

CHAPTER II.

The Satanic confederacy of wicked spirits.

A PERSPECTIVE view of the ages covered by the history in Bible records, shows that the rise and fall in spiritual power of the people of God, was marked by the recognition of the existence of the demoniacal hosts of evil. When the Church of God in the old and new dispensations was at the highest point of spiritual power, the leaders recognized, and drastically dealt with, the invisible forces of Satan; and when at the lowest they were ignored, or allowed to have free course among the people.

GOD LEGISLATING FOR DANGERS FROM EVIL SPIRITS

The reality of the existence of wicked spirits by whom Satan, their prince, carried out his work in the fallen world of men, cannot be more strongly proved, than by the fact that the statutes given by Jehovah to Moses in the fiery mount, embodied stringent measures for dealing with the attempts of evil spirit beings to find entry to the people of God. Moses was instructed by Jehovah to keep the camp of Israel free from their inroads, by the drastic penalty of death for all who had dealings with them. The very fact of Jehovah thus giving statutes in connection with such a subject, and the extreme penalty enforced for disobedience to His law, shows in itself (1) the existence of evil spirits, (2) their wickedness, (3) their ability to communicate with, and influence human beings, and (4) the necessity for uncompromising hostility to them, and their works. God would not legislate for dangers which had no real existence, nor would He command the extreme penalty of death, if the contact of the people with evil spirit beings of the unseen world, did not necessitate such drastic dealing.

The severity of the penalty obviously implies, also, that the leaders of Israel must have been given acute "discerning of spirits," so sure and so clear, that they could have no doubt in deciding cases brought before them.

Whilst Moses and Joshua lived, and enforced the strong measures decreed by God to keep His people free from the inroads of Satanic power, Israel remained in allegiance to God, at the highest point of its history; but when these leaders died, the nation sank into darkness, brought about by evil spirit powers, drawing the people into idolatry and sin; the condition of the nation in after years, rising and falling (see Judges ii. 19, 1 Kings xiv. 22-24; compare 2 Chron. xxxiii. 2-5, xxxiv. 2-7) into (1) allegiance to God, or (2) idolatrous worship of idols, and all the sins resulting from the substitution of the worship of Satan—which idolatry really meant—in the place of Jehovah.

When the new dispensation opens with the advent of Christ, we find Him—the God-Man—recognising the existence of the Satanic powers of evil, and manifesting uncompromising hostility toward them, and their works—Moses in the Old Testament, Christ in the New. Moses, the man who knew God face to face. Christ, the Only Begotten Son of the Father, sent from God to the world of men. Each recognizing the existence of Satan and the evil spirit beings; each drastically dealing with them as entering and possessing men, and each waging war against them, as actively opposed to God.

Taking a perspective view, from the time of Christ on throughout the early history of the Church, up to the giving of the Apocalypse, and the death of the Apostle John, the manifested power of God wrought (in varying degrees) among His people, and the leaders recognized and dealt with the spirits of evil—a period corresponding to the Mosaic period in the old dispensation.

THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Then the forces of darkness gained, and, with intermittent intervals and exceptions, the Church of Christ

sank down under their power, until, in the darkest hour, which we call the Middle Ages, all the sins having their rise through the deceptive workings of the evil spirits of Satan, were as rife as in the time of Moses, when he wrote by the command of God, "There shall not be found with thee . . . one that useth divination, or that practiseth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer" (Deut. xviii. 10-11).

Now, at the close of the dispensation, and on the eve of the millennial age, the Church of Christ will again arise, and reach God's purposed power, only when the leaders recognize, as Moses did in the Old Testament Church, and Christ and His apostles did in the New, the existence of evil spirit powers of darkness, and take towards them and their works, the same uncompromising attitude of hostility, and aggressive warfare.

THE CHURCH OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Why the Church in the twentieth century has not recognized the existence, and workings, of evil supernatural forces, can only be attributed to its low condition of spiritual life and power. Even at the present time, when the existence of evil spirits is recognized by the heathen, it is generally looked upon by the missionary as "superstition" and ignorance; whereas the ignorance is often on the part of the missionary, who is blinded by the prince of the power of the air to the revelation given in the Scriptures, concerning the Satanic powers.

The "ignorance" on the part of the heathen is in their *propitiatory* attitude to evil spirits, because of their ignorance of the gospel message of a Deliverer and a Saviour sent to "proclaim release to the captives" (Luke iv. 18), and Who, when He was on earth, went about healing all who were "oppressed by the devil" (Acts x. 38), and sent His messengers to open the eyes of the bound ones, that they might "turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts xxvi. 18).

If missionaries to the heathen recognized the existence of evil spirits, and that the darkness in heathen lands was caused by the prince of the power of the air (Eph. ii. 2 ; iv. 18 ; 1 John v. 19 ; 2 Cor. iv. 4), and proclaimed to the heathen the message of deliverance from the evil hosts, they know so well to be real, and malignant, foes ; as well as remission of sin, and victory over sin through the atoning sacrifice of Calvary ; a vast change would come over the mission field in a few brief years.

But the Holy Spirit is already at work, opening the eyes of the people of God, and many of the leaders in the Church are beginning to recognize the real existence of Satanic powers, and are seeking to know how to discern their workings, and how to deal with them in the power of God.

BELIEVERS MAY RECEIVE EQUIPMENT TO DEAL
WITH SATANIC POWERS

The hour of need always brings the corresponding measure of power from God to meet that need. The Church of Christ must lay hold of the equipment of the apostolic period, for dealing with the influx of the evil spirit hosts among her members. That all believers may receive the equipment of the Holy Spirit, whereby the authority of Christ over the demon hosts of Satan is manifested, is proved not only by the instance of Philip the deacon in the Acts of the Apostles, but also by the writings of the "Fathers"* in the early centuries of the Christian era, which show that the Christians of that time (1) recognized the existence of evil spirits, (2) that they influenced, deceived and possessed men, and (3) that Christ gave His followers authority over them through His Name. That this authority through the Name of Christ,† wielded by the believer walking in living and vital union with Christ, is available for the servants of God at the close of the age, the Spirit of God is making known in many and divers ways. God gives an object lesson, through a native Christian like Pastor Hsi,‡ in

* See Appendix.

† See Chapter XI.

‡ "Pastor Hsi" : Morgan & Scott.

China, who acted upon the Word of God in simple faith, without the questioning caused by the mental difficulties of Western Christendom; or He awakens the Church in the West, as in the Revival in Wales, by an outpouring of the Spirit of God; which not only manifested the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the twentieth century, as in the days of Pentecost; but also unveiled the reality of Satanic powers in active opposition to God and His people, and the need among the Spirit-filled children of God, for equipment for dealing with them. Incidentally, too, the Revival in Wales threw light upon the Scripture records, showing that the highest points of God's manifested power among men, is invariably the occasion for concurrent manifestations of the working of Satan. It was so when the Son of God came forth from the wilderness conflict with the prince of darkness, and found the hidden demons in many lives aroused to malignant activity, so that from all parts of Palestine crowds of victims came to the Man, before whom the possessing spirits trembled in impotent rage.

The awakened part of the Church of to-day, has now no doubt of the real existence of the spirit beings of evil, and that there is an organized monarchy of supernatural powers, set up in opposition to Christ, and His kingdom, bent upon the eternal ruin of every member of the human race; and these believers know that God is calling them to seek the fullest equipment obtainable for withstanding, and resisting these enemies of Christ and His Church.

In order to understand the working of the deceiver-prince of this power of the air, and become acute to discern his tactics, and his methods of deceiving men, such believers should search the Scriptures thoroughly, to obtain a knowledge of his character, and how spirits of evil are able to possess, and use the bodies of men.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN SATAN AND EVIL SPIRITS

The distinction between the workings of Satan as prince of demons, and his evil spirits, should specially be noted, so as to understand their methods at the present day; for