

Satan's Last Campaign against the church of Christ, Pt 3

Over the last couple months you'll recall that I've been sharing with you about Satan's last campaign against the church of Christ and how he's trying to destroy the people of God without them even knowing that it is he. Through his devices he works behind the scenes, that the blame he deserves might be attributed to God, first and foremost, or to natural causes, or simply to the perversion of human nature, or to whatever else he can use to distract our minds from the true cause.

I also brought to your attention that there are thousands and thousands of statements in the Bible and SOP that speak of evil spirits and the fact that there is another dimension we can't see with our natural vision. But just because we can't literally see all the mischief of demons, doesn't mean that we can't see the results of their work and know whose behind it all.

We hear on the news almost daily about random drive-by shootings, high school and college campus murders, shopping center massacres, mothers and fathers killing their own children, and children their own parents, about religious zealots beheading those that believe differently than they do, and many other heart-sickening crimes. And many people can't understand the reason for the escalation of these types of heinous acts. But there is no reason that we, as Bible believing Christians, should be perplexed about all these strange happenings, because all of these things are the direct result of demonic activity!

Medical science may put all kinds of different labels on it and drug people into oblivion, but again, Satan is the real culprit working through it all that people might not understand that he is the responsible one. And let's not forget that Satan's whole object is to cause people to transgress God's law, because by so doing, he knows that they will be eternally lost. And it doesn't matter to him what kind of sin it is, because any sin, no matter how small, will eventually neutralize all the power the gospel. In fact, let me read it to you, because there's an important point here.

In the book *Steps to Christ, page 34* it says, "Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire, persistently cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel." **(Isn't that something, just one!)**

There's a warning in the Bible against trifling with evil. In **Proverbs 5:22** the wise man said, "*the sinner shall be holden with the cords of his sins.*" We know that Jesus is ready and willing to set us free from sin, but He doesn't force the will; and if we persist in sin, we will eventually become totally bent on evil, and if we don't desire to be set free, and won't accept God's grace, what more can He do?

The Holy Spirit inspired Solomon to write that, "*The sinner shall be holden (or held) with the cords of his sins*", and we can't change that fact. Our sins are a trap of the devil! They're like a net for our feet that springs the moment we step in it, and once the trap is sprung, it's impossible get lose by ourselves. The more we struggle, the more tangled up we get.

This verse is especially a caution to young people. You see, the young person has an inborn love of liberty; they desire freedom, and if you've had teenagers, you know what I mean; and there's nothing wrong with that, it's something God has planted in the soul; but we need to understand that this desire to be free is to be enjoyed only in obedience to the law of God. It's obedience to the Ten

Commandments that will preserve true freedom and liberty, because the law of God points out and prohibits those things that will enslave us or bind us with cords that can't be broken.

But there is someone that can set us free, there is someone that can sever those cords, and we know who that is, don't we? In **John 8:36** Jesus said, *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."* And **2 Corinthians 3:17** says, *"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."* And the apostle James calls the Ten Commandments *"the law of liberty"*, and the young person might think, "How can obedience to law make me free? It sounds more like prison than freedom." But let me ask you this; does obeying the laws of the land keep you out of jail? Absolutely! Just as obeying the laws of the land will allow you to be free from going to jail, so obedience to God's law will keep you from being kept in the devil's prison house of sin. If ever you find yourself held captive by your sins, young person, you need only to ask Jesus for help, and He will untie you from those sins that you're held by and set you free to serve Him, and that's always the best way.

What I'd like to do this morning is read a few of those 17 thousand Spirit of Prophecy statements about the powers of darkness I mentioned last time, and hopefully they'll give us some insight into the devil's devices and how he's using them in his last campaign against the church of Christ. But before I begin to read, I'd like to say something about the Spirit of Prophecy, because some of you may think that reading something other than the Bible is not the best way to communicate inspired information, and that someone may get the wrong idea and think we don't believe the Bible, or that we put the Spirit of Prophecy writings above the Bible; but nothing could be farther from the truth. All the Spirit of Prophecy does is magnify what the Bible says, and why wouldn't we want to know, in greater depth, some of the details that are more difficult to dig out?

First of all, the Bible itself mentions the spirit of prophecy in **Revelation 19:10**; and secondly, **Revelation 12:17** says that this gift of prophecy would be given in the last days, and if you study **Revelation 12** in its entirety, you'll find that there's a time prophecy that indicates that this gift would be manifest sometime after 1798, and guess what? It was, and it was given to a young 17 year old girl in the year 1844. Her name at the time was Ellen Harmon, and later became Ellen White after her marriage to James White. So I make no apologies for reading what the Holy Spirit inspired her to write. In fact, if I withhold it, I would be doing a great disservice. And besides, **Revelation 22:19** doesn't look very kindly on anyone that would take away from the words of the prophecy of the book of Revelation.

What I've tried to do with just a handful of these 17,000 statements is arrange things in different categories, by asking questions, so I can read without bouncing all over the place. First of all we should understand that God and the devil are looking for the same thing, do you know what it is? It's human cooperation. Human cooperation. Obedience to one side or the other implies cooperation. Let's read a couple texts to show this is true.

Romans 6:16 *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"*

And of course there's **Joshua 24:15** where Joshua said to the children of Israel, *"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."* And you can't serve the Lord without also cooperating with Him.

And so we see very clearly here that cooperation with evil or righteousness by the choices we make is what both God and the devil are looking for.

In the *Review and Herald, July 19, 1887* it says, “Neither good nor evil angels can reach their end successfully except they have the cooperation and **(get this)** the determined effort of the individual.”

You know, hard to understand, but some people are determined to do evil; they’re not going to allow anything to get in their way, and when they have a determination like that, the devil can then use them to the utmost to accomplish his goals. They may think they’re accomplishing what they want, but they really have the mind of Satan when they sin, and he’s the one that controls them. Just as we can have the mind of Christ, as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 2:16**, so those that do the devil’s bidding, do it because they have the devil’s mind. The apostle Paul was determined not to know anything among those he witnessed to, “*except Jesus Christ and Him crucified*”, and that needs to be our determination as well. If not, we will become more and more like the devil.

Selected Messages, Book 1, page 158 says, “Over every man good and evil angels strive. It is the man himself who determine which shall win.”

So, we can never say the devil made me do it, can we? If we are lost we’ll have no one to blame but ourselves. God has done everything possible to save us, but He will never force our will. And by the way, this is why once saved always saved cannot be correct. Yes, we do receive eternal life when we accept Jesus and surrender all to Him, but if we choose afterward to reject His sacrifice and decide we don’t want to serve Him anymore, He’s not going to force us into heaven. It’s within our own power to forfeit eternal life if we want to, but if we remain faithful to the end, we will receive immortality, and that will never be taken away, but according to **1 Corinthians 15:51-54** we don’t receive that until the Lord comes. So in the interval, we determine our own destiny by who we choose to cooperate with.

Messages to Young People, pages 52, 53, “I saw evil angels contending for souls, and angels of God resisting them. The conflict was severe. Evil angels were crowding about them, corrupting the atmosphere with their poisonous influence, and stupefying their sensibilities. Holy angels were anxiously watching these souls, and were waiting to drive back Satan’s host. But it is not the work of good angels to control minds against the will of the individuals. If they yield to the enemy, and make no effort to resist him, then the angels of God can do but little more than hold in check the host of Satan, that they should not destroy, until further light be given to those in peril, to move them to arouse and look to heaven for help. Jesus will not commission holy angels to extricate those who make no effort to help themselves. **(You know, it’s as if we are sinking in quicksand and someone comes along and throws us a rope to pull us out, but if we don’t take hold with a firm grip, we’re going to go down. We must do our part if we expect to be saved.)** If Satan sees he is in danger of losing one soul, he will exert himself to the utmost to keep that one. And when the individual is aroused to his danger, and, with distress and fervor, looks to Jesus for strength, Satan fears he shall lose a captive, and he calls a re-enforcement of his angels to hedge in the poor soul, and form a wall of darkness around him, that heaven’s light may not reach him. But if the one in danger perseveres, **(the story of Jacob comes to mind, doesn’t it?)** and in helplessness and weakness casts himself upon the merits of the blood of Christ, Jesus listens to the earnest prayer of faith, and sends a re-enforcement of those angels which excel in strength to deliver him. Satan cannot endure to have his powerful rival appealed to, for he fears and trembles before His [Christ’s]

strength and majesty. At the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles. . . . And when angels, all-powerful, clothed with the armory of heaven, come to the help of the fainting, pursued soul, Satan and his host fall back, well knowing that their battle is lost."

Praise the Lord! When we ask God for help the evil angels fall back like they did in The Garden of Gethsemane when the soldiers came for Jesus. Do you remember reading that? How confused they must have felt as they picked themselves up, but they continued on with their evil plans anyway, didn't they? It just goes to show you how insane people can become when they're possessed by the devil. You would think they would have said, "Hey, wait a minute, this person is more than human and we better leave him alone", but no, they went right ahead as though nothing supernatural had just taken place. It's kind of like Balaam when he started talking back to his donkey. It didn't dawn on him that it was unusual for donkeys to talk because he was so consumed with doing what he wanted to do.

Here's another question: what encourages the presence of holy angels or evil angels?

1888 Materials, page 1241, "Those who manifest the attributes that have been manifested by those who have triumphed over a mistake in their brethren, instead of seeking to encourage and heal, and strengthen those who have erred, reveal the fact that they are walking apart from Jesus, and encouraging the companionship of evil angels. We are bound to stand by those who have made a mistake, and who see it, and acknowledge it. The motives which the Lord Jesus Christ recognizes as pure and holy move us to take this position."

I don't know about you, but I've been around those that have exhibited this kind of triumphant attitude toward those who have made a mistake and acknowledged it, and regardless of their repentance were not accepted as being sincere, and continued to be treated as the vilest of sinners, and that's not good. When a person seeks to destroy the character of another or to magnify the mistakes of others, you can know that they are encouraging the companionship of evil angels and that they are not walking with Jesus; it's just that simple. You'll never find an example in the Bible of Jesus treating others this way, and if we are walking with Him, we won't be found doing such a thing either.

Manuscript Releases, volume 14, page 35, "Angels of heaven cannot work with the human agent who sows the seeds of dissension and strife, but evil angels attend him wherever he goes."

Now let me just say this, because it may be that you are being blamed for sowing seeds of dissension and strife by exposing error, but that's not what we're talking about here. Truth itself does not cause dissension and strife, but by a person rejecting it can. When differences rise among brethren, it's the attitude toward truth that's the problem. The statement I just read to you has to do more with someone playing the devil's advocate. Some people just like to stir things up all the time in order to get a rise out of someone, or to create debate for the sake of debate. If this is what we're doing, then we are being attended by evil angels wherever we go, and holy angels cannot work with us when we're doing this. Enough said about that.

Let me read to you a few more one liners that will help us uncover some of the other devices Satan uses to separate us from the Lord.

The Great Controversy, page 599, “We must come with a humble and teachable spirit to obtain knowledge from the great I AM. Otherwise, evil angels will so blind our minds and harden our hearts that we shall not be impressed by the truth.”

Humble and teachable. This is one that trips up a lot of people, especially those that are teachers and ministers, because they’ve spent a lot of time in study, and when you spend a lot of time in study you think you know more than those that don’t, and you should. But if the Holy Spirit is not in control of such a one, knowledge can go to their heads, and it can be very difficult for them to be corrected if they’ve gone off the deep end into some kind of fanaticism. Some people think they’re smarter than God! If we come with a know-it-all attitude, how can the Holy Spirit teach us anything?

Early Writings, page 116, “All will be in sweet harmony if we follow the humble channel of truth, depending wholly upon God, and there will be no danger of being affected by the evil angels.”

Testimonies for the Church, volume 2, page 82, “Pray before you speak, and heavenly angels will come to your assistance and drive back the evil angels, who would lead you to dishonor God, reproach His cause, and weaken your own soul.”

The thing that comes to my mind after reading this statement is when we are called before the courts to answer for our faith. Before we speak we better shoot a prayer to heaven that the Holy Spirit might speak through us. Otherwise the lawyers and wise men of the earth will make us look like fools, and we’ll be sure to dishonor God.

Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, page 360, “I was shown that as a people we cannot be too careful what influence we exert; we should watch every word. When we by word or act place ourselves upon the enemy’s battle ground, we drive holy angels from us, and encourage and attract evil angels in crowds around us.”

We probably all know people that always seem to be sticking their foot in their mouth, and they’re always sorry for something they said. The apostle Peter was like that before he was converted, and if we don’t want to encourage evil angels to crowd in around us, we have to watch every word before it comes out of our mouth, especially if what we are saying might be a little exaggerated.

In *Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, page 463* it says, “A lie will go around the world while truth is putting on his boots.” And that’s so true. Why is it that a lie travels faster than the truth? It’s because a lie is more acceptable to our sinful nature than the truth, and there are many more people in this world that are moved by the fallen nature than the divine.

Have you ever wondered to what extent evil angels can control our minds?

Listen to this next statement from *Manuscript Releases, volume 3, page 306* “If permitted, the evil angels will work the minds of men until they have no mind or will of their own.”

Sometimes you wonder how people can commit the horrible crimes they do. But if we understand this correctly, it’s because people have permitted themselves to be so controlled by the devil that they have no mind or will of their own anymore. That’s why I said earlier that there are people who actually have the mind of Satan.

Testimonies for the church, volume 1, page 187 “If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: ‘They are joined to their idols, let them alone,’ and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels.”

Oh, God have mercy upon our poor mortal souls that we would not reach this condition. Seems to me that if a person gets to that point, their probation is closed, because without the ministry of the holy angels, how can the Holy Spirit, that controls those angels, minister any longer to their needs? If we persist in choosing our own selfish, perverse ways, then the Lord, after every means is exhausted, will have to say, as He said to the tribe of Ephraim of old, “Let them alone; they are joined to their idols.” May those words never be said of us.

Elaborating on this same point, only this applies to the time when human probation closes for everyone, *Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, page 204* says, “When Jesus leaves the most holy, His restraining Spirit is withdrawn from rulers and people. They are left to the control of evil angels.”

Remember the story of the two demoniacs of Gergesa? *The Desire of Ages, page 341* says, “The encounter with the demoniacs of Gergesa had a lesson for the disciples. It showed the depths of degradation to which Satan is seeking to drag the whole human race, and the mission of Christ to set men free from his power.”

The problem is, when probation closes for the whole human race and nearly the whole world filled with demoniacs, Christ’s mission for the salvation of mankind will be over, and this pronouncement of “Let them alone, they are joined to their idols” will affect everyone that has not surrendered all to Jesus. Can you imagine a whole world filled with these kind of human beings? That’s why we’re told that there’s a time of trouble coming, the wickedness of which, we can’t even imagine.

The Great Controversy, page 510 says, “No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin.”

Friends, that’s good news! Satan cannot control us unless we give our permission; unless we cooperate with him, and every time we disobey what we know to be right, we are giving him that permission. The devil is much more powerful than we are, and we can never defeat him in our own strength, but the good news is, Jesus and holy angels excel in strength and power far exceeding all the wicked forces that have taken nearly the whole world captive. What we must do is humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift us up.

Here’s another question: are we free from the presence of evil angels when we assemble together to worship the God of heaven? You would think that when God’s people assemble together, that that would be the one place where evil angels are not permitted to enter; the one safe place to be free of his devices, but alas, many times this is just where the devil redoubles his efforts and calls in his reinforcements.

Sermons and Talks, volume 2 page 151 “Every time we assemble together, angels of God are here. Evil angels also are here.”

In fact, they're here right now, and it's up to us which ones we will allow to have access to our minds.

Sermons and Talks, volume 2, page 267 “Angels of God are here today, watching anxiously to see how you will receive the words of the gospel. And evil angels are here also, ready to do their wicked work upon the minds of all who will listen to their insinuations.”

In other words, there is no safe place this side of heaven where we can be free from evil influences, but just because this is true doesn't mean we have to put up with the evil. Jesus wasn't free from the insinuations of evil angels, but He didn't listen to them. He didn't allow them to work upon His mind, and we don't have to either.

Selected Messages, volume 3, page 410 “I have been shown that evil angels in the form of believers will work in our ranks to bring in a strong spirit of unbelief. Let not even this discourage you, but bring a true heart to the help of the Lord against the powers of satanic agencies. These powers of evil will assemble in our meetings, not to receive a blessing, but to counterwork the influences of the Spirit of God. We are never to catch up the words that human lips may speak to confirm the evil angels in their work, but we should repeat the words of Christ. Christ was the Instructor in the assemblies of these angels before they fell from their high estate.”

Don't you think it bugs the evil angels when we quote Scripture like Jesus did when He said, “It is written”? Repeating the words of Christ must irritate them to no end, because they have a good memory, and they can remember the kind of words Jesus used when all was harmony in heaven, and it must remind them of what they could have had, had they remained loyal to the king of the universe. But don't feel bad for them, because they had every opportunity to remain holy instead of evil angels. Their eternal destiny is fixed, but ours is not, and that must anger them to know that we still have a chance and they don't. But you know, even if they had another chance, they would choose the wrong master again just as they did the first time. You see, that's what the close of probation is all about. It closes upon individuals because their minds are made up and they will never change, even if given a thousand or ten thousand years to do so.

Here's another question: who do the evil angels especially strive with? This shouldn't be too hard to answer.

Selected Messages, book 2 page 397 “Evil angels seek in every way to discourage those who are striving for victory over sin.”

But what if a person doesn't believe that victory over sin is possible, or even necessary in order to be ready to meet Jesus in peace when He comes. The devil wouldn't have to work very hard with that individual, would he? By the way, another way of saying victory over sin is for one to stop sinning. Isn't that what victory over sin means? If a person is committing the same sin day in and day out, how can it be said that they are having victory over that sin? In that case sin would be having victory over them! No, to have victory over sin means that you are winning in the battle with evil. Victory is superiority gained over spiritual enemies, over your passions and appetites, and or over temptations. If a person thinks that they are saved instead of being saved, then victory over sin becomes a mute issue, because they believe they can't be lost, no matter what they do; that somehow the blood of

Christ covers them even while they continue to sin. Is that what the blood of Christ accomplishes? Or does it cover only those sins that are confessed and forsaken?

Isaiah 55:7 says, *“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him (do what?) return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”*

If a person has to “return” to the Lord by confessing and forsaking, doesn’t that mean that they left the Lord? And if they left the Lord, weren’t they in a lost condition while they were away from Him? **1 John 5:12** says, *“He that has the son has life, and he that has not the Son of God has not life.”* You see, you can’t have it both ways, you either have the Son or you don’t, and if you don’t you’re lost during the time you’re away from Him.

This idea that a person is in a saved condition while they’re knowingly violating God’s commandments is a lie of the devil, and a very popular one. Just about every professed Christian you would ask believes it. So is Satan successful? He is amazingly successful. And what about what Jesus told Mary Magdalene? Jesus told her to *“go and sin no more.”* Was He telling her something she couldn’t do? Of course not. If He did He would be a liar, and we all know that God can’t lie. And what about the impotent man that laid by the pool of Bethesda waiting for the troubling of the waters? After Jesus healed him He said, *“Sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee.”* You see, we have to think these things through, and if we ever come to the conclusion that our sins do not affect our salvation, then we are surely deceived by the devil’s last campaign against the church of Christ.

In **1 Corinthians 15:57**, the apostle Paul said, *“Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

All through the Bible we are told that only those that have victory over sin will be saved, and so we better understand what all this means.

Question: how intent do you suppose evil angels are to win the struggle for control of your, body, mind, and soul?

Selected Messages, volume 3, page 425 “Every form of evil is to spring into intense activity. Evil angels unite their powers with evil men, and as they have been in constant conflict and attained an experience in the best modes of deception and battle and have been strengthening for centuries, they will not yield the last great final contest without a desperate struggle and all the world will be on one side or the other of the question.”

There’s no such thing as straddling the fence, is there? At every moment we are on one side or the other.

Are Satan and his evil angels better prepared to deceive today than they were when they were first cast out of heaven? What do you think? The last statement sort of answered that if you were listening, but here’s the answer again from ***Spiritual Gifts, volume 2, page 277*** “I have been shown that Satan has not been stupid and careless these many years, since his fall, but has been learning. He has grown more artful. His plans are laid deeper, and are more covered with a religious garment to

hide their deformity. The power of Satan now to tempt and deceive is ten-fold greater than it was in the days of the apostles. His power has increased, and it will increase, until it is taken away. His wrath and hate grow stronger as his time to work draws near its close. God knows how Satan is working, and sends his angels to watch over his children, to protect them from the Devil's power. And the battle is constantly going on between the angels of God, and the Devil's angels. The angels of God are clothed with a complete armor, the panoply of heaven, and, although surrounded with deadly foes, fear nothing, for they are doing the will of their loved Commander. They enter the darkest places to rescue the children of God from the snares of Satan, and their presence causes the evil angels to fall back. And as the evil angels are defeated, they utter terrible imprecations against the injustice of God, and against his angels.”

Oh to be covered with the panoply of heaven as the holy angels are; to have on the complete armor of God! We know how the apostle Paul described it in *Ephesians 6:11*; he said, “*Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*” If we have the panoply of heaven around us, we don't have to fear anything.

I remember some years ago when I was called by a lady that was having trouble with her husband. He had been drinking alcohol and was totally out of his mind; in fact she said he was acting very strangely and thought he was possessed by the devil, and would I come over and see if I could help. I knew immediately that she was right, because there is a demon of alcohol. You see, certain demons have certain specialties, just like people do. And when a person has a weakness toward a thing, the devil sends his specialists to bind them with the cords of their sins, as we read earlier.

I knew that I had no power to deliver this man from the devil's grasp, so I knelt down and prayed and made sure I had on the panoply of heaven before I dared go over to their house, and when I was sure of heaven's blessing, I went, and when I arrived, her husband was lying on the floor all rolled up in a large area rug and half naked. When I came in and sat down, he didn't seem to be aware of my presence, but when she called to him and said, “Honey, Jack is here”, he opened his eyes, unrolled himself from the carpet, and backed away from me into the corner of the room as if he had seen something terrifying, and at that moment I knew that the demon of alcohol that was controlling him had seen the holy angel that was by my side, and I wasn't the least bit afraid. So I began to talk to him and rebuke the devil in the name of Jesus and he crawled over to me and wrapped his arms around my legs and begged me to pray for him. And I'll tell you friends, it was a long struggle where he was wanting to be set free, but the devil didn't want to let him go, but finally the victory was gained and when I left he was clothed and in his right mind like the two demoniacs that Jesus healed. I haven't seen this couple since and I don't know if this man went back to drink or not, but I praise God that the victory was won that night and that I got to see firsthand what the devil is capable of, and especially what holy angels are capable of, and I tell you, as long as we are clothed with the panoply of heaven, we don't have to fear anything the devil throws at us.

There's no doubt in my mind that the early Protestant reformers had on the whole armour of God when it looked like they stood all alone against the papacy, but they weren't alone, they were clothed with the panoply of heaven, and that's how they were able to fearlessly stand against mighty earthly powers and even to sing praises to God as they were burned at the stake, and that's what we are going to need as history is soon to be repeated. Only as we realize our own weakness and nothingness, we will be successful in the battle with evil.

When we consider the success rate of the devil, have you ever wondered how the purity of the church will ever be accomplished? The Bible says that God's going to have a church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, and that it will be holy and without blemish. How is that going to come about when all we see now is confusion and division and differing views on just about everything?

Notice what it says in this next inspired statement in the 1858 edition of *The Great Controversy*, **page 118** "Satan looked with great satisfaction upon those who professed the name of Christ, and were closely adhering to these delusions formed by himself. His work is to still form new delusions. His power increases, and he grows more artful. He led on his representatives, the popes and the priests, to exalt themselves, and to stir up the people to bitterly persecute those who loved God, and were not willing to yield to his delusions, introduced through them. Satan moved upon his agents to destroy Christ's devoted followers. O the sufferings and agony, which they made the precious of God to endure! Angels have kept a faithful record of it all. But Satan and his evil angels exulted, and told the angels who administered to, and strengthened those suffering saints, that they would kill them, so that there would not be left a true Christian upon the earth. I saw that the church of God was then pure. There was no danger of men with corrupt hearts coming into the church of God then; for the true Christian, who dared to declare his faith, was in danger of the rack, the stake, and every torture which Satan and his evil angels could invent, and put into the mind of man."

I've said this before and I'll say it again; we're not going to see the unity and purity of the church as a whole until real persecution breaks out among us. It's not a very pleasant thing to think about I know, and it doesn't mean we don't have to work toward it now, but persecution seems to always be what it takes to purify the church.

Testimonies for the Church, volume 6, pages 400-401, "As trials thicken around us, both separation and unity will be seen in our ranks. Some who are now ready to take up weapons of warfare will in times of real peril make it manifest that they have not built upon the solid rock; they will yield to temptation. Those who have had great light and precious privileges, but have not improved them, will, under one pretext or another, go out from us. Not having received the love of the truth, they will be taken in the delusions of the enemy; they will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and will depart from the faith. But, on the other hand, when **the storm of persecution** really breaks upon us, (**when what breaks upon us?**) the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd's voice. Self-denying efforts will be put forth to save the lost, and many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shepherd. The people of God will draw together and present to the enemy a united front. In view of the common peril, strife for supremacy will cease; there will be no disputing as to who shall be accounted greatest. No one of the true believers will say: 'I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas.' The testimony of one and all will be: 'I cleave unto Christ; I rejoice in Him as my personal Saviour.'"

Here's another question: can both evil and holy angels control our minds simultaneously?

Sermons and Talks, volume 2, page 57 "Either the evil angels or the angels of God are controlling the minds of men. Our minds are given to the control of God or to the control of the powers of darkness, and it will be well for us to inquire where we are standing today—whether under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel or under the black banner of the powers of darkness."

I hate to have to continue to make the same point, but we just read that it would be well for us to

inquire where we stand. When you think it through, those who believe we can be saved in sin have to believe that Jesus and the devil can abide in the heart at the same time; that sin, which is of the devil, can be committed by one that has Jesus living within. That is totally against common sense and God's holy word, read **1 John 3:1-10**, and if we are fooled by this false teaching, we will surely end up looking inside the holy city from without when fire comes down from God out of heaven.

Another question would be: how can we tell whether holy angels or evil angels control us? How can we tell? Since it's a matter of eternal salvation, don't you think God would give us a clear indication as to what power we're controlled by? Didn't Jesus say, "*By their fruits you shall know them*"? Sometimes it's easier to see the fruits of others than our own, isn't it? And didn't the apostle Paul say, "*Examine yourselves to see if you be in the faith*"?

Notice what it says in *Spiritual Gifts, volume 2, page 226* ". . . if the evil angels control the heart, it will be seen in various ways. The fruit will be selfishness, covetousness, pride and evil passions. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Professors of religion are **not willing (these are the key words)** not willing to closely examine themselves to see whether they are in the faith, and it is a fearful fact that many are leaning on a false hope. Some lean upon an old experience they had years ago; but when brought down to this heart-searching time, when all should have a daily experience, they have nothing to relate. They seem to think a profession of the truth will save them. When those sins which God hates are subdued, **(in other words, when we stop sinning, because God hates all sin)** Jesus will come in and sup with you and you with him."

Now let's talk about our thoughts for a minute. I don't think most Christians have any idea how important it is to not allow ourselves to think on everything we please. Sin involves more than just doing certain acts, because sinful acts begin in the mind. We need to understand that evil angels can inject evil thoughts into our minds, and when we don't reject them as evil, but rather enjoy thinking about them, we have already started down the road to perdition. Eve didn't pick the forbidden fruit and eat it without first thinking about how it was going to make her wise, did she? Sin begins in the mind. Notice how these next few quotes deal with this issue.

Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, page 310 "You should keep off from Satan's enchanted ground, and not allow your minds to be swayed from allegiance to God. Through Christ you may and should be happy, and should acquire habits of self-control. Even your thoughts must be brought into subjection to the will of God, and your feelings under the control of reason and religion. If the thoughts are wrong, the feelings will be wrong; and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character. When you decide that as Christians you are not required to restrain your thoughts and feelings, you are brought under the influence of evil angels, and invite their presence and their control."

This is what the apostle Paul was talking about when he said, as Christians, we should have the mind of Christ, and when he said we should cast down evil imaginations, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Our High Calling, page 85 "Do not for a moment acknowledge Satan's temptations as being in harmony with your own mind. Turn from them as you would from the adversary himself."

Same book page 87 "The beginning of yielding to temptation is in the sin of permitting the mind to

waver, to be inconsistent in your trust in God. The wicked one is ever watching for a chance to misrepresent God, and to attract the mind to that which is forbidden. If he can, he will fasten the mind upon the things of the world. He will endeavor to excite the emotions, to arouse the passions, to fasten the affections on that which is not for your good; but it is for you to hold every emotion and passion under control, in calm subjection to reason and conscience. Then Satan loses his power to control the mind.”

Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, page 177 “If we would not commit sin, we must shun its very beginnings. Every emotion and desire must be held in subjection to reason and conscience. Every unholy thought must be instantly repelled. To your closet, followers of Christ.”

This is such an important point. If we would shun evil thoughts as soon as they enter our minds, Satan could not control us.

Have you ever wondered why holy angels are constantly going up and down to and from heaven? Remember Jacob’s dream that night after he ran away from home? As he was dreaming he saw a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. What did it all mean? In **Hebrews 1:14** the apostle Paul tells us that all the holy angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Spiritual Gifts, volume 2, pages 269 says, “Angels are going forth on their mission, descending to watch over the tempted children of God, and shield them from the power of the evil angels. And while these angels are descending, others are ascending to bear their tidings for an additional angel to administer relief to this or that lone desponding one who is fiercely buffeted of Satan. Angels are constantly passing, and repassing each other, in their upward and downward flight, fulfilling their mission of love.”

I don’t think we appreciate the ministry of holy angels as we should. All heaven is involved in the work of salvation, and we should praise and thank God for devising a plan that puts the holy angels to work that we might be delivered from every evil influence; and don’t forget, we have a part to play by not allowing our thoughts to run in a wrong channel.

How extensively have evil angels infiltrated the churches? This next quote has the answer.

Early Writings, page 274 “I saw that since Jesus left the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary and entered within the second veil, the churches have been filling up with every unclean and hateful bird. I saw great iniquity and vileness in the churches; yet their members profess to be Christians. Their profession, their prayers, and their exhortations are an abomination in the sight of God. Said the angel, ‘God will not smell in their assemblies. Selfishness, fraud, and deceit are practiced by them without the reprovings of conscience. And over all these evil traits they throw the cloak of religion.’ I was shown the pride of the nominal churches. God is not in their thoughts; their carnal minds dwell upon themselves; they decorate their poor mortal bodies, and then look upon themselves with satisfaction and pleasure. Jesus and the angels look upon them in anger. Said the angel, ‘Their sins and pride have reached unto heaven. Their portion is prepared. Justice and judgment have slumbered long, but will soon awake. Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.’ The fearful threatenings of the third angel are to be realized, and all the wicked are to drink of the wrath of God. An innumerable host of evil angels are spreading over the whole land and crowding the churches. These

agents of Satan look upon the religious bodies with exultation, for the cloak of religion covers the greatest crime and iniquity.”

How many times have we heard of popular ministers caught in adultery, and of the sex crimes of Catholic priests as they prey upon children in their own congregations, and of the misuse of tithes and offerings so church leaders can live in sinful luxury, and on and on? Only eternity will reveal the wickedness perpetrated by many of the men that people have looked up to as ministers of the gospel, only to find out that they were really ministers of sin.

Let me ask you just one more question and then we'll draw this to a close

How will history be repeated when God has a people who reflect His character fully?

Desire of Ages, page 257 “The period of Christ’s personal ministry among men was the time of greatest activity for the forces of the kingdom of darkness. For ages Satan with his evil angels had been seeking to control the bodies and the souls of men, to bring upon them sin and suffering; then he had charged all this misery upon God. Jesus was revealing to men the character of God. He was breaking Satan’s power, and setting his captives free. New life and love and power from heaven were moving upon the hearts of men, and the prince of evil was aroused to contend for the supremacy of his kingdom. Satan summoned all his forces, and at every step contested the work of Christ. So it will be in the great final conflict of the controversy between righteousness and sin. While new life and light and power are descending from on high upon the disciples of Christ, a new life is springing up from beneath, and energizing the agencies of Satan. Intensity is taking possession of every earthly element. With a subtlety gained through centuries of conflict, the prince of evil works under a disguise. He appears clothed as an angel of light, and multitudes are ‘giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.’”

Oh friends, clearly we are living during the time when nearly the whole world is “*giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*” and they don’t even know it, and it’s our job to expose Satan’s last campaign against the church of Christ while probation lingers. And unless we understand better than we do the devices of Satan and how he works through his evil angels to drag the whole human race down to the level of demons, we aren’t going to have much to offer those who are caught in his snares. And so, let’s pray that we will be wide awake and alert so we can help others understand how important it is to know of how Satan works to destroy their souls.