

End-Time Deceptions

Sabbath Afternoon, December 3

The more we learn in reference to the early days of the Christian church, and see with what subtlety Satan worked to weaken and destroy, the better we shall be prepared to resist his devices and meet coming perils. We are in the time when tribulations such as the world has never yet seen will prevail. “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” But God has set bounds that Satan cannot pass. Our most holy faith is this barrier; and if we build ourselves up in the faith, we shall be safe in the keeping of the Mighty One. “Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 297.*

The experience of the past will be repeated. In the future, Satan’s superstitions will assume new forms. Errors will be presented in a pleasing and flattering manner. False theories, clothed with garments of light, will be presented to God’s people. Thus Satan will try to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Most seducing influences will be exerted; minds will be hypnotized.

Corruptions of every type, similar to those existing among the antediluvians, will be brought in to take minds captive. The exaltation of nature as God, the unrestrained license of the human will, the counsel of the ungodly—these Satan uses as agencies to bring about certain ends. He will employ the power of mind over mind to carry out his designs.

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8, p. 293.*

Christ was tempted in all points as man is tempted, but at no time did He bring against the tempter a railing accusation. To every temptation He presented the word of the Lord. “It is written” was His never-failing weapon. We, as the representatives of Christ, are to meet every thrust of the enemy with the word of the living God. Never should we allow ourselves to follow the trail of the serpent by using his scientific arguments. Satan can never gain advantage of the child of God who relies on the word of God as his defense.

Our Counselor impressed deeply on our minds that God’s commandment-keeping people must be sanctified through the truth and that truth must ever be given the foremost place. We must not forget that Satan still lives to exercise his deceptive power through false science.

Christ was the Majesty of heaven, the Prince of life; yet He humbled Himself as a man and became obedient to every law of God. He passed over the ground that every man must tread who takes His name, and came forth from His trial pure and untainted by sin. He was our example in all things.

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, pp. 68, 69.*

Sunday, December 4

Mysticism

There is a spurious experience that is prevailing now everywhere in regard to the love of Jesus—that we must dwell on the love of Jesus, that faith in Jesus is all we need—but these souls must be instructed that the love of Jesus in the heart will lead to humility of life and obedience to all His commandments. “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4). The love of Jesus that goes no farther than the lips will not save any soul, but be a great delusion. . . .

Those who reject the truth of the Bible do it under a pretense of loving Jesus. Those who love Jesus will reveal that love by being obedient children. They will be doers of the Word and not hearers only. They will not be continually pleading, “All that we have to do is to believe in Jesus.” This is true in the fullest sense, but they do not comprehend, they do not take it in its fullest sense. To believe in Jesus is to take Him as your Redeemer, as your Pattern. All who love Jesus must follow His example. They must connect themselves with Jesus as closely as the branch is connected with the living vine.

—*This Day With God*, p. 299.

Human nature is vacillating. Men grasp the truth with their perceptive powers, but they refuse to separate themselves from the world. Men will not consent to be God’s peculiar people. They know the truth of the Bible, but they do not want to obey, and they turn from the truth. They act out their unbelief, and darkness comes upon their souls. Choosing their own way they are left to be filled with their own devices. Truth is insulted, Christ ignored, and perdition will be their portion unless they turn and repent.

—*The Upward Look*, p. 18.

Feeling and faith are as distinct from each other as the east is from the west. Faith is not dependent on feeling. Daily we should dedicate ourselves to God and believe that Christ understands and accepts the sacrifice, without examining ourselves to see if we have that degree of feeling that we think should correspond with our faith. Have we not the assurance that our heavenly Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him in faith than parents are to give good gifts to their children? We should go forward as if to every prayer that we send to the throne of God we heard the response from the One whose promises never fail. Even when depressed by sadness, it is our privilege to make melody in our hearts to God. When we do this, the mists and clouds will be rolled back, and we will pass from the shadow and darkness into the clear sunshine of His presence.

—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 537.

Monday, December 5

Near-Death Experiences

The prince of darkness, who has so long bent the powers of his mastermind to the work of deception, skillfully adapts his temptations to men of all classes and conditions. To persons of culture and refinement he presents spiritualism in its more refined and intellectual aspects, and thus succeeds in drawing many into his snare. The wisdom which spiritualism imparts is that described by the apostle James, which “descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.” James 3:15. This, however, the great deceiver conceals when concealment will best suit his purpose. He who could appear clothed with the brightness of the heavenly seraphs before Christ in the wilderness of temptation, comes to men in the most attractive manner as an angel of light. He appeals to the reason by the presentation of elevating themes; he delights the fancy with enrapturing scenes; and he enlists the affections by his eloquent portrayals of love and charity. He excites the imagination to lofty flights, leading men to take so great pride in their own wisdom that in their hearts they despise the Eternal One. That mighty being who could take the world’s Redeemer to an exceedingly high mountain and bring before Him all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, will present his temptations to men in a manner to pervert the senses of all who are not shielded by divine power.

—*The Great Controversy*, p. 553.

The very name of witchcraft is now held in contempt. The claim that men can [communicate] with evil spirits is regarded as a fable of the Dark Ages. But Spiritualism, which numbers its converts by hundreds of thousands, yea, by millions, which has made its way into scientific circles, which has invaded churches and has found favor in legislative bodies, and even in the courts of kings—this mammoth deception is but a revival in a new disguise of the witchcraft condemned and prohibited of old.

—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 395.

Bible reading, the critical examination of Bible subjects, essays written upon topics which would improve the mind and impart knowledge, the study of the prophecies or the precious lessons of Christ—these will have an influence to strengthen the mental powers and increase spirituality. A familiar acquaintance with the Scriptures sharpens the discerning powers and fortifies the soul against the attacks of Satan. . . .

The intellect, as well as the heart, must be consecrated to the service of God. He has claims upon all there is of us. The follower of Christ should not indulge in any gratification, or engage in any enterprise, however innocent or laudable it may appear, which an enlightened conscience tells him would abate his ardor or lessen his spirituality. Every Christian should labor to press back the tide of evil.

—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 543, 544.

Tuesday, December 6

Reincarnation

Satan beguiles men now as he beguiled Eve in Eden by flattery, by kindling a desire to obtain forbidden knowledge, by exciting ambition for self-exaltation. It was cherishing these evils that caused his fall, and through them he aims to compass the ruin of men. “Ye shall be as gods,” he declares, “knowing good and evil.” Genesis 3:5. Spiritualism teaches “that man is the creature of progression; that it is his destiny from his birth to progress, even to eternity, toward the Godhead.” And again: “Each mind will judge itself and not another.” “The judgment will be right, because it is the judgment of self. . . . The throne is within you.” Said a spiritualistic teacher, as the “spiritual consciousness” awoke within him: “My fellow men, all were unfallen demigods.” And another declares: “Any just and perfect being is Christ.”

Thus, in place of the righteousness and perfection of the infinite God, the true object of adoration; in place of the perfect righteousness of His law, the true standard of human attainment, Satan has substituted the sinful, erring nature of man himself as the only object of adoration, the only rule of judgment, or standard of character. This is progress, not upward, but downward.

—*The Great Controversy*, p. 554.

Satan was seeking to shut out from men a knowledge of God, to turn their attention from the temple of God, and to establish his own kingdom. His strife for supremacy had seemed to be almost wholly successful. It is true that in every generation God had His agencies. Even among the heathen there were men through whom Christ was working to uplift the people from their sin and degradation. But these men were despised and hated. Many of them suffered a violent death. The dark shadow that Satan had cast over the world grew deeper and deeper.

Through heathenism, Satan had for ages turned men away from God; but he won his great triumph in perverting the faith of Israel. By contemplating and worshiping their own conceptions, the heathen had lost a knowledge of God, and had become more and more corrupt. So it was with Israel. The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion; it had now become the principle of the Jewish religion. Satan had implanted this principle. Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 35.

Wednesday, December 7

Necromancy and Ancestor Worship

The most sorrowful thought of all is that under [Satan's] deceptive influence men will have a form of godliness, without having a real connection with God. Like Adam and Eve, who ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, many are even now feeding upon the deceptive morsels of error.

Satanic agencies are clothing false theories in an attractive garb, even as Satan in the Garden of Eden concealed his identity from our first parents by speaking through the serpent. These agencies are instilling into human minds that which in reality is deadly error. The hypnotic influence of Satan will rest upon those who turn from the plain word of God to pleasing fables.

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8, pp. 293, 294.*

In this degenerate age, Satan holds control over those who depart from the right and venture upon his ground. He exercises his power upon such in an alarming manner. I was directed to these words: "Intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." Some, I was shown, gratify their curiosity and tamper with the devil. They have no real faith in spiritualism and would start back with horror at the idea of being mediums. Yet they venture and place themselves in a position where Satan can exercise his power upon them. Such do not mean to enter deep into this work, but they know not what they are doing. They are venturing on the devil's ground and are tempting him to control them. This powerful destroyer considers them his lawful prey and exercises his power upon them, and that against their will. When they wish to control themselves they cannot. They yielded their minds to Satan, and he will not release his claims, but holds them captive. No power can deliver the ensnared soul but the power of God in answer to the earnest prayers of His faithful followers.

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 299.*

By the prediction of Saul's doom, given through the woman of Endor, Satan planned to ensnare the people of Israel. He hoped that they would be inspired with confidence in the sorceress, and would be led to consult her. Thus they would turn from God as their counselor and would place themselves under the guidance of Satan. The lure by which spiritualism attracts the multitudes is its pretended power to draw aside the veil from the future and reveal to men what God has hidden. God has in His word opened before us the great events of the future—all that it is essential for us to know—and He has given us a safe guide for our feet amid all its perils; but it is Satan's purpose to destroy men's confidence in God, to make them dissatisfied with their condition in life, and to lead them to seek a knowledge of what God has wisely veiled from them, and to despise what He has revealed in His Holy Word.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 686.*

Thursday, December 8

Personations and Other Appearances

Deceived mortals are worshiping evil angels, believing them to be the spirits of their dead friends. The word of God expressly declares that the dead have no more a portion in anything done under the sun. Spiritualists say that the dead know everything that is done under the sun, that they communicate to their friends on earth, give valuable information, and perform wonders. Psalm 115:17: “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.” Satan, transformed into an angel of light, works with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. He who could take up the Son of God, who was made a little lower than the angels, and place Him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and take Him up into an exceeding high mountain to present before Him the kingdoms of the world, can exercise his power upon the human family, who are far inferior in strength and wisdom to the Son of God, even after He had taken upon Himself man’s nature.

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 298.*

“We wrestle not against flesh and blood,” declares Paul, “but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.” Ephesians 6:12. Till the close of time there will be a conflict between the church of God and those who are under the control of evil angels.

The early Christians were often called to meet the powers of darkness face to face. By sophistry and by persecution the enemy endeavored to turn them from the true faith. At the present time, when the end of all things earthly is rapidly approaching, Satan is putting forth desperate efforts to ensnare the world. He is devising many plans to occupy minds and to divert attention from the truths essential to salvation. In every city his agencies are busily organizing into parties those who are opposed to the law of God. The archdeceiver is at work to introduce elements of confusion and rebellion, and men are being fired with a zeal that is not according to knowledge.

—*The Acts of the Apostles, p. 219.*

Determined to efface the image of God in man, Satan works with an intensity of effort to hide God from view. Not openly does he work, but secretly, mingling the human and the divine, the spurious and the genuine, so seeking to bring confusion and distress. But in proportionate power divine mercy is revealed to counteract this wicked working, and bring to light the enemy’s hidden purposes.

God’s people are to bear a bold, decided testimony for the truth, unfolding the purposes of God by the witness of pen and voice. In place after place they are to proclaim the message of God’s Word, arousing men and women to comprehend the truth. . . .

There is a reality in sound doctrine. It is not as a vapor, which passes away. Light is to shine forth from the Word of God. God calls upon His people to draw near to Him. Let no one interpose between Him and His people. Christ is knocking at the door of the heart, seeking for entrance. Will you let Him in?

—*This Day With God, p. 308.*

Friday, December 9

For Further Reading

The Ministry of Healing, “Pantheistic Theories,” pp. 428, 429;

Evangelism, “Dealing With False Science, Cults, Isms, and Secret Societies,” pp. 602–609.