not one of ignorance, but requires full and knowing cooperation with the forces of darkness for the express purpose of the perpetration of evil. This is the main difference between black and white magic, in that in the latter the participants are largely ignorant of the fact that they are serving the devil. The art of consulting with the dark forces has different names in different cultures (Voodoo, Santoria, The Evil Eye, Obia etc.). But the manifestations and the outcome are the same, Death and judgement according to the fiery indignation which is reserved for the spirits that have been rebellious.

5. Games:

There are many tools of divination that masquerade as so called games. These are usually available at your local toy store waiting to begin the deception process in your unsuspecting children. The most classic example of this is the Ouija board. Many are familiar with this "game" which consists of a board with letters on it and the words yes and no. Each player places his hands lightly on a planchette and asks the board a question. Then, seemingly by itself, the planchette begins to move and to spell out the answer. Sounds like just some innocent fun but it is an extremely powerful doorway to the darkside. As a matter of fact in susceptible individuals, a single encounter with a Ouija board can result in demon possession. Another form of this is the so called Kaballa ball, which works similarly to the Ouija and will have similar deleterious effects on one's soul.

Another kind of dangerous game is the role playing games such as Dungeons and Dragons, which involves a so called war between light and dark. The player enlists the aid of spirit type beings by reciting incantations and charms, and invoking the names of individuals who are in reality demons. In some cases these games have evolved beyond the game board level, and the participants have actually begun to role play on a grand scale involving getting into character. It is here that these games can suddenly turn destructive as the person gives themselves over to the spirit that they have been invoking.

6. Music:

The first thing that must be stated here is that, in and of itself, music is quite innocuous. However just like everything else under creation, it can be perverted by the forces of darkness into an element of evil. There are generally three kinds of music and they are defined by intent of the message conveyed lyrically, and not by genre or instrumentation. Music can be used to specifically glorify God, or to specifically glorify Satan, or in the vast majority of cases used merely to entertain. Today there are a number of musical lyrics that are specifically designed to promote all manner of evil and debauchery. In defiance of the Scriptures, they promote a message of hate, murder, sin and lawlessness. To anyone who is born again this music would be an assault on their righteous souls, so one doesn't need me to spell them out directly, lest I be found guilty of judging your liberty by my conscious.

7. The Religious Spirit:

This is perhaps the most pervasive and dangerous element of evil that I have so far discussed. What makes this one so bad is that the religious spirit disguises himself as an angel of light couched in religious trappings, so that the unwary are seduced into empty vain acts of bondage, which not only keep them from walking in the liberty of the Spirit, but also ruins the message of the Gospel that should be clearly portrayed in every believer. I remind you of the warning in the Word (2nd Cor. 11:1-15), that those who serve the cause of darkness frequently disguise themselves as messengers of light. No matter how clever the disguise, their intent is still one of evil for there is no light in them, for if there were, then they would have no need of a disguise.

The power of the religious spirit is in subtlety, which is used to great effect in using and twisting the word of truth. This principle is most dramatically illustrated in the Word in Matthew Ch. 16 : 13-23. Jesus, after having finished contending with the Pharisees, asked His disciples a question, which was " Who do you say that I am?" Peter correctly answered that He was the Son of the living God. Jesus then commended him for answering wisely. He then proceeded to tell them more of the plan of the Father to redeem mankind. Part of that revelation consisted of telling them that the Son of Man must suffer and die. Upon hearing this, Peter rebuked Him saying "God forbid". Now Jesus' response was most unexpected in that He turned and looked at Peter and then proceeded to rebuke the devil. Why did he Lord attribute Peter's words to the devil? Because Peter had become an unwitting agent of the darkside by speaking contrary to the truth. Now this error occurred even though his motives were pure and his intent was to speak in support of the Lord, showing us that the devil is not dissuaded by our altruism. He will take any advantage of our ignorance of the Word. This lesson is vitally important for all of us to learn, because it shows that, above all else, the Word of God must stand preeminent. The religious spirit is proficient at subtly twisting the Word and introducing just enough leaven to render it ineffective in our lives.

Today there are literally tens of millions of people who have been deceived by these spirits and waste their lives in dissipation, and hollow pursuits. There are whole denominations that are founded on lies dredged up from the pit of hell. We are expressly warned about such things in the Word. (1st Tim. 4:1-5) We are admonished to avoid being taken in by deceiving spirits, and giving heed to doctrines of demons. This is very powerful advice indeed. Now just what are doctrines of demons anyway? Chiefly these are all of the empty religious trappings that distract Christians from truly worshipping God. These usually consist of things that pertain

to the neglect of the body and empty works, which the Word tells us are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh (Col 2: 20-23).

Examples of the religious spirit in action:

Mormons—the worship of angels

Acts 7:42

Col 2: 18

Rev. 9: 20

7th Day Adventists--- The handwriting of requirements

Gal 3: 1-14

1st Cor. 3: 12-18

Jehovah's Witnesses--- The spirit of antichrist

1st John 4: 1-3

2nd John v. 7-11

Apostolics--- Bondage

2nd Cor. 3: 17

Col 2: 20- 23

Baptists--- Religious pride

2nd Tim 3: 6-9

2nd Pet 3: 14-18

Catholics --- Idolatry

Acts 17: 22-27

I could of course go on and on, however this short list is sufficient to show just how much the devil has infiltrated the fabric of the church, so it's little wonder that the body of Christ is largely paralyzed and ineffective. The sad truth of the matter is that no one could be deceived by any of this if they didn't want to be. The Word of God gives us all of the tools necessary to make accurate judgements concerning any matter placed before us. All of these tricks are very transparent in the mirror of the Word and the Holy Spirit. So then one would ask, why are so many people being deceived? Because of their pride and what the Bible calls the old wine syndrome. Many Christians are reluctant to depart from error, and moreover they have become comfortable with it. They put their trust in false witnesses and the traditions of men, but they remain without excuse since the Word has so clearly revealed the witness of the truth. As I have stated previously, there will also be a high price to pay amongst the leadership of the body of Christ for allowing the precious sheep to be carted off by savage wolves. But again the Word is proven correct by the witness of rebellion, since Jesus warned about the consequences of allowing the blind to lead the blind. We are responsible for guiding the sheep into the truth and to watch out for their souls as ones who must give an account. If we had done this then the devil would not have been able to make so many inroads into the integrity of the church.

IX. Conclusion

In the course of this teaching, I have introduced you to the face of our previously hidden enemy. We have discovered his tactics and identified his operatives. This will allow us to more accurately fight him and defeat him. Having studied this, you should now be able to discern the elements of darkness no matter how cleverly they are hidden inside of a truth. Remember that darkness is antithetical to the light and that it can only prosper in the absence of light. It does not overcome the light, and immediately flees at the presence of the light. We then went on to

discover the tools that darkness uses to undermine the sheep, and that its main weapon is deception, and the power of deception is the lie. Now we have two very powerful defenses against the lies of the wicked one. They are the Word of truth, and the Spirit of truth; and of course these agree as one. Armed with these two it is not possible to be carried away by the wiles of the wicked one. This should be comforting indeed to anyone who names the name of the Lord, knowing that He has provided the means by which we may overcome evil and be made to be more than conquerors in Christ Jesus. Moreover if we as the church are diligent in all of these things, then we will surely fulfil our role to be the light of the world that He proclaimed us to be.

May the Father of Lights shine His holy countenance on these teachings that they may bring illumination to all who read and take heed to these writings. Amen.