

MACHINATIONS OF THE EVIL ONE – HOW TO VANQUISH HIM

"Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you." – James 4:7.

THE word Devil represents that evil one who through unholy ambition became the first opponent of God, who attempted to set up a rival government to that of the Almighty, and who was cast out of Heaven and cut off from all association with holy beings. His name, which was once Lucifer, shining one, was changed to that of Satan, meaning the hater, the accuser. He who was once called, "Son of the Morning," became the Prince of the "rulers of darkness." (Isaiah 14:12-16; Ephesians 6:11,12.) Not only did he do evil to himself and cease to be an angel of light, a "morning star," but he became the instigator of evil, a leader into evil. According to the Scriptural account, he has succeeded in leading astray from God, not only the entire human family, by luring our first parents into disobedience, but has also misled a large number of the Heavenly hosts of angels into sin and opposition to Jehovah.

This may upon the surface appear to be a great triumph of Satan over the Almighty God; but such is not the case. God has at all times been Master of the situation. He has purposed to permit all this deflection to teach a great lesson to both angels and men. It is His purpose, "in due time," to judge all these sinners, both angelic and human, by a company that He is now preparing, and to restore to harmony with Himself all who have properly learned their lesson as to the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the desirableness of righteousness and of obedience. We understand that the only exceptions to this rule are Satan himself and some who after having been clearly enlightened, will deliberately choose sin. Satan has become inseparably connected with sin; and his destruction is plainly declared in the Scriptures, as is also that of those who have so imbibed his spirit as to make it impossible to renew them again

to repentance – whether in the Gospel Age or in the Millennium. – Hebrews 2:14; Matthew 25:41; Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-29.

God has promised to deliver mankind from Satan's power and his blinding influences. He has promised to open all the blind eyes, and to unstop the deaf ears, and to take away the veil that is spread over all nations. (2 Corinthians 4:4; Isaiah 35:5; 25:7,8.) This work is soon to be inaugurated in the Messianic Kingdom, which God has arranged to establish upon earth, under Jesus Christ His Son. Jesus taught us to pray for that Kingdom, saying, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven." When this Kingdom is set up, the Lord Jesus will bind that "old Serpent, the Devil," with a great chain, that he may deceive the nations no more for a thousand years, while Christ will be lifting up all mankind from sin, degradation and death – up to the perfection originally lost in Adam. The interim between the time of man's fall into sin and the time of his deliverance and restoration from that fall has been utilized in preliminary features of God's Plan leading step by step to this glorious outcome.

TWO CLASSES OF ELECT

In shadows and types the Lord has prefigured the great work which He is to accomplish for all mankind. During these ages of types, He was preparing a class of elect ones who should rule over the world as "princes in all the earth," during the Millennial Kingdom. During the present Gospel Age, God has been selecting, or electing, a very choice class to be exalted with Christ as Divine, spiritual beings, to reign with Him as His immediate associates in this Kingdom for the blessing of all the world. These are to give instructions to those who shall have charge of the earthly phase of the Kingdom. These are the special Elect, who suffer with Jesus now, following in His footsteps, that they may be exalted with Him to the highest position to which God has ever called any of His intelligent creatures.

This Church of Christ have had their eyes opened in advance of the world, to see the great difference between righteousness and sin, between the character of God and that of Satan. They have unqualifiedly taken their stand on the side of God. They have therefore escaped from the domination of the great Enemy of God. No longer is he their Prince. These have "passed from death unto life." They now have a standing with God, the relationship of sons.

No other members of the human race since the fall of Adam have been sons of God. These are not earthly sons, as was Adam, but spiritual sons. Theirs is a Heavenly Calling, the distinctive offer of the present Age. They still have some of the fleshly weaknesses which they inherited as members of the fallen race, but they have become New Creatures in Christ, with new hopes, new aims, new aspirations. They are begotten of God's Holy Spirit to a new nature, to be a New Creation; and their unavoidable blemishes are covered by the white robe of their Savior's perfect righteousness. His perfection is thus imputed to them, that they may be acceptable sacrifices with Christ, as members of His Body. **[R5896 : page 148]**

THE WILL A STRONG DEFENSE AGAINST SATAN

Satan, who is the opposer of God and who has led astray some of the holy angels, opposes these who have escaped from his thralldom and who have these new hopes and aspirations. He does not need to make such attacks upon the world; for they are already in his power – "The whole world lieth in the Wicked One." (1 John 5:19, *Diaglott*.) He attacks only those who are trying to get free from him. When the spider perceives that the fly which he has entrapped is struggling and is about to get loose from the web, he instantly hastens to throw additional webs around his victim. So when Satan sees any of his subjects endeavoring to free themselves from his entanglements, he at once sets about throwing stronger coils around them, to prevent if possible their escape.

But Satan cannot overcome a decided human will. God has given every creature this defense; and whoever does not break down this defense by a persistent yielding up of that will to evil influence, can resist the power of sin and of Satan to a considerable degree. But poor humanity need Divine help to free themselves entirely from this great Adversary and his hosts of evil. The position of the Christian is invulnerable so long as he keeps close to the Source of his strength. Greater is He that is on our part than all that can be against us. If the time were come for the binding of Satan, our Lord would attend to it at once. But it has not yet fully come. God's children need not feel, however, that they must flee from Satan and his hosts. They have no such power that we need to strive to get away from them. But rather we should stand our ground, and should firmly resist their influence, knowing that with every temptation God has promised and provided a way of escape. With this knowledge we may be strong in the presence of any adversary.

MAMMON – THE IMPERSONATION OF SELFISHNESS

The Apostle Paul says that we war not against flesh and blood merely, but against spiritual wickedness, or as the margin reads, "wicked spirits" in high positions – the great army of fallen angels under the captaincy of the Devil, the prince of demons. (Ephesians 6:12.) He is the powerful leader of fallen angels and fallen men, of all who may be on the side of wrong. Many are fighting on his side because they are deluded, blinded. They are unwittingly rendering him service. There are two masters: one is God and the other is Mammon. Jesus said, "Ye *cannot* serve God and Mammon." (Matthew 6:24.) We must serve either the one or the other.

Mammon was the name of an ancient Syrian god – the god of riches, of cupidity, the impersonation of worldliness. Today mammon means the spirit of the world, selfishness, with its avarice and love of wealth. Satan is the promoter of this mammon spirit. St.

Paul tells us how we may know which master we are serving. He says, "His servants ye are to whom ye render obedience." (Romans 6:16.) If we are giving time and thought to grasping after riches and worldly honors, if our influence is for war and strife, for selfishness in any form, if our sympathies and affections are tending earthward rather than Heavenward, then we are serving mammon, the worldly spirit, and are thus serving Satan, whether we realize it or not. Close and careful scrutiny of his thoughts, words and doings in the light of the Word of God will soon show any Christian whether he is rendering service to his rightful Master or to the Adversary. Whoever is serving the Devil is his servant, is in his army. If we are serving the cause of righteousness, and that only, we are on the Lord's side.

HOW TO RESIST SATAN'S ATTACKS

The Lord's children are to see to it that they are not deluded into sin and into the service of sin; to that extent they would be deserting their colors and taking their stand as opponents of the Lord. When Christians take a decided stand against Satan and his wiles, they are relieved from his attacks – not that he flees from them in the sense that he is fearful of harm to himself, but that he will leave them. He will retreat just as a general of an army would retreat from a city after having found that its gates were strongly protected and that attack was useless. If the Adversary finds one well protected and resisting him with a firm will, he will at once retreat. But if there be any parley with sin, any tendency to consider a matter when it is seen to be sin, an entrance is at once made for the Adversary; and he will renew the **[R5897 : page 148]** attack and press the matter, placing it in the most alluring light, in order that he may take control, that he may enter the heart where he has found the weakness.

Hence it is of the utmost importance that the child of God should make a positive and prompt decision when he realizes that

he is being enticed to evil. A moment's hesitation is very dangerous. Those who take their stand for the Lord, who give themselves fully and unreservedly to Him, He has agreed to protect. He may permit them to be assailed for a time, but He will deliver them so long as they remain loyal and true; and they will be made stronger as the result of the temptations.

THE ADVERSARY'S METHOD OF ATTACK

The attacks of the Adversary are usually made through his angels. We are not to suppose that the Devil himself is in every part of the world at the same time, or in the minds of all the people of the world – nor even in the minds of all God's people. We are to suppose that wherever any of Satan's agents are there is activity. The fallen angels are ever ready to intrude upon the rights and liberties of humanity, and to bring them more fully into subjection, if possible. But they particularly endeavor to entrap the Lord's children. The Adversary seems to be always on the alert to enter the army of the Church and to try to make havoc in its ranks.

Satan acts upon the minds of humanity. The mind, being imperfect through the fall, has thus inherited tendencies toward sin. The assaults of the Adversary may come through human beings that suggest wrong thoughts to others. He probably gets in his work more often in this way than in any other. The Apostle urges all the children of God to let no evil communication proceed out of their mouth. Evil communications often have the effect of tearing down character, and every Christian should be on the alert, not only for his own protection, but also for the protection of others. Each child of God should see that his own heart is kept pure and so free from guile that he will be in no danger of communicating evil of any sort to another by his words. We should carefully guard our conduct, that no thoughtless act of ours should be a cause of injury to any one or bring a reflection upon the Truth, which we love so well, and to the service of which we have committed ourselves.

"He is come to claim His Throne,
And to make thy life His own.
Voices of this passing earth,
Echoes of its praise or mirth,
Reach not where the heart hath heard
Golden music of His Word.
'All for Jesus' henceforth be!
Live for Him who died for thee!"
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