

WHY GOD HAS PERMITTED SATAN'S LYING DECEPTIONS

"The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."
– Deuteronomy 13:3.

GOD'S children realize that this text is to them full of deep significance and import. It can scarcely be considered too often or be too strongly emphasized. The word prove has the sense of test, demonstrate. The words were addressed to Israel, God's chosen people who had entered into a special Covenant with Him, agreeing to be His people, set apart from the heathen nations by whom they were surrounded, to be a holy nation, Jehovah's peculiar treasure; and He had agreed to be their God. As they had promised to obey all God's requirements, so it was proper that the Lord should prove them. He did not prove the heathen nations; for they had made no covenant with Him and were not in relationship to Him as His servants. But Israel must be proved. The character of their testing is shown in the context. This proving would be accomplished by permitting false teachers, false prophets, to be amongst them.

We are to remember that the word *prophet*, in its broadest signification, means one who teaches, as well as one who foretells. The Lord permitted some to be among the Israelites who would declare things designed to mislead them into the worship of other gods. This would not be because God could not have stricken down the false teachers, but it was permitted as a test to the people who professed to be consecrated to the service of the true God, Jehovah. These false prophets were able to give signs or demonstrations to convince of their miraculous power. But Israel was warned of God to give heed to no prophet whose teachings and works would tend to lead them away from Jehovah and His service. Such signs and

wonders are still frequent accompaniments of the heathen religions, which are inspired by Satan and his demon hosts.

Since all that happened to fleshly Israel was for our **[R5800 : page 341]** admonition (1 Corinthians 10:11), our text has a very forceful application to Spiritual Israel. "The Prince of demons" and his hosts of fallen spirits have great wonder-working powers, as well as considerable ability to foretell future events, sometimes with marvelous accuracy. The fallen angels possess much knowledge of earthly affairs, with power to read the mind as well. This has been true throughout the past.

One of the tests that spirit-mediums formerly used was to tell of the death of some one before it had become known. They would tell, for instance, of the death of some notable. They might declare, "The king of Sweden died today." There would be no means of verifying this information until some ship would come over; for in those days, before the invention of the telegraph and cable, news traveled very slowly. But in a month or two the news would come, and it would prove to be true as foretold by the medium. It would sometimes be found that he had died at the very hour that the medium had declared. Mediums can do less along this line today because of modern inventions for the rapid transmission of news throughout the world; but they have many other means of ascertaining facts and communicating them.

GOD'S WORD HIS PEOPLE'S GUIDE

We are not informed regarding the power used by the fallen angels in their miracle working and cures, but we know that it is not from God. It is for the Lord's children to remember that He has given us His Word, and that He reveals Himself through this Word. It is sufficient that He warns us against having anything to do with these occult powers. Examples of such warnings are found in the following Scriptures: Leviticus 19:31; 20:6,27; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; 2 Kings 17:17; 23:24; 1 Chronicles 10:13; 2 Chronicles

33:6; Isaiah 8:19; Jeremiah 27:9,10; 29:8,9; Luke 8:26-35; Acts 16:16-18.

We are to search the Scriptures and thus to learn about God and His great Plan, and we are not to permit any of these false prophets to lead us away from Him or to have any influence over us. The Lord permits this evil influence to be in the world. Why? Because He is now selecting the Bride for His Son, and He wishes the members of this class to be tested. Only by permitting false teachers could He demonstrate to Himself and to the angels to what extent His professed people are loyal to Him, and whether they will follow false doctrines and false teachers. The Lord will have only those to be of the Very Elect who will obey Him and will trust Him even where they cannot trace Him; so long as they have His Word, His Testimony, it should be sufficient.

The tendency of all these false teachers is to lead away from the one true God to the worship of demons. There are a great many gods, even in America. When a Brahmin comes to this country to live, he just as truly worships Brahma here as in India. Theosophists also make their images or idols to take the place of the true God. Because of greater civilization the false gods are not always of clay or bronze or wood. But today the idol images are often made with printer's ink. The gods that the heathen of civilized countries worship are very different from the God of the Bible.

There are very many today in civilized countries who do not worship the true God. Some have an abstract idea of a principle of right, and this principle is their god. They have also an idea of a principle of evil or wrong, and this evil principle is to them the Devil, and is the only devil they recognize. These people are seeking to do right, but they are deluded.

There are more and more of these false gods coming up in these days. There is the New Thought god. We believe that these new, unscriptural theories and ideas are from the demons, who are

gaining greater power to deceive at this time. We do not know that the false teachings of the past were recognized as false by those teaching them – their promoters were probably not aware that they were false teachers. And so it is today. The teachers of false doctrines, the leaders of all these cults, ancient and modern, which deny or make void the Scriptures, are deceived. The evil spirits are responsible for much of the confusion and difficulty in which the world is today.

The Apostle Paul, in referring to the close of this Gospel Age, declares that false doctrines will be multiplied. He tells us why many will be misled and deceived. He says, "They received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe *the lie* [Genesis 3:4]: that they all might be condemned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.) The intimation here seems to be that those who have come into touch with God and with His Truth will be so attracted by the Truth that it will be like the needle attracted to the pole. God is the great Pole. Those really drawn to Him will be difficult to swerve. Although a magnetic needle may be temporarily diverted from the pole, yet it will surely swing back and point in the right direction. And so it [**R5800 : page 342**] is with God's true people. They have an affinity for the Truth, they are influenced by it, magnetized by it, drawn.

These receive the Truth in the love of it – not in the love of building up a denomination, not in the love of soliciting money for a denomination, not in the love of certain ideas of their own, but in the love of the Truth itself. The Lord will not permit those who receive the Truth in the love of it to be turned aside. But He will send strong delusions to those who receive it from any other motive or for any other reason. These strong delusions He will permit to be spread abroad because He purposes to demonstrate the real heart attitude of each of those who have named His name and taken His

vows upon them. Thus the loyal-hearted ones will be made manifest, and of them He declares, "They shall be Mine, ...in that Day when I make up My jewels." – Mal. 3:17.

FALLEN SPIRITS ESPECIALLY ACTIVE TODAY

The fallen spirits have been very successful throughout the entire world in deluding and ensnaring humanity. The Lord advises His people that these spirits will be especially active and especially seductive in their methods of attack in the Harvest of this present Age. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, [through] giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy." (1 Timothy 4:1,2.) We are forewarned that this "hypocrisy" on the part of the seducing spirits consists of personating "angels of light" (2 Corinthians 11:13,14), and pretending to bring in "*new* light."

Amongst barbarians there is no reason why the spirits should try to bring new light; for these are asleep and already under the power of delusion and false doctrines. But amongst the enlightened and civilized, thought and investigation are being aroused in this the beginning of the great Day of the Lord. Despite the blinding influences of Satan and the hosts of fallen spirits many of these are awakening, and it is here that Satan is kept busy.

Amongst mankind today the old time necromancy and incantations will not do; their intellects are too alert to be much or long hoodwinked by these things. Even the deceptions of Spiritism in its manifestations of superhuman powers through tipping, writing, spirit-photography, voices, etc., all for the purpose of proving human immortality and the ability of the dead to commune with those on earth, are too gross and foolish to deceive and captivate a large proportion of intelligent people, and especially God's consecrated ones, the very class Satan is most anxious to stumble. Consequently there are changes in progress – new "garments of light" are assumed continually; and every feature of

Present Truth sent by God as "meat in due season" for His saints is promptly *counterfeited* to "deceive if possible the Very Elect."

But it is not possible to deceive and lead away those whose faith in God, through Christ, is fixed, who are trusting in the merit of Christ's great redeeming sacrifice, and whose hearts are wholly consecrated to the Lord and His service. Such shall "never fall"; but all others are to be separated from the faithful. God so uses Satan's wrath in the outworking of His plans that He may be said to *send* the strong delusions which are now misleading all whose faith is not securely founded on the Rock Christ Jesus, who have not put on the "whole armor of God," supplied in His Word. Those who are attracted by error and take pleasure in it are thus being manifested, and their condemnation as unfit for a share in the Heavenly Kingdom will be demonstrated as just and holy and righteous altogether.

DELUSIONS OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND THEOSOPHY

Among the popular and more refined devices of the great Adversary, and all the powers of darkness, are Christian Science and Theosophy. These on the outside, together with the evolutionary and anti-Biblical theories on the inside, called Higher Criticism, advanced thought, etc., are rapidly tearing to shreds all of Truth that the poor nominal systems ever had. These theories all bear the distinctive marks of the "father of lies." (John 8:44.) They all with one consent declare man to be immortal. Higher Critics regard as "old wives' fables" much of the Word of God, including the record of miracles, the story of Adam and Eve and their fall in Eden, the story of Jonah and the great fish, etc.

The name "Christian Science" is a misnomer for the tenets of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy. Her teachings are devoid of scientific elements, and the word "Christian" attached as part of the name given her theories is only calculated by Satan to deceive and destroy

God's people. To Christian Scientists Christ is not a Savior, nor was a [R5801 : page 342] Savior needed. Christ was only a good man, a Christian Scientist, who but imperfectly understood the new science which He introduced, but which in these latter times has been perfectly and fully set forth by the late Mrs. Eddy, of Boston. It has for its trademark, so to speak, "All is life; *there is no death!*" Thus they declare Satan's old falsehood started in Eden, "Ye shall *not* surely die." Jesus declared that Satan "was a liar from the beginning and abode not in the truth," not from his own beginning, but from man's beginning.

The various shades of Universalism unite in the same conclusion – Christ did not die to ransom man from the power of the grave, as the Scriptures declare. He was only a man like other men, a good and wise Teacher, but not a Savior in any substitutionary sense, they assert. Some hold that man evolved from an ape or a tadpole or from protoplasm; that he was a very bad likeness and not at all an image of God; that he was like a "half-baked cake." But all unite in the belief that mankind are being gradually evolved to perfection. All assure us in Satan's very language, "Ye shall *not* surely die!" – death is only a process of evolution; man is his own savior.

Then we have Theosophy – a theory appealing to a goodly number of the cultured and aesthetic who are of the blind, naked and hungry in the nominal churches. (Rev. 3:17.) It comes forward as one of the newest and most polished forms of religious thought. But those versed in ancient history know that in its very essence it is a revival of the central thought of Hindooism, and in many particulars of the delusions of the so-called "German Mystics" of medieval times. Theosophy holds that "all things are of God" in the absolute and ridiculous sense. It holds that all finite existences were effluxed or thrown off from one Infinite Being; that these effluxed beings – angels, men, beasts, birds and devils – being portions of

Deity, are immortal, and (as Satan has always taught) "*shall not surely die.*"

In harmony with the philosophy of Socrates and Plato (while denying these as the authors or even the burnishers of their doctrine, and claiming that these Greek philosophers got their information, as *they* now get it, direct from God by communion and intuition), Theosophy claims not only that man will live forever future, but that he has lived forever past. It appeals to the weak-minded with the question, "Have you never seen places that seemed strangely familiar the first time you visited them? Those were places you had seen *before* your present existence began." And, as of old, Satan may [R5801 : page 343] sometimes assist a sluggish imagination with a dream. Theosophy holds that death is not death, but a new birth; and that each individual will be reborn again and again until he has developed sufficiently the Divine nature; and that then he will be reabsorbed into God for eternity.

MAN'S WISDOM IS FOOLISHNESS WITH GOD

Theosophy professes to be based upon neither theology nor philosophy. The word Theosophy is defined by its advocates to mean the Religion of Wisdom. They claim that its wisdom is Divine, resulting from direct intuition and communion with God. Consequently they reject philosophical reasoning, and revelation such as the Scriptures, as hindrances to true wisdom. They have substituted for the Revelation of God the vain imaginings of their own imperfect minds – holy meditations. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," was written by Divine authority of a similar class. – Romans 1:21,22.

Theosophy rejects all revealed religion, ignores all doctrines and claims to be the religion of cause and effect – that sooner or later wrong-doing will react upon the wrong-doer, bringing its penalty; and right-doing will bring its reward. It places Christ and Moses on a parity with Socrates, Plato, Confucius and Mohammed

as world-teachers. It is ready to quote from the Bible or from the Koran any fragment that can be turned to account in its own support, but does not regard any book or man as especially inspired authority. It professes to be the patron of every noble trait and every benevolent design, and is willing to class as Theosophists all popular people. It favors alms-giving and good deeds, so done as to be seen of men.

Therefore Theosophy is, as it claims to be, preeminently suited to the sentiments of the majority of the wise children of this world, who do not appreciate either their own imperfection or God's mercy in Christ. They say, "I want no one to pay my debts for me. I expect to pay for myself the penalty of my sins – if I commit any." All holding such sentiments are ripe for Theosophy. Indeed, the entire "Christian world" is ready to leave its former confused creed-mooring, and to set sail, with Theosophy for pilot and *good works* for motive power, to reach a haven of rest and happiness – *if there be* such a haven; for many of them doubt it. Alas! how ignorance of God's Word and Plan and how the confusion of the nominal churches have paved the way for this great falling away from the cross of Christ to "another gospel," which is really no Gospel. – Galatians 1:6-9.

Of course none of these delusions has any use for the doctrine of the cross of Christ – the "Ransom for all" – or its testimony "in due time," now or hereafter. See 1 Timothy 2:4-6. The Apostle here declares that God our Savior "will have all men to be saved [from the Adamic death now holding sway over the whole world], and to come to the knowledge of the Truth; for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." But no, the Bible doctrine of a Ransom past and of a consequent Restitution in the future (Acts 3:19-23) finds no place in any of these theories.

SATAN'S LIE THE BASIS OF FALSE DOCTRINES

These foretold "strong delusions" of our day are none of them actually strong or powerful. On the contrary, they are very weak. But they have great power to delude many because a large proportion of professed Christians of our day have never become real disciples of Christ, but are merely "tares," imitation Christians. Among those who are real Christians, few are "weaned from the milk." (Isaiah 28:9; Hebrews 5:12-14.) Few Christians in the nominal church are mentally or spiritually out of their swaddling clothes. Few have even used the milk of God's Word, and grown thereby to the use and appreciation of the "strong meat" of Present Truth, which is for the developed man in Christ. It is not surprising, therefore, that those whom Spiritism and Swedenborgianism did not affect are now being gathered into Christian Science and Theosophy, the later developments of Satan's cunning and deception.

The strength of these delusions lies in the grave errors mixed with truths long held by Christian people, because of the "falling away" from the pure faith of the Apostolic Church, foretold in the Scriptures. Among these errors none is designed to open the heart and mind to these delusive and destructive theories of today more effectually than the general belief of the first lie – "Ye shall *not* surely die." The general acceptance of this lie results from a failure to understand the Bible doctrine concerning *life* and *immortality*, which were brought to light by our Lord Jesus through His Gospel of salvation from sin by His Ransom-sacrifice.

Every error held obscures and hinders some truth; and we have now come to the time when every child of God needs all the panoply of Truth – the armor of God. He who has not on the "whole armor of God" is sure to fall into error in this "evil day," this "hour of temptation, which has come upon the whole world, to try them

that dwell on the earth." And "judgment must begin at the House of God." Who shall be able to stand? None except those who are "building themselves up in the most holy faith" with the precious promises and vital doctrines of the Word of God.

ALL BUT "VERY ELECT" TO BE DECEIVED

The advocates of these false doctrines are surprisingly alert and active everywhere, especially in the United States, where thought is most active and where liberty often means license. Hundreds of thousands have embraced these errors as new and advanced light. The extent of their success is not fully apparent to many; for their success lies in a *still hunt* for prey. Their advocates are to be found in almost every congregation of every denomination, and especially among the more cultured; and the "angel of light" feature is seldom neglected. The nominal Churches are already permeated, *leavened* with these false doctrines.

The Scriptural prophecy that "a thousand shall fall at thy [the true Church's] side, and ten thousand at thy right hand" (Psalm 91:3-14), is now fulfilled before our eyes. The doctrine of the *Ransom*, the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world, has been the test. "The cross" has been the great stumbling-stone now, as in the days of our Redeemer's First Advent. Nearly all have fallen away from faith in this vital and fundamental doctrine of Christianity, of the Bible. By the great majority Jesus is now considered as only an Example for us to follow in certain particulars, not as our Redeemer, not as our Ransom.

From the teachings of Scripture we may expect that all but the "Very Elect" of God will be more or less stumbled by the errors and worldliness of our day. (Matthew 24:24-27; 2 Peter 2:3-11.) The "angel of light" sophistries of the powers of evil, and their works of healing, will surely delude all whose eyes of understanding are not open through heeding the testimony of the sure Word of God.

The doing of many wonderful works is one of the old tricks of Satan and his evil hosts. If disease and death are to a considerable extent under Satan's control during [R5802 : page 344] the reign of evil (Hebrews 2:14), why might he not, in his present emergency, when his fall is so near, reverse his methods of working and do some works of healing, thereby to clinch his errors and deceptions and to re-blind some whose eyes have been gradually opening under the light of the dawning Millennial Day, the Day of Christ?

We believe that he is adopting this policy, and that he will do so yet more. We believe that our Lord's pertinent inquiry was suggestive of this when He said, "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?" And, "If Satan rise up against *himself*, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end." (Matthew 12:26; Mark 3:26.) So now, as Satan's kingdom is about to be overthrown, it is his effort to support it by many wonderful works, done by his unknowing as well as by his wilful agents, falsely and in the name of Christ.

THE FAITHFUL SOON TO SHINE FORTH

These various errors, "doctrines of demons," are gathering out of God's Kingdom "all that offend, and them which do iniquity" (and these constitute the great mass); while the faithful, who are to receive the Kingdom and be joint-heirs with Christ in His great Messianic Reign now about to be inaugurated, alone will stand. (Eph. 6:11-13.) When this separation is complete – and we believe it is now almost accomplished – the fire of the great Time of Trouble will make general havoc of present arrangements – social, financial, political, ecclesiastical. Then all errors and falsehoods in religion will go down forever. Then the Lord's faithful Little Flock, having received immortality and the Divine nature, "shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father," seated with Christ in His Throne. (Revelation 3:21.) For a thousand years they shall reign over the world, for the scattering of all ignorance and

blindness and the uplifting of all the families of the earth, the living and the dead.

Then let all who know the Truth as set forth in the sure Word of the Lord be active in its spread. The time is short! If you cannot preach orally in public, perhaps you can preach privately, to your neighbors and friends and those with whom you come in contact. Surely nearly all can preach privately, to your neighbors and friends and those with whom you come in contact. Surely nearly all can preach by the printed page and by pen, as well as by consistent daily conduct. Those about us *need* whatever help we can give them; and if they do not get it very soon they will surely become entangled in some of these latter-day delusions of the Adversary.

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