

Watchman Nee

**Resist
the
Devil**

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by Watchman Nee

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Introduction

Be sober, be watchful: your adversary evil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom withstand steadfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world. -1 Pet. 5:8-9

That no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices. 2 Cor. 2:11

These two scriptural passages indicate to us how full of evil devices Satan is. His basic work is to camouflage whatever he does so that people will not know it is his doing! He even fashions himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). All his works are done under the cover of deceit. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar and he always lies (John 8:44). Of all that he has ever done, he has never willingly and openly acknowledged anything as his work. If he were to make a public report of his works, probably nobody would want them; everyone would probably resist them. For this reason, he always disguises his work in a multitude of ways.

The Work of Satan

Satan's works are manifold. In order for a Christian to walk well before God, he must learn how to resist Satan. In order to do that, he must discern what is the work of Satan. According to the judgment of the Bible, many so-called natural things are actually Satanic works. From a human point of view we may consider something to be incidental, natural, or circumstantial, but the Bible distinctly labels it as the work of the devil. If we are to follow a straight course, God's children must not be ignorant of the devices of Satan—how full of wiles he is, how pretentious and deceptive. We should recognize him in order to resist him.

1. THE WORK OF SATAN IN THE HUMAN MIND

Let us now mention a few of Satan's devices so that we may resist him and overcome him before the Lord.

"For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4-5). Satan surrounds man with strongholds so as to prevent him from obeying Christ. The special field of his work is found in man's mind or thought life. Oftentimes man is bombarded with speculations or imaginations which are adverse to the obedience of Christ. Paul says the weapons of our warfare against these are not of the flesh. These imaginations must first be destroyed before we can bring our thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

The sphere of Satan's operation is in man's thought life. He will inject a thought, an imagination, which appears to be your own. Under this deception, you accept it and use it as if it were yours, though in actuality it is his.

Do remember that many things in the life of a Christian begin with speculations or imaginations. Many sins are first committed in the imagination of the mind. Many unpleasantnesses among brothers and sisters arise from these fancies.

Then there are those sudden thoughts. Sometimes a thought will flash into one's mind that a certain brother is wrong. Many of God's children do not recognize such thoughts as the work of Satan. A person may consider such a thought as his own and take it as true, thinking that the brother really is wrong. And yet, this is not true. It is Satan who has put the thought into his mind. How is he to resist the devil? He must say, "I do not want this thought. I return it to you, Satan." Should he accept it, it will become his own thought. It is Satan's at the start, but it will become his if he keeps it.

Christians need to know what Satanic temptation is. Satanic temptation enters mainly, if not exclusively, in the form of thought. When Satan tempts people, he does not attach a label saying, "This is Satanic temptation!" If people knew it was of Satan they would resist it. No, he sneaks in stealthily without causing a ripple. All his temptations are formulated so as not to easily arouse the Christians. He does not want them to suspect him; he would rather have them sleep on. So he surreptitiously injects a thought into their mind. Once they accept it, it has become a foothold for him.

This is why the children of God must learn how to resist inordinate thoughts. However, they also should be careful lest they become overly attentive. Any excess in this respect will cause further confusion of the thoughts, causing them to fall further into the wiles of the enemy. If one is concentrating on his thoughts, his eyes will not be focusing on the Lord. We must, indeed, resist improper

thoughts, yet we should not be wholly occupied with our thoughts.

I would like to cry aloud that over these years I have seen two extremes: some people exercise no restraint in their thoughts, others are totally taken up with dealing with their thoughts. The latter are just as deceived by Satan as the former. Further, they are likely candidates for a nervous breakdown. So we need to maintain the right balance. We should not allow Satan to tempt us by injecting his thoughts; neither should we be engrossed in how to deal with our thoughts. If we are constantly taken up with dealing with our thoughts, then we have fallen into Satan's temptation, for, instead of having our eyes on the Lord, they are on our thoughts.

Satanic thoughts can be quite easily withstood. There is a saying frequently quoted by many servants of the Lord that goes, "You cannot forbid a bird to fly over your head, but you certainly can forbid it to make a nest in your hair." Do remember, then, that though you cannot prohibit many thoughts from passing through your mind, you can prohibit them from nesting in you. As a thought flashes through you, you may thrust it away by simply saying, "I do not want it. I will not accept it. I reject it." Then you will see that it is thrown out.

Many of God's children have great difficulty with their thoughts. They cannot easily control them. Of the many letters I have received over these past years, the one question most frequently asked is, "How can I control my thoughts?" Some confess that they find it especially difficult to control their thoughts during their prayer time. At this point there is something I would like to say briefly. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8), the Bible tells us. Think on these things! God's children should learn to engage their thoughts in positive thinking. The more they use their mind positively, the less their thoughts will be out of control. Many are not able to control their thoughts because they do not think; they are passive in their thought life. This gives Satan the opportunity to insert some of his many ready-made thoughts into their minds.

Satan will not find it so easy to inject his thought into your mind if you learn to use your mind for thinking on things spiritual, good, righteous, holy, peaceful, and loveable. When your mind is positively engaged and your thoughts are not idle, Satan has no opportunity. But if a Christian's mind is unoccupied and idle, then that passive, ungirded mind of his is open to Satanic infiltration.

Because of this, God's children ought to exercise their minds as they exercise their bodies. This will prevent the intrusion of Satanic thoughts. Learn to recognize what thoughts are unclean, divisive, and slanderous, and then learn to resist them as soon as they are discovered to be of the enemy. Many thoughts are distinctly Satanic and therefore can be easily rejected. Some thoughts, though, are quite

subtle and therefore not so easily repudiated. Nonetheless, we must learn to resist all of them.

Satan is neither omniscient nor omnipresent. He is, however, acquainted with many things, for through his evil spirits—the sinful angels—he has spread an intelligence network throughout the earth. When we are idle, Satan easily puts something that is known to him, but not to us, into our thought. He injects the intelligence that his secret service has obtained into our thoughts. He makes us fancy something, imagine something, and thus thrusts his intelligence into our mind. As soon as we ponder it and accept it, it becomes real to us. God's children, therefore, must reject all communications from Satan, even if such communications do shed light on things. We should refuse to know anything that does not come to our knowledge by revelation received through prayer.

A child of God must not be curious or nosy. If he is not, he will escape many Satanic thoughts. If he is, Satan will supply him endlessly with some of the many things he knows. The Christian at first may think that such knowledge is beneficial. However, if he continues to accept these thoughts, he will soon become a pawn in Satan's hand. Satan will employ the Christian's mind to do his work. It is for this reason that one must resist all causeless thoughts. Whenever a thought about another brother's fault flashes into one's mind, if it comes from the thought of the mind and not from the consciousness of the Spirit, it should be rejected. If it is accepted, it will eventually become a personal conviction. One who thinks a brother has done him wrong will soon reckon it to be real. Consequently, he will break fellowship with his brother.

Unless these sudden thoughts are cut off at the beginning, they will get out of hand afterward. When Satanic temptations first invade the mind, they are relatively easy to deal with; but once they become "facts" in the mind, they are most difficult to get rid of. For this reason we must deal with thoughts. We must reject all unclean thoughts lest we sin. We must actively use our mind so as not to live a loose and dissipated life. Under God's light, we shall see that many sins come through receiving temptations in the thought life.

Let me reiterate: after a thought is first resisted, the matter is considered closed. When the thought comes the second time, it should be ignored. In other words, when a thought first comes to you, resist it by faith, believing that it has fled away. Should it present itself the second time, it comes as a lie, not the truth. Therefore, you must reckon it as false and declare that you have already resisted it. Take this position until the thought flees. If you acknowledge the returned thought as true, you shall soon find it so attached to you that you can hardly throw it off. Many defeats may be attributed to this error. If you resist the devil, he will flee from you. This is the word of the Lord and it is totally trustworthy. Whatever Satan says is undependable. The Lord says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7). Therefore, that which comes back again must be a fake

and should be totally discredited.

Why are the minds of so many Christians confused? It is because they are always resisting. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," says the Bible. Resist him once, and he will flee. You ought to believe that he has fled away. You do not need to resist him many times. Simply believe that he has fled, for this is in accordance with God's Word. Whatever then comes back is not true. You can well afford to ignore it, and, if you do, it will soon disappear. It lurks just outside the door, trying to peep in; if you reckon it as true, it will immediately step in. So, the basic principle is: resist the first time, ignore the second time. If a second time indeed comes, you do not even need to resist; all that is necessary is to not pay the slightest to resist the third time is to refute the first and the second resistances, and so on. Each new resistance means one more distrust of your former resistance. Because you do not believe what the Lord has said, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," you resist to the hundredth time. You will be occupied with resisting from dawn to dusk. The more you think, the more confused you become. The more you use your mind, the more severely you suffer. Therefore, do not resist foolishly. Simply believe that once resisted the devil will flee.

2. THE WORK OF SATAN ON MAN'S BODY

Satan sometimes works upon the human mind and sometimes on man's body. Many sicknesses are not real sicknesses, but are actually Satanic works. Sometimes illnesses are manifestly Satanic attacks.

When Peter's mother-in-law was laid aside with a severe fever, the Lord Jesus went to the house and rebuked the fever (Lk. 4:39). Fever is simply a symptom; it has no personality. You cannot rebuke a symptom; you can only rebuke a personality. You cannot rebuke a chair or a watch, for neither of them has a personality. You only rebuke that which has a personality. But here the Lord Jesus did a surprising thing. When He saw Peter's mother-in-law ill with a fever, He rebuked the fever and it subsided. This clearly indicates that the fever was not ordinary, that it possessed a personality. In other words, it was the work of Satan. At the rebuke of the Lord, Satan retreated.

Another instance is shown in the healing of a child who was deaf and dumb from childhood (Mk. 9:17, 21, 25-27). When the father of the child brought him to the Lord Jesus, the Lord rebuked the unclean spirit saying, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him." And the child was healed. The sickness had been caused by an evil spirit. At the rebuke of the Lord, the evil spirit came out of the child, and the child regained his speech and hearing.

Thus we find two different kinds of patients in the New Testament: the medically or physiologically sick, and those who are sick because of Satan's attack. The first kind of patient the Lord healed; the second kind, since the sickness had a personality, He rebuked.

Many sicknesses are indeed physical ailments, but many are the results of Satanic attacks on the body. God's children need to learn how to resist this latter kind.

Sometimes you cannot understand why you are sick. You have not been careless; so far as you know there has been no possibility of contagion for this particular sickness in your immediate environment. Yet you are sick. You are suddenly incapacitated when you have something of God's work or some spiritual thing to do. This sickness is not ordinary since it cannot be attributed to any natural cause. Furthermore, you became sick just at the time when you had some spiritual work to fulfill. With your eyes closed you can almost judge that this sickness is due to Satanic assault.

This kind of sickness will disappear if you resist it before the Lord, saying, "Lord, I do not accept this sickness, for it comes from the enemy!" Most amazing, you will find that it goes away as suddenly as it came. Neither its coming nor its going can be attributed to any natural cause. It leaves under rebuke.

Take Job as an example. Here was a man who was attacked by Satan with sore

boils from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head. Satan aimed at killing him, but God obstructed the devil's intention by decreeing: "Spare his life."

We Christians need to have a different view of sickness. Many sicknesses are not real sicknesses but are the works of Satan. Many weaknesses are due to the acceptance of Satanic works which, unfortunately, have never been questioned. We must learn this lesson before God: whenever we are sick, we should examine the cause. We should inquire whether the sickness has a proper cause. If a reasonable doubt arises, we should investigate further. We must not accept any sickness without questioning. It may be a real sickness or it may be a Satanic attack. If the latter is the case, we need to resist by declaring that we will not accept what Satan has put on us.

If God's children will stand up and resist, many sicknesses will soon disappear. I do not dare to say that all sickness is attributable to Satan, but I do believe that many sicknesses are caused by his attack. And because these are not questioned and resisted, such sicknesses succeed in making people really ill. If they were resisted, Satan would fail in his work and such illnesses would be eliminated. Is this not wonderful?

Permit me to mention a little of my own experience, though I am most reluctant to refer to things too personal. It happened in 1928 or 1929. I returned to Foochow from Shanghai. For more than two days I ran a high fever of 105° to 106° F. I was staying with a relative, and I felt uneasy about troubling her. I did not know what caused the sickness. I was greatly confused by the many thoughts which crowded into my mind. I was so desperate that finally I managed to get out of bed and sit on the porch. "O Lord, I have to know what is the matter," I prayed. At that moment, I was either praying or reading the Bible. Suddenly it dawned on me that probably this was Satan's attack, for it bore no resemblance to the Lord's hand upon me. As soon as the light came that this was the work of Satan, my inward being was wonderfully enlightened and freed. I had never thought about this being Satan's attack. Suddenly I became wise and saw through the symptom. So I declared that since this was Satan's work, I would not accept it; rather, I would resist it. I was quite uncomfortable that night and struggled much. But I did have a little light within, showing me that this came from the enemy. I resisted and refused to accept it. The next morning I slept a little, and after that the sickness was gone. I did not know how the fever left me. Since then I have had many such experiences in my life. I trust that many other brothers and sisters will have similar experiences. Rebuke Satan, and the sickness will subside.

The experiences of many bear witness to the fact that if a sickness is accepted it will continue, but if it is rejected it will be terminated. Naturally, this does not refer to all sicknesses. What is important, then, is to receive light from God to discern whether or not the attack is of Satan. If it is a Satanic attack, then it must be caused by that which is supernatural instead of being naturally reasonable.

Once it is recognized as Satanic, resist it, and it shall fade away.

Satan desires not only a believer's sickness but even his death. Being a murderer from the beginning, he conspires to bring about the premature death of many, especially of God's children. Therefore, before God we must resist Satan's murderous design. We need to resist him not only as a devil but also as a murderer. Too many of the children of God have the mistaken notion that it would be good if they died. No, such a thought comes from the enemy, for he is always plotting against human life. We can see his evil intention to murder in his insidious attack on Job.

Do not accept the thought of death. It comes from Satan. Perhaps a sudden thought flashes into your mind to put yourself into a dangerous position while you are walking on the street, riding in a boat, or boarding an airplane. You are tempted to accept that thought of possible death. No, learn to reject it and resist it. At no time should you allow Satan to put such a thought into your mind.

A story was told of a believer who had the thought of cutting his throat whenever he was shaving. As a result, he dared not shave for fear that something terrible would happen. One day he told his fear to another brother who warned him that he should resist, for the thought clearly came from Satan. The first brother asked the other brother to pray for him. The latter replied that he would, but that still it must be the first brother who did the resisting. He advised his brother who had this fear to declare: "I resist any thought of death! In the name of the Lord Jesus, I cast out such a thought!"

You should not turn your back on Satan, for this will mean you are running away instead of him running away from you! You should face him and let him turn his back. If you are facing his back, it means he is running. But if you turn back from facing him, you are defeated. Declare that you will not commit suicide. If you do this, then you are facing him, and he will have to run away. If you tremble for fear you will kill yourself, then you are the one who is running away. If you are afraid of him, you are finished!

One day that brother who was fearful lest he might cut himself to death while shaving faced Satan and declared: "I was deceived by you. I know now that it was your doing. Today I resist you." Thereafter that thought never came back. Later he testified, saying, "Since the day I resisted, I have not even had a small cut while shaving." Do not think this is a small matter. Many are those who are under the greatest bondage in the smallest things. Learn, therefore, to recognize before God what Satan can do to the body. Whenever his attack is discerned, resist it until it disappears.

3. THE ACCUSATION OF SATAN IN THE CONSCIENCE

Satan not only attacks the mind and the body but also the conscience. This attack is what we call accusation. It causes great distress to the Christian who feels himself at fault and thus unable to rise up before God.

Accusation may weaken one's whole being. Many dare not resist for fear that it may be the reproof of the Holy Spirit. They cannot distinguish Satanic accusation from the reproach of the Holy Spirit. Hence they accept Satan's accusation as the Holy Spirit's reproach. Consequently, their lives are wasted under accusation. Do remember that Satanic accusation may cripple the most spiritual and most useful person and reduce him to nought. A weakened conscience weakens the entire person.

What is the difference between a conscience under accusation and the reproach of the Holy Spirit? It is extremely important that we know the difference. Satan's accusation is never clear and sharp, whereas the revelation from God distinctly places your sin before you. Far from being distinct, Satan's accusation is that which is continually mumbling. It is said in Proverbs that, "the contentions of a wife are a continuous dropping" (Prov. 19:13). Satanic accusation also operates somewhat like that. It comes down in two or three drops at a time, instead of a pouring out of the whole bucket of water at once. Satan's accusation babbles long like a talkative and dissatisfied woman. Her nature is such that she will not speak out clearly but she will murmur incessantly so as to leave you with a guilty feeling. So is Satanic accusation. It never comes out boldly but rather mumbles along till you feel greatly distressed. When the Holy Spirit comes, though, He enlightens you with a great light so that you distinctly see your fault.

Furthermore, Satanic accusation lacks positive purpose. It does not edify you but, instead, causes you to suffer. It mumbles till it affects you and so overwhelms you that you are no longer able to stand up before God. The purpose of the reproach of the Holy Spirit, however, is to strengthen you, not to weaken you. The more you are reproved, the easier for you to rise up before God. Satanic accusation produces the opposite effect: the more you are accused, the more you are weakened. Hence the reproach of the Holy Spirit is positive in nature. He so reproves that you have to go to the Lord and learn your

lesson. Satanic accusation is quite different. It keeps accusing you until you have been crushed and become useless. Remember, therefore, whenever there is a mumbling that accuses you of fault and so overwhelms you that you cannot even pray or confess or draw nigh to God, then you are definitely under Satanic accusation and must resist.

Furthermore, the results of Satanic accusation are very different from the results of the reproach of the Holy Spirit. If it is the reproach of the Holy Spirit, you will have joy, and at the very least, peace within you after you have confessed your

sin. At the time you are reproved, you do suffer agony; but as soon as you confess your sin before God, you enjoy peace in your heart. Sometimes you will be filled with joy, for the heavy burden has been lifted. With Satanic accusation it is not so. Even at the time of prayer and confession, you are still bothered by his mumbling. He will insinuate that you are sinful and useless, that your confession before God is of no avail, that you will be just as weak after asking for forgiveness as you were before. These are sure signs that the accusation is of Satan; it is not the reproach of the Holy Spirit.

We should understand that the primary fields of Satanic operation are not only in the mind and in the body but also in the conscience. He tries to weaken our conscience. Be careful, then, not to fall into his snare! Do keep it well in mind that through the blood of the Lord our conscience may be purified. No sin in the world is so great that the blood cannot cleanse it. Satan, though, will attempt to weaken our conscience to such an extent that we wonder if the blood of our Lord is able to cleanse us. We feel as though we could never be forgiven. This is indeed a Satanic accusation, a lie of the devil.

Satanic accusations need never be confessed. I have found this out after many years of searching. We may wish to play it safe, and hence we confess and ask the Lord's blood to cleanse us. Let me tell you, if once you ask for the cleansing of the precious blood, then you will also have to do the same thing the second time Satan comes to bother you. And so this will go on endlessly. I have met quite a few brothers and sisters who are afflicted in just such a way as this. You can only advise them not to confess. Instead, they should say to the Lord, "Lord, pardon me for not confessing! If I actually have sinned, I still will not confess, for confession carries little meaning these days. It may be Satan's accusation, so I will not even confess."

Do not be so doubleminded as to think that it is impossible for you to resist these accusations even though you wish you did not have them. If you do nothing but think from morning till night, you will be confounded. But if you resist, you will overcome. You should declare: "I resist! I do not accept these; I oppose all accusations in my conscience! I stand against these accusations which come from Satan! I stand before God under the blood, for the blood is ever efficacious for me! I deny these accusations."

Satan's accusations are many more than we imagine. If Satan cannot make you actually sin and thereby render you useless, then he will make you feel sinful in your conscience and thus paralyze you. He who sins becomes ineffective before God; so does he who feels sinful in his conscience. Everyone who is used of God must be free from the consciousness of sin. If such consciousness exists, a person cannot be used by God. How can one's conscience be burdened with the consciousness of sin and yet he still be used of God? So Satan always purposes to accuse us in our conscience. Hence the book of Hebrews says, "Would have had

no more consciousness of sins" (10:2). This is the absolute necessity, the most basic foundation. Our conscience must not have the consciousness of sins. Yet this is the very thing which Satan seeks to bring in. As soon as there is a guilty feeling in the conscience, the whole being is weakened for all spiritual things. Remember, the consciousness of sin in the conscience does not constitute holiness. The more you are conscious of sin, the less holy you are, and also the less useful. As long as your conscience is troubled with an unforgiven sin, your effectiveness is lost.

Therefore, learn to resist all the works of Satan in your conscience. Satan puts bad Christians out of the battle by enticing them to sin, but he gets seeking Christians out of the fight by using accusation. He disables the carnal Christian by sin and the spiritual Christian by accusation. Consequently, it is very necessary that God's children should have their eyes open to discern Satan's attack. Otherwise, they cannot walk uprightly.

4. SATAN'S ASSAULT THROUGH ENVIRONMENT

We have paid special attention these days to the matter of the discipline of the Holy Spirit." We have noticed how the Holy Spirit so arranges all our circumstances that, even as the Word of God tells us, our hairs are all numbered (Matt. 10:30). Our hairs are not only counted as to their total number but also each is identified by its own number. God knows today when you comb your hair not only how many hairs but also which hairs have fallen!

God's ordering of our environment is clear and detailed. He has looked into all our affairs. Everything is in His hands. Yet, at the same time, Satan has asked God's permission to attack us through our environment. This is something we need to know about.

The story of Job in the Old Testament is the most prominent example. Satan was allowed not only to afflict Job's body with boils, but also to cause his house to fall, his sheep and cattle to be taken away, and his children to die. He sent down fire, wind, and enemies. All these were performed by Satan.

For another example, what did the Lord say about Peter's fall? "Behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat" (Lk. 22:31). Thus we see that though our environment is all arranged by God, yet many attacks may come from Satan. While the Lord Jesus was sleeping in the boat, there arose a great tempest in the sea. Peter and John were certainly not cowards. Yet, as fishermen, they judged by their experience and knew those waves would cause certain disaster. That was why they awoke the Lord Jesus, saying, "Save, Lord; we perish" (Matt. 8:25). The Lord knew, though, that on the other side of the sea in the country of the Gadarenes there were demons to be cast out and that these demons were now trying to drown Him in the sea. So, at the Lord's rebuke, the wind and the sea calmed down. Ordinarily the wind and the sea are not subject to rebuke because they do not possess personality. But here the Lord rebuked them, for Satan was behind, and Satan is subject to rebuke.

Whenever Satan attacks us in our environment, there are two things for us to consider. The passage we read in 1 Peter 5, referring especially to our environment, gives these two sides. It first states, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God" (v. 6). Then it continues with, "Whom withstand" (v. 9).

Whenever God's children encounter unreasonable attacks or causeless perils in their environment, they should on the one hand maintain before God such an attitude as, "Lord, I humble myself under Your mighty hand! I do yield to whatever You have sent me!" They must not utter any word of insubordination; instead they should learn to submit to their environment. Even if it is a Satanic attack, it nonetheless has been permitted by God and hence must be accepted. On the other hand, though, they should resist Satan by declaring, "Whatever the

Lord does, I accept; but whatever Satan does, I categorically oppose. I resist everything that has befallen me through Satan!" Let me assure you, if the attack has been Satan's work, it will fade away by your resisting it.

Alas, many of God's children neither submit to the discipline of the Holy Spirit nor resist Satan's attack in their environment. This really is a problem today—no submission on the one hand, and no resistance on the other hand.

I remember an incident regarding a brother who was engaged in business. Being troubled on all sides, he accepted the difficulties as being the hand of the Lord. One day he met a servant of God on the train who asked him whether he really thought that what had happened to him looked like the Lord's doing. He answered in the negative because those things did not bear any resemblance to the working of God. Whereupon this servant of God showed him that they were the works of Satan and advised him to resist them. So the brother then prayed, "God, if these come from you, I accept; but if they come from Satan, if they are Satan's attacks, I categorically reject, I resist." He spent only a little time in prayer on the train, but by the time he returned to his own place things had wonderfully turned. The change was indeed marvelous.

Most circumstances are given us by the Lord so that we may learn lessons from them; however, there are other occurrences which come from Satanic attacks. We have no lesson to learn from them, only unnecessary suffering. The discipline of the Holy Spirit is for our spiritual building up, but Satan's attack is intended to destroy us.

How to Resist the Devil

We need, then, to learn how to resist the devil. What are the various ways of resistance?

1. FEAR NOT

Whenever Satan works against God's children, he must first secure some ground in them. Ephesians exhorts us, "Neither give place to the devil" (4:27). Without a foothold, Satan cannot operate.

Hence, his first tempting of us will be in order to secure a ground; his next will be an assault on us from the ground he has already secured. Our victory lies in not giving him any ground from the very beginning. One very large ground, perhaps the very largest, that he seeks is fear. Satan's characteristically customary work is to instill fear in the mind of God's children, a foreboding that something is going to happen.

Let us note the words of Job: "For the thing which I fear cometh upon me, and that which I am afraid of cometh unto me" (3:25). What this verse reveals to us is of tremendous significance. Before these terrible things happened to him, Job already had had some apprehension. He was fearful lest his children would die; he was afraid that he might lose all his property. Satan's first job is to plant this fear in man. If the fear is accepted, things will soon happen; if it is rejected, nothing will come of it. Satan has to obtain one's consent before he can operate. If this consent is withheld, he cannot work, for man is created with a free will. Without man's consent, Satan can neither tempt him to sin nor attack him at will. So, in the case of Job, Satan first implanted a tiny little thought of fear in Job. Having once accepted the thought, it made Job tremble.

"Fear is Satan's calling card," said Miss Margaret E. Barber. And whenever you accept his calling card, you receive a visit from him. If you reject his calling card, you drive him away. Fear him, and he comes; fear not, and he is kept away. Therefore, refuse to be afraid! Perhaps one will eventually kill himself if he is obsessed by the thought of cutting his throat while shaving. How often men have thoughts of fear in them, fearful lest this or that thing happen. This is especially true of nervous people. But remember, these thoughts come from Satan and must be resisted.

To the question of what is meant by resistance, an elderly person once replied, "To resist means to say, 'Thank you, but I do not want it,' when something is offered to you." Whatever is offered you, you always answer, "No, thanks!" Though Satan may present you with this or that thing, your reaction is a simple refusal. Such an attitude is enough; it is all that is needed to defeat his purpose. Let us learn this lesson today: resist every thought of fear. Fear not, for fear will bring to you the very thing you are afraid of. May I remind you that no child of God should be fearful of Satan because Satan cannot overcome us. Although he is quite powerful, we have in us One who is greater than he. This is an unchangeable fact, "because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Therefore, never accept fear. He who accepts fear is a fool. Has not the Bible clearly taught that, by resisting Satan, he will flee? What place does he have in us

except to retreat!

2. KNOW THE TRUTH

The second condition of resistance is to know the truth. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

What is truth? Truth is the reality of a thing. When Satan tempts or frightens or attacks people, he always comes in stealthily. He never lets you know he is there. He will not proclaim aloud that he has arrived, for that would arouse your suspicion. He lies, he counterfeits. He never does anything in the light. But if you know what the reality of the thing is, it will set you free. In other words, if you know something is of Satan, you are freed. The difficulty for many children of God is their unawareness of the enemy. They may say with their mouths that it is Satan's attack, yet they do not sense it deep down in their spirits. Though their lips pronounce it to be the work of Satan, their spirits are not as clear. But the day they see the truth, really knowing that this is Satan's work, they are instantly set free.

The power of Satan lies in his deception. If he cannot deceive, he loses his power. Hence, seeing is resisting; seeing makes resistance easy. When you are surrounded with perils in your environment, you cannot overcome if you only feel that these may be Satanic attacks. You need to know for sure that these are of Satan, and then it is easy for you to withstand. To deal with Satan takes more than opposing, for it is difficult to fight against his falsehoods. But when you meet him, you need to recognize him as such; then resist, and he will flee from you.

A sister once asked me, "Satan always puts improper thoughts into my mind while I am praying. What can I do about it?" I answered, "All you need to do is to resist." But she said, "I cannot resist them away." Immediately I knew something was wrong. How could anyone say that Satan gave him many thoughts and then say that he could not resist them away? The fact must be that in spite of what she said, she did not really know that these thoughts came from Satan. So I proceeded, "Was it you who was thinking these thoughts?" After a while she replied, "I was not thinking, neither did I want to think. I wanted to pray. I could not have thought about those things." So I said, "These, then, were not your thoughts. These were instead some premeditated thoughts put into your mind." "Then really," she said, "these must have been put there by Satan." You see, formerly she had not really comprehended that these were Satanic works. Finally, I advised her to resist, and she did. She told me afterwards that the thoughts were easily withstood and they quickly faded away.

It is imperative, therefore, to recognize Satan and his works. This will make resistance easy. Failure to identify Satan renders all resistance ineffectual. By knowing Satan and his devices, half the victory is already won.

3. RESIST IN FAITH

Resistance must be done in faith. We must believe that the Lord has been manifested to destroy the work of the devil, that the blood of the Lord has overcome the attack of Satan, that the resurrection of the Lord has put Satan to shame, and that the ascension of the Lord transcends the power of Satan.

BELIEVE THE LORD HAS BEEN MANIFESTED TO DESTROY THE WORK OF THE DEVIL

The Son of God has manifested Himself! He has come to this earth! While here, He cast out every demon He met; He overcame every temptation from Satan. Indeed, "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). Let us, then, believe that wherever the Lord Jesus goes, whenever He is manifested, the work of the devil cannot exist, for it is totally destroyed.

BELIEVE THE BLOOD OF THE LORD HAS OVERCOME THE ATTACK OF SATAN

How do Christians overcome Satan? "Because of the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 12:11). Through the death of the Lord Jesus, we are united with God into one. The primary objective of Satanic attack is to separate us from God. As long as we are one with God, Satan has absolutely no way to injure us. What, then, separates us from God? Sin alone separates us, but the blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses us from all our sins.

Revelation 12:11 tells us that the brethren overcame Satan because of the blood of the Lamb. With the cleansing of the blood of the Lord Jesus, we are made one with God. When we have the consciousness of sin upon our conscience, we are instantly separated from Him. As soon as the consciousness of sin comes upon us, the devil begins his attack. Without such consciousness he has no way to launch his assault. Thank God, the blood of the Lamb has overcome Satan. Today even the feeblest of God's children can overcome Satan, for every one of us has the blood.

You may not have many other things, but the blood you definitely do have. Through the blood of the Lord Jesus, you quite naturally declare that all your sins have been cleansed. Today God is your God. If God is for you, who can be against you? With your God by your side, the devil cannot attack you. The reason why he is able to accuse and attack is because he has first implanted a consciousness of sin in us. But the blood has placed you on God's side, so Satan cannot do anything with you.

Remember well that once the conscience is purified from the consciousness of sins, Satan can no longer stage his attack. The blood of the Lamb overcomes him. Is it not an amazing thing that whenever man comes before God he senses his unworthiness, but when he confronts Satan he feels guilty? Such a guilty feeling makes him susceptible to the hand of the enemy. So he needs at that moment to declare, "I am sinful; that is why you attack me. But through the blood of the Lamb I overcome you. The Lord Jesus has died for me; His blood has been shed. What can you do to me?" Let us therefore believe. Believe that the Lord was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. Believe that the Lord's death has spelled destruction to Satan's attack.

BELIEVE THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD HAS PUT SATAN TO SHAME

On the cross our Lord disarmed principalities and powers, making a show of them openly (Col. 2:15). Through death, He brought to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14). By His death and resurrection He has utterly destroyed Satan. How did the Lord Jesus put Satan to shame? By shaking off all the works of Satan when He rose from the dead.

What is resurrection? It is a realm beyond the touch of death. Every living thing in the world is within the touch of death. Men die, animals and plants die. All living things are subject to death. There is no exception, for death has spread like a net over this entire world. It has entered into every living thing. But here is a Man who came out of death, for death could not retain Him. He has entered into a realm beyond the touch of death and this realm is called resurrection.

The life we receive at the time of new birth is this resurrection life, for the Lord regenerates us by His resurrection. This new life in us has no relationship whatever to Satan. It is absolutely beyond the reach of Satan; furthermore, it is indestructible (see Heb. 7:16 mg.). Satan did all he could at the cross, but he was completely routed and put to shame by the Lord. So we have in us a life which all the powers of Satan cannot defeat.

Always remember that Satan's attack on us can never be greater than his attack on our Lord on the cross. There he poured forth all that he had accumulated since the creation of man of wrath, cunning devices, plans, and strategy—and all for one purpose: to destroy life. But all his plans and devices were of no avail. He was defeated, and ever after he is the defeated foe. The Bible affirms that his head is bruised.

We must show brothers and sisters that there is no reason for a Christian to be afraid of Satan. By the resurrection life in us, we shall overcome. Satan is fully aware that he can do absolutely nothing to this resurrection life. His days of victory are gone! His head is broken! So his prime effort now is to prolong his days, for he has already given up the hope of victory. Resurrection life is beyond his touch. It is absolutely transcendent over the power of Satan. Therefore, let us not be afraid. Let us resist him not because he is so fierce but because this is the will of God.

BELIEVE THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD HAS TRANSCENDED THE POWER OF SATAN

We should believe in ascension as well as in resurrection. The Bible shows us that when the Lord Jesus ascended to heaven, He was made to sit at the right hand of God the Heavenly Father, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, so that He might be head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:20-22). The Lord has transcended all things and is now seated at the Father's right hand. By reading Ephesians 2 we see that we too were raised up with Him and were made to sit with Him in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6).

Let us therefore observe this: that it is not the Lord Jesus alone whose manifestation destroys the works of the devil, whose cross and resurrection and ascension disarm Satan and his power, and who has transcended all things; all the children of God share in this transcendence of the Lord. Even the weakest members are far above all evil rule and authority and power and dominion.

The point of conflict between us and Satan lies not in the struggle to win, but rather in strife to avoid defeat. These two are vastly different. Many of God's children have a mistaken concept of war with Satan. They wrongly think that they must fight in order to win. Such an idea reveals a lack of understanding of what the gospel is. No Christian is able to fight to win. We fight because we have won. The Lord Jesus has already defeated Satan. Satan has totally lost his ground. Satan's battle today is to recover, ours is to retain. We do not fight in order to occupy; we protect what we have already occupied.

The question, then, is not victory, for Satan is already defeated. The Lord has overcome! The church has overcome! The conflict between the church and Satan is to protect the Lord's victory, not to win it. Our aim is not to wrestle victory from Satan but rather to keep victory from being robbed.

We should always triumph in the cross of our Lord. We should proclaim, "Satan, you are a defeated foe!" We must always remind him of this fact. When you resist Satan, believe this fact that he is a defeated foe. We do not withstand him because of his fierceness. Not at all. I must tell you that such an understanding is a complete distortion. It will only bring in confusion. No, we stand before Satan and declare to him: "You are already defeated! You are finished. I am now in the heavenly places. I defy you and I resist you."

I hope brothers and sisters understand what is meant by resisting. Satan is a defeated foe; he is a fugitive, a prisoner who should have been totally eliminated on the cross of our Lord. Today is only the day of his escape. When the kingdom comes, he shall be completely destroyed. So today he does not tempt in open warfare; rather, he hides outside the door behind the wall to sneak in with his temptation. He does everything secretly. When that happens, do not forget that you represent the Lord God and that Satan is but a fugitive tempting you outside the wall, not inside the room. You need not be afraid of him nor resist him as

though he were part of the regular army. You should announce to him, "You are completely defeated! You were done for at the cross! You ought to have been eliminated, but were not; hence your coming today is not permitted!"

The Bible states clearly that if you withstand, Satan will flee from you. He is a fugitive today, trying to deceive you at the door. You should tell him who he is; then he will run away. If you think of him as already being in your home, then you will certainly be disturbed. He comes only to deceive and to try you. If he cannot succeed, he will flee from you.

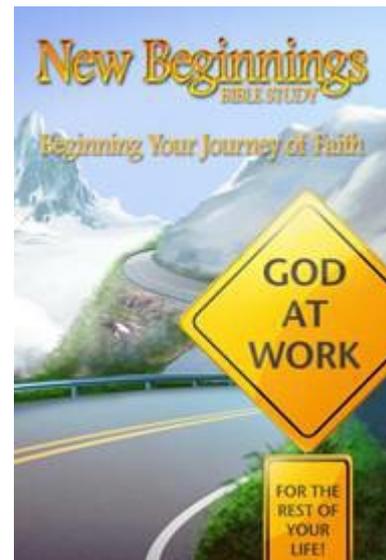
If God's children are afraid of Satan, their portion will be defeat. On the other hand, let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that Satan will not attack us. He will assault—sometimes in our thought, sometimes in our body, sometimes in our spirit, and—sometimes in our environment. We will succumb to his attack only because of our foolishness. If we know our position and know that we are one with the Lord, and if we resist, he will flee from us. This resisting must be done in faith. Believe that he has fled, and he cannot but flee, for he has no ground to stand before the authority of God. We give thanks to God because He has given us the victory in Christ.

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