

CHAPTER I.

A Biblical Survey of Satanic Deception.

TRUTH of every kind makes free, while lies bind up in bonds. Ignorance also binds up, because it gives ground to Satan. Man's ignorance is a primary and essential condition for deception by evil spirits. The ignorance of the people of God concerning the powers of darkness, has made it easy for the devil to carry out his work as deceiver. Unfallen man in his pure state was not perfect in knowledge. Eve was ignorant of "good and evil," and her ignorance was a condition which lent itself to the deception of the serpent.

The devil's great purpose, and for which he fights, is to keep the world in ignorance of himself, his ways, and his colleagues, and the Church is taking sides with him when siding with ignorance about him. Every man should keep an attitude of openness to all truth, and shun the false knowledge which has slain its tens of thousands, and kept the nations in the deception of the devil.

A SPECIAL ONSLAUGHT OF DECEIVING SPIRITS ON THE CHURCH

To-day there is a special onslaught of deceiving spirits upon the Church of Christ, the fulfilment of the prophecy which the Holy Spirit expressly made known to the Church through the Apostle Paul, that a great deceptive onslaught would take place in the "later times." Since the utterance of the prophecy, more than eighteen hundred years have passed by, but the special manifestation of evil spirits in the deception of believers to-day, points unmistakeably to the fact that we are at the close of the age.

The peril of the church at the close of this dispensation is foreshown to be especially from the *supernatural* realm,

whence Satan would send forth an army of teaching spirits, to deceive all who would be open to teachings by spiritual revelation, and thus draw them away unwittingly from full allegiance to God.

Yet in face of this plain forecast of the peril in later times, we find the Church in almost entire ignorance of the workings of this army of evil spirits. The majority of believers too readily accept everything "supernatural" as of God, and supernatural experiences are indiscriminately accepted because all such experiences are thought to be Divine.

Through lack of knowledge, the majority of even the most spiritual people, do not carry out a full and perpetual war upon this army of wicked spirits; and many are shrinking from the subject, and the call to war against them, saying that if Christ is preached it is not necessary to give prominence to the existence of the devil, nor to enter into direct conflict with him, and his hosts. Yet large numbers of the children of God are becoming a prey to the enemy for lack of this very knowledge, and through the silence of teachers on this vital truth, the Church of Christ is passing on into the peril of the closing days of the age, unprepared to meet the onslaught of the foe. On account of this, and in view of the plainly given prophetic warnings in the Scriptures; the already manifest influx of the evil hosts of Satan among the children of God; and the many signs that we are actually in the "later times" referred to by the Apostle; all believers should welcome such knowledge about the powers of darkness, as will enable them to pass through the fiery trial of these days, without being ensnared by the foe.

Apart from such knowledge, when thinking he is "fighting for truth," it is possible for a believer to fight for, defend, and protect evil spirits, and their works, believing he is thereby "defending" God, and His works; for if he thinks a thing Divine, he will protect and stand for it. It is possible for a man through ignorance to stand

against God and to attack the very truth of God, and also defend the devil, and oppose God, unless he has knowledge.

KNOWLEDGE GAINED BY LETTER OF SCRIPTURE,
AND BY EXPERIENCE

The Bible throws much light upon the Satanic powers, which cannot fail to be discerned by all who search the Scriptures with open minds, but these will not obtain as much knowledge of the subject from the sacred record, as will those who have understanding *by experience*, interpreted by the Holy Spirit, and shown to be in line with the truth of the Word of God. The believer may have a direct witness in his spirit to the truth of the Divine Word, but through experience he gets a personal witness to the inspiration of Scripture, to its testimony concerning the existence of supernatural beings, and their works, and the way they deceive, and mislead the children of men.

THE WORK OF SATAN AS DECEIVER IN THE
GARDEN OF EDEN

If all that the Bible contains on the subject of the supernatural powers of evil, could be exhaustively dealt with in this book, we should find that more knowledge is given of the workings of Satan, and his principalities and powers, than many have realized. From Genesis to Revelation the work of Satan as deceiver of the whole inhabited earth can be traced, until the climax is reached, and the full results of the deception in the Garden of Eden are unveiled in the Apocalypse. In Genesis we have the simple story of the garden, with the guileless pair unaware of danger from evil beings in the unseen world. We find recorded there Satan's first work as deceiver, and the subtle form of his method of deception. We see him working upon an innocent creature's highest and purest desires, and cloaking his own purpose of ruin, under the guise of seeking to lead a human being nearer to God. We see him using the God-ward desires of Eve to bring about captivity, and bondage to himself. We see him

using "good" to bring about evil; suggesting evil to bring about supposed good. Caught with the bait of being "wise," and "like God," Eve is blinded to the principle involved in obedience to God, and is DECEIVED (1 Tim. ii. 14, A.V.).

Goodness is, therefore, no guarantee of protection from deception. The keenest way in which the devil deceives the world, and the Church, is when he comes in the guise of somebody, or something, which apparently causes them to go God-ward and good-ward. He said to Eve, "ye shall be as gods," but he did not say, "and ye shall be like demons." Angels and men only knew evil when they fell into a state of evil. Satan did not tell Eve this, when he added "knowing good *and evil*." His true objective in deceiving Eve was to get her to disobey God, but his wile was, "ye shall be like God." Had she reasoned, she would have seen that the deceiver's suggestion exposed itself, for it crudely resolved itself into "disobey God" to be more like God !

THE CURSE OF GOD PRONOUNCED UPON THE DECEIVER

That a highly organized monarchy of evil spirit-beings was in existence, is not made known in the story of the garden. Only a "serpent" is there; but the serpent is spoken to by God as an intelligent being, carrying out a deliberate purpose in the deception of the woman. The serpent-disguise of Satan is swept aside by Jehovah, as He makes known the decision of the Triune God in view of the catastrophe which had taken place. A "Seed" of the deceived woman, should eventually bruise the head of the supernatural being, who had used the form of the serpent to carry out his plan. Thenceforward the name of serpent is attached to him, the very name throughout the ages describing the climax action of his revolt against his Creator, in beguiling and deceiving the woman in Eden, and blasting the human race. Satan triumphed, but God overruled. The victim is made the vehicle for the advent of a Victor, who should ultimately destroy the works of the devil, and cleanse the heavens and the earth from

every trace of his handiwork. The serpent is cursed, but, in effect, the beguiled victim is blest, for through her will come the "Seed" which will triumph over the devil and his seed; and through her will arise a new race through the promised Seed (Gen. iii. 15), which will be antagonistic to the serpent to the end of time, through the enmity implanted by God. Henceforth the story of the ages consists of the record of a war between these two seeds; the Seed of the woman—Christ and His redeemed—and the seed of the devil (See John viii. 44; 1 John iii. 10), right on to the furthestmost point of the final committal of Satan to the lake of fire.

Henceforth it is also war by Satan upon the womanhood of the world, in malignant revenge for the verdict of the garden. War by the trampling down of women in all lands where the deceiver reigns. War upon women in Christian lands, by the continuance of his Eden method of misinterpreting the Word of God; insinuating into men's minds throughout all succeeding ages, that God pronounced a "curse" upon the woman, when in truth she was pardoned and blessed; and instigating men of the fallen race to carry out the supposed curse, which was in truth a CURSE UPON THE DECEIVER, and not the deceived one (Gen. iii. 14).

"I will put enmity between *thee* and the woman," said God, as well as between "*thy* seed and her seed," and this vindictive enmity of the heirarchy of evil to woman, and to believers, has not lessened in its intensity from that day.

SATAN AS DECEIVER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

When once we clearly apprehend the existence of an unseen host of evil spirit-beings, all actively engaged in deceiving and misleading men, Old Testament history will convey to us an open vision of their doings, hitherto hidden from our knowledge. We can trace their operations in relation to the servants of God throughout all history, and discern the work of Satan as deceiver penetrating everywhere. We shall see that David was