

reach its height prior to the second advent. In what ways has the papacy partly fulfilled Paul's predictions?

In a broad sense Satan is the "man of sin" who opposes God and who would like to occupy God's throne. But Satan works through agents of deception, and in the last days the papacy will be one of his chief agencies for deception and coercion.

The climax of apostasy is announced in Revelation 14:8; 18:1-4; "Babylon is fallen." Note again the "Supplementary Material" at the end of chapter 51 for identification of Babylon in this verse.

II. Spiritism

From the time he spoke through the serpent in Eden, Satan has been practicing deception by speaking to men through human mediums and spirit agents. This communication from the world of evil spirits is manifest today in spiritism. Early in human history Satan introduced the idea that the dead could return in spirit form to communicate with the living. This is simply an extension of the idea that there is a spirit part of man that continues to live after physical death.

Frequently in the Old Testament God warned against communication with professed spirits of the dead, and against dealings with the mediums who professed to have access to the spirits. A severe penalty was imposed upon those who disobeyed His commands.

*Leviticus 20:27 *Deuteronomy 18:10-14 1 Chronicles 10:13

Satan attempts to control men's minds, and one of the modern methods he employs is spiritism. It is ancient demon worship and witchcraft in modern guise. Its influence is sweeping everywhere in preparation for Satan's final deception. It is found among Christians as well as non-Christians. Although we cannot here discuss the teachings and practices of modern spiritism, we must recognize the serious implications of it in a time when Satan is putting forth every effort to deceive.

All who hold the un-Scriptural view that man is conscious in death are susceptible to Satan's deceptions through spiritism. This belief prepares the way for the final delusion. Spirit of prophecy instruction has repeatedly directed our attention to the place of spiritism in last-day events. See *The Great Controversy*, page 561:2, where the work of the "spirits of devils" of Revelation 16:13, 14 is pointed out as the climax of Satan's masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritism. Here the "unclean spirits," "spirits of devils," are pictured as coming out of the mouth of the "dragon," generally identified as paganism or spiritism, out of the mouth of the

"beast," the papal power, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, seemingly Protestantism which has apostatized. The evil spirits come out of the "mouth" of each power. Apparently they will speak a common message in their final proclamation to the world.¹

Three times in the book of the Revelation attention is called to miracle-working power exercised by the image to the beast, which we recognize as apostate Protestantism. This miracle-working power is the power of Satan used to deceive men into giving loyalty to the apostate powers. °See Revelation 13:14; 16:14; 19:20. The deception is beyond anything we can imagine today. Its climax is reached when Satan himself counterfeits Christ's coming and leads astray many who are not firmly grounded on the Scriptures. °See 2 Thessalonians 2:9. The word translated "coming" is *parousia*, the same word generally used for Christ's coming, as in verse 8. The use of the word in verse 9 points to a coming on the part of Satan that will imitate Christ's advent. Only a knowledge of the true advent as found in the Bible will protect us against deception at that time.²

III. Persecution

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12. In every age the godly have suffered at the hands of the ungodly. Before the second advent Satan will make his final attempt to turn men from God. The description of the last-day persecution is given in Revelation 13:11-17. °Read these verses.

Following the forty-two months (1260 day-years), ending in 1798

¹ "I saw that the saints must get a thorough understanding of present truth, which they will be obliged to maintain from the Scriptures. They must understand the state of the dead; for the spirits of devils will yet appear to them, professing to be beloved friends and relatives, who will declare to them that the Sabbath has been changed, also other un-Scriptural doctrines. They will do all in their power to excite sympathy and will work miracles before them to confirm what they declare. The people of God must be prepared to withstand these spirits with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything, and that they who appear to them are the spirits of devils. Our minds must not be taken up with things around us, but must be occupied with the present truth and a preparation to give a reason of our hope with meekness and fear. We must seek wisdom from on high that we may stand in this day of error and delusion."—*Early Writings*, page 87:2.

See also *The Great Controversy*, page 588:1, 2.

² "None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict."—*The Great Controversy*, page 593:2.

See also *The Great Controversy*, pages 624:1 to 625:3 (particularly important).