

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

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FOR WE ARE NOT IGNORANT OF HIS DEVICES

(2 Corinthians 2:11)

The word ignorant is a very familiar one with the apostle Paul. So many times he used the phrase, *“I would not have you ignorant”* (1 Corinthians 10:1-2) (Romans 1:13) (1 Corinthians 12:1). The word ignorant means: *“destitute of knowledge; uninstructed or uninformed.”* The apostle speaks of something else of which they were not uninstructed or uninformed...that being the devices of Satan. This is not the only time that Paul speaks of methods or devices employed by Satan. Notice these other phrases that are found in the epistles to the Corinthians: *“that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency”* (1 Corinthians 7:5). *“beguiled Eve through his subtilty”* (2 Corinthians 11:3). *“transformed into an angel of light”* (2 Corinthians 11:14). *“..thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me”* (2 Corinthians 12:7).

It should be quite evident to those believing the Bible that Satan has devices which he uses to tempt and seduce the children of God. These devices are used to get advantage of God’s people or literally, *“lest we should be overreached by Satan”*. To be ignorant of the devices of Satan is spiritually dangerous! What prompted the apostle to refer to the devices of Satan in 2 Corinthians 2:11? In the verses preceding this one, the apostle speaks of the fornicator spoken of in 1 Corinthians 5:7. Paul had directed the church at Corinth to turn such a one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. (1 Corinthians 5:5). From the words in 2 Corinthians 2:6, it appears that the brethren had followed the apostle’s directions and the man guilty

of fornication had repented. Now Paul directed them to forgive the man lest Satan should capitalize on any hesitancy on their part and by such an advantage cast a Satanic spirit over the entire congregation. The exertion of discipline in a congregation is scriptural, but God’s people need to be careful to see that it is done in the spirit of Christ lest the innocent ones be as guilty as the one being disciplined.

Satan is ever alert to new ways and means to drag souls down to perdition. However, he has used some of his tricks so often that intelligent people should be able to see through them and not be ignorant of them.

What Are Some Of These Tricks Or Devices Of Satan?

He makes himself attractive. The scriptures do not depict Satan as being the hideous personality that the artists paint. Where did the horns, tail, etc originate? Such has come from the conceptions of John Milton in Paradise Lost and Dante’s Inferno rather than from the scriptures. Paul said: *“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light”* (2 Corinthians 11:14). His transformation makes him appear attractive that he might deceive mankind.

He makes sin appear attractive. From a workmanship quality, liquor and beer advertisements are perhaps the most attractive of advertisements. These advertisements do not show the drunk in the gutter of sin! The attractiveness of such leads some to think that there is no harm in anything that is so appealing to the eye. Again, from the production standpoint, the beer commercials on television are of the most attractive quality. But what of the effects that such has had upon individuals and led them to do? Such is not a part of the commercials! Satan makes dancing seem so innocent and attractive. He wants both the young and old to argue that there can be no harm in such! But what about the lust that may be created? What about the environment where such is practiced? What about the unmarried mothers whose down fall began on the dance floor? Satan would have it appear so attractive that the less discerning would never consider the sin involved. Are you ignorant of the devices of Satan?

He is crafty and subtle. Satan waits for the particular time to seduce. He displayed his craftiness when he approached Eve as she was alone in the garden. (Genesis 3) (2 Corinthians 11:3). It was after Jesus had fasted forty days and nights that Satan hurled the three-fold temptations at Him as recorded in Matthew 4. Furthermore

Satan knows the word of God. He knows enough about it to hate it and misapply the truth. In Matthew 4:6, he quotes from Psalms 91:11. He is subtle enough to omit the phrase, *“to keep thee in all thy ways”*. He uses the word of God as it conveniently serves his purpose. He also has ministers who do the same thing. *“Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”* (2 Corinthians 11:15).

He urges procrastination. He never suggests that Christians abandon religion, but urges them to postpone their duties. He never urges an individual to say “NO”, but just wait for a more opportune time. God urges today, (2 Corinthians 6:1) (Hebrews 3:13-15), but Satan preaches that tomorrow will do just as well. We must not be ignorant of Satan’s devices. Hell is his destiny and it will be ours if we let Satan deceive us. Be careful!

✍ Bobby K. Thompson



Respecting Convictions

Many years ago I sought to correct what I believed to be a fault in a brother’s life, and he responded: "I do not live with your conscience, but with my own." In effect he was saying I should respect his convictions. In this case, I did respect his convictions; i.e., I believed him to have honest convictions — to be acting in good conscience. Because I respected his convictions, I did not expect him to change his conduct because I felt he was wrong. It was my hope that he would learn God’s will more perfectly and, with this changed conviction, he would make the change in life which honesty demanded.

Conviction" is not truth. It is "a strong persuasion or belief." The transitive verb "convince" is: "to bring ... to belief beyond doubt." But this is wholly subjective — it refers to what the person believes, and has no bearing whatsoever — on what God has said about the matter. We could respect one another’s convictions, and both of us be in error. Divine truth is expressed in God’s word (John 17:17) and must be approached objectively. This external source of truth is not altered by what man believes about it.

Sometimes folk claim to have "convictions" to escape the

responsibilities of examination and Bible study. They ask you to "respect their convictions" — meaning, cease to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, (2 Timothy 4:2).

They may even expect you to act contrary to your own convictions "lest they be offended," or, they become angry because you too have convictions, and must act accordingly, even while you respect their convictions.

There are those who deal in *"vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law: understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."* Paul warned Timothy about such, saying that such evidenced neither pure heart, good conscience, nor sincere faith (1 Timothy 1:3-7). There was no reason to "respect their convictions" nor to believe they had honest convictions. From such turn away.

In the final analysis, respecting one’s convictions means respecting the man, treating him as a man of integrity, an honest man, of good conscience. When a man evinces a desire to know truth and serve God; when he welcomes questions and assistance in Bible study, and makes God’s word — not "feelings" or popularity — his standard; when he alters his practice in keeping with his growing knowledge; we have reason to respect him.

It is a pleasure to study with such a man, and with a little effort, we might learn something from him.

✍ Robert Turner

<i>Belleville church of Christ</i>	
<i>5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258</i>	
www.bellevillechurch.net	
Schedule of Services	Elders
Sun. Bible Study. 9:30 a.m.	Charles Carpenter. . . (317) 839-3873
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . 10:30 a.m.	James Hahn. (317) 745-1507
Sun. Evening Worship. 5:00 p.m.	
Wed. Bible Study. 7:00 p.m.	Deacons
Evangelist	Leon Nevins (317) 272-2966
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507	Don Perry. (765) 676-5825
	Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514