

THE ADVERSARY

The item directly below is the third part of a symposium by Rod Hugelman—“**FOES OF THE NEW CREATION IN THE LAST DAYS**”—“**THE ADVERSARY**”, given at the convention of the Associated Bible Students of Metropolitan Detroit, April 5, 1975.)

Our subject is “Your Adversary, the Devil” and this is based on 1 Peter 5:8: “... Your adversary the devil... walketh about... as a roaring lion, ... seeking whom he may devour.”

We might ask ourselves why has this powerful being singled us out for special attack? There are a number of Scriptures we could turn to examine this. One would be Rev. 20:7-10: “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

That remembrance will persist forever. Then, also, we have Heb. 2:13, 14, and here we read: “And again, I will put my trust in him, and again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. For inasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he, also, himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that, has the power of death, that is, the devil.”

That is really the point isn't it? We are in a life and death struggle. A duel to the death and the bitter enemy is Satan, himself: We have to remember that we are not dealing with just some ordinary individual. As Bro. Alexander brought out, we are talking about someone who is exceedingly intelligent and bears the careful experience of perhaps millions of years. We don't know how long Satan had been in existence. Not only is he by nature more powerful than we but by long experience more clever than we in every way. As these Scriptures in Hebrews and Revelation point out—the Church, head and body, at its conclusion will be the instrument for Satan's eternal destruction. So you are his avowed enemy! His death is your ultimate goal. He is aware of that and he will fight you to the death.

Then we have Eph. 6:11, 12. WE MUST, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

And then we have Rom. 8:38, 39, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Paul was well aware of this great adversary and his great power, and he vowed to allow nothing to separate him from the love of Christ, his brethren and the opportunity that had been made available to him—the opportunity for the prize of the High Calling and the power associated with it which would be greater than any power which Satan might muster and carrying the ability to bring all mankind back up that highway of holiness. A battle to the death and Satan is your enemy! The adversary is the devil and he is determined that it shall be your life and not his.

Now as we examine Strong’s Concordance, we find that “devil” is translated from #1228 and #1225 in the Greek, “*debalos*”, which means “a traducer.” Webster tells us that this word means “to expose to contempt or sham by slander, a lie.” The demons on the other hand are translated from another word, #1139, #1140, and you generally find it translated plural—devils. If you should look up “Satan”, you will find it in both Hebrew and Greek virtually the same word, and it is translated approximately “the accuser” and which we see is in harmony with the first Scripture—“the traducer.” Yes, he is an adversary and his very name and its meaning tells us the nature of how he will attack us.

So now knowing who our enemy is, let us examine some of the ways in which he acts so that we can be better prepared. Being forearmed, we can be prepared against him. First, he is the great accuser and he works through slander; that is, he accuses and slanderously, falsely, and this may take very, very subtle forms. In connection with this, he may break down the respect of others by falsely accusing, by injecting doubt. Now let us turn to Matthew 4, and I think Bro. Seklemian mentioned this earlier this morning in this connection. Remember when Jesus went into the wilderness following his immersion? He was tempted of Satan. Notice Satan’s words: “if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

Just a little doubt injected. Are you the Son of God? If you are, command these stones to be made bread. Notice the doubt—what should I do? If I do, perhaps then I do prove that I am the Son of God. If I don’t, perhaps I am backing out—doubt, doubt, that is Satan’s stock in trade. “To interject doubt by slanderous accusation.” But what was Jesus’ answer? 4. “... It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

But the devil wasn’t satisfied. 5. “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.” 6. “And said unto him, If thou be the Son of

God, cast thyself down:..." Again if—being charged you see—doubt. "Here is your chance to prove it. People will look at you and be persuaded." Jesus answered this way: 7. "... It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Then, of course, Satan showed him the kingdoms of this world, which were his to give, and this time he says: 9. "... All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Didn't say "if you are the son of God" anymore. Jesus' own actions had proven who he was. 10. "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." 11. "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

So there is a reward for being positive in our treatment of the adversary. Another thing we have to keep in mind in connection with false accusations is that when we first hear the lie we cannot really separate it from the truth. We may not have the experience to tell whether it is a lie or not.

Now let's consider Eve's temptation very carefully in Genesis 3 and again we shall see how this works—how Satan can take advantage of an individual. Gen. 3:1, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made [Oh he is careful, subtle—don't ever expect the obvious from Satan!] and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" 2. "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:" 3. "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." 4. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: [slandorous accusation]." 5. "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Now she saw that the tree was good for food and how was she to know that this statement wasn't correct? It had never been tested before and might not there be something to it? Just perhaps God was trying to keep something from them. Doubt began to settle in. Slandorous accusation—not yet tested. Truly false, but not yet known and doubt enters. How serious can that be, such a simple accusation? We are well testified to that, aren't we? The whole world has been plunged into death because of that lie. And what about the other lie which Satan introduces? The result was an attempt to perpetuate that lie—immortality of the soul—then Hell fire and brimstone, and so on.

Now who actually comes out on top? This is the kind of poster you may see now from various churches. The picture of Satan is as a very ugly being. This particular program is a special promotion of the Baptist Church in Rockford. "20,000 degrees Fahrenheit and not a drop of water. The Burning Hell, Tortured lost souls burning forever, see hundreds of Biblical Wonders" and so on. Look at the ugly picture! Who is really condemned? Is

it Satan? The purpose of this is to drive people to where? To his, Satan's, institution! He is perfectly willing to let them think what they will in their fantasies of Satan in order that they may support his institutions. Oh he is very clever! Very, very clever! "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (2 Cor. 11:13-15)

And don't ever expect an even break from Satan. He will never give you one. Only experience will ultimately verify the truth and only that can then expose the lie. Hence, the necessity of 6,000 years of terrible experience prior to the chain of truth coming down from heaven as mentioned in Rev. 20:1, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand." Lies and deceptions are Satan's stock in trade. Therefore, the truth is the chain that will bind him and control him. This is a struggle to the death. Satan will give you no quarter nor expect any. He will never give you an even break, and he will attack your most grievous weakness—ignorance. For we are all ignorant about something. There are always things we don't know and that is the very thing that he will attack. Only there can he inject doubt; after all, if you know, you cannot be fooled. So it is that area that he will attack. What you don't know about others, what you don't know about yourself is a prime target for doubt. Alright, what is your defense? It is very clear, isn't it?—the Truth! Know the truth, it will make you free. Know the truth in every particular—arm yourself thoroughly!

Another one of Satan's methods is Discouragement. How can he discourage us—by accusing your motives and your heart intentions and impugning them. "Oh, you say you are doing that for the Lord's people? Well, you are not! It is a selfish thing so they will appreciate you more, pat you on the back!" Ever had that thought? Just remember, it may well be Satan that is trying to stop you from doing it again—because that is the next thought—"Maybe I ought not to do that." Well, you just keep right on doing it. If it is the right thing for the Lord's people, just keep right on doing it.

Your faults are often brought to mind, aren't they? And they are legion, make no mistake about that—we all have plenty of faults. After all, we can't fall from a pinnacle next to the angels for 6,000 years and not just be rife and shot through with many faults. Bro. Smith brought that to our attention clearly. And Satan will be continuously reminding you of that fact, and he will focus on every distortion of character you may possess. And what is that intended to do? To drag you right down to your knees in submission. But let it rather be in prayer that he shall have failed and God succeeded.

Let's turn back to Romans 8 again, verses 31, 32 and 33: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but

delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of god's elect? It is God that Justifieth."

Yes, through Jesus, the lens of Jesus, we can be examined and seen without distortion as though perfect—but that takes faith, doesn't it! Faith to examine ourselves and to believe that all these things are behind us, and then to stand before the bar of God's justice and run with patience this race that has been set before us. It takes faith to believe that, and Satan will do everything to tell you that it isn't enough. V. 34, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

We aren't here by ourselves, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. He is there to make intercession for us. (35) "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, (37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Yes, through him that loved us. Satan will try and push us down and let it be that we are pushed down to our knees in prayer and supplication to our Heavenly Father who is able to raise us up again.

A third point in connection with discouragement. If we fail in deeds, and we must for we are very weak, yet we can succeed in heart and mind and will through Christ. Satan will focus on the actual results which will never be what we would like. Don't be stumbled by that! Remember that is his device. Look rather on the intent, which is God's yardstick. What was it you were trying to do? What was it you wanted to do? If the heart be right and the heart and mind in total harmony with the Lord, it is as good as if it had been accomplished in fact, is it not? Another point—Satan will attack us by flattery—making use of flattery. In fact, remember that Isaiah 14 tells us that Lucifer became Satan because of this very thing. Do you recall it?

V. 12, "How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning! [You know he must have been quite a being at one time. Lucifer means light, clear as crystal.] How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" Why? How did this happen? (13) "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the sides of the north;" (14) "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." Big "I", little "U". That is Satan's method. That is the method of all those that have that same attitude. What is the result? Disaster. We must never exalt self; but must always be in submission to the Lord.

Remember it was Jesus who later would accomplish and receive all things which Satan sought through his own self-aggrandizement. Yet Jesus achieved it through humility and

so now we have the example of success. We know exactly how to achieve those things: through humility and care and caution in following in the footsteps of the Master. Note the subtle lie and temptation to Eve through flattery which exalts pride. “You see—you’ll be just like God, then you will be able to know both good and evil.” Pride! A little bit of flattery soon produces it: “Well I would surely like to be like that,” and right away it begins to grow. And this may take very cunningly devised forms as we saw in Satan’s actions towards our Lord in the wilderness. The attempt was not to just interject doubt, but if Jesus took the bait of flattery, there would be pride—“Look what I can do.” But the Lord would not accept that. He could have been a great man in the eyes of all Israel. But he would not do that. He would rather be a humble servant even unto death because that was what the Lord would have.

Did you know that Satan will even help you in passing out the truth? Oh yes. He will be very anxious to help you. But there is a condition—you have to be willing to accept all the credit for what you did. Satan knows that once this pride is developed, it will be his victory and before long the victim will take his own fearful toil of even those he may have led into the truth. Think about that and the course of things which have taken place in the last few years of the harvest program. Let’s examine 1 Tim. 3:6. We see that this can be a very, very grave temptation. Now this Scripture speaking of those who desire the office of Elder. He should be “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” In short, he must have experience enough to know that he really doesn’t know as much as he thought he did. And that is a very difficult thing to learn. I remember a professor telling me when I started the Engineering Program at Oregon State University that the reason that there was so much information and knowledge at the University was that all the intelligent high school students left it there on the way through. Every student starts out thinking he knows all the answers, but by the time he gets through scratching his head for four years he is almost ashamed to take a job because he’s not sure he can handle it. They begin to see reality, see their own weaknesses.

Then we have 2 Cor. 11, verses 10 to 15: “As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Wherefore? Because I love you not? God knoweth. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion, that where in they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. [They were going to usurp Paul’s authority and those of the apostles.] And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

As we examine Satan’s institutions, what is characteristic of them? They all are apparently trying to do good, aren’t they? As long as it is within the framework of the

organization, and as long as those institutions can keep one deceived. Satan really doesn't care how much light you have as long as it isn't enough to persuade you to make your consecration and afterward to make your calling and election sure. That he simply cannot tolerate. Therefore, let us resist steadfastly the natural human tendencies to exaggerate the frailties of others to our own self-aggrandizement. Very easy, isn't it? You can always look around and find someone who does not know as much as you do about something, and pride never causes us to stop and think that he may know something that we don't. Never exaggerate the frailties of others. Pride is a terrible thing. It is the visible coffin of a dying heart.

How does Satan exercise these powers? In several ways. He will make use of his institutions, the flesh and the world. He may act directly on the mind. He may actually take over the mind of others. He may act through these individuals, as both willing and unwilling agents. Remember Peter was even used of Satan unwillingly. On the other hand, Judas was used willingly. There is a great deal of difference. Let us take great care not to become one of Satan's secret agents. Let us be very careful of our treatment of one another and to see this great enemy for the enemy that he is—with a total avowed purpose of your destruction.

May the Lord add his blessing!