

At the Threshold of of the Fiery Gehenna

The Orthodox Teaching on Evil Spirits
and God's Judgment Upon Them

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Introduction

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel” (Gen. 3:15).

A person who lives solely for material interests and physical sensations does not ponder such “abstract” questions as the existence of God, the existence of a spiritual world with good and evil spirits, or the afterlife. He is completely absorbed in his daily concerns. But suddenly, some unexpected upheavals shake him, and he begins

to feel the need to make sense of his life and see the purpose of his existence. And so, when he begins to reflect on the spiritual and moral aspects of life, he quickly realizes that science—in which he had placed so much faith until now—is utterly powerless to help him make sense of his most pressing and burning questions.

If his religious sensibility has not been completely stifled, he will feel the need to turn to God, begin to pray, and read the Holy Scriptures. And if this is not merely a fleeting and superficial deviation, but a truly serious turning point in his life—a sincere desire to become a better person—then God will begin to renew his heart and open up new horizons to his inner vision. He will begin to clearly sense the Lord’s guiding hand, His nearness, and His fatherly love. He will begin to understand that the world is much broader and richer in content than he had previously thought. He will become more discerning in distinguishing good from evil and will begin to realize that there is a spiritual world and invisible beings that influence his life—some for good, others for evil—and that, besides God, there are angels and demons.

Exploring the spiritual world is both interesting and important. But where can one learn about it? The literature on this subject is vast, contradictory, and filled with fabrications and all sorts of fantasy. However, the teaching of Scripture on this subject, though concise, is very clear and precise. Scripture teaches that there are bright and good angels and that every Christian has a guardian angel. A special booklet is devoted to angels (see Missionary Leaflet No. 14, “Angels”).

In addition to angels, there are demons. Scripture and life experience convince us that they truly exist and pose a real and constant danger to everyone—not an imaginary one. Just as in human society, alongside normal and well-meaning people, there are all sorts of criminals, degenerates, psychopaths, sadists, and so on, so too in the spiritual world, besides the bright and good angels, there are the “scum” of the spiritual world—the devil and demons. Just as in our world no one is born a criminal, a sadist, or a depraved person, but becomes one as a result of their disorderly and sinful actions, so too in that invisible world all beings were initially good and well-

intentioned, but then some of them, having chosen the wrong path, became depraved and consciously evil. As a result of their criminal actions, their angelic minds became clouded, and they became evil, impulsive, and disorderly. They take pleasure in causing suffering to others and sowing all manner of evil.

In this booklet, we will introduce the reader to the Orthodox teaching on fallen angels, explain their objectives, their methods of tempting people and sowing evil, and describe how to protect oneself from their schemes. We devote a special chapter to the topic of modern occultism and demonism, which are increasingly and more widely taking hold of human society. As we observe with alarm the successes of modern “black spirituality,” a prophecy from Scripture comes to mind: *“Woe to those who dwell on the earth and on the sea! For the devil has come down to you in great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time left”* (Rev. 12:12). But it is comforting that the very success of the prince of darkness heralds the nearness of his complete defeat and punishment, when the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth, surrounded by angels and saints. Then *“the devil will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone... and will be tormented there day and night for ever and ever... Rejoice over this, O heaven, for God has executed His judgment upon him!”* (Rev. 18:20, 20:2–10). After the defeat of all the forces of the kingdom of hell, a new phase of existence will begin, and the righteous, having overcome the temptations of the deceiver, will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.

Scripture on evil spirits

Scripture teaches that, in addition to the visible, material world, there exists a vast and diverse spiritual world. This world is so different from ours and so much richer than it that we are unable to fully understand it or even adequately imagine it. Nevertheless, despite this significant difference, the spiritual and physical worlds intersect to a certain extent. The spiritual world is divided into two distinct and even opposing spheres of existence. One

of them is called “Heaven”—it is the kingdom of light, where God reveals His glory to the blessed spirits. Angels and the souls of the righteous dwell there. The other realm is Hell—the kingdom of darkness and a place of suffering, where demons and the souls of sinners are tormented. Demons, like angels, are not self-existent. Although they are immortal, they are not eternal—only God is eternal. Long before the creation of our physical world, God created the spiritual world, populating it with angels—rational and benevolent beings whom He endowed with reason, free will, and various abilities similar to, yet more perfect than, our own.

At some point in their existence, evidently even before the creation of our material world, a tragedy occurred in the angelic realm. A faction of angels, led by *Denitsa* (Lucifer)—one of the angels closest to God—rebelled against the Creator and instigated a revolt in the angelic realm. The Apostle John the Theologian describes this event as follows: “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon (the devil), and the dragon and his angels fought against them. But they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down—that ancient serpent called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world—he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him” (Rev. 12:7–9). The Lord Jesus Christ mentions this event only briefly, saying that He “*saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning*” (Luke 10:18). The apostles Peter and Jude also mention this event very briefly, stating only that some of the angels did not keep their dignity but abandoned their appointed dwelling place. For this, they were bound with chains of eternal darkness, awaiting God’s final judgment upon them (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

Note: Upon a first reading of the text just cited, the reader might think that the war took place in the angelic realm when the earth already existed. However, given that the Book of Revelation often combines several events into a single vision—events linked not by chronological sequence but by thematic connection—it seems that this apocalyptic picture does not imply that the earth already existed when the devil fell away from God, but rather that the war the devil is now waging against us on earth actually began in Heaven, and just as he lost that war, so will he lose the present war when the Lord comes and passes judgment on him.

A comparison of various passages in Holy Scripture reveals that the cause of Lucifer's fall was his **pride** (Sir. 10:15; 1 Tim. 3:16). The prophet Isaiah vividly depicts Lucifer's arrogance when he portrays him in the image of a proud pagan ruler: "How you have fallen from heaven, O Morning Star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations. You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of assembly with the gods, in the far north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you have been cast down to hell, to the depths of the underworld" (Isa. 14:12–15). The prophet Ezekiel complements Isaiah's portrayal by depicting the Morning Star as the proud king of Tyre:

"You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned your garments. Ruby, topaz, and diamond; chrysolite, onyx, and jasper; sapphire, carbuncle, and emerald; and gold—all skillfully set in their sockets and strung upon you—were prepared on the day of your creation. You were an anointed cherub, sent to protect, and I appointed you to that role. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until iniquity was found in you. Because of the vastness of your trade, your inner being was filled with injustice, and you sinned. So I cast you down as an unclean thing; I banished you from the mountain of God, O cherub who gave shade, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom through your arrogance. Therefore, I will bring you down to the ground and expose you to disgrace before the kings" (Ezek. 28:12–18).

Thus, one of the highest angels, a bearer of divine light, fell away from the Source of Light out of pride and became darkness and a sower of gloom. He sought to equal his Creator, to usurp His glory and power, but only revealed his own insignificance and ingratitude. Being powerless to give others anything of true value, he made lies his chief weapon of seduction, so that lies, as it were, became his very essence. Everything he says, does, and promises is the most brazen lie, though at times skillfully cloaked in the guise of truth. Because he lies constantly, Scripture has named him *Satan*—which in Hebrew means “*slanderer*.” In Greek, this corresponds to the name “*devil*.” His other names—such as the serpent, the dragon, Beelzebub, Belial, the prince of darkness, the prince of demons, the adversary, the prince of this world, the enemy of the human race, the wicked one, and the like—point to his ferocity and the destructive nature of his activities. Scripture refers to the angels who followed him as demons, devils, unclean spirits, or evil spirits.

Having lost access to Heaven, the devil focused all his attention on human beings—who were created pure and innocent. The third chapter of Genesis provides details of the temptation of the first humans. Realizing that Eve would be more susceptible than Adam, the devil addressed her specifically with a cunning question: “Did God really forbid you to eat from any tree in the Garden?” Eve, failing to notice the trickery in the question, explains to the tempter what is permitted and what is forbidden to them. Finding in Eve a naive and talkative interlocutor, the devil begins to persuade her, explaining that God—out of envy—had forbidden them to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but if they listened to him, the serpent, they themselves would become like gods and know all secrets. Having persuaded Eve to break God’s commandment, he uses her to tempt Adam as well. Thus, with the deadly poison of sin, the devil strikes human nature. Pointing to this tragic moment in the lives of our first parents, the Savior calls the devil “*a murderer from the beginning*” (John 8:44).

Having sinned, people lost the joy of communion with God and the opportunity to live in Eden. The balance between their spiritual and physical powers was disrupted; they became morally weak and prone to sin. Having

become sinful, they lost access to the tree of life and became mortal. The author of the book of “The Wisdom of Solomon” sees the devil as the root cause of all humanity’s misfortunes: “*God created man for immortality and made him in the image of His own eternal being, but through the devil’s envy, death entered the world*” (Wisdom of Solomon 2:23–24).

Having struck the naive people with his deadly sting, the serpent rejoiced. But the Lord foretold to him that the war he had started was not over, but had only just begun. He, the tempter of the woman, would one day himself be defeated by her **Offspring**: “*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her Offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel*” (Gen. 3:15). This remarkable prophecy determined the further history of humanity, which essentially became a war between the spirit of temptation and those who seek God. In the immediate sense, this prophecy was fulfilled when the Lord Jesus Christ, having suffered on the cross (having been *struck in the heel*), crushed the head of the ancient dragon. Then, on the cross, the Lord “*stripped the rulers and authorities [of the kingdom of darkness] of their power, making a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross*” (Col. 2:15). In a broader sense, this prophecy is also fulfilled in the life of every Christian when, armed with the power of Christ, he repels the tempter (Luke 10:19), even though he himself, like Christ, is sometimes subjected to physical suffering.

Subsequent accounts in the Old Testament say little about the devil. Nevertheless, they consistently portray him as a cunning tempter and the sower of all evil. For example, the devil afflicted the righteous Job with a severe skin disease from head to toe (Job 1:6–22); he took possession of King Saul and tormented him (1 Kings 16:14–15). The devil instilled in David the vain thought of conducting a census of his people (2 Chronicles 21:1). The demon Asmodeus killed the husbands of Sarah, the daughter of Raguel (Tobit 3:8). The evil spirit is depicted with the same traits of envy, cunning, and deceit in the Book of Kings (3 Kings 22:19–23) and in the Book of the Prophet Zechariah (Zech. 3:1–2).

Taking advantage of humanity's natural religiosity, the devil seeks to pervert this religiosity, steering it toward superstition and fanaticism. It was he who taught people to deify all manner of false gods—forces of nature, stars and planets, legendary heroes, animals, monsters, and everything else that could stir the imagination of primitive man. Blinded by superstition, the pagans did not realize that by deifying various objects, they were thereby pleasing the demons, who accepted their honors as belonging to them (Deut. 32:17; 1 Cor. 10:20).

New Testament Teachings on Evil Spirits. The spread of idolatry and all manner of superstitions by the time of Christ's birth contributed to the excessive dominance of evil spirits in human society. An outward sign of this dominance was the presence of a large number of *demoniacs*—people possessed by evil spirits. Having come into our world out of compassion for humanity, the Lord Jesus Christ first and foremost set about freeing them from the devil's oppression (Matt. 12:24–29; 1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14). In the pages of the Gospel, the reader will find many accounts of the healing of the demon-possessed (Matt. 4:24, 8:16, 9:31; Mark 1:32–34; Luke 4:41, 8:2, 11:4). The most detailed accounts are those of the healing of the demon-possessed boy (Matt. 17:14–21), the daughter of the Canaanite woman (Mark 7:24–29), and the two demon-possessed men of Gadara (Matt. 8:28–34, Mark 5:1–19). What is remarkable in the latter case is that not just one, but *an entire legion* of demons—that is, a vast multitude of them—had possessed the man.

A careful study of the Gospel accounts of the healing of the demon-possessed convinces us that these stories are not about epilepsy or other neurological disorders, but specifically about **the expulsion** of very real—though invisible—malicious beings who take pleasure in tormenting others.

To reveal the full ferocity of the demons to those who doubted, the Lord once allowed them to leave the man and enter a herd of pigs that were grazing nearby. And so, before the eyes of the astonished crowd, a huge herd of frenzied pigs rushed toward a cliff, plunged into the lake, and drowned there (Mark 5:13). This single fact—

the instantaneous transfer of spirits from one being to another—completely rules out any ordinary mental illness. Reading the Gospels and other accounts of the casting out of demons reveals a whole series of specific **symptoms** of demon possession. First, those possessed exhibit a specific negative reaction to everything sacred and divine. For example, at the sight of Christ, those possessed began to convulse. Often, the demons inhabiting the unfortunate person recognized Christ as the Son of God and, through the mouth of the possessed person, begged Christ to delay their punishment and not send them into the abyss (Matt. 8:29; Mark 5:7). Moreover, during their conversation, the possessed person's voice became unnatural, inhuman. It was clear to those around them that it was not a human speaking, but someone speaking through him. Finally, immediately after the demon departed, the formerly possessed became normal people, and all signs of possession vanished without a trace. These specific symptoms of demon possession can also be observed in people possessed today. If skeptics do not want to believe in miracles, let them at least conclude from the behavior of the possessed that the spiritual world truly exists. We will return to the topic of demon possession later.

The Apostles' Casting Out of Demons. As He prepared His disciples for their upcoming mission of worldwide preaching, the Lord, among other things, commissioned them to continue the work of freeing people from the devil's violence: "*And He began to send them out two by two [to towns and villages] and gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out*" (Matt. 10:1; Luke 9:1; Mark 6:7). The apostles did not expect the unclean spirits to obediently submit to their word, and so, upon returning from their first missionary journey, they joyfully reported to the Savior: "*Lord, even the demons submitted to us in Your name*" (Luke 10:17). Then the Lord confirmed even more clearly that He was entrusting them with the authority to cast out every unclean supernatural power: "*Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall harm you*" (Luke 10:19). Before His ascension into heaven, the Lord foretold that the

subjugation of the devil's power would be a distinguishing mark of the Church: *"And these signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons..."* (Mark 16:17).

Indeed, the spread of the Gospel was invariably accompanied by the casting out of unclean spirits. The Book of Acts of the Apostles records instances of the healing of the possessed performed by the Apostle Peter (Acts 5:16); then by the Apostle Philip, when *"the unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying out"* (Acts 8:7), and later by the Apostle Paul, who cast out a spirit of divination from a young girl (Acts 16:16–18). Moreover, God's grace sometimes worked so abundantly that when, for example, objects belonging to the Apostle Paul were placed on the possessed, the demons would come out of the afflicted (Acts 19:12).

From apostolic times onward, exorcism prayers against demons have been an indispensable part of the sacrament of Baptism. Nevertheless, although the Lord Jesus Christ has defeated the prince of darkness, stripped him of all authority over people, and given the Church great power to fight against him and his unclean spirits, we must remember that until the time of the Last Judgment, these unclean spirits will pose a great and constant danger to each of us. For this reason, the Lord Jesus Christ taught us to constantly pray to God: *"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."* *"Be sober-minded and alert,"* the Apostle Peter exhorts Christians, *"because your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour"* (1 Pet. 5:8).

Having been cast out of Heaven, the devil and his demons have concentrated their activities in a realm close to us—the so-called "air." The devil considers people who oppose the Christian faith or live sinfully to be his subjects and uses them to fight against the Church. According to the apostle, these people live *"according to the will of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit now at work in those who belong to the rebellion"* (Eph. 2:2).

Now let's take a closer look at how the devil operates among people and what methods he employs. In particular, we will discuss demon possession and possession, as well as methods of temptation and enslavement through the occult and magic.

Demonic Possession and Possession

Scripture distinguishes demon possession from both spiritual possession and natural mental illnesses (Matt. 4:24, 9:32–34; Mark 1:34; Luke 7:21, 8:2). Given the extraordinary complexity of human nature, it is difficult to explain the essence of demon possession with precision. It is clear, however, that it differs from mere demonic influence, in which a dark spirit attempts to incline a person's will toward sin. In such cases, the person retains control over their actions, and the temptation they face can be driven away through prayer. Demonic possession also differs from the kind of possession in which the devil takes control of a person's mind and will.

Apparently, in the case of demonic possession, the evil spirit takes control of the body's **neuromuscular** system—as if inserting itself between the body and the soul—so that the person loses control over their movements and actions. It should be noted, however, that in the case of possession, the evil spirit does not have complete control over the powers of the possessed person's soul: these powers are merely unable to manifest themselves. The soul remains, to a certain extent, capable of thinking and feeling independently, but is completely powerless to control the body's organs.

If we imagine the soul as a pianist and the body as a grand piano, then the evil spirit can be likened to a vicious gorilla that has wedged itself between the pianist and his instrument and is frantically pounding on the keys. Having no control over their bodies, the possessed are victims of the malevolent spirit that has enslaved them, and therefore are not responsible for their actions. They are slaves to the evil spirit.

Possession can take various outward forms. Sometimes the possessed rage and smash everything around them, striking terror into those around them. In doing so, they often display superhuman strength, as, for example, the possessed man of Gadara, who broke any chains with which they tried to bind him (Mark 5:4). At the same time, those possessed inflict all manner of injuries upon themselves, such as the possessed boy who, at the new

moon, would throw himself into fire or into water (Matt. 17:15). But possession is often expressed in a quieter form, when people temporarily lose their natural abilities. For example, the Gospels tell of a demon-possessed man who was mute but began to speak normally again as soon as the Lord delivered him from the demon; or, for instance, the woman who was bent over and was able to stand upright after the Lord delivered her from the devil. The poor woman had been bent over for 18 years (Luke 13:11).

In some cases, those possessed by demons exhibit the ability to see the future and prophesy. For example, the Book of Acts of the Holy Apostles recounts the story of a young woman who was a fortune-teller and brought her masters a considerable income by predicting people's futures. When the Apostle Paul cast the demon out of her, she lost this ability (Acts 16:16–19). Although possession began to disappear with the spread of the Christian faith, it nevertheless still exists today.

What leads to demon possession, and who gives an evil spirit the right to take control of a person and torment them? According to Professor Kurt Koch, a German pastor who devoted more than 40 years of his life to the problem of demon possession and wrote a number of major studies on the subject, in all the cases known to him, the cause of demon possession was an interest in the occult: either the person himself was involved in the occult at some point in his life, or he sought the services of occultists, or someone in his family had previously been involved in such practices. By “occultism” we mean activities such as summoning spirits, spiritualism, fortune-telling and consulting fortune-tellers, yoga, psychic healing, white and black magic, and generally any activities in which a person seeks the services of fallen spirits (even if unconsciously). Thus, people who practice the occult endanger not only themselves but also their children and grandchildren.

In our time, a time of apostasy from Christianity and an ever-increasing fascination with the occult, more and more people are falling prey to the violence of evil spirits. It is true that psychiatrists are reluctant to acknowledge the existence of demons and, as a rule, classify demonic possession as a natural mental illness. But

a person of faith must understand that no medication or psychotherapeutic methods can drive out evil spirits. The power of God is necessary here.

Here are the distinguishing characteristics of demonic possession that set it apart from natural mental illnesses [Kurt E. Koch, “Demonology Past and Present,” Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1973, pp. 31–52].

A revulsion toward everything sacred and related to God: Holy Communion, the cross, the Bible, holy water, icons, prosphora, incense, prayer, etc. Moreover, those possessed sense the presence of a sacred object even when it is hidden from their view: it irritates them, makes them sick, and even drives them into a state of rage.

Change in voice. This symptom is not observed in ordinary nervous disorders. Since speech is controlled by the brain—over which demons do not have complete control, but only over the vocal cords—the words that come from the mouth of a possessed person sound unnatural.

Clairvoyance. Demons do not know the future, just as angels do not know it: it is known only to the Lord God. However, demons know the past and perceive the present to a much greater extent than ordinary people. Being spirits, they can almost instantly inform a clairvoyant of what is happening far away—even on the other side of the world—so that listeners may think the clairvoyant knows the future. When a clairvoyant predicts the future, it is always merely conjecture. Demons, having a wealth of life experience and knowing far more people, are sometimes able to foresee what will happen with considerable accuracy. Of course, they are often wrong. Furthermore, sometimes their predictions come true not because that is exactly what was destined to happen, but because the person himself, having convinced himself of something related to his future, begins to subconsciously strive for it and thereby contributes to the fulfillment of the prediction.

Sudden healing. It may take a psychiatrist several years to cure a mentally ill patient. Deliverance from a demon, however, occurs instantly, after which all signs of possession disappear, and the person becomes normal.

Sudden Transfer. There is a danger that the evil spirit dwelling in the possessed person may suddenly transfer either to the one attempting to cast it out or to members of that person's family. This symptom is distinct from the danger of "contagion" to which doctors and psychiatrists are exposed. It is well known that people who work regularly with the mentally ill may themselves begin to exhibit various mental abnormalities. At the same time, the patient himself derives no relief from the fact that his doctor has been "infected." In cases of demonic transference, however, the former possessed person is completely freed from possession, while another person just as suddenly falls under the influence of that spirit.

Although the Lord Jesus Christ gave His disciples powerful means for casting out demons, not everyone should undertake this task. The New Testament reveals one striking fact regarding unclean spirits, namely, that they are utterly powerless before **the name of Christ**: the Lord Jesus Christ has absolute and inescapable authority over them. Even during the Savior's earthly life, the apostles noticed that a certain man was casting out demons in the name of Christ. Puzzled, they told Christ about this and asked for permission to forbid the stranger from using His name. But the Lord replied to them: "*Do not forbid him, for whoever is not against you is for you*" (Luke 9:50). Evidently, this stranger sincerely believed in Christ, even though he kept to himself.

However, it is dangerous for an ordinary person to engage in battle with unclean spirits, even with the weapon of Christ's name. The Book of Acts recounts the immense impression that the apostles' miracles performed in Christ's name—and, in particular, their casting out of demons—made on everyone. And so, the sons of a certain Jewish priest named Sceva—who were not Christians themselves but practiced sorcery for profit—wanted to try

the new method used by the apostles. So they began to invoke the name of Christ to cast out an evil spirit from a man who was possessed. Suddenly, the possessed man said to them, “*I know Jesus, and I know Paul—but who are you?*” And immediately he pounced on the exorcists; after overpowering them, he gained such dominance over them that they fled from that house naked and beaten (Acts 19:14–17).

From this incident, we must conclude that the name of Christ must be invoked with great faith and reverence—for the sake of a person’s salvation, and not for practical purposes or out of vanity. At the same time, it is extremely important to be protected oneself by the power of Christ, which comes from a Christian way of life. In general, the matter of casting out demons is best left to those authorized by the Church—priests, bishops, and spiritual elders. Any personal enthusiasm or recklessness in this matter is extremely dangerous. The devil is a very dangerous and cunning enemy. A person who presumptuously engages him in open combat may pay dearly for his recklessness.

Possession differs from demonic possession in that, in possession, the devil takes control of a person’s very **mind** and **will**. In demonic possession, the devil enslaves a person’s body, but their mind and will remain relatively free, albeit powerless. Of course, the devil cannot enslave our mind and will by force. He achieves this gradually, as the person himself, through his aversion to God or his sinful life, falls under his influence. We see an example of demonic possession in Judas the betrayer. The words of the Gospel, “*Satan entered Judas*” (Luke 22:3), do not refer to demonic possession but to the enslavement **of the will** of the traitorous disciple. At first, Judas joined the apostles out of a sincere and selfless impulse. But before long, he grew cold toward Christ and became disillusioned with the purpose of his mission. So that his efforts would not be entirely in vain, he began to secretly reward himself from the common fund, into which good people had donated for the apostles’ needs and to help the poor. He himself did not notice how, little by little, the devil clouded his mind and began to control

his will. Finally, at the Last Supper, the devil completely took possession of the unfortunate disciple and led him first to a vile act of betrayal, and then to suicide.

We see another example of demonic possession in the Jewish leaders and scribes who were hostile toward Christ. Whatever He said, they disputed and rejected; whatever He did—no matter how great and noble—they criticized and mocked. These proud men did not see how the devil had taken possession of their minds and wills in order to hinder the work of humanity's salvation. That is why the Lord said to them: "*Your father is the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires*" (John 8:44). There have been many such enemies of God throughout the history of the Church, especially during the days of revolution in our long-suffering homeland.

People possessed by the devil are not merely religious ignoramuses or ordinary sinners; they are people whose "*minds the god of this age has blinded*" (2 Cor. 4:4) and whom he uses to fight against God. The demon-possessed are the wretched victims of the evil one; the possessed are his active servants.

The devil's snares

"*Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks,*" said the Lord; but He immediately added, "*for it is necessary that stumbling blocks come*" (Matt. 18:7). "*It is necessary*"—obviously, for our own good. The Lord does not want us to be presumptuous and careless, but wants us to grow and improve spiritually.

The Lord partially revealed the problem of temptations in the parable of the weeds. *The sower* (the Lord) sowed *good seed* (goodness) in his *field*, and *his enemy* (the devil) sowed *weeds* (temptations) among them. When *the servants*, , noticed the weeds sprouting and asked their master for permission *to pull them up*, he refused, saying: "*No, lest in pulling up the weeds you uproot the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest*" (i.e., until the judgment). Only then "*will the angels gather out of His Kingdom all the temptations and*

those who practice lawlessness and cast them into the fiery furnace” (Matt. 13:24–42). In other words, the premature removal of temptations would hinder the process of people’s spiritual development.

Just as in the plant and animal worlds the struggle for existence leads to the development of more perfect and resilient species, so too does the struggle against temptations lead to the formation of more steadfast and virtuous souls. Just as precious metal is tested by fire and a student by an exam, so the future citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven is tested by temptations (1 Pet. 1:7).

From these and other passages of Scripture, we must conclude that the limited activity of the tempter is part of God’s plan and is permitted by Him for the benefit of humankind. God does not allow him to rule arbitrarily over anyone except those who have yielded to him.

How can we explain that an angel who was once radiant and close to God has now taken up such a degrading and filthy task as goading people into all sorts of vile deeds? Some believe that, as a sadist, he takes pleasure in tormenting others. That is true, but there is another, more important reason. Let us recall that Lucifer fell away from God because of **pride**. He desired to be equal to the Creator in His glory and power, but having been defeated by the angels who remained faithful to God, he now seeks, at the very least, to subjugate as many people as possible. He cannot achieve this on his own as long as people, who carry within themselves a spark of goodness, remain under God’s protection. To take possession of someone, the devil must first morally corrupt them; he accomplishes this through **sin**. By tempting people over many millennia, the devil has perfected this vile art. Here are his main tactics:

Deception,

Adaptability,

Gradualness,
Persistence,
Deception.

For a person to succumb to temptation, it is important, first of all, that they mistake this temptation for their own desire: then they themselves will zealously pursue what they consider essential for their happiness and well-being. Therefore, the devil **conceals** his presence in every way possible and hides behind circumstances that he presents as favorable. Furthermore, before tempting someone, the devil carefully studies the person's character, inclinations, and weaknesses, and **tailors** his temptations accordingly.

The following account from the Book of Acts illustrates this method of temptation. The early Christians lived in such close-knit and united harmony that they held all things in common. The more affluent among them sold their property so that, with the proceeds, they could help their brothers and sisters in need. Thanks to such sincere brotherly love, none of the Christians were in need, and outsiders regarded them as an example for all of society. Then a certain Ananias, a wealthy man, fearing he would be seen as greedy, decided to sell his property as well and donate the proceeds to the community's needs. But so as not to become completely impoverished, he conspired with his wife Sapphira to give the apostles only a portion of the proceeds, while hiding the rest "for a rainy day." In principle, it was their right to dispose of their property as they saw fit. The deception lay in the fact that they wanted to pass themselves off as completely selfless. When Ananias brought a portion of his money to the apostle Peter and solemnly declared that he was donating all his property, the apostle, by divine revelation, knew that Ananias was deceiving him and said: "*Ananias! Why did you allow Satan to put it into your heart to*

lie to the Holy Spirit and withhold part of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, was it not your own ? ... You have not lied to men but to God” (Acts 5:1–11). Upon hearing these words, Ananias immediately fell down dead.

We see how the devil skillfully exploited Ananias’s cowardice and vanity. Ananias was attached to his possessions, but he also wanted to be known as a generous giver. And so the devil suggested a “brilliant” compromise to him: a way to keep his possessions while simultaneously earning everyone’s gratitude. If Ananias had honestly admitted that he was donating only a portion of his money, there would have been nothing reprehensible about it. But out of vanity, he resorted to deception. He could deceive people, but not God, because the Lord had promised a great reward to those who would give away their possessions to the poor and follow Him, taking up the cross of poverty.

Gradualism is another tool the tempter uses successfully. Taking advantage of man’s natural aversion to vice, the devil accustoms him to sinning little by little, in the form of minor indulgences. At the same time, the devil reassures man that this will be only a one-time deviation from the norm and that, having obtained what he desires, he will remain an honest and virtuous person. If a person succumbs to temptation, the devil will then offer him another similar, but more serious, sin—again under the guise of a “minor” deviation from the norm. “You’ll repent later,” the tempter reassures them. And so, as a person succumbs to temptations, they sink deeper and deeper into the mire of sin, failing to notice that they have become a helpless slave to their passions and the prey of the prince of darkness.

Let’s illustrate this point with the following example. Suppose a person unexpectedly stumbles upon a wallet lying on the ground while walking along the street. Opening it, he discovers a certain amount of money inside. Right there in the wallet, he finds a card with the owner’s name and address. His first thought is to return the wallet as soon as possible. But then the tempter approaches his ear and whispers that it would be wiser to keep

the find: “After all, it’s as if Providence sent you this money at such a difficult time. And there’s no theft involved here, since the money was lying out in the open for everyone to see, and someone else could have picked it up.” Then his conscience intervenes and tells him that taking what belongs to others is a sin, and he must try to find the owner. He needs this money, too. But the devil challenges the voice of conscience and logically proves to the man that no, everything is fine: you didn’t reach into someone else’s pocket; what you found is yours. If a person listens to the voice of conscience and returns what he has found, he will feel an inner satisfaction that he acted honestly and did not take advantage of someone else’s misfortune. If, however, he succumbs to temptation, the devil will push him toward other, even more dishonest acts, striving to turn him into a deceiver, a thief, and a robber.

The devil’s method of gradual seduction can be seen particularly clearly in the example of Judas—one of the twelve apostles. Judas, serving as treasurer, was in charge of the box into which people placed their donations for the apostles’ needs and for distribution to the poor. Dealing with money is always a source of temptation, and as we see in the Gospels, Judas succumbed to it. He began, little by little, to “borrow” from the common fund for his own needs. Out of compassion for the sinner, the Lord tried to gently bring Judas to his senses, but to no avail. Without even realizing it, Judas became a thief. Eventually, his greed took such a hold of him that he sold his Teacher for thirty pieces of silver. Thus, little by little, the devil took control of one of Christ’s closest disciples and led him to a terrible sin and suicide.

Having no direct access to a person’s will, the devil tries to influence it through thoughts and feelings, which in turn depend on external impressions. That is why the devil strives so hard to present something tempting to our ears and eyes. Only as a person succumbs to sinful thoughts and feelings does the devil take control of his will and enslave him.

The devil takes advantage of our fickleness. He knows that, in principle, any person—even one who has overcome temptation thousands of times—can always succumb to sin in a moment of relaxation or carelessness. Therefore, he does not leave a person alone until his last breath. Having failed with yet another temptation, he **stubbornly** waits for a new opportunity to try once more to lead a person into sin. As an experienced psychologist, the devil knows that a person is particularly weak in moments of fatigue and distress. Sometimes, however, he waits for a person to simply let their guard down and become less vigilant and cautious. And then, at such a moment, the devil comes, swooping down on the person like a whirlwind and pushing them toward the very sin to which they are most susceptible.

It was precisely through his persistence that the devil managed to tempt the greatest righteous man of Old Testament times—King David. David, having overcome numerous persecutions and life trials, finally ascended the throne of Israel. His enemies were cowed, the wars ceased, years of peaceful prosperity began, and David let his guard down somewhat. And so, one evening, as he went out onto the roof of his house, he saw a beautiful woman bathing in a pool in the neighboring house. He wanted to find out who she was. It turned out that she was Bathsheba, the wife of one of the senior officers in his army. His acquaintance with his beautiful neighbor turned into lust, and the king sinned. Bathsheba became pregnant as a result of the illicit affair, which, according to Jewish law, was punishable by stoning. Wanting to save her from a shameful and agonizing death, David urgently summoned her husband back from the campaign to give him the opportunity to spend time with Bathsheba and thus allow him to believe that she had become pregnant by him. But for some reason, Bathsheba's husband did not want to live with her and soon returned to his army, which was besieging some enemy city. The situation seemed desperate, and then the devil inspired David with the following ingenious solution: to send Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, to the most dangerous part of the battlefield so that he might be struck down by an enemy's hand. Indeed, once Uriah reached the front lines, he was killed by an enemy arrow, and David then had the

opportunity to marry his widow and thus conceal his sin of adultery. At the same time, the devil had so clouded David's mind that he lost the ability to understand just how terrible his double sin was. Only after the prophet Nathan, in a contrived parable, forced the king to pass judgment on a similar case did David realize that he himself had pronounced a sentence upon himself. In horror, he fell to his knees before God and began to repent publicly (2 Kings 11). He was never able to forgive himself for this sin and repented of it throughout his life, leaving us his prayer of repentance (Psalm 50), which still moves the hearts of repentant sinners to this day. Thus, the merciful Lord rescued His fallen righteous one from the devil's snares.

Through this and similar instances, the Lord teaches us not to be presumptuous: *"Therefore, let anyone who thinks they are standing firm take care not to fall"* (1 Cor. 10:12). If the devil, in his boundless audacity, dared to tempt even the Savior (Matt. 4:3–10), then who is safe from his wiles? Therefore, in warning us, the Lord teaches: *"The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Watch and pray so that you may not fall into temptation"* (Matt. 26:41).

The devil's primary method—which permeates all his activities and very essence—is **lies**—lies everywhere and always—the most brazen and shameless lies, yet often skillfully seasoned with grains of truth for greater plausibility! That is why the Lord described him as *"a liar and the father of lies"* (John 8:44).

The devil strives **to distort** everything beyond recognition in our minds: he portrays a minor setback as a great, irreparable tragedy; and a trivial pleasure or temporary gain as the most important matter, almost the very purpose of life. By tempting us to sin, he reassures us that it is a perfectly natural and forgivable weakness. And when a person sins, the devil plunges him into despair and instills the belief that he has forever angered the Creator and that repentance is therefore futile. The devil convinces a person who indulges in some passion that he is too weak to even try to reform. And the devil tries to lead a person who leads a holy life into pride. He presents the ravings of philosophers and various religious fabrications as remarkable revelations, while portraying the

teachings of the Gospel as boring and strange. He tries to lead a person who strives with all their might for a spiritual life astray through pride and self-confidence. Sometimes he even appears in the form of a bright angel or Christ Himself, so that the person may come to think of himself as better than others (2 Cor. 11:14). In the lives of the saints, one can find many accounts of how he tempted ascetics who had attained great spiritual heights with such visions.

Breathing an unquenchable thirst for power, the devil spares neither effort nor time in transforming every natural human weakness into an uncontrollable and repulsive passion. He wants man to completely defile himself and become worse than an animal. Then, through sin, the devil gains power over him and makes him his slave and obedient instrument.

But thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ, the devil's power is fleeting, and his iron chains are weaker than a spider's web. It is enough for a sinner to turn to God in repentance, and all the devil's power crumbles like a house of cards. *“For this purpose the Son of God appeared: to destroy the works of the devil”* (1 John 3:8). It is the Lord Himself who is the Mighty One who bound the strong man and plundered his possessions (Matt. 12:29). Therefore, let us hasten to the Savior for help and protection. With strong faith and a virtuous life, let us resist the fallen spirit, and he will flee from us, as promised (James 4:7),

The Temptation of Occultism

“The Spirit clearly says that in the last days some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceiving spirits and the teachings of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1).

Just as a child turns to its mother, so a person instinctively turns to God—especially in difficult moments of life. In God, he sees his Heavenly Father, Who desires what is best for him and can do even the impossible. The Lord

Jesus Christ promised: *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you”* (Matt. 7:7). Some ask for physical healing, for help at work, for the strengthening of their family, or for the well-being of their children; others ask for the strengthening of their faith, instruction in prayer, or the gift of the Holy Spirit—each according to their spiritual level. God, however, accepts the prayers of all who turn to Him with sincere and fervent faith.

In addition to drawing God’s help to us, prayer is remarkable in that it fosters a person’s inner growth. This is because prayer is not a monologue but **a conversation** in which the Lord responds to the soul and illuminates it with the grace of the Holy Spirit. By illuminating a person’s inner world, God teaches them to seek not only the material and the temporary, but—most importantly—the eternal and what is truly valuable. A person who converses with God in prayer realizes that God is the supreme and almighty Being, full of love, yet also righteous, before Whom one must stand in awe. He cannot be manipulated like some blind force. He is the Father, whom one must obey. Thus, a personal experience of prayer—which initially arises from specific needs—contributes to a person’s **moral perfection** and leads them to the highest good: the Kingdom of Heaven.

The complete opposite of such healthy religiosity, based on faith and obedience to God, is the unhealthy, “dark spirituality” of occultism. Here, too, there is an element of the supernatural and a search for help—but help is sought not from the Creator, but from some dubious spirits or mysterious non-physical forces. While a healthy faith in God ennobles a person, an unhealthy occult faith spiritually cripples them. It is entirely focused on the earthly, the trivial, and the sinful. The goal of occult practices is purely utilitarian: to uncover secrets, achieve worldly success, win someone’s love, improve one’s health, draw on bioenergy, expand one’s potential, take revenge on an enemy, or simply “play” with the mysterious. Many are enticed by the fact that all of this can be achieved without any physical effort and without violating civil laws.

While turning to God awakens a person's conscience and prompts them to repent and reform, occult practices, on the contrary, impose no moral obligations: just take what you want and enjoy it! This apparent freedom from moral obligations seems to be the main appeal of occultism. But, as we shall see later, these helpful spirits from the otherworld are by no means altruistic, and sooner or later a person pays dearly for the services received. It's only at first that everything seems easy and simple.

Occultism is as ancient as humanity itself. The eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden was humanity's first attempt to acquire extraordinary knowledge and abilities through occult means (see Genesis, Chapter 3). Sorcerers, shamans, necromancers, and the like have always existed, but mostly "underground." What is remarkable about our era is the ever-increasing popularity and fascination with various forms of occultism, as evidenced by a number of serious contemporary studies. For example, Mircea Eliade, a scholar at the University of Chicago specializing in comparative religion and occultism, notes in his book **Occultism, Witchcraft, and Cultural Fashions**: "As a historian of religion, I cannot help but be amazed by the enormous popularity of witchcraft in contemporary Western culture and subculture. At the same time, this fascination with witchcraft is only part of a broader trend, namely, a heightened interest in all manner of occult and esoteric sciences" (The University Press, Chicago, IL, 1976). Influenced by the currently fashionable "New Age" movement, thousands of people in the U.S. claim to be *channelers* (mediums) and *psychics* (fortune-tellers), and millions turn to them for advice and services and are fascinated by their literature. Some of these channelers are well known in artistic and television circles. In Europe, Canada, Brazil, Russia, and other countries, there is also a noticeable increase in interest in the supernatural. The influence of occult ideas has even begun to penetrate serious sciences such as psychology, medicine, philosophy, archaeology, and so on. Pseudo-Christian sects have begun to emerge, spreading ancient occult ideas cloaked in pseudoscientific and Christian terminology. In bookstores, you can find a special section dedicated to "New Age" teachings. It is filled with titles such as: "Witches in the Middle Ages,"

“Ancient Egyptian Magic,” “History of Secret Societies,” “Serpentine and the Rainbow,” “Secret Words of Haitian Shamans and Zombies,” “Encyclopedia of Ancient and Forbidden Knowledge,” “From Kabbalah to Astral Worlds: Mental Energies and the Secrets of Intimate Relationships,” “The Book of Sacred Magic: The Essential Dark Source of Occult Knowledge,” “The Modern Witches’ Dictionary: Everything You Need to Know to Cast Spells,” “Achieve Your Desires Through Occult Energy,” “Levitation—What It Is and How to Do It.”

Dr. Walter R. Martin, a leading expert on cults in America, asserts that 60 percent of Americans practice occult techniques in one form or another or are interested in the occult. There are more than 3,000 publishers of occult books and magazines, with a combined annual turnover of one billion dollars. Even mainstream magazines, which generally have no interest in this field, publish articles on occult techniques, astrological omens, crystal healing, and so on. In Russia, too, fascination with the occult is reaching epidemic proportions. These sad facts point to the spiritual degeneration of modern society and foreshadow the nearness of Christ’s Second Coming.

The word “*occultism*” derives from the Latin word **occultus**, meaning “something hidden and inaccessible to the majority.” The realm of occultism encompasses various inexplicable phenomena and actions that set mysterious, non-physical forces in motion. Occult practices pursue the following goals: 1) to acquire knowledge inaccessible by ordinary physical means; 2) to make contact with spirits or supernatural forces; 3) to learn how to manipulate these spirits or forces. Here is a partial list of occult teachings and practices: professional fortune-telling, astrology, palmistry, numerology, theosophy (the Blavatsky Society), Kabbalah, anthroposophy, spiritualism, astral travel, certain forms of mysticism, transcendental meditation, mediumship or channeling, yoga, psychic (non-traditional) healing, biofield therapy, ritual coding, shamanism, witchcraft, and all forms of white and black magic.

In our time, the occult teaching known as “New Age” is gaining great popularity, having absorbed many older occult teachings. Some modern sects and cults either arose from “revelations” from spirits or incorporate

elements of occultism and employ occult practices. Among them are: the Rosicrucian Order, the Roerich teachings (“Living Ethics” or “Agni Yoga”), the Society of the White Brothers, the societies of E. Blavatsky, the “New Age” movement, the Aum Shinrikyo cult, Krishnaism, the Lucius Trust (Alice Bailey), Eckankar (Paul Twitchell), The Children of God (David Berg), the Unification Church (Sun Moon), the Anthroposophical Society (Rudolf Steiner), Astara (Earlyne Chaney), the Mormon “church” (Joseph Smith with his “angel Moroni”), Christian Science (Mary Baker Eddy), and others.

What drives enlightened people of the twentieth century to turn to such unscientific and dubious practices as summoning spirits? The answer to this question lies in the fact that science and materialist doctrine alone cannot satisfy humanity’s highest aspirations. Something within each of us seeks the higher, the spiritual, and yearns for answers to fundamental questions: Why do we live? Do other worlds and more perfect forms of existence exist? What awaits us beyond the grave? Do non-physical forces exist that can help a person transcend the laws of physics and attain lasting happiness? And so, people who are unaware of or ignore Christian teachings turn to esoteric teachings. These teachings claim to answer the profound, fundamental questions of existence and to open access to non-physical forces. But these answers are false, and their methods are harmful. The most terrifying thing is that they suppress a person’s fear of God and sense of responsibility for their actions. Fallen spirits instill in the novice occultist the belief that there is neither God’s judgment nor eternal torment; on the contrary, they claim that everything there is easy and pleasant. Therefore, enrich yourself with knowledge and absorb the power offered to you. And, indeed, sometimes as a result of occult practices, a person develops extraordinary abilities—telepathy, clairvoyance, the ability to “heal with one’s biofield” or move objects from a distance (telekinesis), and so on. But, as we shall see, these abilities did not develop within them on their own, but with **the assistance of unclean spirits**, and therefore they are very dangerous and harmful. True, so as not to scare off a naive beginner, demons cunningly conceal their presence and disguise themselves as: a) either harmless wandering spirits, or b)

impersonal, non-physical energy, diffused throughout the cosmos or hidden within the person themselves. Let us examine to what extent these occultists' notions correspond to reality.

a) The Nature of Occult Spirits

Communication with spirits takes place either through *spiritualism* or through *mediumship*. The history of summoning spirits (spiritism) dates back to ancient times. It is even mentioned in the Bible as a practice forbidden by God and considered sinful: *“Do not turn to those who summon the dead, and do not go to sorcerers; do not defile yourselves by them”* (Lev. 19:31). *“If any soul turns to those who summon the dead and to sorcerers, to follow them in unfaithfulness, I will set My face against that soul and cut it off from among its people”* (Lev. 20:6, 20:27). In séances, a spirit appears either in the form of an apparition or through its influence on various objects—for example, by moving a small plate, tapping on a table, swinging a pendulum (Ouija board), and so on. In mediumistic séances, a medium in a trance state places his or her body at the disposal of a spirit, which, by entering the person, takes control of his or her faculties, performs various actions through him or her, and conveys various revelations. The modern “New Age” movement popularizes precisely this second type of communication with spirits (or “forces”), calling it “channeling” (from the English word “channel,” meaning “to conduct”). As the medium (channeler) enters a trance, the muscles of their face and lips begin to twitch involuntarily. When the spirit fully takes possession of the medium, there is a change in the rhythm of their breathing, and their facial expression changes, sometimes beyond recognition. Their voice also changes, so that a woman’s voice, for example, begins to sound like a man’s bass. Upon emerging from the trance, the person cannot recall what happened to them or what they said while in the mediumistic state. At first, the spirit does not dare to possess the medium without their consent, and it is necessary for the medium themselves to invite the spirit to enter them.

However, after repeated mediumistic séances, the spirit's possession may take on an involuntary, spontaneous character, and the medium becomes subject to their spirit.

There is no doubt that there are many charlatans among spiritualists and mediums. However, there are also a considerable number of professionals who genuinely communicate with otherworldly beings and receive from them knowledge and abilities that are inaccessible to other people. The overwhelming majority of ordinary channelers and spiritualists have no idea how **treacherous and dangerous** the beings they entrust themselves to are. These are far from being harmless, wandering souls, nor are they impersonal forces of nature. On the contrary, according to the testimony of many professional mediums and shamans, the spirits with whom they dealt **deliberately** deceived them. They pretended to be benevolent in order to take control of them and harm them. For example, Satprem, a disciple of the occultist and Hindu guru (teacher) Sri Aurobindo, wrote: "It is well known to all occultists that spirits are capable of assuming any form they wish" (Satprem, **Sri Aurobindo or the Adventure of Consciousness**, New York, Harper and Row, 1974).

Robert Monroe vividly described an incident in which, during one of his "astral" journeys, he was subjected to a brazen and persistent attack by evil spirits. At the most critical moment of the struggle, two of the spirits suddenly took on the appearance of his two beloved daughters. They did so so unexpectedly and convincingly that Robert lost the ability to resist and nearly perished (*Journeys out of the Body*, Garden City, NY, Anchor Books, 1973).

The well-known medium Emanuel Swedenborg, who devoted himself to communicating with spirits and is recognized by many as a serious expert on the occult, testifies that the spirits with whom spiritualists and mediums communicate are so cunning and deceitful that it is impossible for a person who turns to them to ascertain their true identity and intentions. These spirits are excellent actors, masquerading as the souls of the deceased. Swedenborg warns novice occultists with the following words: "When these spirits say anything, they must not

be believed at all, because they make everything up and lie constantly ... Moreover, they do so with such aplomb and audacity that a person becomes completely disoriented. And if one believes even partially what they claim, the spirits, with the utmost audacity, invent new fabrications, so that they completely confuse him. Therefore, everyone must be wary of spirits and not believe them in the slightest" (*The True Christian Religion*, New York, E.P. Dutton, 1936).

We hear similar testimony from Uri Geller, known for his ability to bend spoons and knives telepathically. He and his mentor, parapsychologist Andrija Puharich, M.D., often experienced a sense of unease when communicating with spirits, noticing something strange and suspicious in their behavior. Both occultists repeatedly found that the spirits behaved very ambiguously, as if they were playing tricks on them (Andrija Puharich, Uri, New York: Bantam, 1975). Other professional spiritualists and mediums also experienced this same uneasy feeling.

So, if the spirits of occultists **lie**, is it not clear that they are **not** good angels or servants of God? Nor can they be the souls of deceased people, because, according to Scripture, souls are not permitted to wander the world at will. On the contrary, after a person's death, God assigns a specific place to their soul—in heaven or in hell—where the soul must remain until the Day of Judgment (*"It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,"* Acts 9:27). Therefore, if the spirits invoked by occultists are neither angels nor the souls of the dead, then they are most likely spirits subject to the one of whom the Savior said, *"He is a liar and the father of lies"*—that is, the devil (John 8:44). Consequently, spiritualists and channelers, by trusting in otherworldly spirits, put themselves and others in great danger (we will explain this in more detail below). It is difficult to understand how people who would never trust a stranger can so naively trust otherworldly beings about whom they know nothing and who are often caught in lies.

b) Is spiritual energy impersonal?

Now let's consider a second view, popular in our time, that occult practices set in motion non-physical energy—energy that is diffused throughout the cosmos or hidden within the practitioners themselves. This view is particularly appealing to the modern skeptic, who acknowledges neither a personal God nor a spiritual world. Such a proud person's mind is flattered by the thought that, through his mere desire, he can set in motion a powerful immaterial energy and make it work for him. Based on the premise of the existence of impersonal, non-physical forces, a number of modern occult theories have emerged which, cloaked in pseudoscientific terminology, are presented to the reader as useful recipes for every situation in life.

The success of these modern occult teachings is immense because, in the eyes of seekers who are spiritually uneducated, they seem to reveal new worlds: everything that was previously mysterious and impossible suddenly becomes explainable and attainable. There is nothing to fear, no one to tremble before—everything is simple and achievable for those who have learned to control non-physical forces.

Note: A particular danger to mental health is posed by that branch of occultism which promotes a method for unlocking an internal source of energy within the individual (A. Klizovsky, *The Foundations of a New-Age Worldview*). According to this teaching, anyone who masters a specific technique can develop a multidimensional perception of the external and internal worlds, maintain and restore health in themselves and others, learn to access any information, open the third eye, undertake astral travel, and learn to open their chakras. Opening the chakras using special techniques to release psychic energy promises limitless possibilities. A person can become godlike—possessing clairvoyance, telepathy, telekinesis, and so on. At the same time, however, experts in this field (A. Klizovsky) warn that unlocking one's bio-energy carries many serious consequences. A detailed examination of this topic goes beyond the scope of the discussion here. We will merely note that people who engage in opening their chakras damage their psyche, sometimes irreparably.

It is curious that the spirits themselves, who operate “behind the scenes” of modern pseudoscientific occult experiments, are not in the least offended that channelers ignore their work and conceal their contributions. On the contrary, the spirits willingly hide behind impersonal, non-physical forces, because this makes it easier for them to achieve their main goal: the enslavement of humanity. And this is very consistent on their part, because their prince himself, the devil, is a multifaceted and skillful demagogue. To a person with intellectual curiosity, he says, “I will give you supernatural knowledge;” to a person with a mystical inclination: “I will reveal to you the mysteries of existence;” to one thirsting for power, he promises glory and might; to a person seeking earthly happiness, he promises all the blessings of life; and to the unbeliever, he instills the thought: “I do not exist; I am a figment of the imagination!”

Thus, having enticed a person with what they value most, the devil then leads them farther and farther away from God, until he plunges them into the abyss of hell. Thanks to his ability to adapt to human thinking, the devil has managed to deceive many of our contemporaries with ancient occult fables, cloaking them in pseudoscientific terminology. This has even given rise in our time to a distinct scientific discipline—parapsychology—which studies and attempts to scientifically explain ancient shamanic and mediumistic practices.

Yet a fundamental question remains: Does non-physical, morally neutral energy exist, and if so, what is its nature? To answer these questions, we must consider that any energy or force, whether material or spiritual, is invariably linked to **the source** that generates it. For example, any physical energy or field (such as electromagnetic, gravitational, etc.) does not exist “on its own,” but originates from specific subatomic particles (photons, gravitons, etc.). And since these physical particles are impersonal, the fields they form are also impersonal and therefore morally neutral. Similarly, spiritual energy (spiritual forces) does not exist “on its own,” but also emanates from one spiritual being or another. And since spiritual beings (angels, humans, demons) are **personalities**, the energy emanating from them is consequently colored by their moral state—good or evil.

Experienced psychics understand this perfectly well and therefore try to shield themselves from moral contamination.

It is well known that in the world in which we live, besides black and white there is gray; besides light and darkness, there are half-shadows. But in a vacuum there are no half-shadows—there is either complete light or complete darkness. Similarly, in the spirit world there is no morally ambiguous state. Spirits (compared to humans) are simple beings: they can be either entirely good (angels) or entirely evil (demons). Accordingly, there are only two states in the spiritual world: heaven or hell. There is no middle, neutral state. Having understood this, we must agree that the power (energy) emanating from God and the angels is always good and leads to good, while the power (energy) emanating from demons is always evil and leads to evil. The Church's centuries-long experience confirms this. The power emanating from God, or "uncreated divine energy" (in the words of St. Gregory Palamas), is a power that enlightens and enlivens the soul. "*Master, it is good for us to be here with You,*" the disciples exclaimed when they were bathed in divine light on Mount Tabor (Matt. 17:1–13).

But human beings are far more complex than simple spirits (angels and demons). Therefore, they can remain in a morally indeterminate state for some time and are capable of wavering between good and evil. Precisely because of man's moral duality and instability, the good and evil within him neutralize one another, and therefore his spiritual energy is weak and ineffective compared to the energy of pure spirits. This is similar to how, for example, in an atom, the negatively charged electrons neutralize the positive charge of the nucleus. In the spiritual world, however, there are no morally neutral non-physical forces, because they emanate from morally defined beings—angels or demons. Therefore, every time a person comes into contact with the energy emanating from these beings, they will experience either an attraction to good or to evil.

Note: Of course, God is the primary source of all forms of energy. But the fallen angels have turned this energy to evil, just as they have with the other gifts given to them by the Creator.

Thus, occultists are mistaken regarding the neutrality and safety of non-physical energy. Since neither God nor His angels allow themselves to be manipulated, demons willingly come to the service of occultists. It is they who endow occultists with the necessary energy. But they do so far from selflessly. They provide this energy on credit and at high interest rates. Sorcerers, witches, Satanists, and many professional occultists are aware of this but keep it a secret. To avoid making unsubstantiated claims, let us cite several expert opinions.

Professor Michael Harner lectures at Columbia and Yale Universities. In addition, he teaches anthropology at the New School for Social Research in New York and is the author of **The Way of the Shaman**. His research in the occult has led him to believe that the primary source of a shaman's power is the spirit world. "Without a guiding spirit, it is impossible to be a shaman, because a shaman needs a powerful source of energy" (New York: Bantam, 1986).

Hindu and Buddhist gurus (teachers) also acknowledge that their power comes from the spirit world. For example, Indries Shah notes: "Gurus do not possess extraordinary spiritual power in and of themselves. They receive it from spirits. All a guru possesses is the ability to concentrate" (*Oriental Magic*, NY, E.P. Dutton, 1973). In the book **The Adventures into the Psychic**, Jess Shearn, a longtime researcher of parapsychological phenomena, makes the following observation: "Almost without exception, all great mediums felt that they were instruments of an otherworldly power that flowed through them. They did not attribute any power to themselves" (NY, Signet, 1982).

No matter how much occultists might sometimes want to boast of their extraordinary abilities, they are nevertheless forced to admit that, in reality, it is **spirits** from the other world acting through them. For example, citing parapsychological researcher Lawrence LeShah, who studied a number of Eastern and Western psychic

healers, Charles Panati writes that “if there is one thing in common among the healers he studied, it is the acknowledgment that none of them healed through their own power. On the contrary, each of them understood that it was the ‘spirit’ that acted through them. They viewed themselves as passive instruments of the spirit. In order to perform a healing, all healers first had to enter a trance-like state” (*Supersenses*, Garden City, NY, Anchor/Doubleday, 1976).

One of the most comprehensive studies on the subject of psychic healing can be found in the anthology **Healers and the Healing Process**. In this decade-long study, which involved a large number of specialists, we read: “Any study of anomalous healing immediately brings the researcher face-to-face with the concept of intelligent spirits (referred to variously as ‘guides,’ ‘controllers,’ or ‘protectors’) who influence the healer’s mind and provide him with information of which he previously had no conscious awareness” (Wheaton, IL. Theosophical Quest, 1977). This study also concluded that anomalous healing is most prevalent in countries where spiritualism and belief in spirits are popular. More detailed information on this topic can be found in the books **The Facts on the Occult** and **The Facts on Spirit Guides**, edited by John Ankerberg and John Weldon (Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1991).

Thus, it has been established that, regardless of the terminology they use, occultists communicate with **real spirits** who provide them with information and non-physical power.

c) The Results of Occult Practices

We have already presented evidence indicating that these spirits are not angels or the souls of the dead, but most likely demons. But to be fully convinced of this, let us examine the consequences of communicating with them. This is the most infallible method of investigating spiritual phenomena, as indicated by the Savior Himself when He said: “*By their fruits you will recognize them... A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree*

bear good fruit” (Matt. 7:16). And here, numerous facts from the lives of people involved in the occult convince us that a) spirits push those who communicate with them into all manner of sins and crimes; and b) they undermine their health and ruin their lives. Indeed, after some time, people involved in the occult begin to exhibit mental oddities, fall into depression, turn to alcoholism, and abuse drugs. M. Lamar Keene spent 13 years among professional mediums. In his public confession, he wrote: “All the mediums I knew, either personally or through others, met a tragic end. The Fox sisters, for example, who started it all, ended their lives as hopeless alcoholics. William Slade, who became famous for his mind-reading, went mad and died in a psychiatric hospital in Michigan. The medium Margery died a hopeless alcoholic ... Wherever I look, the same picture emerges: mediums invariably end their miserable existence with an even more miserable death. I was utterly disheartened by this whole mediumistic business—the deception, the vulgar debauchery, the endless binge drinking, the drug addiction... (*The Psychic Mafia*).

Furthermore, spirits torment those they “help” in every possible way, thereby revealing their evil, sadistic nature. But they do so cunningly: so as not to scare off their victim prematurely, they gradually and systematically increase the dose of suffering. A person involved in the occult begins to suffer from increased nervousness and physical ailments, is subjected to inexplicable accidents and various misfortunes, experiences bouts of panic, and begins to contemplate suicide. When they realize that it is likely the spirits who are bringing all these misfortunes upon them, and they try to free themselves from them and cease their occult activities, the spirits redouble their ferocity and flood them with a sea of even greater misfortunes in order to frighten them and force them to return to their influence. By tightening and loosening the reins in this way, they gradually enslave the occultist and ultimately destroy him.

This observation is confirmed by Dr. Nandor Fodor, author of the authoritative **Encyclopedia of Psychic Science**: “Attempts to suppress one’s mediumistic abilities result in various illnesses. But when a person returns

to occult practices, the symptoms disappear” (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1974). The famous parapsychologist Edgar Cayce is a striking example. Joseph Millard writes that “he was, in fact, a pitiful puppet of otherworldly forces” (*Edgar Cayce: Mystery Man of Miracles*, Greenwich, CT, Faucett, 1967). Former medium Raphael Gasson wrote from personal experience: “Many suffered greatly after they began to explore mediumship and experienced great distress when they tried to free themselves from it. Families fell apart, and suicide attempts and mental illness began to overwhelm those who had become involved in this practice and then sought to free themselves from its power. Those who found salvation have only God to thank for His mercy” (*The Challenging Counterfeit*, Plainfield, NJ, Logos, 1966).

Spiritualist and guru Sri Chinmoy, an advisor to the United Nations, observes: “Many, many sorcerers and people who communicate with spirits have been either strangled or killed. I know this because I have personally encountered several such cases” (*Astrology, the Supernatural and the Beyond*, Jamaica, NY, Angi Press, 1973). Professor Kurt Koch, who devoted 45 years to the study of anomalous phenomena, testifies that “among people involved in the occult, there is a very high percentage of suicides, tragic accidents, and cases of insanity.” He and many other experts in the field of parapsychology assert that long-term involvement in the occult invariably destroys a person’s physical health: as if some kind of internal vampire were sucking the strength out of the occultist.

People fall into the trap of the occult because at first they do not see the danger; on the contrary, everything seems so wonderful and pleasant. Malachin Martin, in his book **Hostage to the Devil**, describes the fate of a certain “Karl,” a certified physicist and psychologist with a keen interest in religion and parapsychology. Karl amazed his acquaintances with his extraordinary psychic abilities. Following his “calling,” he seriously studied the teachings on reincarnation and astral travel. As he delved deeper into these occult sciences, new horizons kept opening up before him. Karl was intelligent and cautious. He was convinced that his research would benefit

science and humanity. After being appointed to a professorship at a university in the United States, he continued to experiment in the fields of parapsychology and mystical phenomena. Gradually, however, he began to notice some negative changes in his character and mood. Then he began to be troubled by a sense of distrust and even fear— —regarding the spirits with whom he communicated. And so, Carl came to the conclusion that he needed to radically change his research methods and abandon his original theses. But then he is struck by paralysis and ends up in the hospital in a “vegetative” state. Only eleven months later, after intensive treatment accompanied by the prayers of relatives and friends, Karl recovers. Upon leaving the hospital, he renounced all his achievements in the field of parapsychology and revealed the secret behind his illness: “I solemnly and voluntarily surrendered myself to an evil spirit. Although this spirit presented itself as good, promising to help me and improve me, from the very beginning I sensed deep down that it was evil.”

Nevertheless, despite the fact that tens of thousands of people have suffered as a result of occult practices and there is so much documented evidence of the dangers of the occult, many continue to cling to the myths that the occult is either harmless quackery, an innocent pastime, or even a positive spiritual quest. It is neither one, nor the other, nor the third. It is also incorrect to believe that, in addition to a “dangerous” form, there is a “safe” form of the occult. Some hope that, with a certain degree of caution, one can derive benefit from the occult. Unfortunately, all evidence suggests that in any form of occult activity, something negative and destructive “latches onto” a person, from which they cannot free themselves without help from above. This otherworldly force begins to manipulate a person’s fate and pushes them deeper and deeper into the quagmire of the occult. It is similar to the disease AIDS. Once this virus enters the body, it deceives healthy cells by presenting itself as “one of their own” and harmless. The cell lowers its defenses, and the virus enters it like a “Trojan horse.” Only once inside the cell does the virus reveal its destructive power. True, even after infection, a person continues to live a relatively normal life for several more years and may not suspect that their days are numbered. Only in the

final stage of the disease does the presence of the all-destructive virus become evident. But by then it is already too late.

There is another important factor that is rarely mentioned in scientific studies of the occult, yet is exceptionally significant, which reveals the true god-defying nature of occult spirits: it is that inexplicable **aversion** to God and all that is sacred that a person experiences after receiving help or bio-charging from them. For a believer, this abrupt change in spiritual disposition is particularly noticeable. As soon as he receives any kind of help from a psychic or occultist, he loses all desire to pray, read the Holy Scriptures, go to church, and so on. Moreover, this aversion is directly proportional to the power received through occult means. Repeated involvement with the occult makes a person hostile toward God.

Kurt E. Koch recounts the following incident. In one of the villages in Thailand lived a native peasant who was an active member of his Christian church. One day, he injured his hand, which resulted in a festering wound. In the tropical climate, the infection spread rapidly, and soon part of his arm was covered with a large dark red, almost black patch. However, since the nearest doctor was quite far away, the farmer tried to treat his arm with home remedies. Finally, when the gangrene had almost reached his shoulder, he went to see a doctor. The doctor told him that his arm needed to be amputated immediately, or he would soon die of gangrene. The Thai man exclaimed in panic, "But what will I do with just one arm? Who will plant and harvest the rice for me?" The Thai man was overcome with terrible distress. Then he remembered an old Hindu man who healed people with some mysterious power. Although he knew that Christians should not turn to sorcerers, his desperate situation compelled him to seek help from the Hindu man anyway. It turned out that this Hindu man was far from being a charlatan, and his magical powers accomplished the impossible. The purulent infection was stopped, and his hand was saved. But shortly after receiving help from the sorcerer, the Thai man stopped attending church and returned

to the pagan faith of his ancestors. Thus, he paid for the salvation of his hand with his soul (*Occult Bondage and Deliverance*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970).

A little further on, Prof. K. Koch recounts that the most powerful sorcerer he had ever encountered was the Eskimo shaman Alualuk. His occult powers were so great that he even raised several deceased pagans from the dead. One of them lived another ten years after being raised from the dead. However, after being instructed by a preacher, this shaman came to believe in Christ and was baptized. After that, he lost all his magical power. When Koch asked what power he had used to perform his miracles, the former shaman categorically declared, “Of course, demonic power!” He added that his power had never extended to committed Christians.

In our time, the danger of occultism has increased because it is presented as a religious and even Christian pursuit. Traditionally, all forms of occultism have made no secret of their hostile attitude toward Christianity. These days, however, psychics and other occultists may offer advice such as “go get baptized,” “spend time in church,” “receive Communion,” “drink holy water,” and so on. Some psychics even invoke the name of God during their sessions, recite prayers, and make the sign of the cross, thereby creating the impression that God’s power is acting through them. All of this is a terrible deception! Every form of occultism, no matter how it is disguised, **is anti-religious** by its very nature.

Indeed, all the key characteristics of occultism are evident in modern “Christianized” psychic sessions: the attempt to manipulate supernatural forces for selfish ends. Religion requires submission to the Creator, faith, repentance, moral reform, a striving for the heavenly, and selfless service to the good. Here, however, the goal is to absorb “light energy,” achieve worldly success, uncover mysteries, and so on—all without any moral obligations to God. A person involved in the occult who goes to church is not seeking Christ there, but the power of the biofield. Looking at the icons, he sees not God, but a source of energy. He presumptuously reaches out his

hands toward sacred objects to “recharge” himself for his impure deeds, thereby insulting the majesty of the Creator.

And what do psychics themselves say about themselves? Let’s turn to a conversation with Yuri Tarasov, titled: “I Am a Fourth-Generation Sorcerer.” In response to the reporter’s question: “I’ve noticed that you treated a patient with osteochondrosis using your biofield, manual therapy, and psychotherapy. All of this is widely known. We know some practitioners of alternative medicine—for example, Dzhun, Kashpirovsky... But are you one in three forms? What exactly is the sorcery?” Tarasov replied: “The answer is contained in your question. Why don’t I call myself a psychic? Because a psychic can do about one-tenth of what any run-of-the-mill sorcerer is capable of. The same can be said about hypnotists, folk healers, psychotherapists... Each of these fields is just the tip of the iceberg.” He spoke with utter candor. “The tip of the iceberg,” the base of which descends into the underworld.

Because of **the god-defying nature** of all forms of occult practices, Scripture strictly forbids engaging in them. Here are a few passages. *“There shall not be found among you a diviner, a soothsayer, a sorcerer, a charmer, a medium, a spiritist, or one who consults the dead; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord”* (Deut. 18:10–13). *“If a prophet or a dreamer arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder he foretold comes to pass, and he says, ‘Let us follow other gods—which you have not known—and serve them’—then do not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer, for by this the Lord your God is testing you to see whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart ... And that prophet or dreamer must be put to death for having tried to entice you to turn away from the Lord your God”* (Deut. 13:1–5).

Thus, while a healthy religious life enlightens and morally ennobles a person, unhealthy pseudo-religious occult practices morally cripple and destroy him. All forms of occultism inevitably lead to communion with fallen spirits. And although at first these practices bring success in one’s affairs and create the impression that they open

up unlimited possibilities, in the end a person has to pay a very high price for the services received from fallen spirits. *“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matt. 16:26).

Measures for protection against evil spirits

It is difficult for a person to imagine just how fierce and treacherous the fallen spirits are, how relentless and resourceful they are in tempting people and sowing all manner of evil. Yet, despite all this, they do not dare to arbitrarily harm anyone, for that person is under the protection of the Most High. Only when a person, through a sinful way of life, turns away from God and plunges into the darkness of unbelief and passions does he fall under the influence of the fallen spirits, who enslave him. Unbelievers and sinners are the very material, the very army, that the devil uses to spread temptation and evil in human society and to establish his kingdom of darkness. His kingdom, like a raging sea, surrounds us on all sides and threatens our salvation.

In contrast, the Lord Jesus Christ established His Kingdom of Light on earth—the Church—where the believer finds a peaceful haven, a safe refuge, and protection from evil spirits. Indeed, even the very act of entering the Church during the sacrament of Baptism is accompanied by special invocatory prayers that the priest recites over the catechumen (one preparing for baptism):

“O Living One, Lord and Master, You who have freed this servant of Yours from the bondage of the enemy, receive him into Your Heavenly Kingdom... Unite him with the life of a bright angel, who delivers him from all the wiles of the enemy, from encountering the wicked one, from the demon of midday, and

from wicked dreams. Cast out from him every deceitful and unclean spirit hiding and dwelling in his heart—the spirit of delusion, the spirit of deceit, the spirit of idolatry and every lust, the spirit of falsehood and every impurity, acting under the devil’s influence. And make Your servant a sheep of the holy flock of Your Christ, an honorable member of Your Church, a sanctified vessel, a son of light, and an heir to Your Kingdom.”

Then, through threefold immersion in water, the newly baptized is cleansed of the defilement of sin, which gave the devil access to him, and is clothed with the grace of God, which, like a bright robe, covers him on all sides (1 Pet. 2:9; Col. 1:12–13). From this moment on, the new member of the Church, in a figurative likeness to the Savior, enters the *sheepfold*, which He, the Good Shepherd, vigilantly guards against *ravenous wolves*—the devil and other fallen spirits. The Savior said of this: “*I give them (the believers) eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand*” (John 10:1–16, 28). Therefore, all that a baptized person needs to remain under the Lord’s protection is to avoid sin and preserve the grace of the Holy Spirit that has been bestowed upon them.

But the devil, having lost access to a new member of the Church, begins to look for new ways to influence him again. He tries to achieve this with his usual weapon—temptations. Of course, a Christian receives from God all the necessary means to resist temptations, but if he becomes complacent and begins to live a carnal life, sinning, then the devil regains access to him and begins to enslave him with even greater cruelty. The Lord Jesus Christ said about this: “When an unclean spirit comes out of a person, it wanders through arid places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean, and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they enter and dwell there; and the final condition of that person is worse than the first” (Matt. 12:43–

45). Warning us of this danger, Scripture calls us to be vigilant: “*Let anyone who thinks they are standing firm take care not to fall*” (1 Cor. 10:12). The Apostle Paul teaches that a Christian must consider themselves a soldier of Christ, standing in the midst of battle.

“My brothers,” he urges, “be strengthened in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil; for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. For this reason, take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to stand firm on the evil day and, having done everything, to stand firm” (Eph. 6:10–13).

The Lord Jesus Christ has equipped us with a number of means that draw God’s grace to us and repel evil spirits. These include, first of all, **prayer** and **calling upon the name of Christ**. We are taught to ask our Heavenly Father daily: “*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (the devil)*.” Many prayers, such as the morning and evening prayers, contain petitions for protection from the devil’s schemes (see the prayer book). At the end of this chapter, the reader will find several special prayers against evil spirits. Regarding the power of His name, the Lord said: “*In My name you will cast out demons*” (Mark 16:19). Scripture and the lives of the saints provide countless examples of the effectiveness of the name of Christ in casting out demons.

The Church’s centuries-old experience confirms that demons cannot withstand the image **of the Holy Cross or the sign of the Cross**—they are to demons what fire is to insects. St. Nikita Skifatos says on this subject: “Demons often disturb the soul’s peace and rob it of sleep, but a courageous soul, through the life-giving image of the Cross and the invocation of the name of Jesus Christ, with God’s help, shatters their phantoms and puts

them to flight” (Dobrotolyubie, vol. 2, p. 118). Similarly, St. John Chrysostom explains: “One must not merely trace the sign of the Cross with one’s fingers, but do so with a sincere heart and complete faith. If you make this sign on your face in this way, not a single unclean spirit will be able to approach you, seeing that sword by which it was pierced and received a mortal wound. For if we look with trepidation upon the places of execution of criminals, imagine how terrified the demons are when they see the weapon with which Christ destroyed all their power and cut off the head of the serpent. “When the Cross is with us, then demons are no longer frightening or dangerous” (Discourses on the Gospel, Vol. 2, 5th ed., pp. 432–433). From the most ancient times, it has been customary for Christians to wear a small cross around their necks.

It is also important **to consecrate your home**. Sometimes the house we have moved into may have been defiled by its previous occupants if they lived sinfully, used foul language, indulged in loud music and inappropriate movies, or practiced the occult. It is not uncommon for evil spirits to take up residence in homes where a murder or suicide has occurred. To purify your home, you should sprinkle it with holy water while reciting the appropriate prayers (see below), or better yet, invite a priest to bless the apartment.

In general, it is important to remember that demons are attracted to **sin**. If, after sinning, we have not repented with all our hearts, this gives demons access to us. A sinful state is like a tunnel through which they penetrate our subconscious and influence us. Therefore, to rid ourselves of their influence, we must purify ourselves through sincere **repentance and confession**, after which we should reverently **receive** the Holy Mysteries of Christ. Then, upon entering us, the Lord, like a consuming fire, will destroy all impurity and cut off the access of dark spirits to us. It is good to train ourselves to receive Communion regularly, at least once a month; then we will constantly carry within us the fire of God’s grace. The Christians of the early centuries received Communion every Sunday.

All these means that the Lord Jesus Christ has given us for salvation and to draw His grace should be viewed not as magical formulas, but as **channels** of God's mercy, given to us to strengthen our faith and to confirm us in a virtuous life.

Here are a few prayers against unclean spirits.

Troparion to the Life-Giving Cross

Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance; grant victory to the Orthodox Christians over their enemies, and preserve Your people with Your Cross.	Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance. Grant Orthodox Christians victory over their enemies and protect those who belong to You with Your Cross.
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Prayer to the Holy Cross

(to be read before sleep)

May God arise, and may His enemies be scattered; may those who hate Him flee from His presence. As smoke vanishes, so may they vanish; as wax melts before the fire, so may the demons perish before those who love God and make the sign of the Cross. Rejoice, all-honorable and life-giving Cross of the Lord, which drives away demons by the power of Christ crucified upon you, who descended into hell and trampled the power of the devil, and who gave us Your honorable Cross to drive away every adversary. O glorious and life-giving Cross of the Lord, help me, together with the Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and all the saints, for ever and ever. Amen.

Psalm 90

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide under the shadow of the God of heaven. He will say to the Lord, “You are my shield and my refuge, my God; in You I trust.” He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the destructive word. He will shield you with His shoulders, and under His wings you will find safety. His truth will be your shield. You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that ravages at noon. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand—but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your own eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. For you have said, “The Lord is my refuge.” You have made the Most High your dwelling place. No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling. For He has commanded His angels to guard you in all your ways. They will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the asp and the viper; you will trample the lion and the serpent. Because he has trusted in Me, I will deliver him and protect him, for he has come to know My name. I am with him in his distress; when he calls upon Me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and honor him; I will satisfy him with a long life and show him My salvation.

Prayer Against Demonic Schemes

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, who struck down the ancient serpent with the cross and bound him in the chains of darkness in Tartarus, protect me from his wiles. Through the prayers of our Most Pure Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, the Holy Archangel Michael and all the Heavenly Hosts, the Holy Prophet and Forerunner John, the Holy Evangelist John the Theologian, the Holy Martyr Cyprian and the Martyr Justina, Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, Saint Nikita of Novgorod, Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco the Wonderworker ... and all the saints, by the power of the life-giving Cross and through the intercession of my

Guardian Angel, deliver me from evil spirits, from deceitful people, from sorcery, curses, the evil eye, and from every slander of the enemy. By Your almighty power, preserve me from evil, so that, illuminated by Your light, I may safely reach the peaceful haven of the Kingdom of Heaven and there give You, my Savior, eternal thanks, together with Your begotten Father and Your all-holy and life-giving Spirit. Amen.

In the appendix, the reader will find two more incantatory prayers that the priest recites on special occasions.

The Kingdom of Satan at the threshold of fiery Gehenna

Scripture predicts that before the end of the world, the activity of fallen spirits will intensify greatly. In those days, many people, having lost their faith, will become involved in the occult and openly serve demons. Out of compassion for those perishing, the Lord will try to bring sinners to their senses through various calamities, but most of them will become as if blind and deaf, *“and they will not repent of their murders, nor of their sorcery, nor of their sexual immorality, nor of their theft”* (Rev. 9:21).

That will be the time when Satan, who had until then been restrained by the power of the risen Christ, will for a short time be granted a certain degree of freedom to deceive those who have turned away from God. In chapter 20 of the Book of Revelation, the entire period from Christ’s resurrection to the end of the world is symbolically designated as a thousand years. In a prophetic vision, the Apostle John saw “an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key to the Abyss and a great chain in his hand. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And he cast him into the Abyss, shut him up, and sealed it over him, so that he might no longer deceive the nations until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be released for a short time... And he will go out to deceive the nations...” (Rev. 20:1–8). According to the Holy Fathers, *“the binding of the dragon”* refers to the time of Christ’s resurrection, when Satan lost his former power over sinners, who had been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and found himself restricted, *“bound,”* in his activity in the world. *The thousand years* encompass the entire period from Christ’s resurrection to the time before the end of the world, when Satan, taking advantage of people’s apostasy from the faith, will once again gain power over them—but for a very short time. Then, according to the symbolic vision in the Book of Revelation, his spirits, like hellish locusts, will, as it were, fill the very atmosphere that people breathe—that is,

they will permeate every aspect of social life: “And smoke went up from the bottomless pit, like the smoke from a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke from the pit. And out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and they were given power like that of earthly scorpions ... And they had as their king the angel of the Abyss [the devil], whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon (the Destroyer) ... “Woe to those who dwell on the earth, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time left!” (Rev. 9:2–2, 11, 12:12).

Eager to destroy as many people as possible, the devil will transfer all his power *to the Antichrist* (the world ruler and enemy of Christianity), “*whose coming is by the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders*” (2 Thess. 2:9). His chief assistant, *the False Prophet*, will deceive people with various false miracles and “*perform great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of everyone*” (Rev. 13:13). These will, of course, not be true miracles, but various sophisticated tricks performed with the help of unclean spirits (Rev. 16:14).

These will be times of exceptionally severe persecution of believers. Because of humanity’s unbelief and corruption, the Antichrist will be permitted “*to make war against the saints [believers in Christ] and to conquer them*” (Rev. 13:7). But this will be only an outward and apparent success. The Church itself will remain unshaken, as the Lord promised: “*I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*” (Matt. 16:18). Under the Antichrist, it will merely go underground.

But the very success of the devil in those days will foreshadow his imminent and final destruction. Finally, the ancient prophecies will be fulfilled: “On that day the Lord will strike with His heavy, great, and mighty sword the leviathan, the straight-running serpent, and the leviathan, the winding serpent, and He will slay the sea monster” (Isa. 27:1). John the Theologian, the mystic, saw in a prophetic vision how “the beast [the Antichrist] was seized, and with him the false prophet who had performed signs before him ... and both, still alive, were cast

into the lake of fire burning with brimstone... After this... the devil, who had deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev. 19:20, Rev. 20:10).

Such is the complete and utter destruction of the proud Morning Star, the spirits who fell with him, and their entire dark kingdom! With their casting into Gehenna, all temptations, violence, lies, and every kind of evil in the world will come to an end, and the eternal bliss of the saved will begin. This joyful time is drawing near, but we must be especially vigilant in our devotion to Christ and compel ourselves to burn with faith, lest we be swept away by the torrent of temptations that Satan will direct against humanity on the eve of his complete defeat. *“To the one who conquers, I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, just as I also conquered and sat down with My Father on His throne”* (Rev. 3:21).

Conclusion

Thus, the devil and demons are real, not imaginary, beings who pose a great and constant danger to us. Although they have no power over those who believe in Christ, they nevertheless exploit people’s sinfulness to enslave them and drive them to commit various crimes. Therefore, we must guard against sin in every way and strive to live righteously and holy lives. We must remember that fallen spirits are very skilled at deceiving people and possess vast experience. They devote all their time and effort to leading us away from the Lord and destroying us. The Lord limits their activity and protects us from their schemes. However, He allows them to tempt us for our own spiritual benefit, so that we may not be lazy but live vigilantly and grow spiritually.

The Lord Jesus Christ has given us powerful means to repel evil spirits: His Name, prayer, the Cross, holy water, and especially Holy Communion. Let us make use of these means and live for the good until we reach the peaceful haven of the Kingdom of Heaven! Amen.

Prayers Against the Slander of Evil Spirits

Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel, the Mighty Warrior

O Lord, Great God, King without beginning! Send Your Archangel Michael to help me, Your servant, that he may deliver me from my enemies, both visible and invisible!

O Lord's Archangel Michael! Pour out the balm of mercy upon Your servant (name).

O Archangel Michael of the Lord, crusher of demons! Hinder all enemies who fight against me, render them powerless, and scatter them like dust in the blast of a strong wind. O Great Archangel Michael of the Lord, six-winged, first Prince and Commander of the Heavenly Hosts—the Cherubim and Seraphim! O wondrous Archangel Michael! Be my helper in all things—in grievances, sorrows, and griefs; in deserts, at crossroads, on rivers, and on the seas—be my peaceful refuge! Deliver me, great Archangel Michael, from every devilish deception, when you hear me, a sinner, praying to you and invoking your holy name. Then hear my prayer and hasten to my aid. O great Archangel Michael! Defeat all who attack me by the power of the Lord's precious and life-giving Cross, through the prayers of the Most Holy Theotokos, the Holy Apostles, Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, Saint Andrew the Fool for Christ's sake, and Saint Elijah the Prophet, the Holy Great Martyrs Nikita and Eustathius, the Venerable Fathers, the Holy Hierarchs, the Martyrs, and all the holy Heavenly Hosts. Amen.

O great Archangel Michael! Help me, a sinner. Deliver me from earthquakes, storms, floods, fire, the sword, a senseless death, from all evil, from human malice, and from all the wiles of unclean spirits—deliver me, O great Michael, Archangel of the Lord, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer Against Witchcraft

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, protect me with Your holy angels, through the prayers of the All-Pure Lady, our Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, by the power of the Honorable and Life-Giving Cross, through the prayers of Your holy archangel Michael and the other incorporeal heavenly powers, Your holy prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John, Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist, the Theologian; the Holy Martyr Cyprian and the Martyr Justina; Saint Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, the Wonderworker; Saint Leo, Bishop of Catania; Saint Nikita of Novgorod; Saint Joasaph of Belgorod, Saint Mitrophan of Voronezh, the Venerable Sergius, Abbot of Radonezh, the Venerable Zosima and Savvatiy of Solovki, the Venerable Seraphim of Sarov, the Wonderworker, the Holy Martyrs Vera, Nadezhda, Love, and their mother Sophia, the holy martyr Trifon, Saint John of Shanghai the Wonderworker, the holy blessed mother Xenia, Saint the righteous John of Kronstadt the Wonderworker, the holy and righteous God-bearers Joachim and Anna, and all Your saints—help me, the unworthy one, deliver me from all the enemy's slanders and from every evil—envy, witchcraft, sorcery, magic, and wicked people—so that they may not cause me any harm.

Lord, preserve me with the light of Your radiance in the morning, at noon, in the evening, and throughout my coming sleep. By the power of Your grace, turn away and remove from me every evil wickedness that acts at the devil's instigation. And if any evil is planned or done against me, cast it back into the underworld. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer to the Holy Martyr Cyprian

O holy servant of God, holy martyr Cyprian, swift helper and intercessor for all who turn to you! Accept this praise from us, the unworthy. Intercede for us before the Lord God: strength in our weaknesses, comfort in our

sorrows, and all that is beneficial for our lives. Lift up your powerful prayer to the Lord, that He may protect us from falling into sin, that He may teach us true repentance; may He deliver us from the devil's captivity and from every work of unclean spirits, and subdue all who wrong us. Be our strong defender against all our enemies, both visible and invisible; grant us patience in temptations. At the hour of our death, grant us intercession against our tormentors in the trials of the air; may we, guided by You, reach the heavenly Jerusalem and there, in the Kingdom of Heaven, together with all the saints, be deemed worthy to glorify and sing praises to the most holy name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

Appendix

A priest's prayer over a dwelling plagued by evil spirits.

Lord God, our Savior, Son of the Living God, borne upon the cherubim and existing above every beginning, authority, power, and dominion! You are great and awesome to all who surround You. You are the One who, by Your might, spread out the heavens like a vault, created the earth, and wisely rule the universe. You move the earth from its place; You speak to the sun—and it does not rise—and You limit the stars in their radiance (Job 9:7). You rebuke the sea and dry it up. By Your wrath, the rocks crumble, and all principalities and powers tremble. You have broken the gates of bronze and shattered the chains of iron. You have bound the mighty one and plundered his vessels. By Your Cross You have cast down the tormentor, and with the “fishing rod” of Your Incarnation You have caught the serpent, binding and confining him in the darkness of Tartarus.

You, O Lord, are the strong wall of all who hope in You; cause all devilish schemes, satanic plots, and every enemy's slander to retreat, be driven away, and turn to flight. And cast out from this house all oppressive and tormenting spirits wandering around it. Protect all who call upon Your blessed name and bear the sign of Your Cross, which is a terror to demons. For You, O Lord, cast out a legion of demons and freed the deaf-mute from the demon, commanding it not to return to him. You have destroyed the camp of our unseen enemies, and You have endowed the faithful who seek You with wisdom, saying to them: *“Behold, I give you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall harm you”* (Luke 10:19).

Preserve, then, O Lord, all who dwell in this house from every harm and temptation, from the terrors of the night, from the arrow that flies by day, from the plague that walks in the darkness, and from the pestilence that ravages at noon. May all Your servants, both men and women and infants, rejoicing in Your help and protected by the angelic host, sing to You with one voice, “ ”: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear—what can man do to me?” And again: “I will not fear evil, for You are with me.”

For You, O God, are my strength. You are the mighty Lord, the Prince of Peace, and the Father of the age to come, whose Kingdom is an eternal kingdom. And to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and the All-Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages, amen.

The Exorcism Prayer of St. Basil which the priest recites over one suffering from demons

God of gods and Lord of lords, Creator of the fiery hosts, Maker of incorporeal powers, and Architect of all things in heaven and on earth, Whom no man has seen or can see, before Whom all creation trembles. You cast down to earth the archangel who once became proud, and confined him to the depths of the underworld along with the angels who rebelled with him, who through their malice became demons. Grant that this incantation, performed in the name of Your awesome Name, may be a terror to the prince of evil and to all the spirits allied with him—

who were cast down with him from the heavenly light—and put him to flight; command him to depart from here and cause no harm to those now being sealed with the Holy Cross. May these Your servants, by Your command, receive the seal of strength to tread upon serpents, scorpions, and all the forces of the enemy.

For Your name—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is exalted by every breath, and is sung and glorified with fear, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

A Warning to Exorcists

Based on an article by Professor Alexei Osipov of the Moscow Theological Academy.

Just as no one without the necessary knowledge and precautions should treat dangerous infections, so too should no one presumptuously take on the role of an exorcist (a professional expeller of demons). Demons are extremely cunning and vengeful, and a person who engages them in battle, unless armed with deep faith, humility, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, may pay a very heavy price.

It is likely for this reason that the Council of Laodicea (364) decreed: “Those not authorized by the bishops must not perform exorcisms either in churches or in homes” (Canon 26). The Venerable John Cassian of Rome warns self-proclaimed miracle workers: “Whoever desires to command unclean spirits, or to miraculously restore health to the sick, or to display any of the wondrous signs before the people—such a one, though invoking the name of Christ, is alien to Christ, since, in haughty pride, he does not follow the Teacher of humility... That is why our fathers never called those monks good or free from the contagion of vanity who wished to be known as exorcists...” [1]

The “Apostolic Constitutions” (3rd century) prohibit the ordination of exorcists, explaining that “the glorious feat of exorcism is a work of God’s voluntary favor and grace through Christ, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; for the one who has received the gift of healing demonstrates, through revelations from God, that the grace within him is evident to all.” [2].

The Orthodox Church has always followed the Savior’s teaching that *“this kind can be driven out only by prayer and fasting”* (Matt. 17:21)—that is, by a proper ascetic life, through which a Christian, as he grows in humility, attains dispassion and receives from God the gift of victory over evil spirits. Only one who has attained dispassion is capable of entering into open battle with the spirits of darkness without harm to the sick or to himself.

However, even in ancient times such individuals were few and far between [3], and there is no need to speak of the present time. Therefore, a priest—even the most pious one—who presumes to cast out (rebuke) evil spirits on his own through special prayers and sacred rites (“ex opere operato”) risks not only exposing himself to their mockery but also plunging the possessed person into even greater illness and suffering. Without the gift of the Holy Spirit, one cannot create the appearance of His gift at work. Saint Ignatius bitterly exclaimed regarding such attempts: “Soul-destroying theatrics and a most sorrowful comedy—elders who assume the role of the ancient holy Elders without possessing their spiritual gifts” [4].

There were saints who cast out demons—but not from just anyone, only from those whom the Lord Himself pointed out to them. At the same time, they healed “simply” through prayer—mostly internal, invisible to others, and less often external (see, for example, the prayers of Saints Basil the Great and John Chrysostom)—by performing the sacraments of Penance, Chrismation, and the Eucharist, but without any special incantatory ritual sequence [5], since such a sequence is already performed over all believers before the sacrament of Baptism and is part of their act of conscious renunciation of Satan and all his works.

Here are a few statements by the Holy Fathers on this matter.

In a letter attributed to **St. Clement of Rome**, “On Virginity,” ascetics are instructed to “...visit those possessed by evil spirits and offer prayers for them. Let them cast out demons through fasting and prayer—not with flowery, carefully chosen, or refined words, but as men who have received the gift of healing from God.”

Abba **Pitirion** “spoke with particular force about discerning spirits, saying that certain demons watch over our passions and often turn them toward evil. Therefore, my children,” he told us, “whoever wishes to cast out demons must first **subdue the passions**: for whatever passion one overcomes, that demon will be cast out. Little by little, you must subdue your passions in order to cast out the demons of these passions” [6].

In the Discourses “On the Divine Gifts” by the Venerable **John Cassian the Roman**, we find the following: “A person given over to obvious vices may sometimes perform amazing deeds and therefore be honored as a saint and a servant of God... and even the one who is confident that he possesses the gift of healing, puffed up with pride of heart, experiences the most grievous fall. Hence it happens that demons, crying out the names of people who possess no qualities of holiness and no spiritual fruits, pretend that their holiness is burning them and that they are forced to flee from those they have possessed” [7].

The Venerable **Barsanuphius the Great**: “It is not good to pray earnestly for healing without knowing what is good for you” [8]. He also said: “It is not fitting for everyone to resist the devil, but only for those who are strong in God, to whom the demons are subject; but if anyone who is weak resists him, the demons mock him, saying that, though he is under their power, he resists them. Likewise, commanding them is the work of great men who have authority over them. How many of the saints have rebuked the devil, like the Archangel Michael, who did so because he was about to fall? As for us, the weak, all that remains is to take refuge in the name of Jesus” [9].

When asked to pray for a man possessed by a demon, the Venerable **John the Prophet** replied: “Let him fast and pray as much as he can; then those who pray for him will be heard, for *‘the fervent prayer of a righteous person is powerful’*” (James 5:16), and the Lord said, *‘This kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting’*” [10].

The Venerable **Isaac the Syrian** on arguing with demons: “For you go out to teach those who are already six thousand years old. And this (your insolent argument) serves as a weapon for them, with which they can strike you down, despite all your wisdom and all your prudence” [11].

Blessed **Theophylact of Bulgaria**: “Those who have been freed from demons become even worse afterward if they do not reform” [12].

Bishop **Ignatius (Bryanchaninov)**: “Remember in your prayers the suffering D., who has been delivered over to Satan by God’s providence, that her spirit may be saved... Spiritually speaking, such a punishment from God by no means reflects poorly on a person: many great saints of God were subjected to such delivery into Satan’s hands... Possession is far less serious than accepting any hostile thought that could destroy the soul forever” [13].

The statements of the saints cited above eloquently testify to their attitude toward the issue of healing the possessed—an issue of such great importance to our people.

Exorcism is a phenomenon of the same spiritual order as the so-called Pentecostalism, Charismatic movement, “New Age” movement—which are now widespread throughout the non-Orthodox West—and, in secular circles, so-called extrasensory perception. All of this cripples both the souls and bodies of people.

A magical perception of worship is one of the main causes of the degeneration of the Christian religion and its distortions, as well as the rise of paganism, especially atheism, occultism, and Satanism.

Footnotes in the article on exorcism.

1. St. John Cassian the Roman. Writings. Moscow, 1892. p. 445.
2. For more on this: Uspensky, N.D. "The Byzantine Liturgy" // Theological Works. Vol. 21. p. 31.
3. Gregory of Sinai (14th century), writes St. Ignatius Bryanchaninov, "dared to say that in his time there were no men of grace at all, so rare had they become... All the more so in our time must the one who prays exercise the utmost caution. We have no God-inspired mentors!" (Bishop Ignatius (Bryanchaninov). Works. St. Petersburg, 1905. Vol. 1. p. 274).
4. Ibid. p. 72.
5. Numerous examples of this could be cited. See one of them in The Life of the Venerable Hieroschemamonk Hilarion of Optina (Published by the Vvedenskaya Optina Hermitage, 1993, p. 190).
6. Lavsaik. Moscow, 1992. pp. 126–127.
7. St. John Cassian the Roman. Op. cit., p. 440.

8. The Holy Fathers Barsanuphius the Great and John: A Guide to the Spiritual Life in Answers to the Questions of Disciples. Diveevo, 1994. p. 263. Question 381.
 9. Ibid. p. 223. Question 301.
 10. Ibid. p. 416. Question 673.
 11. St. Isaac the Syrian. Ascetic Discourses. Moscow, 1993. p. 137. Discourse 30.
 12. Blessed Theophylact of Bulgaria. Commentary on Matthew 12:43–45.
 13. St. Ignatius (Bryanchaninov). Collection of Letters. Moscow, 1995. pp. 217–218.
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