

# **Behold the Lamb!**

## **What it Means to be a Christian**

### **Lesson 7: Satan's Tricks and Traps!**

Satan does everything He can to cast His hellish shadow over us, so that we shall not see the glorious beauty of God's character of love and mercy. But Jesus, by His wondrous grace, will change the hearts and lives of all who cry to Him for strength and help! To the humble, repentant, believing soul, nothing is withheld that he needs in order to keep close to Jesus. Here is a promise we can claim right now:

**"I will put enmity [hostility, hatred] between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Genesis 3:15.**

The divine sentence pronounced against Satan after the fall of man, was also a prophecy, for all the ages to the close of time, and foreshadowing the great conflict to engage all the races of men who should live upon the earth. God declares, "I will put enmity." This enmity is not natural to humans. When man transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil, and he was in harmony, and not at variance, with Satan.

There exists naturally no enmity between sinful man and the originator of sin. Both became evil through apostasy. The apostate is never at rest, except as he obtains sympathy and support by inducing others to follow his example. For this reason, fallen angels and wicked men unite in desperate companionship. Had not God specially interposed, Satan and man would have entered into an alliance against Heaven; and instead of cherishing enmity against Satan, the whole human family would have been united in opposition to God.

Satan tempted man to sin, as he had caused angels to rebel, that he might secure co-operation in his warfare against Heaven. There was no conflict between himself and the fallen angels regarding their hatred of Christ. While on all other points there was discord, they were firmly united in opposing the authority of the Ruler of the universe. [it is interesting that even among the fallen angels there is arguing and quarrelling. Where ever we see these things in any group, we can know that the sweet Spirit of God is not there.]

But when Satan heard the declaration that enmity should exist between himself and the woman, and between his seed and her seed, he knew that his efforts to deprave human nature would be interrupted; that by some means man was to be enabled to resist his power.

The grace that Christ implants in the soul creates the enmity against Satan. Without this converting grace and renewing power, man would continue the captive of Satan, a servant ever ready to do his bidding. But the new principle in the soul creates conflict where hitherto had been peace. The power which Christ imparts, enables man to resist the tyrant and usurper. Whoever is seen to detest sin instead of loving it, whoever resists and conquers those passions that have held sway within, shows the working of a principle wholly from above.

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The antagonism that exists between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of Satan was most clearly shown in the world's reception of Jesus. It was not so much because He appeared without worldly wealth, pomp, or grandeur, that the Jews were led to reject Him. They saw that He possessed power which would more than make up for the lack of these outward advantages. But the purity and holiness of Christ called forth against Him the hatred of the ungodly. His life of self-denial and sinless devotion was a perpetual reproof to a proud, sensual people.

It was this that evoked enmity against the Son of God. Satan and evil angels joined with evil men. All the energies of apostasy conspired against the champion of truth. The same enmity is manifested toward Christ's followers as was manifested toward their Master. Whoever sees the repulsive character of sin, and, in strength from above, resists temptation, will assuredly arouse the wrath of Satan and his subjects.

Hatred of the pure principles of truth, and reproach and persecution of its advocates, will exist as long as sin and sinners remain. The followers of Christ and the servants of Satan cannot harmonize. The offense of the cross has not ceased. **"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12.**

Satan's agents are constantly working under his direction to establish his authority and build up his kingdom in opposition to the government of God. For this reason they seek to deceive Christ's followers, and lure them from their allegiance. Like their leader, they misconstrue and pervert the Scriptures to accomplish their object. As Satan endeavored to cast reproach upon God, so do his agents seek to malign God's people.

The spirit which put Christ to death moves the wicked to destroy His followers. All this is foreshadowed in that first prophecy, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." Such is the work that will be carried forward in the great controversy between Christ and Satan to the close of time.

Satan summons all his forces, and throws his whole power into the combat. Why is it that he meets with no greater resistance? Why are the soldiers of Christ so sleepy and indifferent? Because they do not realize their danger. There is but little enmity against Satan and his works, because there is so great ignorance concerning his power and malice, and the vast extent of his warfare against Christ and His church.

Multitudes are deluded here. They do not know that their enemy is a mighty general, who controls the minds of evil angels, and that with clever plans and skillful movements he is warring against Christ to prevent the salvation of souls. Among professed Christians, and even among ministers of the gospel, there is heard scarcely a reference to Satan, except perhaps an incidental mention in the pulpit. They overlook the evidences of his continual activity and success; they neglect the many warnings of his subtlety; they seem to ignore his very existence.

While men are ignorant of his devices, this vigilant foe is upon their track every moment. He is intruding his presence in every department of the household, in every street of our cities, in the churches, in the councils, in the courts of justice, perplexing, deceiving, seducing, everywhere ruining the souls and bodies of men, women, and children, breaking up families, sowing hatred, emulation, strife, sedition, murder. And the Christian world seem to regard these things as though God had appointed them, and they must exist.

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Satan is continually seeking to overcome the people of God by breaking down the barriers which separate them from the world. Ancient Israel were enticed into sin when they ventured into forbidden association with the heathen. In a similar manner are modern Israel led astray. **“The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” 2 Corinthians 4:4.**

All who are not decided followers of Christ are servants of Satan. In the unregenerate heart there is love of sin, and a disposition to cherish and excuse it. In the renewed heart there is hatred of sin, and determined resistance against it. When Christians choose the society of the ungodly and unbelieving, they expose themselves to temptation. Satan conceals himself from view, and stealthily draws his bandage across their eyes. They cannot see that such company is calculated to do them harm, and while all the time assimilating to the world in character, words, and actions, they are becoming more and more blinded. Familiarity with sin inevitably causes it to appear less repulsive. He who chooses to associate with the servants of Satan soon ceases to fear their master.

The tempter often works most successfully through those who are least suspected of being under his control. The opinion prevails with many that all which appears like courtesy or refinement must, in some sense, pertain to Christ. Never was there a greater mistake. These qualities should grace the character of every Christian, for they would exert a powerful influence in favor of true religion; but they must be consecrated to God, or they are a power for evil.

Many who are pleasant and intelligent, and who would not stoop to what is commonly regarded as an immoral act, are but polished instruments in the hands of Satan. The insidious, deceptive character of their influence and example renders them more dangerous enemies to the cause of Christ than are those who are unattractive, coarse, rough, and degraded.

By earnest prayer and dependence upon God, Solomon obtained the wisdom which excited the wonder and admiration of the world. But when he turned from the Source of his strength, and went forward relying upon himself, he fell a prey to temptation. Then the marvelous powers bestowed on this wisest of kings, only rendered him a more efficient agent of the adversary of souls.

While Satan is constantly seeking to blind their minds to the fact, let Christians never forget that they **“wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits [margin] in high places.” Ephesians 6:12.**

The inspired warning is sounding down the centuries to our time: **“Be sober, be vigilant; [watchful] because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Peter 5:8. “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Ephesians 6:11.**

From the days of Adam to our own time, our great enemy has been exercising his power to oppress and destroy. He is now preparing for his last campaign against the church. All who seek to follow Jesus will be brought into conflict with this relentless foe. The more nearly the

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Christian imitates the divine Pattern, the more surely will he make himself a mark for the attacks of Satan.

All who are actively engaged in the cause of God, seeking to unveil the deceptions of the evil one and to present Christ before the people, will be able to join in the testimony of Paul, in which he speaks of serving the Lord with all humility of mind, with many tears and temptations.

Satan assailed Christ with His fiercest and most subtle temptations; but he was repulsed in every conflict. Those battles were fought in our behalf; those victories make it possible for us to conquer. Christ will give strength to all who seek it. No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. The fact that Christ has conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight manfully the battle against sin and Satan.

### Agency of Evil Spirits:

If Satan could, he would blot out every Christian from the face of the earth. If he could, he would blot out everyone else too. With countless fallen angels to do his bidding, and with a mind far in advance of our own, we are no match for his power and cunning. But in Christ there is the power needed. Our danger is in not recognizing the strength and number of Satan's host and thus thinking ourselves safe, we do not flee to Christ, moment by moment, for the help we need.

The existence of Satan and the agency of evil spirits are facts fully established by both the Old and the New Testament. From the days of Adam to Moses, and through all the succeeding ages to John, the latest gospel writer, Satan is recognized as an active, personal agent, the originator of evil, the enemy of God and man.

It is true that imagination and superstition have given their own coloring to these facts, and have linked them with legends and traditions of heathen, Jewish, and even Christian nations; but as revealed in the word of God they are of the utmost solemnity and importance. The connection of the visible with the invisible world, the ministration of angels of God, and the agency of evil angels, are inseparably interwoven with human history.

We are told of the fall of the angels from their purity, of Lucifer their leader, the instigator of rebellion, of their confederacy and government, of their various orders, of their great intelligence and subtlety, and of their malicious designs against the innocence and happiness of men. We are told of One mightier than the fallen foe, One by whose authority Satan's power is limited and controlled; and we are told, also, of the punishment prepared for the originator of iniquity.

During the time when Christ was upon the earth, evil spirits manifested their power in a most striking manner. And why was this?—Christ had come to enter upon the plan devised for man's redemption, and Satan therefore determined to assert his right to control the world. He had succeeded in establishing idolatry in every part of the earth except the land of Palestine. To the only land that had not fully yielded to the tempter's sway, Christ came to shed upon the people the light of Heaven.

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Here two rival powers claimed supremacy. Jesus was stretching out His arms of love, inviting all who would to find pardon and peace in Him. The hosts of darkness understood that if His mission should be successful, their rule was soon to end. Satan raged like a chained lion, and defiantly exhibited his power over the bodies as well as the souls of men.

The fact that men have been possessed with demons is clearly stated in the New Testament. The persons thus afflicted were not merely suffering with disease from natural causes. Christ had perfect understanding of that with which He was dealing, and He recognized the direct presence and agency of evil spirits.

An outstanding example of their number, power, and malignity, and also of the power and mercy of Christ, is given in the Scripture account of the healing of the demoniacs at Gadara. Those wretched maniacs, spurning all restraint, writhing, foaming, raging, were filling the air with their cries, doing violence to themselves, and endangering all who should approach them. Their bleeding and disfigured bodies and distracted minds presented a spectacle well-pleasing to the prince of darkness.

One of the demons controlling the sufferers declared, **“My name is Legion; for we are many.”** **Mark 5:9.** In the Roman army a legion consisted of from three to five thousand men. Satan’s hosts also are marshaled into companies, and the single company to which these demons belonged numbered no less than a legion.

At the command of Jesus, the evil spirits departed from their victims, leaving them calmly sitting at the Saviour’s feet, subdued, intelligent, and gentle. But the demons were permitted to drive a herd of swine into the sea; and to the dwellers of Gadara their loss outweighed the blessings which Christ had bestowed, and the divine Healer was entreated to depart. This was the result which Satan planned to achieve. By casting the blame upon Jesus, he aroused the selfish fears of the people, and prevented them from listening to his words.

Satan is constantly accusing Christians as the cause of loss, misfortune, and suffering, instead of allowing the reproach to fall where it belongs, upon himself and his agents.

But the purposes of Christ were not stopped. He allowed the evil spirits to destroy the herd of swine as a rebuke to those Jews, who, by raising these unclean beasts for the sake of gain, had transgressed the command of God. Had not Christ restrained the demons, they would have plunged into the sea, not only the swine, but also their keepers and owners. The preservation of both the keepers and the owners was due alone to His merciful interposition for their deliverance.

Furthermore, this scene was permitted to take place that the disciples might witness the cruel power of Satan upon both man and beast. The Saviour desired His followers to have a knowledge of the foe whom they were to meet, that they might not be deceived and overcome by his devices. It was also His will that the people of that region should behold His power to break the bondage of Satan and release His captives. And though Jesus Himself departed, the men so marvelously delivered, remained to declare the mercy of their Benefactor.

Other instances of a similar nature are recorded in the Scriptures. The daughter of the Syro-phenician woman was grievously vexed with a devil, whom Jesus cast out by His word. Mark

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7:26-30. One “possessed with a devil, blind and dumb,” (Matthew 12:22) a youth who had a dumb spirit, that oftentimes “cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him,” (Mark 9:17-27) the maniac, who, tormented by “a spirit of an unclean devil” (Luke 4:33-36), disturbed the Sabbath quiet of the synagogue at Capernaum, were all healed by the compassionate Saviour. In nearly every instance, Christ addressed the demon as an intelligent entity, commanding him to come out of his victim and to torment him no more.

The worshipers at Capernaum, beholding His mighty power, “were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, “What a word is this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.” Luke 4:36

Those possessed with devils are usually represented as being in a condition of great suffering; yet there were exceptions to this rule. For the sake of obtaining supernatural power, some welcomed the Satanic influence. These of course had no conflict with the demons. Of this class were those who possessed the spirit of divination,— Simon Magus, Elymas the sorcerer, and the damsel who followed Paul and Silas at Philippi.

None are in greater danger from the influence of evil spirits than are those who, notwithstanding the direct and ample testimony of the Scriptures, deny the existence and agency of the devil and his angels. So long as we are ignorant of their wiles, they have almost inconceivable advantage; many give heed to their suggestions while they suppose themselves to be following the dictates of their own wisdom. This is why, as we approach the close of time, when Satan is to work with greatest power to deceive and destroy, he spreads everywhere the belief that he does not exist.

It is his policy to conceal himself and his manner of working. There is nothing that the great deceiver fears so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices. The better to disguise his real character and purposes, he has caused himself to be so represented as to excite no stronger emotion than ridicule or contempt. He is well pleased to be painted as a ludicrous or loathsome object, misshapen, half animal and half human. He is pleased to hear his name used in sport and mockery by those who consider themselves intelligent and well-informed.

It is because he has masked himself with consummate skill that the question is so widely asked, “Does such a being really exist?” It is an evidence of his success that theories giving the lie to the plainest testimony of the Scriptures are so generally received in the religious world. And it is because Satan can most readily control the minds of those who are unconscious of his influence that the word of God gives us so many examples of his malignant work, unveiling before us his secret forces, and thus placing us on our guard against his assaults.

The power and malice of Satan and his host might rightly alarm us, were it not that we may find shelter and deliverance in the superior power of our Redeemer. We carefully secure our houses with bolts and locks to protect our property and our lives from evil men; but we seldom think of the evil angels who are constantly seeking access to us, and against whose attacks we have no method of defense. If permitted, they can distract our minds, disorder, torment our bodies, destroy our possessions and our lives. Their only delight is in misery and destruction. Fearful is the condition of those who resist the divine claims and yield to Satan’s temptations until God

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gives them up to the control of evil spirits. But those who follow Christ are ever safe under His watch care. Angels that excel in strength are sent from Heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people.

### The Snares of Satan:

As the people of God approach the perils of the last days, Satan holds earnest consultation with his angels as to the most successful plan of overthrowing their faith. He sees that the popular churches are already lulled to sleep by his deceptive power. By pleasing sophistry and lying wonders he can continue to hold them under his control. Therefore he directs his angels to lay their snares especially for those who are looking for the second advent of Christ, and trying to keep all the commandments of God.

Says the great deceiver: "We must watch those who are calling the attention of the people to the Sabbath of the Lord; they will lead many to see the claims of the law of God; and the same light which reveals the true Sabbath, reveals also the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and shows that the last work for man's salvation is now going forward. Hold the minds of the people in darkness till that work is ended, and we shall secure the world and the church also.

"The Sabbath is the great question which is to decide the destiny of souls. We must exalt the Sabbath of our creating. We have caused it to be accepted by both worldlings and church-members; now the church must be led to unite with the world in its support. We must work by signs and wonders to blind their eyes to the truth, and lead them to lay aside reason and the fear of God, and follow custom and tradition.

"I will influence popular ministers to turn the attention of their hearers from the commandments of God. That which the Scriptures declare to be a perfect law of liberty shall be represented as a yoke of bondage. The people accept their ministers' explanations of Scripture, and do not investigate for themselves. Therefore by working through the ministers, I can control the people according to my will.

"But our principal concern is to silence this sect of Sabbath-keepers. We must excite popular indignation against them. We will enlist great men and worldly-wise men upon our side, and induce those in authority to carry out our purposes. Then the Sabbath which I have set up shall be enforced by laws the most severe and exacting. Those who disregard them shall be driven out from the cities and villages, and made to suffer hunger and privation.

"When once we have the power, we will show what we can do with those who will not swerve from their allegiance to God. We led the Roman Church to inflict imprisonment, torture, and death upon those who refused to yield to her decrees, and now that we are bringing the Protestant churches and the world into harmony with this right arm of our strength, we will finally have a law to exterminate all who will not submit to our authority. When death shall be made the penalty of violating our Sabbath, then many who are now ranked with commandment-keepers will come over to our side.

"But before proceeding to these extreme measures, we must exert all our wisdom and subtlety to deceive and ensnare those who honor the true Sabbath. We can separate many from Christ

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by worldliness, lust, and pride. They may think themselves safe because they believe the truth, but indulgence of appetite or the lower passions, which will confuse judgment and destroy discrimination, will cause their fall.

“Go, make the possessors of lands and money drunk with the cares of this life. Present the world before them in its most attractive light, that they may lay up their treasure here, and fix their affections upon earthly things. We must do our utmost to prevent those who labor in God’s cause from obtaining means to use against us. Keep the money in our own ranks. The more means they obtain, the more they will injure our kingdom by taking from us our subjects. Make them care more for money than for the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom and the spread of the truths we hate, and we need not fear their influence; for we know that every selfish, covetous person will fall under our power, and will finally be separated from God’s people.

“Through those that have a form of godliness but know not the power, we can gain many who would otherwise do us great harm. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God will be our most effective helpers. Those of this class who are apt and intelligent will serve as decoys to draw others into our snares. Many will not fear their influence, because they profess the same faith. We will thus lead them to conclude that the requirements of Christ are less strict than they once believed, and that by conformity to the world they would exert a greater influence with worldlings. Thus they will separate from Christ; then they will have no strength to resist our power, and ere long they will be ready to ridicule their former zeal and devotion.

“Until the great decisive blow shall be struck, our efforts against commandment-keepers must be untiring. We must be present at all their gatherings. In their large meetings especially our cause will suffer much, and we must exercise great vigilance, and employ all our seductive arts to prevent souls from hearing the truth and becoming impressed by it.

“I will have upon the ground, as my agents, men holding false doctrines mingled with just enough truth to deceive souls. I will also have unbelieving ones present, who will express doubts in regard to the Lord’s messages of warning to his church. Should the people read and believe these admonitions, we could have little hope of overcoming them. But if we can divert their attention from these warnings, they will remain ignorant of our power and cunning, and we shall secure them in our ranks at last. God will not permit His words to be slighted with impunity. If we can keep souls deceived for a time, God’s mercy will be withdrawn, and He will give them up to our full control.

“We must cause distraction and division. We must destroy their anxiety for their own souls, and lead them to criticize, to judge, and to accuse and condemn one another, and to cherish selfishness and enmity. For these sins, God banished us from His presence; and all who follow our example will meet a similar fate.”

The Scriptures declare that upon one occasion, when the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them, not to bow before the Eternal King, but to further his own malicious designs against the righteous. With the same object he is in attendance when men assemble for the worship of God. Though hidden from sight, he is working with all diligence to control the minds of the worshipers. Like a skillful general, he lays his plans beforehand.

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As he sees the messenger of God searching the Scriptures, he takes note of the subject to be presented to the people. Then he employs all his cunning and shrewdness to so control circumstances that the message may not reach those whom he is deceiving on that very point. The one who most needs the warning will be urged into some business transaction which requires his presence, or will by some other means be prevented from hearing the words that might prove to him a savor of life unto life.

Again, Satan sees the Lord's servants burdened because of the spiritual darkness that enshrouds the people. He hears their earnest prayers for divine grace and power to break the spell of indifference, carelessness, and indolence. Then with renewed zeal he plies his arts. He tempts men to the indulgence of appetite or to some other form of self-gratification, and thus benumbs their sensibilities, so that they fail to hear the very things which they most need to learn.

Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to engross the mind. There has ever been a class professing godliness who, instead of following on to know the truth, make it their religion to seek some fault of character or error of faith in those with whom they do not agree. Such are Satan's right-hand helpers. Accusers of the brethren are not few; and they are always active when God is at work, and His servants are rendering Him true homage. They will put a false coloring upon the words and acts of those who love and obey the truth. They will represent the most earnest, zealous, self-denying servants of Christ as deceived or deceivers.

It is their work to misrepresent the motives of every true and noble deed, to circulate insinuations, and arouse suspicion in the minds of the inexperienced. In every conceivable manner they will seek to cause that which is pure and righteous to be regarded as foul and deceptive. And in this work the agents of Satan have their master and his angels to help them.

But none need be deceived concerning them. It may be readily seen whose children they are, whose example they follow, and whose work they do. **"Ye shall know them by their fruits."** **Matthew 7:16.** They closely resemble Satan, the envenomed slanderer, the accuser of the brethren.

It is Satan's plan to bring into the church insincere, unregenerate elements that will encourage doubt and unbelief, and hinder all who desire to see the work of God advance, and to advance with it. Many who have no real faith in God or in His word, assent to some principles of truth, and pass as Christians; and thus they are enabled to introduce their errors as scriptural doctrines.

The position that it is of no consequence what men believe, is one of Satan's most successful deceptions. He knows that the truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver; therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute false theories, fables, another gospel. From the beginning, the servants of God have contended against false teachers, not merely as vicious men, but as inculcators of falsehoods that were fatal to the soul. Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, firmly and fearlessly opposed those who were turning men from the word of God. That

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liberality which regards a correct religious faith as unimportant, found no favor with these holy defenders of the truth.

The vague and fanciful interpretations of Scripture, and the many conflicting theories concerning religious faith, that are found in the Christian world, are the work of our great adversary to so confuse minds that they shall not discern the truth. And the discord and division which exists among the churches of Christendom is in a great measure due to the prevailing custom of wresting the Scriptures to support a favorite theory.

Instead of carefully studying God's word with humility of heart to obtain a knowledge of His will, many seek only to discover something odd or original. In order to sustain erroneous doctrines or unchristian practices, they seize upon passages of Scripture separated from the context, perhaps quoting half of a single verse as proving their point, when the remaining portion would show the meaning to be quite the opposite. With the cunning of the serpent, they entrench themselves behind disconnected utterances construed to suit their carnal desires.

Thus do many willfully pervert the word of God. Others, who have an active imagination, seize upon the figures and symbols of Holy Writ, interpret to suit their fancy, with little regard to the testimony of Scripture as its own interpreter, and then they present their fancies as the teachings of God's word.

Whenever the study of the Scriptures is entered upon without a prayerful, humble, teachable spirit, the plainest and simplest as well as the most difficult passages will be wrested from their true meaning. The papal leaders select such portions of Scripture as best serve their purpose, interpret to suit themselves, and then present these to the people, while they deny them the privilege of studying the Bible, and understanding its sacred truths for themselves.

Unless the whole Bible is given to the people just as it reads, it would be better for them not to have it at all. The Bible was designed to be a guide to all who wish to become acquainted with the will of their Maker. God gave to men the sure word of prophecy; angels and even Christ Himself came to make known to Daniel and John the things that must shortly come to pass. Those important matters that concern our salvation were not left involved in mystery.

They were not revealed in such a way as to perplex and mislead the honest seeker after truth. Said the Lord by the prophet Habakkuk, **"Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it."** **Habakkuk 2:2.** The word of God is plain to all who study it with a prayerful heart. Every truly honest soul will come to the light of truth. **"Light is sown for the righteous."** **Psalms 97:11.** No church can advance in holiness unless its members are earnestly seeking for truth as for hid treasure.

By the cry of liberality, men are blinded to the devices of their adversary, while he is all the time working steadily for the accomplishment of his object. As he succeeds in supplanting the word of truth by human speculations, the law of God is set aside, and the churches are under the bondage of sin while they claim to be free.

To many, scientific research has become a curse; their finite minds are so weak that they lose their balance. They cannot harmonize their views of science with Scripture statements, and

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they think that the Bible is to be tested by their standard of "science falsely so called." Thus they err from the faith, and are seduced by the devil.

Men have endeavored to be wiser than their Creator; human philosophy has attempted to search out and explain mysteries which will never be revealed, through the eternal ages. If men would but search and understand what God has made known of Himself and His purposes, they would obtain such a view of the glory, majesty, and power of Jehovah, that they would realize their own littleness, and would be content with that which has been revealed for themselves and their children.

It is a masterpiece of Satan's deceptions to keep the minds of men searching and conjecturing in regard to that which God has not made known, and which He does not intend that we shall understand. It was thus that Lucifer himself was cast out of Heaven. He became dissatisfied because all the secrets of God's purposes were not confided to him, and he entirely disregarded that which was revealed concerning his own work in the lofty position assigned him. By arousing the same discontent in the angels under his command, he caused their fall. Now he seeks to imbue the minds of men with the same spirit, and to lead them also to disregard the direct commands of God.

Those who are unwilling to accept the plain, cutting truths of the Bible, are continually seeking for pleasing fables that will quiet their consciences. The less spiritual, self-denying, and humiliating the doctrines presented, the greater the favor with which they are received. These persons degrade the intellectual powers to serve their carnal desires. Too wise in their own conceit to search the word of God with contrition of soul and earnest prayer for divine guidance, they have no shield from delusion.

Satan is ready to supply the heart's desire, and he palms off his deceptions in the place of truth. It was thus that the papacy gained its power over the minds of men; and by rejection of the truth because it involves a cross, Protestants are following the same path. All who neglect the word of God to study convenience and policy, that they may not be at variance with the world, will be left to receive damnable heresy for religious truth. The apostle Paul speaks of a class who received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

He says of these, "**For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**" **2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.** With such a warning before us, it behooves us to be on our guard as to what doctrines we receive.

Every conceivable form of error will be accepted by those who willfully reject the truth. Satan has different deceptions prepared to reach different minds; and some who look with horror upon one deception will readily receive another. Among the most successful agencies of the great deceiver are the delusive doctrines and lying wonders of Spiritualism. Disguised as an angel of light, he spreads his nets where least suspected. If men would but study the word of God with earnest prayer that they might understand its teachings, they would not be left in darkness to receive false doctrines. But as they reject the truth, they fall a prey to these deceptions.

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Another dangerous heresy is the doctrine that denies the divinity of Christ. Men who have no experimental knowledge of Jesus, will yet assume an appearance of great wisdom, as though their judgment were beyond question, and boldly declare that the Son of God had no existence prior to His first advent to this world.

This position directly contradicts the plainest statements of our Saviour concerning Himself; yet it is received with favor by a large class who claim to believe the Scriptures. With such persons it is folly to argue. No argument, however conclusive, will convince those who reject the direct testimony of the Son of God. **“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2:14.** Those who persistently cling to such errors, give evidence of their own ignorance of God and of His Son.

Still another subtle and mischievous error is the fast spreading belief that Satan has no existence as a personal being; that the name is used in Scripture merely to represent men’s evil thoughts and desires.

The teaching so widely echoed from popular pulpits, that the second advent of Christ is His coming to each individual at death, is a device to divert the minds of men from His personal coming in the clouds of heaven. For years Satan has thus been saying, “Behold, He is in the secret chambers;” and many souls have been lost by accepting this deception.

Again, worldly wisdom teaches that prayer is not essential. Men of science claim that there can be no real answer to prayer; that this would be a violation of law, a miracle, and that miracles have no existence. The universe, say they, is governed by fixed laws, and God Himself does nothing contrary to these laws. Thus they represent God as bound by His own laws; as if the operation of divine laws could exclude divine freedom.

Such teaching is opposed to the testimony of the Scriptures. Were not miracles wrought by Christ and His apostles? The same compassionate Saviour lives to-day, and He is as willing to listen to the prayer of faith as when He walked visibly among men. The natural co-operates with the supernatural. It is a part of God’s plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow, did we not thus ask.

Innumerable are the erroneous doctrines and fanciful ideas that are obtaining among the churches of Christendom. It is impossible to estimate the evil results of removing one of the landmarks fixed by the word of God. Few who venture to do this, stop with the rejection of a single truth. The majority continue to set aside one after another of its principles, until they become actual infidels. And this is the object which Satan seeks to accomplish.

There is nothing that he desires more than to destroy confidence in God and in His word. Satan stands at the head of the great army of doubters, and he works to the utmost of his power to beguile souls into his ranks. It is becoming fashionable to doubt. There are many who seem to feel that it is a virtue to stand on the side of unbelief, skepticism, and infidelity. But underneath an appearance of candor and humility, it will be found that such persons are actuated by self-confidence and pride.

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It is a terrible thing to lose faith in God or in His word. Unbelief strengthens as it is encouraged. There is danger in even once giving expression to doubt; a seed is sown which produces a harvest of its kind. Satan will nourish the crop every moment. Those who allow themselves to talk of their doubts will find them constantly becoming more confirmed. God will never remove every occasion for doubt. He will never work a miracle to remove unbelief when He has given sufficient evidence for faith.

God looks with displeasure upon the self-sufficient and the unbelieving, who are ever doubting His promises and distrusting the assurance of His grace. They are unproductive trees that spread their dark branches far and wide, shutting away the sunlight from other plants, and causing them to droop and die under the chilling shadow. The lifework of these persons will appear as a never-ceasing witness against them. They are sowing seeds of doubt and skepticism that will yield an unyielding harvest.

The followers of Christ know little of the plots which Satan and his hosts are forming against them. But He who sitteth in the heavens will overrule all these devices for the accomplishment of His deep designs. The Lord permits His people to be subjected to the fiery ordeal of temptation, not because He takes pleasure in their distress and affliction, but because this process is essential to their final victory. He could not, consistently with His own glory, shield them from temptation; for the very object of the trial is to prepare them to resist all the allurements of evil.

Satan is well aware that the weakest soul who abides in Christ is more than a match for the hosts of darkness, and that, should he reveal himself openly, he would be met and resisted. Therefore he seeks to draw away the soldiers of the cross from their strong fortification, while he lies in ambush with his forces, ready to destroy all who venture upon his ground. No man is safe for a day or an hour without prayer. Especially should we entreat the Lord for wisdom to understand His word.

Satan is an expert in quoting Scripture, placing his own interpretation upon passages by which he hopes to cause us to stumble. We should study the Bible with humility of heart, never losing sight of our dependence upon God. While we must constantly guard against the devices of Satan, we should pray in faith continually, "Lead us not into temptation."