

Seeking to Persuade God

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"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). Preaching and teaching are designed to please God and persuade men to be obedient to the word of God. Most people of this age reverse the order and seek to please men and persuade God to accept them as they are.

I am convinced that one of the first places men began to depart from the Almighty God is to question either His existence, His word, or His goodness. That is exactly what Satan did in the mind of Eve in the Garden of Eden, and that is what he has done down through time. To plant doubt in the mind of man regarding the person and nature of God accomplishes exactly what Satan desires in turning his mind from righteousness to unrighteousness. In his cunning way Satan substitutes sensual lusts to replace our faith in the promises of God.

The gospel of Christ will accomplish exactly the reverse of Satan's snares.

The apostle was sent by Christ "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).

If one could actually see where Satan is all the time in his life and understand what tactics he employs to rule in his heart, just as he rules in the hearts of the people of this world, he might wonder how one could ever escape hell. This world is Satan's dominion and it is destined for eternal fire (Matt. 25:41). No one could survive damnation but for the grace of God and the salvation through Jesus Christ. The word of Christ illuminates the way to enable us to come to Christ for redemption from our sins and to deliver us from the craftiness and power of Satan. Satan is patient, prudent, persistent and persevering in his attempt to get YOU. It is through every appetite, every appeal of the mind and of the flesh, that he seduces us to sin, and thereby, turns us from God.

Every day you pick up the newspaper or look at a TV news cast you see something that is calculated to turn your mind from God to Satan. There will be some picture, some headline, some commercial, some cleverly planted suggestion that makes the appeal to you to think or do something ungodly. Television is saturated with seductive venom to turn the heart and life from God to serve Satan. The language we hear, the nudity that is constantly seen, the violence, the ungodly and worldly plots that have already enslaved those about us day by day, influence our minds toward the doctrine of Satan.

The portrait of his evil personality can be seen in all principal communications of our day. Satan presents to all of us that his way is accepted by society and that nudity and extramarital sex are wholesome and all right. Greed and lust, liquor and drugs are presented as acceptable and good. And Satan actually portrays this lifestyle as a healthy, normal, right way of life, and you are missing something if you deny it. That doctrine is evil and damnable! Innumerable multitudes have been imprisoned by the god of this world: Satan, who has blinded the minds of them which believe not, so that the gospel will not be accepted (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

Satan depicts the way to success in business and in every other dealing with one's fellowman is to lie, to cheat and to steal. He says victory over one's enemies comes by deception of every kind. He causes one to think that this is the normal way of life; that it is the only way to true success in life. That is the picture the Devil plants in the minds of men and women of accountability. That lifestyle has engulfed millions. But one sees so much of it every day that he comes to accept it without complaint.

Everything from toys and children's games to the very finest in higher education is sprinkled throughout with all the sophisticated means Satan uses to turn man's mind away from God. Therefore, it becomes necessary to frequently, and in the most diligent manner, review in our own minds what God has said in His Book about Himself. We need also to know what He has said about our own destiny, and what He wants us to do and be as we live in this world.

I want to challenge the thinking of those who read these pages by this, and perhaps some subsequent articles, to understand who God is and to seek His favor. You must also understand the shrewd tactics of Satan and how to resist him. In setting forth my goal in this endeavor, I want to adopt the inspired words of Peter: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance" (2 Peter 1:12-15).

I am not a politician. I have no political office and I do not aspire one of any kind. I am not running from anything nor for anything; I am simply trying to teach the word of God. I am endeavoring to reach the hearts of men and women with the only power that is able to resist the onslaught of Satan's wiles: the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16). I am quite sincere about this matter. I want to go to heaven when I die, and I want you to go also.

In Hebrew 13:1 some instructions are given for Christians who face the battles against spiritual wickedness in this life. Here is what the inspired writer said: "Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unaware. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:1-4).

Now I wonder how many think this teaching belongs to the first century or to some other point in history, but not to the twentieth century? A lot of people evidently do not believe it is applicable to this generation. This teaching pertains to all people in the present age. It is applicable right now!

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with

meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" (Heb. 13:5-9). This is relevant to all people of this dispensation.

The statement that "Jesus is the same yesterday, and today and forever" relates to the things that are pertinent to our lives every day. It is not relevant just to a period of miracles in the days of the apostles. Jesus Christ is unchangeable in all his promises, his word, and his work as Saviour, Mediator and High Priest. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. In matters of faith he is always the same in his relationship to us. What is said of Christ is said of the Godhead, absolutely and in every respect. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).

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