

Demons? Come On, Let's Be Reasonable!

Last April Lisa and I, and our daughter Bethany, and our very good friend Bill spent two weeks down in North Carolina with our other daughter Kayla and her husband Ross. While we were there Lisa and Bethany did some pretty deep digging into the private affairs of a very high level satanist. Although I can't prove it, I believe what happened next was related to this. Both Kayla and Bethany came under demonic attack. These attacks came regularly for a while, during our visit and also after we returned home.

I won't take the time to rehearse everything that happened, but I would love to share a couple details that I believe lean in the supernatural direction. Kayla often had the overwhelming sensation that something was on her back, attached somehow to her spine. She was almost panicked at times, crying out "get it off! Get it off!". She said it was speaking into her right ear, and we could actually see that ear (only the right one) turn bright red. One evening, as Kayla came under attack, her legs stopped working. While she stood immobile she suddenly felt like she was kicked in the gut, and was thrown like a rag doll against the wall.

Not long after Kayla's first attack Ross reached out to his pastor and elders, seeking help and advice. This turned out to be a big mistake. From a position of ignorance, with hardly a shred of real investigation into the matter, the pastor hastily made his diagnosis: "this is NOT demonic," and the elders all dutifully submitted to his superior wisdom. He insisted that either Kayla was mentally ill and needed a psychiatric evaluation, or (more likely) that the whole thing was just a charade: that she had colluded with her sister to "act out" as some sort of attention-getting device. He suspected that she had never received enough attention as a child, or that she had been a victim of the wrong type of attention: that she had been sexually abused, probably by me. Again, there was never a single shred of evidence offered. He told Kayla "don't worry, you have our attention. You need not act out any more".

The following Sunday (Easter, incidentally) we were met in the parking lot by a Church security guard, who said that he was under strict orders from the pastor to not let us in. It was his job, the argument went, to ensure the safety of his flock, and he couldn't be sure that Kayla wasn't a danger to them, or that she wouldn't "cause a scene". She was banned from church until further notice.

A young family from the church was scheduled to come over that afternoon for Easter dinner. Even though the pastor told Ross and Kayla that everything they had told him "will not leave this room", he broke his word by warning the young couple that Kayla was mentally ill, and advised them to cancel their dinner plans. They did. He later sent out word to the entire congregation, recommending that they shun Kayla, justifying this much deeper betrayal of confidence by claiming that it was more important that he protect his flock. He recommended that Ross abandon his seminary studies, and that Kayla quit her job, and that if they didn't comply, he might have to "take matter into his own hands". This seemed to carry a particularly threatening undertone, since in North Carolina it is legal for a person to be institutionalized without consent.

Kayla reached out to the pastor she had grown up under back home in Maine, and he was very kind and encouraging. He even contacted the North Carolina pastor in an attempt to smooth out some of the roughness. But he, too, insisted that it was highly unlikely that my girls' attacks had anything to do with demons, and that we should seek a more "reasonable" explanation, like mental illness. He recommended a psychiatric evaluation.

This was not our first encounter with the demonic. Nine years earlier Bethany had been victimized by demons in rather frightening ways, when she was 16 years of age. She was quite seriously ill with Lyme disease and a whole host of other complications. And then, on top of all else, she began cutting herself. Sometimes she would cover her arms and legs and belly with hundreds of lacerations. When I would try to find out why, all she could tell was that "they" wanted her to. It was very difficult for her to explain. She had a hard time even relating who "they" were. They were in her head. She wasn't

hearing them audibly, but the thoughts in her head were foreign intrusions that weren't originating in her own mind. They wanted blood, and they tormented her day and night – especially at night. For several weeks they attempted to convince her to kill our dogs and spread out their blood in particular patterns. She resisted and didn't do it. She also began having serious and frightening seizures and psychotic episodes during which she would twist and writhe, stop breathing, and sometimes lose control of her own arms. Sometimes she would even, against her own will, attempt to choke herself.

Pastors and churchmen were unanimous in their diagnosis: this is not demonic. After all, we need to be reasonable; let's not jump to conclusions; it had to be mental illness, a chemical imbalance, or teenage rebellion, or who-knows-what. Anything, that is, except the most obvious: that it was the work of unseen forces of evil. They would sometimes give lip service to the demonic, but then dismiss it as a practical cause.

Why is it that the very people who have received the most formal training in God's word are so reluctant to recognize and accept the activity of satan in this world? It certainly can't be because Scripture is silent; the Bible has plenty to say. There are numerous accounts in the gospels of people being actively demonized (Mat. 8:28f; 9:32f; 12:22f; 15:22f; Mar. 7:26f; Luke 4:22f; 9:42; etc.); we find in Mat. 17:15 that demons can gain control over the bodies of humans, and also of animals (Mat. 8:32); texts like Mat. 9:32-33, 17:14-18, and Luke 13:11-16 show us beyond a doubt that there is a connection between the activity of demons and physical disability, disease and seizures (even in the lives of spiritual "children of Abraham"); we find in Job 1:16 and Job 1:19 that demons can even control natural forces, like "fire from heaven" (lightning?) and wind. John 14:30 describes satan as "the prince of this world", and II Cor. 4:4 calls him "the god of this world". When a man who was guilty of sexual immorality in the Corinthian church (I Cor. 5:1-5) came under discipline, Paul ordered that he be sent out of the church (back into the world), and clearly described this as his being "handed over to satan" (in the hope that this would bring him to repentance). satan is described as a roaring lion, roaming around seeking whom he may devour (not "tease", or "tickle", or "harass", but devour – I Pet. 5:8).

So far, pastors we've spoken with have unanimously dismissed Kayla and Bethany's attacks as something other than demonic, on the grounds that "children of God cannot be demon possessed". I suppose a case could be made that, since we belong to God, we can't be "possessed" (owned) by demons, but this certainly doesn't mean that we cannot come under attack. Who would we expect satan to launch his fiercest assaults against, if not his most hated enemies (us)? The Lord Jesus indicated that even His closest inner circle of disciples could be influenced by satan (Mark 8:33), and even face serious satanic assault (Luke 22:31). I believe that Paul, that great Spirit-filled apostle who penned much of the New Testament, came under frequent demonic attack (II Cor. 12:7). People love to speculate about the nature of his thorn in the flesh, but it seems to me that the text tells us plainly what it was: a "messenger from satan", or to put it another way, a satanic angel (a demon). I believe that Paul's thorn in the flesh was what the text is telling us: it was a satanic angel that was sent to torment him to keep him humble.

Although this doesn't carry anywhere near the same weight as Biblical exposition, it's also worth noting that some of the church's greatest minds have supported a very robust demonology. The Puritans (grievously misunderstood and mischaracterized in our day) viewed all of human history as a continual spiritual struggle between the kingdom of God and the worldly dominion of satan, while acknowledging that we can claim and enjoy complete victory over the forces of evil, through Christ's authority. Isaac Ambrose wrote in his work "War With Devils": "as spirits, demons can attack us invisibly in any place and at any time". Jonathan Edwards, who correctly saw satan as the master-mind of this world's system, wrote that satan's genius can be attributed to his having been "educated in the best divinity school in the universe, viz. the heaven of heavens" (from his work "True Grace, Distinguished From The Experience Of Devils"). The father of the reformation, Martin Luther, came under demonic attack often. He was even reported to have thrown an inkwell at the offending devil on

at least one occasion.

Yet, even the pastors who most highly esteem the puritans and the reformers are loathe to recognize the full extent of the influence of Satan in our world today, always seeking a more “reasonable” and “scientific” explanation of phenomena. They claim that Martin Luther walked a fine line between genius and madness, and when he rebuked demons and threw inkwells at them, he was crossing that line into the realm of temporary insanity. His attacks couldn’t possibly have come from unseen forces of evil; they must surely have been the result of a “chemical imbalance” in his brain, or some such thing.

God’s word clearly teaches that we wrestle not (ultimately) against flesh and blood. In fact, the spiritual fight is so much more the ultimate one that Eph. 6:12 omits the parenthetical disclaimer. But the Church today too often teaches just the opposite: that we wrestle not (ultimately) against principalities and powers and spiritual forces of wickedness in high places. Sure, they’re out there somewhere, but they aren’t our primary foe. Don’t concern yourself with the demonic. Our real enemy is Planned Parenthood, or the ACLU, or liberals in high national office, or state governors, or amateur criminals, or narcissist control freaks, or the unpleasant gossiping marm at the office, etc. Yes, these are very real enemies of the kingdom of God, but Ephesians 6:12 tells us that they are secondary enemies; our primary foe is the principalities and powers behind them in the spiritual realm.

Why is the Church so often missing this? When something looks like a demon, and sounds like a demon, and smells like a demon, why are we so persistently reluctant to acknowledge that maybe it is, in fact, a demon? Why are we so prone to perform the most outrageous intellectual gymnastics in an attempt to find some naturalistic explanation, rather than simply accepting the obvious?

I think the answer is found here: that we have become good renaissance men; we are more inclined to think like sons and daughters of the enlightenment, and less inclined to think like children of God. We live in the “age of reason”, where “science” and human “rationality” define the parameters of epistemology. (I know, that’s a fancy-sounding word, but it’s not nearly as erudite as it sounds. Epistemology is simply the branch of philosophy that deals with knowledge – how we know what we know). Empiricism (the belief that knowledge can only be justified through sense experience) has become the philosophical foundation of our day, and the Church has unwittingly gone along with it. I would humbly suggest that this is a very grave mistake, both spiritually and philosophically. To turn away from God’s revelation as our only foundation for true knowledge is to commit epistemological suicide, and it is my intention to spend the balance of this essay defending that claim.

I expect I’m in the minority, but I love philosophy. The reason why I love it is because it never fails to drive me right to the throne of God (even atheistic philosophy – by default). I’ve often heard Christians say that philosophy is “worldly”, and therefore should be shunned. I don’t believe this is right, or even possible. To say “philosophy should be avoided” is to make a value judgment that is, itself, philosophical. Certainly Scripture exhorts us to eschew vain humanistic philosophy, in texts like Col. 2:8, but we need to fill the resulting void with God’s revealed truth (in other words, with Godly philosophy). “Philosophy” simply means “love of knowledge”, and this is an apt description of what servants of the Lord are supposed to be: lovers of knowledge – truth seekers (Acts 17:11).

Philosophy has three basic branches: ethics (the nature of what is morally right or wrong), metaphysics (the nature of reality), and epistemology (the nature of knowledge). Since the Bible is the absolute final authority in all three spheres, God’s word is deeply philosophical. And it is equally true that, while theology is necessarily philosophical, true philosophy is unavoidably theological. There is no possibility of possessing objective knowledge unless there exists a transcendent final authority (God) who has revealed Himself to us. How can we know that God exists? Because without Him we cannot know anything else at all.

I know that’s a rather bold claim. Please allow me to attempt to explain. Bear in mind that I’m condensing hundreds of pages of philosophy into a handful of paragraphs. If after reading this you’re not convinced, then be sure that a more elaborate and convincing case can be made.

If I could reduce the history of philosophy into one sentence, it would be this: that it has been man's attempt to find "justified true belief" (Plato's definition of knowledge) from a foundation of human autonomy (with the exception of a flickering bright spot in the Middle Ages). In order for beliefs to qualify as knowledge, they have to actually be true, and we need to know that they are. So the question is, how do we justify them? How can we be sure our beliefs are true?

After the dawn of the Renaissance Period the quest for objective knowledge leaned heavily in the rationalistic direction. The rationalist philosophers (like Gottfried Leibniz, Baruch Spinoza, and Renee Descartes) sought to establish an epistemological foundation on what they called "intuitive first principles". But the problem is this: human intuition is unavoidably subjective. Why should my quest for truth begin with your intuition, and why should your quest for truth begin with mine? With human intuition as its starting point epistemology loses all stability, and objective knowledge is forever lost, adrift in a hopeless sea of subjectivity. If only we had some source of transcendent revelation that tells us that human intuition has epistemological value (for example, that God's law is written on our hearts), then a priori knowledge would be justified. But alas, with a commitment to human autonomy as our philosophical foundation "intuitive first principles" are a dead end.

With the failure of the rationalist experiment, empiricism became the predominant philosophy, and has remained so to this day. Empiricism seeks to find a solid foundation for knowledge on sense experience: "seeing is believing". It is argued that truth can only be verified empirically. (Does this sound familiar? Here we find the origin of the present day "science" cult).

But then along came a well known 18th century Scottish empiricist named David Hume. He showed the world that this seemingly unshakable philosophical edifice is really quite easily shaken, by simply pointing out the very obvious faith-based assumption that it rests upon. It assumes (on blind faith) that there is a necessary connection between our impressions (sense experiences) and reality. This is something that cannot be verified empirically, so empiricism, as a foundational epistemology, refutes itself. In other words, empiricism tells us that truth can only be verified through sense experience, but it tells us this with a proposition that cannot be verified through sense experience. Left to ourselves, we have no framework within which to verify the reliability of our impressions; this is something that must be blindly assumed, and so the epistemological fortress of empiricism crumbles.

A 19th century Prussian philosopher named Immanuel Kant built on Hume's work. He argued, quite correctly, that since the mind is able to condition impressions, there is really no way of knowing whether or not anything we experience truly reflects real reality. We could all be asleep in pods, hooked up to the Matrix, for all we know. He argued that we are all hopelessly bound to a world of phenomena (perceptions) that may or may not be correct interpretations of noumena (the real world). Kant's conclusion was that we Kant know anything for sure (pun intended). In our quest for justified true belief, given a foundation of human autonomy, empiricism is a dead end.

I agree that, from a strictly humanist foundation, Hume and Kant were quite right. The atheist David Hume and the agnostic Immanuel Kant did more to advance the cause of Christian philosophy than most people realize, by killing humanist philosophy with friendly fire.

What we need in order for philosophy to get off the ground is some source of information that transcends human subjectivity, and this source needs to be all-knowing. Hmm. Does anyone have any idea where we might find such a source? Yes; that's right! In the infallible revelation of a transcendent God. There is an omniscient God who has revealed Himself to us, and this presupposition supplies exactly the epistemological foundation that we need. With this as our starting point we can be truth-seekers after all. Ironically, Christianity actually makes sense out of a variation of empiricism, saving it from the ash heap. We can, in fact, trust our senses, and we can know that there is a necessary connection between impressions and reality, because God's Word tells us so (John 20:27; II Pet. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:6). This means, too, that Christianity is not anti-science; in fact, it saves science from philosophical ruin. Since we can know that sense experience is basically reliable (because God tells us

so) therefore induction can commence. True science is simply the pursuit of God through an investigation of His creation.

Empiricism has fathered an impish child named “naturalism” (or sometimes “materialism”). Naturalism is the metaphysical belief that there is nothing more to the nature of reality than the material world that we are introduced to through sense experience – that all there is to reality is matter and energy. According to a naturalistic worldview there is no spiritual realm. Naturalism is, therefore, distinctly atheistic. If there is no spiritual realm, then there is no God, or angels, or satan, or demons; there is nothing more to reality than meets the eye.

This has become the predominant philosophy of our day here in Western Culture. I have already sought to show the epistemological failure of empiricism; well, the apple seldom falls far from the tree. Empiricism’s natural-born son fares no better. It seeks to justify a dogmatic truth claim (that all there is to reality is the material realm) by appealing to ignorance. “I’m not aware of any spiritual realm”, says naturalism, “therefore there is no such thing”. But, of course, ignorance of any particular aspect of metaphysics doesn’t offer the slightest shred of evidence against it. Here is the exact same argument applied to a different case: “I’ve never seen the Eiffel tower, therefore it doesn't exist”.

Despite their blind faith commitment to philosophical naturalism atheists are constantly telling us that they don't have faith, they have reason. Here again, their epistemology falls apart. There can't be any such thing as objective reason unless there are absolute standards, or norms, of rationality within which sound reason must operate. If not, then reason would be entirely subjective. It would be impossible for our thinking to go “off the rails”, unless there are rails to go off from. You could reason your way and I could reason mine, and you could arrive at your own truth, and I could arrive at mine. There would be no such thing as absolute truth; truth would be relative. (Is this sounding familiar?)

To take the argument a step further, there can be no such thing as absolute norms of rationality or laws of logic, unless they are rooted in the very nature of an absolute and personal law-giver who has revealed Himself to us (God). “Sound reason” is only sound insofar as it is consistent with divine ontology. Without a transcendent law-giver there would be no right or wrong way to reason.

So the atheist cannot say “you have faith and I have reason”. Not only does his entire naturalistic worldview rest on a foundation of blind faith, but he also cannot account for the existence of objective reason. The existence of reason depends upon the existence of absolute laws of logic; absolute laws of logic depend upon the existence of God. In other words, rationality cannot escape falling into a hopeless trap of human subjectivity unless there exists a transcendent final authority (God) who defines its parameters for us. The existence of reason depends upon the existence of God. For this reason, the most respectable atheists (in my opinion), like Friedrich Nietzsche, openly admitted that their philosophy reduced to nihilism (a worldview that denies the existence of any absolutes).

“Fine!” says the atheist. “So my worldview reduces to nihilism. Who cares? I'm happy to live in a nihilistic world!”

No, actually you aren't, and you can't. In fact, there is absolutely no possibility that this is a nihilistic world, and deep down you know it. Nihilism is self-refuting. It is impossible to even attempt to make a case against the existence of absolute laws of rationality without your argument depending upon the very laws that it is arguing against. If you don't believe me, then go ahead and give it your best shot. Make your best case against the existence of absolute norms of rationality, but do so consistent with your own nihilistic worldview: use words that are not words (independent of the very first law of logic, the law of identity), or use words that are both words and nonwords at the same time and in the same relationship (independent of the law of noncontradiction), or, if you prefer, use words that are neither words nor nonwords (independent of the law of excluded middle). You can't do it, can you? As soon as you try, you will find that either you are using words that are words, or gibberish (nonwords that are nonwords). You can't use words that are not words. That's because we find ourselves bound to a well-structured reality that is necessarily governed by absolutes that find their origin in the very nature of the unchangeable God of the Bible.

The atheist might object by pointing out that Christian philosophy rests on the presupposition that there is a God who has revealed Himself to us, and that this too requires faith. Of course. We don't deny it. In fact, the Bible has an awful lot to say in favor of faith. So, how is the Christian's philosophy any better than the atheist's? He has his faith, and we have ours, and never the twain shall meet. Our faith isn't any better than his, right?

Au contraire ! Faith is only as valuable as the object in which it is placed. Ultimately, the atheist himself is the object of his own faith. Why does he believe in naturalism? He hasn't the slightest shred of proof that there is no spiritual realm. If you press him hard enough, he will inevitably expose the fact that he just believes it because he believes it. "It's true because I say it is". The atheist, who Kant know anything for sure, is the object of his own faith. This is an empty, meaningless, ineffective faith.

The object of the Christian faith, on the other hand, is an all knowing, all powerful God, who can't be wrong. He is intimately familiar with every detail in every corner of existence (Is. 40:14,26; Mat 10:30; Ps. 69:5; 139:15). Moreover, the object of our faith supplies the necessary preconditions for objective rationality, without which the atheist could not even form an argument against the existence of God. Our's is a faith that cannot not be true (don't miss the double negative). If our faith were not true, then there could be no such thing as objective rationality, yet it is impossible for there to be no such thing as objective rationality. Even while you argue against it your argument is depending upon it. Mr. atheist, the objective reason that you fraudulently attempt to lay claim to cannot exist in your nihilistic world, yet even the exercise of your faith depends upon it. Your faith could not exist if our faith were not true.

I think it's time I steer this essay back to the main point. Thank you for bearing with me for so long. Why is it, when we encounter some manifestation of demonic activity, that pastors and churchmen are so reluctant to acknowledge it for what it is? God's word clearly introduces us to a metaphysical reality that includes spiritual forces of evil that are active and powerful and seeking to destroy us (I Pet. 5:8). So, why are most churchmen so bent on finding some other explanation? Because they have been taken in by the zeitgeist. Atheistic naturalism has invaded the church. How often have we heard them say things like "let's not jump to conclusions; let's not assume this is demonic; let's be reasonable"? But what does this imply? It implies that it would be somehow more reasonable to hold a naturalistic worldview than a Biblical one. Yet, as pointed out above, objective reason depends upon divine revelation. In the name of reason, our churches have steered themselves away from the only sound justification for reason, and instead have begun to build upon the philosophical sinking sands of naturalism.

I'm not saying that every manifestation is necessarily demonic; it is possible that it could be something else, or even a combination of things. We should be discerning. But the problem is this: the church is ruling out the demonic altogether. The church would object: "we're not ruling out the demonic entirely". Yes, actually you are. By reserving it as an absolute last resort you are ruling it out. You will consider the demonic only after all else fails, and the problem is, there is never a case where all else fails. There is always some naturalistic hypothesis that can be dreamed up, like mental illness.

So the church really is not being discerning. They are using atheistic philosophy as the litmus test for truth, instead of God's word. This is not only bad theology, but also bad philosophy, and that is the point that this essay seeks to make. Churchmen say "let's be reasonable", and then they make a truth-judgment that murders objective reason; they say "let's not jump to conclusions", and then they jump to a conclusion that is entirely unreasonable.

This paradigm shift in the church's philosophy is not only epistemically suicidal, but it is also dishonoring of God. And here, I contend, is where we arrive at the very heart of the matter. I don't believe that the rise of atheistic naturalism happened by accident; it was an intentional satanic deception, and it has been satan's intention to dishonor God. Why would satan want to deceive humanity into believing in philosophical naturalism? Because he would like nothing more than for the world to be blissfully ignorant of his existence, so the hidden hand would be free to work its nefarious mischief unnoticed. I have seen plenty of proof of this deception in primary source materials from

freemasonry. Atheists, I hate to break it to you, but you're being laughed at from both sides. It isn't just we Christians who recognize the foolishness of atheism (Ps. 14:1); the satanists are even more derisive.

Naturalism is a satanic deception, and I'm afraid it has proven to be quite effective. The church hasn't wanted to be seen as "unscientific", or culturally irrelevant, so she has cozied up with atheistic philosophy, and in so doing, has played right into satan's scheme. And oh the damage that has been done! The one organization that should be most effectively engaged in the spiritual war of the worlds has given up a significant portion of the fight. The church should be publicly exposing the complex web of deceit that satan has woven over the whole world. The church should be familiarizing itself with the primary source writings of her very well organized enemies. I find it most frustrating that, even though they have been telling us what they're up to, still the church insists on remaining intentionally ignorant. We should know satanic symbols and rituals, and the dates when the rituals are being performed. We should be aware of, and fighting against, the enormous problem of satanic human trafficking. We should stop buying their products and watching their movies and playing their video games. We should be exposing globalist luciferian agendas, rather than pretending they don't exist, or even worse, helping to advance them. It would be perfectly appropriate for these things to find their way regularly into expository preaching; we should be teaching them in our Bible studies and Sunday school classes. Moreover, we should be praying about all these things diligently, openly and specifically, and for those of us who are fighting hard against them. I recently left a church, in part because it was made clear to me that these sorts of prayer requests were not welcome. They weren't even willing to pray for me and my involvement.

When the church invited philosophical naturalism in the front door, satan walked right in along with it, and together they've been making a collaborative effort ever since to nudge the Holy Spirit out the back door. But we can be sure that God will not share his church with satan. As I've said in previous essays, it seems to me that the organization of the church is being shaken hard, but the organism is only being refined. Christ's church will thrive, but this does not necessarily include your particular congregation. A remnant is waking up and rising up and boldly wearing the armor of God. We will not be shaken; we will stand. And what a privilege it is to be a soldier in the army that is committed to this cause. Think about it, fellow soldiers; our commander is the Almighty Lord of Hosts! The Lord Jesus, who loves us and died for us, is leading our phalanx into battle! This is a commander, and this is a cause, for whom and for which I would be honored to lay down my life. Let the sleeping church have it's little playtime Christianity; we will draw the sword and fight the good fight.