

OUR POWERFUL AND CUNNING FOE

While our foe in the great spiritual warfare of life fully utilizes men and women who yield themselves to his service, our real battle is not with them, but with him who dominates their thinking and their behavior. This archenemy of Christ and His people is identified as "the devil" (Eph. 6:11) and "Satan" (Mat. 16:23; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 2:11; et al.). *Satan* means "adversary," "accuser," or "enemy" and he is indeed such to all who are striving for Christ. He is described as "the prince of the powers of the air" (Eph. 2:2), even as his agents against whom we wage war are described as "principalities," "powers," "the world-rulers of this darkness," and "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

The Lord twice called Satan the "prince of this world" (John 14:30; 16:11). The world is led, influenced, and dominated by his will. It is in this world that the Lord's soldiers fight the spiritual battles with men and their institutions under Satan's control, even as we receive our orders from the Lord Jesus. Thus, our real warfare is with their invisible reprobate prince in the spirit realm. He is described as one who inhabits and pervades the very atmosphere of our earth. He is presently allowed to live in "the air," but he will eventually be brought down to the Hell prepared for him and his angels (Mat. 25:41).

We are warned of the "wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). *Wiles* is from a word meaning "a deliberate planning or system." The devil is crafty, subtle, and deliberate in strategically seeking out our most vulnerable points. He is a master of deception and subterfuge: "Jesus called him "a liar and the father thereof" (John 8:44). He stalks his prey, lurks in the shadows, and awaits his opportunity to devour whomever he may (1

Pet. 5:8). We must not be ignorant of his devices lest he gain an advantage over us (2 Cor. 2:11). He cleverly lays his snares that he may bring men into the captivity of his will (2 Tim. 2:26). He constantly seeks a weakness that he may tempt us (1 Cor. 7:5). His deceptive powers are so formidable that he at times can pass himself off as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). It is plain from the foregoing that he not only engages in open combat, but that he excels in guerrilla and espionage tactics.

It should be evident from the Scriptural descriptions noted above that we need strength and power beyond that of mere human ingenuity to wage war with this horrible and mighty enemy (Eph. 6:10–18). We must utilize every spiritual weapon with which the Lord has provided us. We make a costly, yea fatal, mistake if we underestimate him and try to fight him in our own strength alone.

—Dub McClish

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