

Kenneth
Ball

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The Prince of This World

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John 14:30

by

Jarviete Aycock

Kenneth Ball - 1944

"The Prince of This World"

(The Devil)

[John 14:30]

By

Evangelist Jarrette Aycock

Author of

The Nightingale of the Psalms

The Grand Old Book

The Crimson Stream

The Story of Two Prodigals

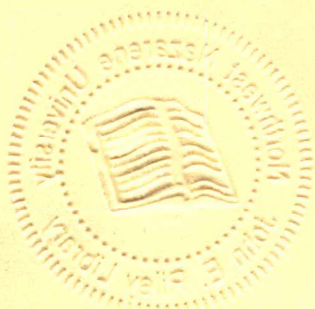
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By Jarrette Aycock



INTRODUCTION

In his "Systematic Theology" Ralston occupies the first two or three paragraphs of each division with a dissertation on the central position of the new thesis, and concludes that one cannot well be sound on the theme he now proposes to present without also being sound on practically the whole body of theological thought. And although the excessive repetition is a little monotonous, there is yet much truth in the conclusion; for Christian truth is a consistent system every tenet of which is dependent upon all the rest.

In the present thesis Evangelist Jarrette Aycock has presented a theme which of late years has been given small place in the preaching and writing of Christian apologists. But it is a theme that must be true because the system of which it is an essential part has been abundantly substantiated. And I think no one can read what is written without feeling that it is impossible to lift this theme out as an isolated item. Its proper discussion demands attention to human responsibility, divine mercy, a blood atonement, salvation from sin, and the final triumph of Christ and of those who put their trust in Him. And thus a sermon on the devil becomes a proclamation of the saving gospel, and the book itself takes its place among the many books which fall like leaves from the tree of life into the hands and hearts of the people.

It is scarcely necessary for me to attempt an introduction of the author, for he is as well known to readers of religious literature as I am, and could introduce me to many who know him better than they do me. But it is a pleasure to commend both the author and his book. Here is a man who has gone with his face set steadfastly toward Jerusalem for more than twenty-five years, during which period he has never swerved a hair's breadth from the standard rule of sound orthodoxy in doctrine or missed in slight degree the scriptural requirements for conduct and spirit. In promoting the publication of his book and in making available to him the hearts and mailing addresses of our people, we are taking no chance at all; for, like Timothy, he never uses any power for selfish ends. His whole mind and heart are absorbed in the task of promoting the gospel and winning men to God. And the book—well, it possesses the two essentials of a good book in that it is unquestionably true and irresistibly interesting. I sincerely pray that thousands of copies of this little book may go forth to the hands and homes of the people, and I am assured that such a labor will be the casting of bread upon the waters which in its coming back will bring many immortal souls into the kingdom.

In prayer and faith and love,

J. B. CHAPMAN, *General Superintendent.*

July 25, 1941.

"The Prince of This World"

BY JARRETTE AYCOCK

"Men don't believe in a devil now as our fathers used
to do,
They force the doors of the broadest creed to let his
form pass through,
There isn't a print of his cloven hoof or a fiery dart from
his bow
To be found in the earth and air today, for the world
has voted so.

"But who is it that mixes the fatal draught that palsies
heart and brain?
And fills the bier of each passing year with ten hun-
dred thousand slain?
Who blights the bloom of the land today with the fiery
breath of hell?
If the devil isn't and never was, will somebody rise and
tell?

"Who dogs the steps of the toiling saint and digs the pit
for his feet?
Who sows the tares in the field of time, wherever God
sows His wheat?
The devil was voted not to be and of course the thing is
true;
But who is it doing the kind of work the devil alone
should do?

"We are told that he does not go about like a roaring
lion now;
But whom shall we hold responsible for the everlasting
row,

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To be heard in home and state and church to the earth's
remotest bound,
If the devil by unanimous vote is nowhere to be found?

"Will someone step to the front forthwith and make
his bow and show,
How the frauds and crimes of a single day spring up,
we want to know.
The devil was fairly voted out, and of course the devil's
gone,
But simple folks would like to know, who carries his
business on?"

AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

A Personality

There are many today who think the devil a myth, only another name for evil, or an evil influence. Instead, he is a real personality, a ruler of myriads of demons, the prince of a multitude. He has his throne, his kingdoms and his dominions. There is no more proof in the Bible of a personal God than there is of a personal devil.

Bible Descriptions

In the twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel there is a description of one who is called, "The prince of Tyrus," who Bible scholars believe is a picture of none other than Satan. And the picture there drawn is greatly different from the one usually given of "The Prince of this World."

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Beautiful

Artists have painted the devil as a monster with hoofs and horns, with clawlike hands and a spearlike tail; but the Bible artist paints him as one who is "perfect in beauty."

If the devil approached people looking as the world has pictured him, no one would have anything to do with him. But he comes in beauty, not a beauty made up of powder, paint and curling irons but a beauty of grace and speech and poise.

The Bible states he has, "been in Eden, the Garden of God," that he has "walked in the holy mount." Therefore the devil knows how to conduct himself in the most spiritual assemblies. He is at home in the church, the prayermeeting and the revival. He is not ignorant of the Scriptures and is so bold that he even dared to quote them to the Son of God.

Perfect in His Ways

This chapter further states that this being was "perfect in his ways from the day he was created until iniquity was found in him." The devil did not fall from a place which he had acquired through merit or favor as men do today, but from a state in which he was created; and in falling, he

lost his purity, he lost his state of holiness and he lost his place with God. But he did not, necessarily, lose his abilities or lose his gifts or lose his graces.

Gifts of the Wicked

Take the minister who has swayed the multitudes, the man with the forceful personality, the flashing eye, the eloquent tongue and rich voice filled with pathos: he breaks with God, goes back into sin and takes the lecture platform for the liquor interests or for infidelity. The grace of God is gone from his heart, that thing which we call "unction" is no longer there, but his eloquent tongue, his rich voice and striking personality are still in evidence. Now he sways the multitudes for wickedness as he once swayed them for righteousness, and the longer he follows this kind of work the more adept he will become.

The devil is a fallen angel but he is still an angel and do not forget it. His intelligence is not dulled, his abilities are not lessened, many of those qualities which made him superior to the other angels of God are still extant and are augmented by more than six thousand years of active practice, and he is still using them to deceive, degrade, and damn the human race.

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He Is a Prince

In John 14:30 he is called, "The prince of this world." In Ephesians 2:2 he is called, "the prince of the power of the air." Where his throne is located we do not know, but we do know that his kingdom extends through the world of darkness, over the earth on which we live and into the air above the earth. Again I say, there is no more proof of a personal God than there is of a personal devil.

HIS POWER

Consider the power of the devil. In Ephesians 6:12 we read, "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." In the Book of Job we see the manifestation of his power in at least three realms:

Power over the Elements

He had power over the elements, inasmuch that storms came, lightning flashed, and cyclones whirled and did their deadly work on the property and people of Job. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan says that many theologians have believed that the darkness and disturbing elements around the cross were the workings of Satan to make the crucifixion of Christ more unendurable.

Power over the Mind

He manifested power over the minds of men. He deceived the friends of Job; placed Job in the wrong light, turned his wife against him, and made his life more unendurable by accusation and criticism

Power over the Body

He manifested power over the body, afflicting Job physically, covering his body with boils and running sores. He made his life so miserable that Job cried out in his agony and pain, "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived." Again and again physical affliction has been directly attributed to Satan. You remember Jesus said in Luke 13: 16, "Ought not this woman, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years be loosed from this bond?"

Not only does he have the power to bind men's hearts with the cords of sin, but their bodies with physical infirmities and their minds with mental problems.

Power to Blind

He also has power to blind, so that men, "Having eyes see not and having ears hear not." Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4: 4, "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ . . . should shine unto them." Many souls on the verge of light and salvation have been blinded by Satan and turned into darkness and despair from which they have never recovered.

Power to Hinder

We often hear the expression, "God can work and none can hinder." The trouble with that statement is, it is not true. If we take the Bible as a guide we find the devil does hinder. In fact he often hinders the saints from doing the things God wishes them to do.

In 1 Thess. 2:18 Paul says, "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us." To yet another group, Paul wrote, "Ye did run well, who did hinder you?" Could we have heard the answer it would have been, "The devil."

Hinders Prayer

He delayed the answer to Daniel's prayer, as recorded in Daniel the tenth chapter. The angel who finally came to answer told Daniel that his prayer was heard the first day, but one, whom he called the "Prince of Persia," withstood him one and twenty days, until Michael, the archangel, came to his aid. Many commentators believe that the personality who hindered, referred to here, could be none other than Satan.

Had some of us been in Daniel's place we would never have had our prayers answered. In these days it is hard to get some of us to wait

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twenty-one hours or even twenty-one minutes on God, much less twenty-one days.

Resisting and Disputing

Zechariah saw, "Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him." He was not in ambush, not hiding somewhere in the darkness to attack him as he departed, but he was standing at Joshua's side in the very presence of the angel of the Lord.

He is so bold and so powerful, Jude tells us that "Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

No Myth

The devil is more than a myth, more than an idea, more than a name for evil; he is a real being, with power second only to that of Divinity. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of darkness." And without the help of the Almighty we can never cope with him.

NAMES GIVEN HIM

The names which the Scriptures have given the devil have not been given him to portray the idea of his looks or his general appearance; but to give us a glimpse of his nature, to indicate his methods, his characteristics and to show us his tactics.

A Wolf

Jesus in the tenth chapter of John has likened him unto a wolf, thus setting forth his characteristic to steal, to kill and to destroy. And through the centuries he has been proved a sneak, a thief and a murderer.

A Lion

Simon, in I Peter 5:8 says, "The devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." This sets forth the bold side of his nature, showing that his method is not only to kill, but to bluff, to bully and to intimidate. That he has courage we know, for John the Revelator says, "He accuses the brethren *before our God* day and night."

A Fowl

In the thirteenth chapter of Matthew he has been likened unto the fowls of the air. As such he

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comes with grace and poise, with beauty and songs, on wings and with glistening plumage. He presents himself in such an attractive way that he is able to enter our homes, our schools and our churches and deceive many who would otherwise avoid him.

The psalmist has likened him unto an adder. As such he lurks by the wayside to strike the innocent without warning. It is said that the rattler always warns before striking, but the adder never warns, and such is the method of Satan.

Mel Trotter told me of a camping trip. He was in a tent where a tiny baby was sleeping on the floor. As he turned to leave the tent he noticed there was coiled near the child a large spreading adder, with eyes dancing, neck spreading and tongue flashing; seemingly just waiting for him to leave that it might sink its poison fangs into the tender flesh, and send its deadly virus coursing to the infant's heart. Mr. Trotter rescued the baby and killed the snake.

Friend, there is just such an adder in the personality of Satan lurking on the pathway of your child, ready, watching, waiting for an opportunity to spring, to strike, to sink his fiendish fangs into

the deathless spirit, poison the body, blight the life and damn the soul.

A Dragon

John, in Revelation 20:2, calls the devil a dragon. The dragon is a creature of mythology; in a true sense, a thing of the imagination. And as a dragon the devil works. He is a genius in approaching the soul through the imagination, causing one to worry about things which do not exist; creating bridges that may never be reached and showing rivers that may never have to be crossed.

He takes advantage of a sick body, a tired and worn out mind, a nervous temperament. He works on the imagination making people think they are unappreciated, that loved ones are against them and friends are forsaking them. By these tactics he shatters courage, weakens faith, and wins many a victory. Beware of the dragon.

A Liar

Jesus in speaking of the devil, said, "He is a liar." He lied to Eve in the garden. God had said of the forbidden fruit, "The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The devil said, "Ye shall *not* surely die."

The devil lied on Job when he said to God, "Touch his bone and his flesh and he will curse

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thee to thy face." That statement was proved false. He lied again when he said, "All that a man hath will he give for his life." But Job went to court, proved him a liar and demonstrated to the world that some men are not for sale at any price.

He lied to Jesus when he offered Him the kingdoms of the world in exchange for worship, for they are not his to give. For six thousand years this archfiend of hell has been lying to and lying about the saints of God. Do not believe him, for Jesus said, "He is a liar and the father of it."

False Modesty

There is too much false modesty in the world today. Some folks are so nice they are "nasty nice." They do not believe in calling a spade a spade, and they are so careful in their choice of expressions that words which should have a deep, biting meaning have lost their teeth and their grip.

When little Johnny uses the word liar, his elders throw up their hands in horror and say, "Oh, you must not say that, say fib." Fib nothing, if a thing is not true it is a lie. If he says anything about the devil, again there is holy horror and they

say, "Oh, Johnny, don't use that awful word. You must say the old bad man, or the 'booger' man."

In this way they take all the teeth out of the rake, the prongs out of the fork, and the blade from the knife.

Camouflaging

The Sunday school teacher of Johnny's class speaks of Satan as "the old bad man." The preacher in order to be funny refers to him in his sermon as, "Old Split Foot, and the 'booger' man."

When they get home, the parents are lining up some neighbor and when Johnny asks, "Who?" they hedge by saying, "Oh, that old bad man who lives down the street."

When he cries to go with the older children, they tell him if he is not good, "the old bad man," or "the booger man" will get him. At night when at home alone with the older children they tell him of ghosts and haunted houses, spooks and hobgoblins, until he is frightened almost out of his wits. Then they turn the lights out and he is told to run or the "bad man" will get him sure.

All day he has heard about the evil person, at home, at church, from the grown folks and from the children. He is spoken about in the Bible, and lives on their street, and he gets little boys who cry.

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Johnny Grows Up

Then Johnny grows up, as all Johnnys should. He finds that there are no haunted houses; and ghosts and spooks do not exist. Little boys can cry all day and there is no "booger man" to get them, and you do not have to whistle when you pass the graveyard.

He has heard these names so often applied to the Satan of the Bible that he draws the conclusion that if a part is false, all is false. If there are no ghosts, there is no devil.

One day Johnny said to a friend, "I don't believe there is a devil anyway, I think it is just like Santa Claus, he is your daddy." Well, his daddy may be devilish but nevertheless there is a devil; a real, live, personal devil, and, "believe it or not," he is a devil of a devil.

Angel of Light

"Satan is transformed into an angel of light," is Paul's statement in 2 Cor. 11:14. And it is in this form he enters into many of our homes and churches.

A friend told me about a beautiful and gifted young lady who came to his church. Her bearing was such that the church fell in love with her. She seemed spiritual and was a natural leader of young

people. They pushed her forward in the church work, only to find as the months went by that she was bad to the core, and she nearly wrecked the faith of many of the young people before they could get rid of her.

Illustration

Another pastor told me about a young man, a musician and singer, who came to his church. They had been praying for someone to lead the choir and train the orchestra and they thought that he was an answer to prayer. They took him into the church and hired him as director of music, only to find after a few months that his seeming spirituality was only a camouflage over a heart of hell, and his conduct among the young people was such that when they discovered it, the church board waited upon him and gave him just forty-eight hours to leave town.

Had the devil approached either of these churches in the form of a silly flapper or a modern "sheik" or "jelly bean" they would have had nothing to do with him. But Satan is wise, he knew that; so he came as, "an angel of light."

More Methods

The devil is a magician, and a worker of miracles. This is clearly and definitely taught in

the thirteenth chapter of Revelation. Many of the things which we see and hear today, that seem so miraculous to us, are not of God, but of the devil.

We are sure of this, because many of those who are connected with these strange and unexplainable happenings deny the deity of Christ and the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the Bible teaches that "he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ he is antichrist."

His Workers

The devil's workers are everywhere. So zealous has he been for his own cause that no campaign was ever launched, religious or otherwise, that he did not have a representative somewhere on hand and possibly on the committee.

So subtle is "Our Adversary" in work of this kind, that when he is unable to get some of his own servants on the job, by deception and trickery he has secured people of God to help him. This may seem to be overstated, but let us see. Did you ever strongly oppose some enterprise, and because of your opposition it was defeated? Some time elapsed, and you awoke to the fact that you were wrong, and that God would have received greater

glory if you had withheld your opposition. Who put you wrong? God? No, He is always right. You may think too much of the devil to blame it on him, but I do not. He is the very one that got you to do it. He may not have got you into sin, but he did get you to oppose what he opposed, and God's cause was defeated and that was all he was after.

Impressions

The devil is shrewd concerning impressions and visions. "Be sure you are led of the spirit," is his oft-repeated caution, but he fails to designate what spirit.

He works with a rush; with him it is always, hurry, hurry, hurry. He gives a vision, some very definite impression, then rushes the soul immediately into the thing, and trouble is the result.

This is his most successful method in dealing with Christians; rushing them into things; causing them to pass judgment before the evidence is all in.

God's method is to "wait," "tarry," "stand still and see," "be still and know." He never rushes His children, but urges them to "try the spirits" whether they be of God.

HIS COURAGE

Have you ever stopped to consider the courage of the devil as is plainly revealed throughout the Scriptures? I have heard men call him a coward, but where do they get it? I have seen the gymnastic type of preacher lean over the pulpit, and as if shaking his fist in the face of the devil, dare him to come up and fight. I am not going to do that; he is liable to come.

Looking for a Scrap

I learned when just a lad in school in the Indian Territory, never to place a chip on my shoulder and dare a fellow to knock it off, for there were boys in that country who would do it. I tried it just once, and when the chip came off it seemed my head was coming off with it. I am placing no chips on my shoulder for the devil to knock off. I am drawing no lines and daring him to cross.

I have heard people in testifying say, "Bless God, I gave the devil a solar-plexus blow that knocked him out." When I hear such, I think, "No you didn't, you just hit another bag of wind." If the devil could be knocked out, better men than live today would have knocked him out centuries ago.

Does He Tremble?

Some in minimizing the power of the devil will quote the old song,

Satan trembles when he sees,
The weakest saint upon his knees.

But I have my doubts about that. It all depends on who the saint is and what he is doing on his knees. He trembled in the presence of Christ, but we have no record of his trembling anywhere else.

"Any being who has the courage to enter the presence of God, contend with Jesus Christ, dispute with the angel Michael, and attack a man with the character and reputation that Job had, is not likely to get palpitation of the heart just because some of us come around."

Often Defeated

The devil has been defeated again and again but has always come back. When he was flung from the battlements of heaven in that far off battle long ago, he seemed to shake his fist at God and shout as he fell, "You'll hear from me again."

Where the devil went and what he did we do not know. Some Bible scholars think that it was he who plunged the world into chaos. But be that as it may, there is one thing we do know, no sooner

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had God brought order out of chaos, created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden than Satan came in the form of the serpent, deceived the woman and the man, called God a liar, plunged the world into sin and secured a mortgage upon the human race.

Interest

The devil secured that mortgage more than six thousand years ago and from that time to this, on the first day of every year, every month, every week, yes, on the first hour of every day and the first minute of every hour he has been on hand to collect his interest, and humanity has never failed to pay.

“Small was the thing I bought,
Small was the debt I thought,
Poor was the loan at best;
God! but the interest.”

So great was the grip the devil secured on the race that he caused Adam, the first man, to be driven from the Garden; he caused Cain, the second man, to become a murderer; plunged Abel, the third man, into eternity; robbed the ground of its original strength; threw the world into wickedness and fought God every step of the way from Adam

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to Noah. He made such headway in his work that "God saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

A TRIP THROUGH THE BIBLE

If God will help me, and you will follow me, I should like for us to take a trip through the Bible and see how "our adversary the devil" has manifested courage throughout his long and chequered career.

Noah to Moses

God defeated the devil in that first great struggle by ushering in the flood. He destroyed the wicked, cleansed the earth, saved the righteous Noah and his little family and brought in a new and a better order. But was the devil beaten for good? No! He evidently was not drowned in the flood. For no sooner had the ark rested on Mt. Ararat than the devil was again on the job. He caused Noah to get drunk on the fruit of his first crop; drove Abraham into sin; Lot's wife into disobedience; Israel into bondage and fought God every step of the way from Noah to Moses. He was so successful in the fight that about all the spiritual fire left in the world was a bush which Moses discovered burning on the mountain side.

Red Sea to the Jordan

God again came to their rescue, defeated the devil; led Israel out of bondage; made a path for

them through the sea; gave them laws by which to live; placed a pillar of fire before them and said, "Walk in the light and I will lead you to Canaan." But the devil was not drowned with the Egyptians and as soon as the march began he joined the company. He caused Aaron and his sister to murmur against Moses; made Moses lose his patience; drove the Children of Israel into sin and disobedience and fought God every step of the way from the Red Sea to the River Jordan. He was so successful in his fight that all but a remnant of the mighty host that came out of Egypt bleached their bones in the wilderness and never saw the promised land.

Joshua to Malachi

Again God came on the scene; routed the devil; pushed aside the waters of the Jordan and under Joshua led Israel into Canaan, thus introducing another new and better order. But the devil was not drowned in the Jordan, and hardly had the walls of Jericho fallen before he again began his work. He caused the Israelites to break God's commandments by intermarrying with the Canaanites; corrupted the period of the Judges; drove Saul, the first king of Israel, into disobedience; led David, the second king, into adultery; Solomon, the third king, into great wickedness; murdered

the prophets and stoned the witnesses that God raised up. He placed Israel back into bondage and fought God every step of the way from Joshua to Malachi and played such havoc in his work that for over three hundred years no record was written.

The Birth of Christ

I think the long silence after Malachi laid down his pen deceived the devil, for he is not omnipotent. Perhaps he thought that God had given up the fight, that no other prophet would ever arise, that no other messenger of God would ever come.

But as he gloated over his apparent victory, one of his own messengers rushed into his presence crying, "There is a new star in the heavens and a new Babe is born in Bethlehem; Wise Men and shepherds are coming to worship Him, and they 'call His name Jesus for he shall save His people from their sins'." At this news I see his face go black with hatred and I hear his cry, "I know Him, I know Him. I have met Him before and I will get Him yet."

Killing the Children

A new day was dawning, a new dispensation was coming, but did the news of the birth of the Son of God so intimidate the devil that he fled?

No! He immediately marshalled his forces, and hastened with all speed to Bethlehem, but arrived too late to find the Baby Jesus. So determined was he to destroy the Child Christ, that he put it in the heart of Herod to put to death all the male children that were two years of age and under.

The Temptation

Thwarted in his efforts to destroy the Child, he bided his time until Jesus entered His public ministry. Then as he had once challenged God for a combat with his servant Job, he challenged Him for a contest with His Son Jesus. "Let me meet Him alone and He will worship me," was the substance of his challenge. "All right," God answered "you may meet Him in the wilderness, when from a physical standpoint He is in His weakest condition." Then, as the Scriptures hath said, "Jesus went forth to be tempted of the devil." After He had fasted forty days, when He was hungry, when His humanity was crying for food, the battle with Satan began. Luke tells us the story, how the devil attacked Him in three realms. *First*, in the physical realm, saying, "Command that these stones be made bread." *Second*, in the realm of power, saying, "Worship me and I will give you the kingdoms of earth." *Third*, in the realm of

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religion by quoting Him scripture. But Jesus defeated him at every point, meeting every thrust of his powerful sword with the shield of faith and the Word of God.

Christ beat him in that great battle of the wilderness, but did the devil retreat for good? No, the Bible says, "he departed from him for a season." After defeat in his last attack as he backed away, he seemed to shake his fist in the face of Christ and say, "You beat me here, but I'll see you again."

Mountain to the Cross

As soon as Jesus chose His apostles, Satan entered into the treasurer and fought God all the way from the mountain to the cross. During that time he caused Christ's own kin to doubt Him, Judas to betray Him, Peter to deny Him, His disciples to forsake Him, the soldiers to abuse Him, Herod to mock Him, Pilate to sentence Him and the people to laugh at and make fun of him.

The Crucifixion

Since there was nothing more he could do in Jerusalem, the devil followed Christ as He staggered under the heavy wooden cross up Golgotha's hill. There he nerved the arms of the soldiers who drove the spikes in His hands and feet, he strength-

ened the backs of the Romans who lifted the heavy cross and dropped it in its socket in the rock. Then when he had Christ suspended between heaven and earth he put it into the heart of the chief priests to mock Him, the scribes and Pharisees to criticize Him, the dying thief to revile Him, and the multitude to laugh at His loneliness.

I have often thought that when Jesus lifted up His voice and cried, "It is finished!" the devil, misunderstanding that cry, might have dispatched his messengers to his farthest outposts shouting, "Victory, victory, we have put to death the Son of God."

The Burial

But did the devil grow careless at this apparent victory? No! He attended the funeral and when they had placed Jesus in the tomb the devil stationed his ally, Death, at His head and said, "Hold Him," he placed his accomplice, Corruption, at His feet, with an order to dissolve Him. When the stone was rolled into place it was the devil who suggested the Roman seal be placed upon it and the armed guard be stationed around the tomb. Then, and then only did hell go on a vacation, devils on a picnic, and Satan settle down to make his fiendish plans for the destruction of the world.

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What Might Have Been

Have you ever considered what might have been if the crucifixion of Christ had been a victory for Satan? If the death of Jesus had not been in the great plan of God?

The very nature of the devil is destructive. He hates God and all He has created. Had that death been a victory for the devil he would have started on the destruction of the earth and would never have stopped until he had blighted every flower, withered every blade of grass, and blasted every beautiful thing in the world of nature. He would have killed every beast, destroyed every bird, broken every heart, wrecked every life and damned every soul. Then sweeping over the earth with the fires and fumes of hell he would have left this place, which God created in beauty and glory, a barren waste, an awful wilderness covered with the ashes of desolation.

Victory for Christ

The crucifixion was not a victory for Satan, but a glorious triumph for our God and His Christ. Hardly had the devil started to formulate plans for the destruction of the earth when Death dashed up shouting, "I couldn't hold Him."

Corruption came crying, "I could not dissolve Him, He's up, He's out, He's gone."

"Who?"

"Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of Calvary, the Savior of the world."

Denies the Resurrection

Foiled, defeated, beaten, facing a new and a better order the devil rallied his forces in time to meet with the chief priests and scribes who hired the soldiers to say, "His disciples came and stole him away."

Not content with this, Satan hurried to the side of the apostles and tried to upset them with doubts. With Thomas he nearly succeeded and with thousands of others since that day, he has.

Resurrection to Pentecost

The devil fought God every foot of the way from the Resurrection to Pentecost and was so successful that of the 500 brethren who saw Christ alive after His resurrection, only 120 were in the Upper Room when the Holy Ghost came.

Launching the Church

God won a marvelous victory over Satan on the Day of Pentecost, for with the coming of the Holy Ghost He ushered in a new and a better dis-

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pensation by launching the Church. Undaunted again, Satan joined the first church in the personalities of Ananias and Sapphira, and renewed his age old fight.

He had Stephen stoned to death, killed James with the sword, and hounded the steps of the apostles until the last one was murdered or banished.

Power of Infidelity

With that relentless war the devil has come on down through the centuries; persecuting the Church, dogging the steps of the child of God, throwing a blockade across the pathway of every saint and making life as unendurable for the Christian as possible. So successful has been his fight that he has succeeded in diverting the channel of the river of infidelity, turning it out of its regular course until today it is running through many an American church. Many ministers are preaching to their congregations the same doctrines that Bob Ingersoll and Tom Paine preached to the infidel clubs a few generations ago.

Our Foe

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers. He is more than a myth, more than an idea, more than a name, he

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is a real being with power second only to members of the Godhead. For courage he is unsurpassed and for persistency he has no equal. When I consider this fallen angel with all his ability, augmented by more than six thousand years of active experience, I do not feel like shaking my fist in his face and daring him to come up and fight. I do not feel like advertising for people to watch me outrun the devil. I feel like drawing nigh unto God and imploring Him to draw nigh unto me and crying out with George Heath:

My soul be on thy guard,
Ten thousand foes arise,
The hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the skies.

O watch, and fight, and pray,
The battle ne'er give o'er,
Renew it boldly every day
And help divine implore.

Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor lay thine armor down,
The work of faith shall not be done,
Till thou hast gained the crown.

Fight on my soul till death
Shall bring thee to thy God,
He'll take thee at thy parting breath
To His divine abode.

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Neighbor, that will be the time to challenge the devil. That will be the time to shake your fist in his face and dare him to come up and fight. But until that time I want to draw nigh unto my God, implore Him to draw nigh unto me. I want to "dwell in the secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

The Devil Is Here Now

The devil is here now. He has taken note of this message and in his conceited soul he may have taken pride in some of the things I have said about him. But I have not meant to eulogize him. I have tried to show, that we "wrestle not with flesh and blood," that we battle not against men, but against a real, living, powerful foe, and apart from the grace of God we are no match for him.

Christ Is Here

But while Satan is here, let me remind you that Christ is also here. And while the devil is great, our Christ is greater. The devil is powerful, but our Christ is all powerful. The devil is wise, but our Christ is all wise. The devil is mighty, but our Christ is Almighty. The devil is strong, but our Christ is stronger.

The devil is great in the fact that he can blight, blast, tear down, wreck, destroy, and ruin. But our Christ is greater in the fact that he can take that which the devil has blighted and blasted, rebuild the wreck, reset the broken places, take away the blight, and make that which the devil has dishonored, another vessel unto honor, "fit and meet for the Master's use."

It was Christ who discovered sin in the devil before the foundation of the world. It was Christ who flung him from the battlements of heaven in the far-off long ago. It is this same Christ who has defeated him on every battle field since the world began.

Where Is There Hope?

Should you raise the question, "If the devil, though often defeated, has always returned, where is the hope for the future?" It is this. In Christ's battle with Satan, every defeat has been a greater defeat, every victory a greater victory. Every battle has been fought on higher ground, every order has been a better order, every age a better age, and every dispensation has been a better dispensation. We stand today upon the threshold of the Golden Age, when our Lord will lay "hold on

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the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, . . . and cast him into the bottomless pit, . . . that he should deceive the nations no more for a thousand years." Then Christ will cast him "into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and he shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Then will the scripture be fulfilled, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Jesus Won

When I think of the great battles of the past in which our Lord has been the victor, when I think of the battle of the future in which John the Revelator has shown us Christ, the PRINCE OF PEACE as conqueror of the Prince of This World, my heart sings with the poet:

The bells of joy are ringing,
Within my soul today,
My joyful heart is singing
Along the sunny way.
My eyes with gladness glisten,
Yet nothing great I've done,
But listen, listen, listen,
I'm glad that Jesus won.

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With cruel thorns they crowned Him,
They tore His precious side,
And then they gathered round Him
And jeered Him till He died.
But He again has risen,
His foes are all outdone,
And listen, listen, listen,
I'm glad that Jesus won.

Upon His cross I'm gazing,
My heart o'erflows with love;
My happy soul is praising
My risen King above.
No stone, no grave, no prison,
Could hold God's mighty Son,
And, listen, listen, listen,
I'm glad that Jesus won.