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GATE CITY JOURNAL

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Open Forum

What Is Satan?

In considering this subject it is necessary to compare the devil of the Bible with the devil of popular belief so as to accept the truth and reject the error; and by such a comparison the striking contrast will largely help to a clear understanding of the truth concerning the entire subject.

The devil of popular religion is a personal being, immortal, omniscient and omnipresent. He is said to have a kingdom of his own, located in a place called hell, supposed to be in the heart of the earth, yet his dominion extends throughout all the earth's surface.

The possession of wonderful power is attributed to the popular devil and his vast kingly possessions in hell and upon earth are said to be the result of a rebellion in heaven in the remote past. As a punishment for this rebellion, the great arch angel with his followers, who comprised a third of the host of heaven, were cast out of heaven.

If we reason upon this theory we shall be driven to ask: Is it possible that evil can arise in heaven? Is it possible that "he of the first if not the first arch angel" in heaven could be transformed into this monster of evil?

If so, heaven itself is not secure from the invasion of evil passion, and if one prominent angel with his followers can thus transform the whitest of

holiness into the blackest of wickedness, why may not all the immortal angels and even the mortals who shall put on immortality at the resurrection, be corrupted with evil thoughts and transformed from happy beings walking with the Lamb in the whiteness of the "righteous of the saints" into the blackness and wickedness of this devil and his outcasts from heaven?

By the way, was it not a most singular way of punishing this disobedient angel to give him the very thing his wicked ambition craved, and thus gratify his most ardent desires?

If the devil is a being possessed of the marvelous powers attributed to him by popular belief, the question will obtrude itself upon reasonable minds without in the least deserving the charge of irreverence, why did God, who is the source of power, give such power of evil to a being bent upon war against all that is good even against God Himself. Of course, if the devil was once a holy angel he was immortal; and, indeed he is declared to be immortal and therefore possessed of the power of endless life—to live as long as God lives—to live too in the hottest fire imaginable, and therefore he must be constituted of a fireproof nature, which can be none other than immortal nature; and that is the nature of God Himself. Then comes the question, why did the All Wise God ever impart His holy and pure nature to any but those who are worthy and who will, after the possession, forever continue worthy, since one possessed of the divine nature is so possessed because he has "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." And cannot therefore sin, any more than he can die, for the divine nature is sinless, as it is deathless. It is therefore nothing short of blasphemy to declare or believe in the popular theory of the devil.

To a reasonable mind, therefore, a naked statement of the popular belief of the devil is all that is required to secure its rejection and relegate the superstition to the myths of pagan tradition from whence it came.

"How art thou fallen from heaven

O Lucifer, son of the morning." We need not seek outside this chapter to see who this Lucifer is. In the margin it is "Day Star," an epithet which in no sense can apply to a being who is said to love darkness, and hate the light of day. This "day star" is spoken of as aspiring to "ascend into heaven," while the devil of popular belief first comes into view as already in heaven and expressing a preference for rulership in hell. The Lucifer of the passage seeks to ascend; the popular devil desired to descend. The one desired to exalt his throne above the stars of God; the other preferred to have his beneath the stars in a kingdom of darkness as deep down as possible, the deeper the better to suit him. This day star was to be brought down to heel, to the sides of the pit, which is the grave (verse 11) which is no place for an immortal being. But to cut the matter short, the fourth verse leaves no room to doubt who this Lucifer is; for it says thou shalt take up the proverb against the King of Babylon and say How hath the oppressor ceased. Then follows a very glowing and highly poetic description of the fall of the King of Babylon from his throne. From the political heaven of Babylon the king as day star is represented as falling, having weakened the nations.

It requires a most fertile imagination to discover an angel falling from the presence of God in heaven in a remote past when there were no nations, here where it is the fall of one who had weakened the nations.

So much for Lucifer. There are of course other passages in the Bible which are supposed to confirm the existence of this evil monster, none of which will stand examination any better than Lucifer. The word satan, which means adversary, is supposed to be another title for Lucifer. In reality it means adversary. The angel of the Lord who opposed Baalam was a good satan, or adversary.

The word devil (diabolos) signifies false accuser, slanderer. Paul says in I Timothy 3:2, "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers (devils) sober, faithful, etc. The theory of the personal devil of popular theology cannot be upheld either by the Bible or reason. The only devil, satan or whatever you may choose to call him there is, is the inclination of your own nature to do wrong.

There being no power but of God how, if the devil theory were true, could James say as in I:13, "Let no man say when he is tempted I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted, neither tempteth He any man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lusts and enticed." There you have it. The devil is your own sinful desires, and everyone can testify of his own personal knowledge that that is a sufficient devil.

Lack of space prevents a more detailed consideration of this subject at this time. Should anyone desire for

ther light on disputed points in this connection we will be pleased to give it at any time space is available in this journal.

ICONOCLAST.

Is Satan Immortal?

Editor Journal:—Satan is a created being; created perfect but in no sense having immortality. "Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. . . . Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee." Ezekiel 28:15-18. "For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Malachi 4:1. Satan is the root and his followers are the branches, and they all meet the same fate. "And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of Hosts." Malachi 4:3. None of God's created beings have immortality, for God "only hath immortality" Timothy 6:16.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." Rev. 20:10. This statement does not indicate that Satan and his followers are immortal and will live throughout all eternity. If you have a deed to a piece of property you will, no doubt, find a statement in that document to the effect that you and your heirs are to hold and enjoy the said property for ever and ever; but this statement does not indicate that you and your heirs are to live throughout all eternity. It simply indicates that you and your heirs are to enjoy this property as long as they live. The original meaning of this expression "forever and ever" is "as long as you live." In Exodus 21:16 is given the law whereby man becomes a servant of his master forever, which evidently means "as long as he lives." Jonah said "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever; yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord, My God, Jonah 2:6. The time Jonah spent in the bottom of the sea he called "forever." At the end of this time he was released, and told his experience. "And the angels which kept not their first estate but left their own habitation he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude 6-7. We understand from this that Satan, fallen angels and lost mortals will be destroyed the same as Sodom and Gomorrah; but the eternal fire that destroyed these cities ceased to burn when they were consumed. The fire that will come down from God out of heaven will destroy the ungodly and then cease to burn, but the effect upon the universe will be eternal.

"And they (Satan and his followers) went upon the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them." Rev. 20:9. Only the righteous will survive this destruction. The sinners in Zion (in the church) are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high; his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Isaiah 33:14-16.

E. L. MACLAFFERTY.

I. O. O. F. Picnic

Nyssa Odd Fellows were the hosts Sunday of visiting brethren from Ontario and Vale. A picnic was held in the auto park and a merry social time enjoyed. "Big eats" of course was one of the principal features, and the great American game of horse-shoe furnished the principal diversion.

The Journal \$1.50 year

CALL FOR BIDS

Sealed bids will be received by the clerk of School District No. 26 for painting outside of school house one coat and kalsomining inside; also some cement work. All work to be completed by August 25. See clerk for particulars. Bids will be closed July 31, at 6 o'clock p. m.

G. W. Barrett, Clerk.

By order of Board of Directors.

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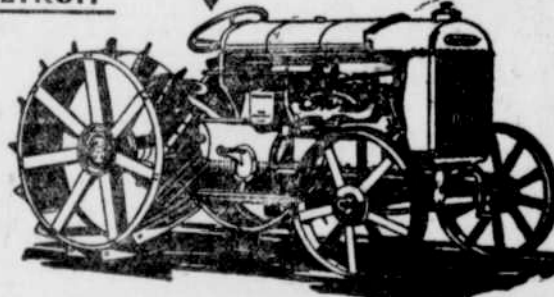
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