

The Teaching of CHRIST

By

G. Campbell Morgan, D. D.

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PART I

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST CONCERNING PERSONALITIES

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCERNING SATAN AND DEMONS

"Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10).

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Matthew 6:13).

"It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" (Matthew 10:25).

"And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges" (Matthew 12:26-27).

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation" (Matthew 12:43-45).

"When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side" (Matthew 13:19).

"He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the

children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels” (Matthew 13:37-39)

"But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matthew 16:23).

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

"And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts” (Mark 4:15).

"For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit” (Mark 5:8).

"When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him” (Mark 9:25).

"Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved” (Luke 8:12).

"And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:18-20).

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first” (Luke 11:24-26).

"And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?” (Luke 13:16).

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat” (Luke 22:31).

“Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (John 6:70).

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31).

"Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).

"Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:11).

IN the study of the religions of the world, there is perhaps nothing more startling than the discovery of the universal belief in the existence of a dark under-world of spiritual beings in antagonism to all that is highest in man and to all that makes for his happiness or holiness. Every form of religion, from the fetish worship which is considered the lowest, to the highest conceptions, includes belief in the existence of such forces. The differences between religions in this respect are differences in the attitude of the mind to these spiritual antagonisms; all believing in their existence.

New Testament writers recognized these forces, and gave very definite teaching concerning their opposition to man, his conflict with them, and the way of victory over them.

This belief in the existence of such an under-world of spiritual beings in antagonism to man is so closely interwoven with the texture of these Gospel stories that the most casual description of their contents must include some reference to them. Indeed, it is a conspicuous fact that the Incarnation resulted, not only in the manifestation of GOD, and the interpretation of man; but also in the unmasking of Satan. Whereas in the Word incarnate we have in very deed seen the Father; and whereas in that selfsame Man of Nazareth we have had an explanation of the mystery of our own being; it is equally true that as the result of His presence and His teaching the apostle was able to write long ago concerning the enemy of the race, **"We are not ignorant of his devices."**

We turn then, with reverent interest, to the teaching of our Lord on this great and confessedly mysterious subject; and in doing so two matters impress us, to which reference must be made by way of introduction;

- First that here again we have no systematic teaching, no attempt to satisfy curiosity, or to supply knowledge simply in order to make men **"wise and prudent** [understanding]," to use our Lord's descriptive words of the men from whom the ways of GOD are forever hidden. But on the other hand as we read these records, intermixed with the teaching of the Master, we find enough references to this under-world of evil, to yield a mass of material; and to afford very clear conceptions to those who, convinced of the unerring wisdom of the Teacher, listen with the simplicity of babes, in order to know and do the will of the Father.

It is impossible to quote here all the references to the subject in the Gospels. A tabulation of

results must suffice, referring to some outstanding and representative words of the Lord, under two headings:

- First His teaching concerning Satan; and
- Secondly His teaching concerning those whom He described as his angels.

First, then, the teaching of our Lord concerning Satan.

The references of JESUS to Satan are too many and too explicit to need any argument to prove His belief in the existence of a spiritual personality of great subtlety, and of great power, who is actively engaged in evil operations producing evil results. No man can deny the personality of Satan without either denying the accuracy of these records, or asserting that CHRIST was a child of His own age, influenced merely by the opinions of that age, and mistaken. To those who accept Him as the final, infallible, authoritative Teacher, and who believe in the accuracy of the records, no argument is needed as to the personality, or as to the fact of the activity of such a personality in the universe.

Our business is to endeavor to see this being, as JESUS saw him, and to understand him in the light of His teaching.

In doing this we shall notice

- First the names by which He called him; and
- Secondly the terms by which He defined him.

Here again, we have no set discourse on the person of Satan; but in the midst of His teaching, our Lord referred to him, named him, and used certain titles for him which are definitions; and from these names and these titles we gather the teaching of our Lord concerning Satan.

First, then, the names by which our Lord referred to this personality.

There were three and three only; and they were all taken from the Hebrew economy. Each one of them is to be found in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It is important that we should understand that our Lord came to exercise His ministry as the Hebrew Messiah; and that by all His references to their theology, and to their great religious conceptions, He set the seal of His authority upon them, in so far as they had gone.

Each name by which He referred to this adversary was a name perfectly familiar to the ears of His hearers, perfectly well known in the Hebrew economy. The three names are, Satan, the Devil, and Beelzebub.

The word "Satan" was in its first use a title rather than a name; but in the process of the history of Hebrew theology it had become a definite name attached to one person. The simple meaning of the word is *adversary*; and first of all, adversary in a legal sense; so that in the Old Testament the word is used, not always of a spiritual enemy, and not always of an evil enemy.

Job used the word of GOD Himself, when he described Him as his Adversary; He was his Adversary at law, the One Who was against him. Whether that was a mistake on the part of Job is not now to be discussed.

As we take our way through the writings of the Hebrew people, we find that gradually the name was retained for this one personality, of whom there seems to have been no very definite conception, and no very clear teaching; save that he was a spiritual being, of vast wisdom and tremendous power, who was at war with the purpose of GOD. Our Lord took that name, and used it in His references to this personality.

He also used the name which we translate as "the devil," the Greek word *diabolos*, which means the *traducer*, the *false accuser*; and necessarily in that word there was always the thought and suggestion of evil which was not at first associated with the other word, adversary.

Upon two occasions only, our Lord made use of the word by which this being was designated by the Pharisees, Beelzebub. It is a terrible word, Baal, zebub; Baal, the master, zebub, of the flies; that is, the dung-god, the genius presiding over corruption.

To pass in review the occasions upon which our Lord made use of the name Satan;

- In the hour of His temptation it is recorded that He said to the tempter, **"Get thee hence, Satan"** (Matthew 4:10).
- In His conflict with the Pharisees, when they declared that He was cooperating with Satan in the working of His miracles of exorcism, CHRIST said, **"If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?"** (Matthew 12:26).
- In His explanation of the parable of the sower to His own disciples, He spoke of the enemy, saying, **"Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts"** (Mark 4:15).
- In His address to Peter at Caesarea Philippi, at that parting of the ways in His ministry, He spoke those terrifically solemn words, addressing them to the man, and yet through the man speaking to the personality whom He recognized behind the disciple, **"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men"** (Matthew 16:23).
- In His word to the seventy returned from their victorious mission, He said, **"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven"** (Luke 10:18).

Once, when describing a woman who for long years had been in infirmity He said, **"And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?"** (Luke 13:16).

And at last, amid the shadows of the Passover feast and discourses He uttered that illuminative word, **"Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not"** (Luke 22:31-32).

That is merely a cursory grouping of the occasions upon which it is recorded that our Lord used

the word itself. Upon each one of them we might dwell, for all contribute; something of light to our understanding of the Lord's conception of the power of Satan;

- The first recognizing the fact that he is the instrument for tempting the soul of a man;
- The second realizing the unity of Satan's kingdom in its attack upon the purposes of GOD;
- The third realizing his constant activity with regard to the proclamation of the Divine revelation, that wherever possible he it is who steals away from the heart of a man the Word of GOD;
- The fourth revealing the whole inspiration of Satanic method in the word to Peter, "**Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men**";
- The fifth, putting the whole story of Satan into one great flash of light: "**I beheld**," and the word beheld is a very striking one; it does not refer to the casual sight of something that happened; it is rather a word indicating constant watchfulness, and reveals the Lord's attitude towards Satan.

Suggestively, though not in detailed unveiling, that is the history of the genesis and consummation of evil in the universe of GOD; that was the primal fall, when according to Milton, Lucifer, son of the morning, fell as the result of his rebellion against the government of GOD. CHRIST said, "**I beheld Satan fall**," I know his history, I know his present position, I know the ultimate issue of all his effort, "**I beheld Satan**," not enthroned, not winning his victory; not triumphing, but fallen as lightning from heaven.

In the sixth reference there is one simple incidental revelation of the strange power of Satan over physical conditions; Satan had bound this daughter of Abraham through the long years; and in the seventh there is a wonderfully illuminative revelation of the relation of Satan to the economy of GOD, "**Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.**"

Satan is seen as compelled to the ministry of sifting the men of faith; but over against the power of his sifting there is set the advocacy, the intercession of the Son of GOD Himself; and He spoke in perfect confidence that though he sift, no grain of wheat can be lost, the chaff alone goes. The prevailing intercession of the Saviour is a mightier force than the sifting of the foe.

Of course this is only to touch upon some of the great values of the texts.

The outstanding references to Satan are

- First that at Caesarea Philippi, in which our Lord said, " **Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men**," revealing the very inspiration of evil;
- Secondly that in which He said, " **I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven**," and thus declared His own attitude towards the enemy; and
- Finally that in which He said, "**Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.**"

There are four recorded occasions on which He spoke of this being as "the Devil."

In His explanation of the parable of the sower as recorded by Luke, He said, **“Then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved”** (Luke 8:12).

When He repeated the parable, according to Matthew, He changed the word, and spoke of **“the evil one.”**

In Matthew's account of the explanation of the parable of the tares, or the darnel, He said, **“The enemy that sowed them is the devil”** (Matthew 13:39).

In His condemnation of His critics, as recorded by John, He used the name: **“Ye are of your father the devil”** (John 8:44); and in that connection, remember what we attempted to insist upon when considering His teaching concerning GOD, that the word **“father”** does not essentially mean progenitor.

The real thought of "father" has nothing in it that suggests the origin of being; it is the word that suggests care, watchfulness, attention; and the terrible thought of this passage therefore is that these men were under the care, the watchfulness, the attention of the devil; and if those sacred words, care and watchfulness and attention, seem out of place in that connection, I use them deliberately, for the revelation of Scripture is that of the appalling persistence with which the devil will attempt to encompass the ruin of a soul, and the wreckage of society.

In the foretelling of the doom of Satan and his angels, He spoke of an **“everlasting (age-abiding) fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”** (Matthew 25:41).

Once He used the word of a man, when He definitely and distinctly and emphatically declared of Judas, **“One of you is a devil”** (John 6:70). It is the only occasion when He said “a devil.” In every other case He employed the definite article; but He spoke of Judas as being “a devil,” a false accuser, a traducer.

In connection with His conflict with the Pharisees, He twice used the word Beelzebub, quoting it to His disciples when He said, **“If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?”** (Matthew 10:25) and quoting it again when speaking to the Pharisees, He said, **“And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?”** (Matthew 12:27).

Let us now turn to the defining terms of which He made use.

These are found in the course of His teaching, and in each case must be interpreted by the context. I group them by the suggestiveness of the context. He used two terms to define Satan in relation to the Kingdom of GOD; two to define him in his relation to human character; and one to define him in his relation to Himself.

When dealing with the relation of Satan to the Kingdom of GOD, and its establishment in the world, He used the terms: **“the evil one,”** and **“the enemy.”**

We recite the ending of the prayer that our Lord taught His disciples, "**Deliver us from evil**," and I prefer that form of recitation because I believe the petition includes the evil one, and all the results of his activity. But the implication is that we are delivered from the evils which result from the work of "**the evil one**."

When JESUS was explaining the parables of the sower and the tares He said respectively, "**Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart**" (Matthew 13:19); and, "**the tares are the children of the wicked one**" (Matthew 13:38).

Thus the term, "**the evil (wicked) one**," suggests that Satan is the origin, the fountainhead of evil; and our Lord employed it when dealing with His relation to the Kingdom. The supreme passion of the heart of the Master was that of the establishment of GOD's Kingdom. Wherever He looked He saw the multitudes without a shepherd, and was moved with compassion. He saw wounds and weariness and want and woe, and His heart was filled with pain; and through the chaos He saw the cosmos; through the disorder, the order of the Kingdom; and His whole work was directed towards the establishment of the Kingdom of GOD in the world.

On the other hand the evil one was actively engaged in attempting to prevent that consummation; sowing darnel where the Master sowed the wheat.

"**The enemy**" means, quite literally, the hater, and therefore the one hostile to every purpose of beneficence and of love. In explanation of the parable of the tares, the Lord said, "**enemy that sowed them is the devil**"; and in His address to the Seventy, "**I give unto you power . . . over all the power of the enemy**" as they had said, "**even the devils are subject unto us through thy name**."

Thus when our Lord was speaking of His Kingdom, teaching men to pray for its establishment, declaring the method by which the Kingdom purpose would be carried through a particular dispensation, He referred to Satan as "**the evil one**," the origin of the things that hindered; and "**the enemy**," the one who opposes the progress of the King.

The terms of which He made use, when showing the relation of the devil to human character, are found in the Gospel of John.

Speaking to men who were opposed to Him, who were criticizing Him, who were willfully blinding their eyes to His work and His word, He told them they were of their father the devil, and used two terms to describe him, as He said "**He was a murderer**," quite literally, a manslayer; and "**he is a liar**," quite literally, a teller of the untruth, the falsifier of that which is true.

Thus in the matter of the relation of this personality to human character two terrible facts are revealed;

- His aim is the destruction of man, and
- His method is the falsifying of truth.

Our Lord made use of one term only in describing the relation of this person to Himself: "**the prince of this world.**"

It is to be carefully noted that the Greek word here **prince** is *archon*, and not *archegos*. Archon means simply a ruler, and was the common word used of the rulers of the people. Archegos is never used in the New Testament of any person save the Lord Himself. It means the file-leader, the first in order, the true and ultimate Prince. That word is retained for CHRIST Himself, not by collusion between the writers, but by the overruling of the Holy Spirit.

When JESUS spoke of Satan as the prince, the ruler of this world, it was always in connection with something He was saying of Himself. There are only three recorded occasions, and they all were when the shadow of the Cross was resting upon Him; when He was coming very near to what Russell Lowell so wonderfully described as the

“. . . death grapple in the darkness
"Twixt old systems and the Word:"

when, - to use the language of man, and the measurements of time, - He was coming to the very hour of His conflict, that final conflict between the Prince of life and the prince of evil. Then He used the term, "**the prince of this world.**"

"**Now shall the prince of this world be cast out**" (John 12:31).

"**The prince of the world cometh: and hath nothing in Me**" (John 14:30).

"**The prince of this world is judged**" (John 16:11).

There are expositors who suggest that our Lord there used a designation which has reference to the primal creation of Satan, and I believe that to be true. When we know the whole story, we shall probably find that the first habitation of Satan was this world; that the prince of the creation described in the first verse of Genesis was Lucifer, this very Satan; and that he fell in that relation. By the use of this term our Lord was going back to that earliest fact Satan was "**the prince of this world,**" the one whose realm in the Divine economy was this world; and that partially explains for me his attack upon the parents of the race, whose mission in the Divine economy was connected with restoration.

It is sufficient however for us to observe this description of him, in his relation to the Lord Himself. John declared that "**the whole world lieth in wickedness** (the evil one)." This is a picture of Satan's mastery of men, who have become materialized.

We must not however leave that descriptive term in the shadows that reveal the power of Satan; but rather in the light that reveals the mastery of our Lord. "**Now shall the prince of this world be cast out**"; "**the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me**"; and, "**the prince of this world is judged.**" The Lord always used the term in order to show that the sceptre is taken from the grasp of Satan, and held in His own right hand.

Beyond this recognition and revelation of one ruling personality of evil, there is to be found in the teaching of the Lord a constant recognition of multitudes of evil beings, all acting under the direction of this one ruler.

We shall examine that teaching by considering the common name used for these beings, and two defining terms.

The common name is "**demons**." The word demon is but the Anglicized form of the Greek word. Its derivation is very uncertain. Perhaps it comes from a root meaning to distribute; and if so, the idea has come from the Greek conception of the demon as being a tutelary deity, that is, one who, being intermediate between the sons of men and the final gods, distributed the gifts of the gods to men. Perhaps it comes from a root meaning wise, or knowing, and Socrates strongly held that to be the meaning of the word, and that the demons were wise ones, or knowing ones. If we try to find out what the word suggests, not by its root meaning, but by its use in classical Greek, we are still in the presence of great difficulty; and yet such an attempt will lead us to the light which; think is to be found in the New Testament.

Hesiod distinctly declared that the demons were the spirits of the men of the golden age, who had become mediators between the gods and the sons of men. Homer spoke of the demons almost invariably in a bad sense.

Hesiod's references to demons suggested that their influence on human life was entirely beneficent. Homer sometimes admits that also, but the prevailing use of the word in his writings suggests that their influence was evil.

In the writings of Empedocles we find that he thought of the influence of the demon as sometimes good and sometimes bad.

Christian writers, both those of the New Testament and the great fathers of the Church, denied the intermediation of spirits or angels between men and GOD. The great Christian conception was that every man had right of access to GOD, and needed no such mediation. This explains Paul's strong protest against voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels. Christian teachers looked upon demons as wholly bad.

In the New Testament the word demons is always used in an evil sense by Christian writers and speakers; and whereas the Greek idea, according to Hesiod, was that demons were the spirits of the men of the Golden Age, the New Testament teaches that they are angelic spirits who have lost their First estate, and fallen from their First habitation.

May not these myths and legends of a Golden Age have this element of truth, that they refer to that age of the earth before the catastrophe, when angels were the inhabitants; and because they kept not their First estate, were cast down from their proper habitation. We may find very much of light in what we call paganism, in proportion as we understand that GOD has never wholly abandoned man to darkness in the midst of probationary life.

A reference to dispossession is the only kind recorded from the lips of our Lord respecting

demons.

There are two exceptions:

- First when He quoted the opinion of the multitude concerning John, "**He hath a devil** (demon)"; and
- Secondly the declaration He made concerning Himself, "**I have not a devil** (demon)."

These are the only exceptions to the rule laid down, that whenever He spoke of demons it was in connection with exorcism. The only relation He had with this under-world of evil beings was that of conflict with them, freeing men from their power, and casting out those that possessed humanity.

There are two defining terms of which He made use in connection with demons. He called them spirits. In describing the condition of a man from whom they were cast out, He said "**When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation**" (Matthew 12:43-45).

In addressing them He said, "**Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit**"; "**Hold thy peace, and come out of him.**" In speaking of the rejoicing of the Seventy, He said, "**Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you.**" In that word there is a revelation of the nature of these fallen ones.

In the last mention He made of them, in the great prophecy of His ultimate victory, as recorded by Matthew, He called them angels, messengers; and revealed the fact that they were under the authority of Satan in the words "**everlasting** (age-abiding) **fire, reserved for the devil and his angels**" (Matthew 25:41).

This teaching reveals our enemies in the spiritual world, as it sets before us the fact of one personality, the *archon*, the ruler, who is prince of this world; and reveals to us multitudes of spiritual beings under his control, following his command, cooperating with him in a persistent fight against the Kingdom of GOD, against righteousness, and holiness, and love.

It is this unveiling which most evidently was in the mind of the apostle when he said, "**For 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**" (Ephesians 6:12)

But this teaching reveals something more, and it is the something more which comes to the heart as a message of hope and of courage.

If there were nothing but this unveiling of these hosts of wickedness, how we should be filled

with fear. But the teaching reveals the Master as perfectly knowing them, persistently opposing them, and constantly triumphing over them.

In the days of His flesh, after that hour of supreme temptation as a man in the wilderness, we never find our Lord entering into any discussion with evil spirits, but always addressing them in terms of perfect mastery and perfect command; triumphing over them through all the pathway of His teaching, until at last He triumphed over them in His Cross, putting them off from Him, making a show of them openly in the universe of GOD.

Therefore we fight under a Master Who has perfectly won the victory, and under Whose control we also may be more than conquerors.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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