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THE ENEMY. – NO. 2.

We have received some questions relative to statements made in an article in the December number under the above heading, which it will be a pleasure to answer, that we may remove misapprehension, though we had hoped that the pointed Scriptures referred to would have been sufficient to meet all objections to the position taken. It seems to be thought by some that the position taken by us leaves our destiny, and the destiny of our children, irrevocably in the hands of the enemy, which, of course, would be an awful thought, and as far from the belief of the writer as it evidently is from the teachings of the Scriptures. Our friends who object to the statement "that he (Satan) is our enemy, and that he is the cause of sickness, pain and death, and ought always to have the credit (?) of it" (blame of it), say nothing about the plain statement in Heb. 2:14, to which we referred, and which we think there is no possibility of explaining away.

If he (Satan) "has the power of death," as the Apostle declares, no amount of cavil will change it, and we must seek for its harmony with other Scriptures without changing it, and must conclude, we think, that sickness and pain are also in his power. Now, let us briefly ask our friends to carefully re-read the article referred to, and compare Scripture with Scripture, bearing in mind the following thoughts: The account in Job to which our attention has been called, beginning with the first chapter, is a statement of a conversation between the Lord and Satan. (Job 1:7-12.) The writer of the book of Job, whoever he was, tells us what the LORD said, what Satan said, and what Job (2nd chap., 10th verse) [R452 : page 2] said. Now, Job evidently knew nothing about the conversation between the LORD and Satan, else he would have known that Satan was afflicting him, and that God had consented to let Satan and the

world, through succeeding generations, know of his (Job's) integrity and faithfulness. Not knowing of the arrangement to prove him, Job attributes it (the evil) to the Lord, though in his devotion he is assured it is for good. His three friends also attribute it to the LORD, but consider it a judgment upon him, while Job claims his justification before the LORD.

Now, the first thing for us to do, in deciding as to the correctness of the position, is to decide as to who afflicted Job. Did not Satan ask the Lord to? (1st chap., 11th verse.) Did the LORD consent to it? Is the 12th verse of the 1st chapter obscure or plain when it says, "ALL that he hath is in thy power"? Then in the 2d chapter, 4th to the 6th verse, Satan is permitted to lay his hand upon Job's person, but, during this transaction, to spare his life. Now, the conclusion, and the only one we can arrive at from the evidence, is that this whole transaction was for the especial purpose of showing the integrity of Job, and of displaying to the world his faithfulness to God. The conviction was rooted deep in the mind of Job that God was his friend, and would in the end protect him, though evil might for a time seem to prevail over him. In this Job was right, and did "not charge God foolishly."

We conclude, also, that Satan cannot afflict God's children beyond what is the penalty for sin, except by especial permission, and that permission will not be given except where it will result in greater good to the subject and greater glory to God, as was this case with Job.

But the good result is not of Satan, but of God, who "will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able." We understand these Scriptures, in harmony with others, to teach that the LORD, in his general dealings with mankind, has permitted or allowed Satan, the adversary, to be the willing medium through which the penalty of sin should be meted out; that, while he "has the power of death"

(Heb. 2:14), it is an under or subordinate power which he has grasped as an usurper – just such a power as Jefferson Davis had during the Rebellion; that in due time God will "destroy him that hath the power of death"; that is, the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Then our children shall come again from the land of "the enemy." (Jer. 31:16.) "Blessed be the name of the LORD."

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