

DAIMON

The word "devil" in the English version of the New Testament is also used to represent the original word *daimon*; and the translation is tainted with the theory of the translators concerning disembodied spirits, or ghosts. We can the more boldly say this now, since the Revision has exposed the same weakness in the use of the word "hell" for two words in the original-Gehenna and *hades*. 'While the modern leaders still hold to the ancient theory of disembodied spirits, they have made such changes in their belief as the result of superstition giving place to education that they have no longer any use for disembodied spirits for the purpose supposed to be involved in the New Testament account of demons. The prevalent idea in the days of Jesus was that diseases were produced by "spirits." Blindness, dumbness, insanity, etc., were all the work of "spirits" possessed by the unfortunate victims: but now religious leaders know better, and are able to dispense entirely with such "spirits" in accounting for the same diseases. With the ancient mythologists "spirits" were essential in accounting for diseases; now they are not; therefore their existence is no longer necessary. If it is superstition to believe now as in the past that diseases are inflicted by disembodied spirits, may it not be superstition also to believe in the existence of such spirits? The supposed utility of their existence having been seen to be a delusion, why retain them without any thing for them to do in the line of employment in which they were once supposed to be engaged?

Our language is full of words of heathen origin; but such words no longer mean what they did on the lips of a heathen. Our meaning is well understood now when we call an insane person a "lunatic," without retaining the theory that the person is moonstruck. One using the word "lunatic" would not thereby be committed to the ancient theory. So with our use of the names of the days of the week, as well as many names of diseases, for example, "St. Anthony's fire," "St. Vitus dance." We accommodate ourselves to the phraseology of our times without being held to the original meaning thereof.

Now what is permissible in our times in this respect was also so in the days of Jesus and His apostles. When a disease was miraculously cured, the act was described in the language of the times. Then as now, some held the heathen view, others the reasonable and truthful view. The words "soul" and "spirit" are used to-day by some wrongfully, by others rightfully; and the latter cannot be held responsible for the former. So with the words *daimon* and *demoniac* in the days of Jesus. Suppose we transfer the phraseology of those times down to our own times and use it in the description of curing diseases, would not the *facts* be precisely the same? The use of the words now would no more make the cure of disease a literal casting out of demons or "spirits" than the use of the words then and vice versa. The facts represented by the words are what we must seek to find, and not stumble over the words into the delusions generally associated with them. The following quotation from "Yate's History of Egypt" will illustrate the truth in this matter very clearly:

"It would seem that the same diseases prevailed then in Syria and Egypt as now, and the various practices adopted by the people concerning them have very little changed during a period of nearly two thousand years. Nothing is more common in the present day in the East than to be told that a person has a devil or is possessed of a devil; and the expression is applied more or less to *every complaint*. I had occasion to notice this immediately on my arrival in the country.

I have known the Rev. Mr. Wolff ridiculed for stating that one evening when he was passing between Jerusalem and Cairo he "cast out a devil in the wilderness;" but I can only suppose he used the expression in the sense alluded to, and that he merely employed the native idiom. I have often been applied to myself in Syria and other parts to cast out a devil; by which I merely understood that I was to cure the bodily ailments of the individuals-not that

I was expected to perform a miracle on the occasion, further than that the cure of every disease is ascribed by the natives to talismanic influence.”

Now let us examine, for example, the first instance in the New Testament of casting out a demon. In Matt. 9: 32 we read, “As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed of a devil (*dairnonizomenon-being* demonized), and when the devil (*daimonion*) was cast out, the dumb man spake.” What really was the matter with this man? He was dumb; and the very same affliction is the sad lot of many persons today. Shall we say of the dumb of today that they are demonized? Yes, if the word is used to describe dumbness; no, if it is used as meaning that every dumb person is possessed of a “disembodied spirit,” or ghost afflicting the man with dumbness. To “cast out a demon” now, in a similar case, would be to cure the afflicted of dumbness; but a “spirit,” called a “demon” would no more be an entity leaving the cured person than fever would be a “spirit” or “demon” as an entity leaving a person of whom we may say, “Her fever left her.” So when it is said, “He lost his speech,” “he lost his hearing;” or “his speech returned,” “his hearing came back to him.” A comparison of the *facts* in the case will show that it is only a difference in phraseology in different times, in different countries to describe the same *facts*.

The relation of the two words-*diabolos* and *daimon*-may be said to be that of cause and effect. Therefore when the former came into the world, the latter followed; and in the same order they will go out of the world. The Apostle Paul says, “Sin entered into the world,” and when “the sin of the world is taken away,” sin will have gone out of the world. When sin entered, *diabolos* entered, and thereby man’s nature became afflicted with diseases, or we may say, became demonized. When the *diabolos* is destroyed, the demonized condition of the fallen race will cease. No one supposes that when Paul says “sin entered into the world” he meant that sin was a “spirit” or an entity coming from one world to another. So when the “Lamb of God” shall have “taken away the sin of the world,” no one supposes that sin is an entity taken from one world to another. If sin could be said to have entered the world, and yet the statement not mean that an entity entered, then if we call sin *diabolos*, we can say *diabolos* entered; and when sin is destroyed and is no more in the world, *diabolos* will have been destroyed and will be no more in the world. Since the disease of the human family-mortality-is the result of sin, disease may be said also to have entered into the world, and, using the heathen word, we may say that thereby the race became demonized, or became possessed of a demon in the form of mortality. Now the work of the Redeemer is to cast out this demon; and in the casting out of the demon there will no more be a personality or a million personalities than in the coming in.

Now transfer this from the race and the universal affliction of man with the demon of mortality to an individual afflicted with one of the many diseases resulting from a mortal state, and we can say of a certain disease that it entered man and that, when the man is cured, it left the man; or, to change it into eastern phraseology of New Testament times, we would say a demon entered a man, and, when he is cured, a demon was cast out.

If a superstitious person were to say of a certain woman, “She is possessed of seven demons,” that person would have in mind that seven immaterial entities had entered the woman and that they were afflicting her with seven diseases. A more enlightened person might not deem it needful, and indeed might know it would be impossible for the time being, to correct the superstitious idea, and might use the same language, the “seven demons” meaning to him seven diseases. So even now in this western world and in this boasted age of enlightenment some who still hold to the fag ends of heathenism, despite their education and their advantage in the advancement of science, say of a person when he dies, “His soul left him,” meaning that an immaterial, Conscious entity had left him; but the language to one enlightened in the Bible and in true science would mean that the man’s life had gone out or had been extinguished.

A DIFFICULTY

The greatest difficulty in understanding some of the New Testament accounts of casting out demons is the fact that the language sometimes seems to make them appear to speak independently of the person whom they are supposed to possess. Allowing that this difficulty forces the conclusion that the demons were entities and that they actually did speak, the question will arise, Why is the same phenomenon not to be found in similar afflictions today? We may visit an insane asylum and hear much strange talk and see many distressing actions, but all would clearly be the talk and actions of the poor unfortunates who would be distressingly visible and not a word would come from invisible entities, demons or "spirits." Have *facts* changed? Have the "spirits" who talked in times of yore become dumb, or gone off on a journey, while the same diseases still remain to afflict mankind? No one is foolish enough to answer yes. The facts are the same now as then; and therefore the difficulty is in the phraseology only, and it may be removed by a careful consideration of facts, with the mind freed from superstition.

Now let us examine a case where the demons appear to speak. Matt. 8: 28-34 will illustrate all other passages of similar phraseology. Even in this, however, some allowance must be made for coloring on the part of the translators-not necessarily intentional; but because of their holding to heathen demonology. In this passage we have a description of two insane men. They are said to be possessed of demons. Verse 31 says, "So the devils (demons) besought him" etc. If there were no demons there as separate entities or "spirits" how could they talk? Here is the difficulty. But we must not forget that we are in the presence of two *insane* men, and therefore we may not hope to listen to rational speech; but we may expect to hear them speak in accordance with the deluded state of their minds. Even in our day some *men* profess to be incarnations of *women*. What is this, but a delusion (or a fraud) that the disembodied entities of the dead women have entered into these men? One professes to be an incarnation of Christ; another of Elijah, etc. Now it would not be strange if these women-incarnated men should personate the women and use the feminine gender in speaking of themselves; nor if the pretended Christ-incarnate man should try to personate and speak as if he were Christ. It would be consistent with the delusion, but not with reason and facts, and that is all that can be expected in such cases. We have heard of an insane man who supposed himself to be Queen Victoria. It would not be strange if he talked according to his delusion. Now suppose one deluded with the theory that he was not simply one immortal soul inside the body, but that he was many immortal souls--even "legion" [Latin: meaning Regiment]--being, to use modern fashionable language, so many souls "incarnate." Would he not be likely to speak of himself in the plural number? If he believed his plural self guilty and destined to be consigned by the Messiah, whom he recognized in Jesus, to disembodiment and then "torment" (verse 29) would he not be likely, consistent with the heathen theory of transmigration of souls, to beg that his plural spirit-self be allowed transmigration into an herd of swine rather than into the supposed "torment"? It is not to be doubted that those deluded mortals who in our day prate about being "incarnations" of this one and that one, had they the choice between transmigration into a herd of swine and transportation to the hell of "torment" they believe in, they would follow the example of those of their kind in the country of the Gergesenes. In the narrative the possessed are identified with the possessions in the style of the language of the East without stopping to make a radical change, which would have been impossible with those who were so imbued with the spirit of demonology. For the demons to beseech was for the men who supposed themselves a legion of demons to do so, and if when their insanity was transmitted to the herd of swine they supposed the "spirits" had been "transmigrated" into them, to the enlightened then and now the meaning would be clear as to the *facts* in the case. Of course, if it required one "spirit" for every disease, and the insanity of one pig would not result from the possession of another, there must have been as many demons in the two men as there were pigs in the herd of swine--and there were two thousand. But who that is sane would believe such a thing? The only conclusion therefore is that allowance must be made for the language of the

times and circumstances in the case, and that two insane men were restored to their senses, and miraculously the herd of swine which was kept unlawfully, was afflicted with a madness that proved their destruction. Indeed, according to the science of our times all diseases have their germs, which are transmissible from one person to another. And it is surely more reasonable to believe that the germs of insanity were transmitted actually from the insane men to the swine than it is to hold that so many immaterial, immortal disembodied ghosts passed from the one to the other. As to the insane when the cure had been performed it is said of one of the men "he was sitting clothed and *in his right mind*" (Mark 5: 15). In his madness he had torn off his clothes and raved; but now he was sane and acted accordingly. These are facts which show what was done, and are accounted for without the aid of the heathen theory of transmigration or incarnation of disembodied souls of dead men and women.

Before dismissing this part of our subject it may be well to give a short history of demonology, as a means of showing that the popular theory of our times is identical with that of heathenism so far as the existence of departed disembodied spirits is concerned, the very theory to which demonology owes its origin. The absurdities associated with the theory by the ancient Greeks, Romans, and by the Jews after they became idolators, are now ridiculed by people of education, and yet many of them still cling to that which was responsible for those absurdities. The foolish tales told about demons and the attributing of jugglery by the ignorant to their supposed occult powers are no more absurd than is the theory of departed disembodied spirits itself. Perhaps the reading of the short history we are about to give will make this manifest; and the truth of the prediction of the Apostle Paul will be found exemplified in quarters that will be a surprise to many. He declared, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter (later) times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (demons);, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (I. Tim. 4: 1, 2). The "doctrine of demons" is the doctrine of disembodied Spirits, with all its attendant lies and frauds about purgatory, ghosts, apparitions, table rapping, etc. It is all the outgrowth of the immortality of the soul, which originated in the words of the serpent-"Ye shall not surely die; but ye shall be as gods." This doctrine, Gibbon says, the Jews did not believe till they went to Babylon. When Jesus appeared it had so become interwoven in the language of the times that by the use of the language those who did not countenance the theory were forced into circumstances which compelled them to appear as if they did; and we are today in a similar predicament; and we are compelled to express truth in words which originally (and modernly with some) expressed heathen fictions.

The following concise history we quote from the book previously referred to, entitled "The Devil, an Expose":

HISTORY OF DEMONOLOGY

In what sense then, was the word *Daimon* used by the Greek writers? A most extended inquiry by Mr. Farmer has established that the Greek writers used this word to express HUMAN "SPIRITS" of *departed* people. Many such "spirits" of departed human beings the ancients deified and worshipped: and hence the word *daimon* meant to the Greek and those who used their language, *human departed "spirits," raised to the rank of gods and deities.* "Homer calleth all his gods, *daimones*, and Hesiod, *the worthies of the golden age.*" -Leigh's *Critica Sacra*, article *Daimon*. Hesiod maintains, indeed, that whenever a good man dies he becomes a demon: and Plato praises him for the sentiment.

The heathen had two classes of gods: the world, together with all its constituent parts and principles, and the demons. "They conceived the world to be pervaded and animated by a vital and intelligent substance they regarded as a divinity which contained, framed, and governed all things." Farmer on Miracles, p. 107. Cicero expressly asserts-"There is nothing more perfect than the world-it is wise, and, on this account, a god." He further adds, "that, although

a Stoic, he acknowledged that this world is wise, has a mind, which has fabricated both itself and the world, and regulates, moves, and rules all things." Balbus, the Stoic, maintains that "the world is a god, and the habitation of the gods." These were designated as the *natural gods*. Besides these, the heathens maintained that certain "spirits" existed which held a *middle rank* between the gods and men on earth; and, because they were regarded as carrying on all intercourse between the gods and men, as conveying the addresses of men so the gods, and distributing the benefits of the gods to men, they were called, from *dab*, to distribute, *daimones*. The opinion further prevailed that the celestial gods did not themselves interpose in human affairs, but committed the whole management to these *daimones*, and on this account these demons became the great object of religious hope, of fear, of dependence, and of worship.

A further consideration affording very strong evidence that these "demons" meant the "spirits" of departed men" is that the *parentage* and, consequently, the *human* origin of almost all the heathen deities were known and recorded. Philo Biblyus, the translator of Sanchoniathon's History of the Gods, expressly asserts, "That the Phoenicians and Egyptians, from whom other people derived this custom, reckoned those amongst the great gods who had been benefactors to the human race: and that, to them, they erected pillars and statues, and dedicated sacred festivals."-Apud Busch. Preap. Evangelica. lib. I. c. ix, p. 32. Diodorus Siculus states, "That there were two classes of gods, the one eternal and immortal, the other such as were born on the earth and arrived at the titles and honors of divinity on account of the blessings they bestowed on mankind,"-Lib, i and v. This writer describes Saturn, Jupiter, Apollo, and others (the primacy gods of Paganism) as *illustrious* men. Plato remarks. "All those who die valiantly in war are of Hesiod's golden generation. and *become demons*; and we ought forever to worship and adore their sepulchres, as the sepulchres of demons."-Plato de Republica, c. v. 468, tom. ii, editio Serrani. This transference of warlike heroes into gods, and the worship of them, many regard as belonging peculiarly and solely to paganism: but have we not the same things in our day? Do we not *see* statues erected in our streets to those chargeable with legal murder which are raised for the mental worship of our children?-the Wellingtons. the Nelsons, and hosts of others. And with what is the cathedral of our metropolis filled? Is it with the ministers of peace? with the Fenelons, the Oherliris, the Whitfields. the Watts, the Arkwrights. the Townshends. the Bentham's, the Adasn Smiths, the Baikes? No: The interior of Saint Paul's presents, as Mr. Peter Stuart, of Liverpool. after a visit he paid recently to that splendid edifice, remarked. "*an assembly of gladiators*. Add to the look of Imitative admiration a mental worship (bestowed by the young on these gladiators), sonic regular ceremonies, and then there would be no difference between the worship of Hercules and Mars of old. and of the Wellingtons and the Nelsons now.

To return from this digression on modern hero worship. it is apparent that among the Greeks the term *daimon* expressed a "*departed human spirit*, deified. The Greeks held further that these *daimones*. or "departed human 'spirits.'" *had the power of TAKING POSSESSION of other HUMAN BEINGS*, and that they could be *expelled* from these beings so possessed. Hence Lucian, writing respecting an exorcist, *one* who so dispossessed the possessed. remarks: *ekselaunei too doimono* = he expelled the demon (Lucian's Phyllospeudes. P. 338, vol. ii, edit. Amstelodami). Lucian affords, in a dialogue in the works from which the above is a quotation, the view entertained in his day regarding demons. Four parties are introduced in the dialogue; three, Ion, Eucrates. and Diognotus. being believers in demons, and the fourth, Tychiades. who *is* not a believer therein. Ion, after he had given an account of the person who cast out demons, adds that he himself had seen one (that is, a demon) so ejected. 'Many others as well as you,' said Eucrates. "have met with demons (*daimono*), I have a thousand times seen such things." In proof of this assertion, he assures the company that he and his family had often seen the statue of Pelchus descending from his pedestal, and walking round the house-pp. 338-339. In the sequel of the dialogue, Eucrates, who had been

defending the doctrine of apparitions, says, "We have been endeavouring to persuade Tychiades (who sustains the character of an unbeliever in these points) that there are demons (*daimonas tinas einni*) and that the phantasms and souls of the dead wander upon the earth, and appear to whom they please," p. 346. To confirm this sentiment, Diognotus, the Pythagorean, bids Tychiades go to Corinth, where he might see the very house from which he himself expelled the demon (*daimorza*) that disturbed it, which was the ghost of a dead man, p. 348. Hippocrates expressly states that the Greeks referred possession to the gods and the heroes, all of whom were human spirits. He wrote an essay on epilepsy, which was called *hiereus nosas*, the *sacred disease*, because the people believed what the priests taught, that epileptics were possessed: and the priests, the magicians, and the impostors derived a considerable revenue from attempting to cure this disease by expiation's and charms. The essay was written to expose this delusion of his countrymen, he attempting to prove that this disease is-as neither more divine or sacred than any other.

The Latins also entertained the idea that "departed human 'spirits'" sometimes possessed the living. Those so possessed among them were called the Cerriti and the Larvati: the Cerriti from the goddess Ceres, who was supposed to possess them; the Larvati from the laros, gods, who were supposed to be the possessing. The correspondence between the possessing beings, the *lares*, and the *daimones*, Cicero testifies-They whom the Greeks consider *daimones*, we, I consider [call] *lures*. Littleton, in his valuable dictionary, defines the larvn as the souls of the dead, which they elsewhere called *shades*. And Arnobius relates that Varro asserts that the larvae are lares, being, as it were, certain genii and the souls of the departed. And Crito, a learned writer, thus writes: the larvati are denioniacs; the larvae, by which they are possessed, are human ghosts De Crito, vol. i, p. 238). Strabo, who flourished in the time of the Emperor Augustus, calls the goddess Feronia (who was born in Italy) a demon; and says that those who were *possessed with this demon* walked barefoot over burning coals: and Philostratus, who was contemporary with our Saviour. relates "that a demon, who possessed a young man, confessed himself to be the ghost of a person slain in battle" (Strabo, lib., v, p. 364).

Opinions similar to those held by the Greeks and the Latins, were entertained by the Jews. Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, asserts that those called *daioionia* are the "spirits" of wicked men who enter the living, and kill those who receive no help (De Bell. Jud., lih. vu, 2, 6, 3). Very early in the history of the Jews they had become acquainted with the gods of the heathen, and showed a lamentable proneness to adopt the principles and the practices of their superstitious and idolatrous neighbors. The philosophy of the East was greatly studied and admired by the Jews, and they came to regard persons possessed as possessed by the same "spirits" as those which their neighbors regarded as possessing. So strongly was this opinion rooted in their minds and so generally diffused among the people, that when the Saviour cast out *daioionia*. the Pharisees observed, "He casteth out *daimonia* by Beelzebub, the Prince of *Daimonia*" (Matt. 9: 34), a statement at which no astonishment was expressed; which, had not the knowledge of the doctrine of possession by "departed human spirits" been general among the Jews, would have excited astonishment.

Who, then, was this Beelzebub, the prince, not of devils, as the Common Version renders the word, but of *demons*? We read in the Old Testament that one of the kings of Israel, namely, Ahaziah, "sent messengers, and said unto them, Go. inquire of Beelzebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover of this disease?" (II. Kings 1: 2). This Beelzebub was esteemed a god-that is, a deified human "spirit," which "spirit" the Jews, like other nations, believed to possess people. The meaning of the word *zebub* or *zebul* is a fly, the god which the Ekronites worshipped. History informs us that those who lived in hot climates, and where the soil is moist (which was the case with the Ekronites who bordered on the sea), were exceedingly infested with flies. These insects were thought to cause contagious distempers.

Pliny makes mention of a people, who stopped a pestilence which these insects occasioned, by sacrificing to the *fly-hunting god* (Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. x. c, 20 § 40). Influenced by this prejudice, Abaziah, instead of applying to Jehovah God, applied to this god of Ekron for deliverance, or for a knowledge of his state in reference to the disease, which he most likely considered to depend upon the influence of these flies; and that, on this ground, Beelzebub could inform him of the result. (Beelzebub was, most likely, Jupiter, who is described by the Greeks as *mutodes*, the god of flies, and the *muiagros*, the fly hunter). The fact of Ahaziah applying to Beelzebub shows at what an early period the Jews were acquainted with the demonology of the surrounding heathen nations, and how they had adopted the notions regarding the power of these demons; a fact which explains the use of the phrase *daimonion* so frequently in the gospels. The existence of these *daiinones*, as possessing and influencing human beings, was recognized so fully among the Jews, that Josephus, already quoted, who was nearly contemporary with the apostles, dwells much upon the expulsion of demons; he gives an instance of successful expulsion when tried by a Jew in the presence of Vespasian: and further declares, no doubt with the view of elevating the great monarch of the Jews, Solomon, that God instructed Solomon in the *anti-demoniac art*.