

God's Answers For Today

We have no record of the merciful warnings and entreaties which the rebels must have received from the God of love, but we do know that every inducement to be loyal was spurned. And so "there was war in heaven: Michael [Christ] and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12:7-9. Our Lord briefly referred to this tragic event when He said: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Luke 10:18. And ever since, that unhappy host of "angels that sinned" and "which kept not their first estate," have pursued with venomous fury the evil purposes of their satanic leader. (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6)

The devil is primarily responsible for all the sin and misery and strife and contention in the world today. He would ban God from men's thinking and planning, and set their minds on fire with ideas and philosophies whose end is ruination. "The devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour," says Peter, therefore we must "be sober, be vigilant." 1 Peter 5:8. He knows he is doomed, and that his time is short, therefore his efforts to demoralize and pervert humanity are put forth with the utmost vehemence. Because of this, a woe is pronounced on the inhabitants of this earth. (Revelation 12:12.)

But we are not left without a defense. We would, of course, be overcome if we resisted him in our own strength. But if the Spirit of the Lord dwells within us, and if we submit humbly to God, asking Him for power to overcome, then victory will be ours. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Isaiah 59:19. "Submit yourselves therefore to God, Resist the devil, and he will flee from you!" James 4:7.

How Does the Devil Work?

EVERY activity of the devil is for the one purpose of frustrating the Gospel of Christ. "The god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not," says Paul, "lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, should shine unto them." 2 Corinthians 4:4. All his plans, all his deceptions, all his falsehoods, are for the one great purpose of depriving men of the blessings and light of the Gospel. He works in many ways to do this.

If ever the Gospel of Jesus were needed, it is today. Yet at no time have its foundations been more vigorously assailed. This is the devil's work. As Paul with prophetic foresight surveyed conditions today, he warned: "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Timothy 4:3. Even stronger language is used of these "fables" which shall supplant the truth of the Gospel in the last days, for Paul elsewhere calls them "doctrines of devils." He describes also a condition in which many no longer listen to God, but give "heed to seducing spirits." 1 Timothy 4:1. These "doctrines of devils" are actually counterfeits of the doctrines of God, possessing, as counterfeits usually do, an outward appearance of genuineness. There is no Bible teaching which has not been denied, and for which an attractive perversion has not been prepared. Of course, Satan depends on human agents to teach his errors, the kind of instructors whom many in the world, according to Paul, will "heap unto themselves." Isaiah had cause to complain of them in his day, and pronounced a woe upon them. (Isaiah 5:20.)

The effect of all Satan's delusions is to deaden our sense of sin, to encourage a state of spiritual slumber, to misrepresent God, His law, and His ultimate intentions, and to unfit us for the great day of Christ's return.

Of all Satan's endeavors to enlist us on his side, one of the most effective is that of modern Spiritualism. As we have already seen, the Bible teaches that the dead are peacefully sleeping, and that they will thus remain until the great resurrection day when Christ returns. But Spiritualism would have us believe that the dead are very much alive. According to the Spiritualist view, there is no waiting period whatever between death and the enjoyment of more abundant life in other spheres. It is claimed that the dead live on, and that far from lacking a knowledge of affairs on earth, as the Bible affirms, they actually possess a greater knowledge and keener emotions. (Job 14:21; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6.)

Spiritualism claims to draw aside the veil between the consciousness of this life, and the "consciousness" of death. According to a prominent medium, it is "the lifting of a curtain between two planes of consciousness." (The Either-Or of Spiritualism, page 4.) Another medium, defining the meaning

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of this popular modern movement, says that it "is the only doctrine which gives a definite and substantial existence to the spirit world. And which allows for the straightforward and uninterrupted progress of the human spirit from the elementary conditions of human life on this earth, up to, and through the higher phases of existence in the spirit world." - *The History of Spiritualism*, page 4.

And in an attempt to prove that Spiritualism is "true," the alleged spirit forms and voices of loved ones who are dead, are produced in the seance chamber. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, an apostle of Spiritualism, in his autobiography claimed: "I have clasped materialized hands. I have had long conversations with the direct voice. I have smelt the peculiar ozone-like smell of ectoplasm. I have seen spirits walk round the room in fair light, and join in the talk of the company." - *Memories and Adventures*, page 402.

Such familiar spirits are, however, nothing but the work of Satan and his fallen angels. By cleverly assuming the form of our departed dead, they seek to give the impression that the dead are really alive, and therefore contradict the Bible teaching that the dead are inert, and remain so until the resurrection. As Cardinal Lepicier declared in his book *The Unseen World*: "It must be evident to all impartial minds that Spiritualism is in reality a most effective means of drawing away from God." He recognized that the ghostly forms of the darkened seance chamber were the work of intelligences superior to the human soul in power and acumen, but of base morality."

In Old Testament times, and throughout history, in every nation, Satan and his angels have used this most effective method of fascinating men and women, and of leading them away from God and the Bible.

Spiritualism leads to complacency about the future. It claims that survival after death is automatic, ghostly materialization being used as proof. Jesus, however, declared that "he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5:12. Spiritualism says, no! Whether we are Christians or not, it claims that we are all destined to enjoy fuller life and unhindered spiritual progress after death. Because of this claim that endless life in higher spheres is to be the experience of us all, regardless of our moral status, Spiritualism naturally weakens the urge to struggle against pleasurable sins, and destroys the urge to sacrifice for the cause of truth.

So a loving God gives the following warnings in His Word: "Regard not them which have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards." Leviticus 19:31. And again: "There shall not be found among you anyone that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consultant with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord." Deuteronomy 18:9-12.

The Bible foresaw that in the last days the spirits of devils working miracles would go forth among the nations, "to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:14. One way whereby these evil angels will achieve their purpose, will be-as in the past-by appearing as familiar spirits. Examples of leading men-like Hitler who had his own private medium-who have resorted to the spirits for advice, are by no means scarce.

God's inspired advice is: "When they tell you to consult mediums and ghosts that cheep and gibber in low murmurs, ask them if a nation should not rather consult its God. Say 'Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? Consult the Message and the Counsel of God!' " Isaiah 8:19, 20 (Moffatt).

Satan and his host are engaged in a vast conspiracy of evil for our overthrow. But God is on our side. And the holy angels are on our side. They are anxious to see us safely through to the eternal joys which lie just ahead of us. If we trust in God, even the most deceptive devices of Satan will prove unavailing.

Why Was Not the Devil Destroyed?

THE devil will be destroyed one day; of this we are assured. One of the great purposes of Jesus was "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Hebrews 2:14. John visualized the dramatic scenes which will finally and forever bring down the curtain on the activities of Satan and his hosts. "Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them," he says. (Revelation 20:7-9)

But why wait until some future date to terminate his nefarious activities? Why, in fact, should God have waited at all, when Lucifer made it clear that he would never repent? Surely God knew the suffering