

# GC Worship Talk

## THE FAITHFUL PLANNED GIVER

We all are aware that there is a conflict going on between good and evil, love and hate, Truth and error, life and death, Jesus Christ and Satan. God has had a rescue plan in place since before our world was created.

Ephesians 1:4 - 5 NKJV

just as He chose us in Him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having **predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself**, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Jesus has been the most important part of God's rescue plan since it was initiated.

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the **Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**.

(Revelation 13:8 NKJV) last part

God has had this plan in place from eternity past. Jesus was the most important active part of this plan since He would GO.

Jesus before leaving earth gave a command to REACH THE WORLD.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a very important part to play in taking the last warning message to the people of this world that do not know Jesus Christ, who do not know that judgement is happening right now, in the Heavenly court room. Many people do not know that Jesus is coming back to earth very soon. These people need to hear the last warning message.

There are three special messages for the last days of earth's history found in Revelation 14:6 to 12. Three Angels deliver these messages in a loud voice. These angels are using their outdoor voices.

1. Everlasting Gospel of Judgement and a call to worship the Creator Living GOD. (Revelation 14:7)
2. Warning to come out of false worship. (Revelation 14:8)
3. Warning about a mark in the forehead or hand (Revelation 14:9)

### Seal or Mark

They were told not to damage the grass of the earth or any green growth or

any tree, but **only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.**  
(Revelation 9:4 NRSV)

This last day message that SDAs give to the world to come out of error and darkness and into the marvelous light of truth and be SEALED in their foreheads by GOD for eternity. This message is calling for a choice to commit your life to GOD and be Sealed in the FORHEAD (heart or intellect).

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his **mark on his forehead or on his hand,**  
(Revelation 14:9 NKJV)

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a **mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,**  
(Revelation 13:16 NKJV)

and that **no one may buy or sell** except one who has the **mark** or the **name** of the beast, or the **number** of his name.  
(Revelation 13:17 NKJV)

There are two possible choices that every human may make. The choice that you make results in a specific mark. Choose God and receive His Seal in your Forehead. Choose Satan and receive his mark of the beast in either your right hand or in your forehead. Satan has one mark but two locations that it is placed.

Notice that the consequences that are experienced by both groups are ECONOMIC "**no one may buy or sell**" unless they have the proper mark.

Those who choose to be faithful to GOD are **economically disadvantaged** since they are not able to buy or sell.

The supposed benefit that results from rejection of GOD by those who receive the mark in their right hands or foreheads is also ECONOMIC, they can continue to purchase (buy and sell).

Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the **number of a man**: His number is 666.  
(Revelation 13:18 NKJV)

Who is this MAN? This created being? Who is identified by this number?

### Isaiah 14:12-14 NKJV

(12) "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You, who weakened the nations!

(13) For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north;

(14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'

### Revelation 12:3-4 NKJV

(3) And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

(4) His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

### Revelation 12:7-9 NKJV

(7) And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,

(8) but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

(9) So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

We see in these texts the players in this conflict. Michael a mighty leader representing GOD with His angels. Lucifer, great fiery red dragon, serpent, Devil, Satan with his angels. There is no question that he is the source of sin and all evil in the universe.

The purpose of your organizations in this conflict is to lead the people of the world to defeat the Devil. The way that the Devil loses is when those who he claims as his subjects come to a commitment of their lives to be followers of Jesus Christ.

Just as God approached the climax of this cosmic conflict by sending a Baby

to be the Messiah who would defeat all the powers of evil.

God's strategy to defeat Satan in these last days of earth's history is recorded in Matthew 10:16. Jesus says:

Mat 10:16 (NKJV) "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

Jesus, the Baby Messiah, was by earthly standards very weak. Christians who are followers of Jesus are seen to be as weak as sheep, by earthly standards are very weak. God uses the weak in this last day conflict just like he used the spotless Lamb of God two thousand years ago to defeat Satan. Trusting fully in God is the only hope of success.

In this position of apparent weakness, do you think that it would be good to understand the purposes of the enemy, as Satan is seeking to attack the sheep like disciples of Jesus who are members of the last day Christ following church?

Satan does have a plan. God revealed the Devil's plan in vision to Ellen White. As Ellen White in vision observed, Satan explained exactly what his angels should plan to do in these last days of earth's history.

Listen for the **five characteristics** of those who will be targeted by Satan and then the **five temptations** that Satan will use to distract this specific targeted group from following Jesus.

Remember that Ellen White is seeing and hearing in vision then recording what Satan is saying to his angels. SATAN IS THE ONE SPEAKING!

# Wiles of Satan

## Counsels on Stewardship, page 154

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 472-474

"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 (1) second advent of Christ and endeavoring to (2) keep all the commandments of God." – {CS 154.1}

So far, these two characteristics are general and could describe many Christians. But Satan does not stop here. He becomes much more specific in his instructions. Listen carefully as Ellen White continues to describe what God is revealing to her in vision.

### **Special Target**

“Says the great deceiver: “We must watch those who are calling the attention of the people to the (3) **Sabbath of Jehovah**; 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 (4) **ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary**, and shows that the (5) **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”.... – {CS 154.2}

Satan is seeking to deceive every person on planet earth and has identified a specific church as a special target. What church on earth meets all 5 of these listed characteristics? I would suggest no other church, but the Seventh-day Adventist Church is known to teach all five of these doctrines.

You would think that Satan would use the old tried and true temptations of morality, murder, lying, worship of idols. But the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment (you shall not covet) seems to be his focus in these last hours of earth’s history. Remember who is speaking. This is Satan instructing his angels.

### **Specific Temptation**

“Go, make the possessors of (1) **lands** and (2) **money** drunk with the (3) **cares of this life**. Present the world before them in its most attractive light, that they may (4) **lay up their treasure here**, and fix their (5) **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.”—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 472-474. – {CS 154.3}

Satan wants to put his mark on the right-hand or forehead of every person on earth. That includes every Seventh-day Adventist member. Notice that all of the five temptations are ECONOMIC in nature. 1. Lands, 2. Money, 3. Cares if this life, 4. Lay up their treasure here (on earth), and 5. Fix their affections upon earthly things. Satan knows that if he can deceive a person into receiving his mark, they cannot receive the Seal of God.

So, what does Planned Giving & Trust Services have to do with this last day economic conflict for the hearts of humanity? Planned Giving encourages every Seventh-day Adventist member,

since they are the specific targets of Satan, to have a plan during life and at the end of life that will keep their money and possessions that God's has entrusted to them to manage working to defeat the Devil by "take subjects from Satan" who is the god of hate and introduce them to Jesus and a God of LOVE.

Ellen White in the book *Counsels on Stewardship* page 323, speaking in the context of Planned Giving writes:

**"...this duty is just as sacred as the duty to preach the word to save souls. ... Should not Christian men feel interested and anxious for that man's future good as well as for the interest of God's cause, that he shall make a right disposition of his Lord's money, the talents lent him for wise improvement?"** <sup>1</sup> White, E. G. (1940). *Counsels on Stewardship* (pp. 323-324). Review and Herald Publishing Association. (Emphasis added)

Planned Giving encourages all people to choose the SEAL OF GOD in their forehead. In other words fully 100% committed to GOD. How would God want us to do this?

#### ***A Call for Reform***

Let it ever be kept in mind that the **present selfish system** of disposing of property is not God's plan, but man's device. **Christians should be reformers**, and break up this present system, giving an entirely new aspect to the **formation of wills** (Last Will and Testament). Let the idea be ever present that it is the Lord's property which you are handling. The will of **God in this matter is law.**<sup>2</sup> *Counsel on Stewardship* page 328

As I travel around the world I hear people state that their local culture, customs, practices, and traditions do not teach them to plan or be planned givers. How would God want his followers to change what is done and to be reformers in the area of Planned Giving?

#### ***A Better Way***

The Lord would have His followers dispense their means while they can do it themselves. Some may inquire, "Must we actually dispossess ourselves of everything which we **call our own**?" We may not be required to do this now; but we **must be willing to do so for Christ's sake**. We must acknowledge that our possessions are **absolutely His**, by using of them freely whenever means is needed to advance His cause. *Counsel on Stewardship* page 325

Many people ask me where is the safest place to make investments for the future?

#### **How to Make Your Property Secure**

*Counsels on Stewardship* page 329

Would you make your **property secure**? Place it in the hand that bears the nail-print of the crucifixion. Retain it in your possession, and it will be to your eternal loss. **Give it to God, and**

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<sup>2</sup> White, E. G. (1940). [\*Counsels on Stewardship\*](#) (p. 328). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

from that moment it bears His inscription. It is sealed with His immutability. Would you enjoy your substance? Then use it for the blessing of the suffering.—Testimonies for the Church 9:51.<sup>3</sup>

There is no risk-free investment on planet earth. There is only one risk free investment and that is in the BANK OF HEAVEN.

## Bank of Heaven

Counsels on Stewardship page 287

Viewing the cross of Calvary, looking upon the world's Redeemer, who for our sake became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich, we shall feel that we are not to lay up for ourselves treasures on the earth, but to lay up treasures in the bank of heaven, which will never suspend payment nor fail. The Lord has given Jesus to our world, and the question is, What can we give back to God in gifts and offerings to show our appreciation of His love? "Freely ye have received, freely give."<sup>4</sup>

The Third Angels message is righteousness by faith in God alone. Yet this same Angel warns about economic temptations also. Seventh-day Adventists have been warned how to avoid these temptations. Seventh-day Adventist have these special warning messages to share with the world that all may be prepared to defend their faith in God from the attacks of Satan.

Ephesians 6:10-12 NKJV

(10) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

(11) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

(12) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Christians may be as weak as sheep, but with God all things are possible.

"But Jesus looked at them and said, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.'" Mark 10:27 NKJV

PGTS purpose is to provide the scriptural, Spirit of Prophecy foundation and the legal information that is necessary to help all SDA members prepare a plan for their family that will take care of their temporal needs but also keep God's resources safely on the winning side of

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<sup>3</sup> White, E. G. (1940). [Counsels on Stewardship](#) (p. 329). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

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the cosmic conflict. The side of the great hope that is following the winner, Jesus Christ and out of the possession of the loser of this conflict, the Devil and his angels.

## **Jesus Christ Wins!**

I challenge you to PLAN FOR YOUR FAMILY TO WIN with JESUS. Encourage all Seventh-day Adventist church members to be faithful planned givers.



## Sources

### Worse Than Earthly Loss

Satan is the archdeceiver. The results to us of accepting his temptations are worse than any earthly loss that can be realized, yes, worse than death itself. Those who purchase success at the fearful cost of submission to the will and plans of Satan, will find that they have made a hard bargain. Everything in Satan's trade is secured at a high price. The advantages he presents are a mirage. The high hopes he holds out are secured at the loss of things that are good and holy and pure. Let Satan be always confounded by the word, "It is written." "Blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord: that walketh in His ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee." ... – {CS 155.1}

The path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord is far above all worldly schemes and practices. Those who walk in it are to show by their works the purity of their principles.—The Signs of the Times, February 24, 1909. – {CS 155.2}

### A Dwarfed Religious Experience

The wealthy are tempted to employ their means in self-indulgence, in the gratification of appetite, in personal adornment, or in the embellishment of their homes. For these objects professed Christians do not hesitate to spend freely, and even extravagantly. But when solicited to give to the Lord's treasury, to build up His cause, and to carry forward His work in the earth, many demur. The countenance that was all aglow with interest in plans for self-gratification, does not light up with joy when the cause of God appeals to their liberality. Perhaps, feeling that they cannot well do otherwise, they dole out a limited sum, far smaller than they freely spend for needless indulgence. But they manifest no real love for Christ, no earnest interest in the salvation of precious souls. What marvel that the Christian life of this class is at best but a dwarfed and sickly existence! Unless such persons change their course, their light will go out in darkness.—The Review and Herald, May 16, 1882. – {CS 155.3}

# The Snares of Satan

## Testimonies to Minister's and Gospel Workers

[See Appendix.] [From the fourth volume of Spirit of prophecy, Or The Great Controversy, 337-340 (1884).]

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 endeavoring to keep all the commandments of God. – {TM 472.1}

Says the great deceiver: “We must watch those who are calling the attention of the people to the Sabbath of Jehovah; 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. – {TM 472.2}

“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. – {TM 472.3}

“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 minister’s explanations of Scripture and do not investigate for themselves. Therefore, by working through the ministers, I can control the people according to my will. – {TM 472.4}

“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 Romish 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. – {TM 473.1}

“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 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. – {TM 473.2}

“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. – {TM 473.3}

“Through those that have a form of godliness but know not the power, we can gain many who would otherwise do us 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. – {TM 474.1}

“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. – {TM 474.2}

“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. – {TM 475.1}

“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.” – {TM 475.2}

# Snares of Satan

**Spirit of Prophecy, column 4**

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Says the great deceiver: “We must watch those who are calling the attention of the people to the Sabbath of Jehovah; 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. – {4SP 337.2}

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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. – {4SP 337.3}

“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. – {4SP 338.1}

“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 that we can do with those who will not swerve from their allegiance to God. We led the Romish 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. – {4SP 338.2}

“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 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. – {4SP 339.1}

“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. – {4SP 339.2}

“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. – {4SP 339.3}

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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. – {4SP 340.1}

“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. – {4SP 340.2}

“We must cause distraction and division. We must destroy their anxiety for their own souls, and lead them to criticise, 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.” – {4SP 340.3}

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. 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. – {4SP 341.1}

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. – {4SP 341.2}

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. – {4SP 341.3}

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 evenommed slanderer, the accuser of the brethren. – {4SP 342.1}

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. – {4SP 342.2}

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 liberality which regards a correct religious faith as unimportant, found no favor with these holy defenders of the truth. – {4SP 343.1}

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. – {4SP 343.2}

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 vagaries as the teachings of God's word. – {4SP 343.3}

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. – {4SP 344.1}

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, 3.] 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." [Psalm 97:11.] No church can advance in holiness unless its members are earnestly seeking for truth as for hid treasure. – {4SP 344.2}

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. – {4SP 345.1}

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 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. – {4SP 345.2}

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. – {4SP 345.3}

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. – {4SP 346.1}

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. – {4SP 347.1}

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. – {4SP 347.2}

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. – {4SP 347.3}

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. – {4SP 348.1}

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. – {4SP 348.2}

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 today, 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. – {4SP 348.3}

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. – {4SP 348.4}

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. 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. – {4SP 349.1}

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 life-work of these persons will appear as a never-ceasing witness against them. They are sowing seeds of doubt and skepticism that will yield an unfailing harvest. – {4SP 349.2}

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. – {4SP 350.1}

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.” – {4SP 350.2}

## **How to combat the Wiles of the Devil**

Ephesians 6:10-20 NKJV

(10) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

(11) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

(12) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

(13) Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

(14) Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

(15) and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

(16) above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

(17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

(18) praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints--

(19) and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,

(20) for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.