

## THE ADVERSARY'S TACTICS

**"For we are not ignorant of his devices." – 2 Cor. 2:11.**

AS WE PROGRESS toward the consummation of the Harvest, it should not surprise us that in every way the Adversary becomes more persistent in his attacks. Opposition to the Divine Plan of the Ages is on the increase everywhere. Slanderous misrepresentations are so unblushingly made as to carry a measure of conviction with them, to the injury of the Cause we serve.

What Satan cannot do against the Truth along the lines of logic, the Bible and common sense, he seeks to do through slanderous misrepresentations of all who take their stand on the side of Truth; and his opposition is incurred usually in proportion to the activity of the servants of the Truth. This opposition is to them a trial of faith and of patient endurance. It tests their loyalty to God, to the Truth and to the brethren. It becomes, likewise, a test of brotherly love to the household of faith. It does a sifting or separating work. "The Lord your God proveth you." – Deut. 13:3. [R5148 : page 387]

The same line of attack furnishes special trials for the church nominal – both wheat and tares. It gives opportunity for exhibitions of envy, anger, malice, hatred, strife, evil-surmising and evil-speaking. Thus many are being tested and their love of unrighteousness is being shown. "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:20.) The thorn and brier classes, however closely affiliated with religious things, are not Vine branches. They do not bear the fruit of the Vine, but contrariwise are injurious to the Lord's people. "The poison of asps is under their lips." Some of them are courageous enough to make lies; others, less courageous, love the lies and are mean enough to circulate them. The advance of the Day of the Lord will ultimately reveal the true situation. Some will have shame and contempt, while others will shine as the stars forever and ever.

All who have the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness and love – will be tested, too, along these same lines. The Lord's will for such is that they should deepen and broaden their characters along all these lines in proportion as contrary temptations assail them. Thus more and more will they become copies of God's dear Son, and the trials will assist in making them meet, fit for the Kingdom.

### **ACCUSER OF THE BRETHREN**

Another of Satan's devices is to discourage the Lord's faithful disciples who are seeking to know and to do His will. The more conscientious they are, the more subject they will be to Satan's suggestions of unworthiness, rejection, condemnation, Second Death. God permits this as a test or trial to faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." To be developed, faith must be tried with opposition. The more our faith is developed, the more pleasing in the Father's sight we shall be. He would have our faith in Himself implicit, unwavering.

The Adversary, on the contrary, would destroy our faith. Sometimes he attempts this by misrepresenting God's character as unloving, unjust, unkind, and sometimes by exaggerating our weaknesses and failures, to cause us to cease striving for the goal of Divine approval. He would have us give up in despair.

Persons who have been obsessed by evil spirits tell plainly that first of all the spirits personated God and His angels, advised prayer, etc. Afterwards they gave evil suggestions. By and by they gave both good and evil suggestions. The evil suggestions entertained, they would next condemn the individual for having entertained them. Finally all pretense would be dropped, and the individual would be told that he had sinned away all Divine favor and was wholly at the mercy of the evil spirits. Then would come suggestions of evil deeds or of suicide, the endeavor being made to drive the individual to a full surrender of his mind, his will, in order to full possession and mental unbalance.

The only remedy for persons in such a deplorable condition is that they exert their will power to oppose all such false suggestions. Nothing is so helpful under such circumstances as correct knowledge of the Divine teaching respecting God's Love and the abundance of His merciful provision in Christ. Persons in this condition should be encouraged to cast themselves fully and unreservedly at the foot of the cross in the spirit of their minds – in fullness of consecration. Then in proportion to their faith they may lay hold upon the Lord in prayer for complete deliverance from the Adversary's power. We know of no other way to get rid of the evil spirits.

There are also cases where the obsession has taken place and where the Adversary seems to be able to exercise an evil influence upon the mind, causing doubt, fear, alienation from the Lord. Generally "sin lieth at the door" – some violation of the soul's covenants with the Lord. Such are in danger of great gloom, loss of faith, trust – everything. The cure for their case is a knowledge of God's real character – His great Love and sympathy exercised through the Lord Jesus Christ and made available through Him to all who give their lives in full consecration.

Faith should triumph, or the light of joy and blessing will die. "According to your faith be it unto you," is the Divine rule. Those who will not exercise the faith will never be acceptable to the Father for membership in the Kingdom class. Such must wait for the next Age and have different experiences. The Little Flock, the Elect ones whom the Lord is now choosing, must all be faith-*full*.

### **"THE WICKED ONE TOUCHETH HIM NOT"**

The Apostle John declares that a certain course of conduct is possible in which the Adversary would be unable to touch us. (I John 5:18.) The picture brought before our mental eyes is that of a charmed circle, within which God's people may come. This circle is not a fence, [R5148 : page 388] but merely a line of light, which can easily be overstepped. On the inside of that circle is the Lord's favor. The

very center of it is the Lord Himself, the Head of the Church. The exhortation of the Scriptures, the leadings of the Holy Spirit, and the providences of the Lord, all encourage His followers to press close to Him – "Nearer, my God, to Thee."

Outside the charmed circle are the powers of evil. These are sometimes allowed to touch the earthly interests and temporal affairs of the children of the Light; but the demon influence is not permitted to really touch the New Creatures in Christ inside this circle. Over that line they cannot exercise their influence. But alas! lured by the world, the flesh and the Devil, some of the saints at times go too close to the line, perhaps pursuing some fleshly bait or golden bauble or earthly honor. Such the Adversary is ever ready to lay hold of, to drag them out into the darkness of sin, doubt, despair – further and further away from the Lord.

The lesson of this picture to all Spirit-begotten children of God is, "Abide in Him," "Abstain from all appearance of evil," "Draw near unto God," "Press onward and upward," "Take heed to yourselves," "Forget the things that are behind," "Mortify your flesh," and earthly desires and ambitions, Keep close to the Master, that "the Wicked One touch you not."

But we again remind any who may be touched by the Adversary and temporarily ensnared that God is full of loving-kindness, that His mercy endureth forever, for all those who desire to live in harmony with Him. While it is true that the nearer we get to the separating line, the nearer do we come within the range of the Adversary's influence and power, and the weaker becomes the power of the Truth, the Spirit of the Lord, in our control, nevertheless, there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, and the Lord will welcome the strayed sheep, even though He temporarily allow trying experiences. Ultimately to the returning one these experiences will prove valuable lessons, safeguarding against any further tendency to stray or to dally with earthly things.

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