

The Final Deception and its Antidote

Marc Rasell

Copyright © 2010-2012 All Rights Reserved

Acknowledgements

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture verses are from the King James Version, 1611
(Authorized Version) Copyright status: Crown copyright (UK).

Introduction

Behind the scenes of this world spiritual forces are fighting over the souls of men in the great controversy between Christ and Satan¹ (Ephesians 6:12). The Scriptures reveal the play and counter-play of these forces throughout sacred history until the return of Christ and the setting up of His kingdom (Daniel 2:44). It is important for us to know where we are in the scheme of things and be prepared to take our stand on the right side. Those who do nothing but sit on the fence are in danger of being swept away by the spiritualistic delusions that are to come upon the world (Matthew 24:24). God has given us light in His Word to guide our steps and light our path (Psalm 119:105). The deceptions and philosophies of spiritualism will increasingly infiltrate the church and take on a holy garb, until one day the church will become a haunt of demons (Revelation 18:2)! God has given us warnings in His Word to protect and guide us; none will be deceived without first hearing and rejecting the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12). If we sincerely desire to know the truth then we will know the doctrine and be safe (John 7:17).

Spiritualism is essentially rebellion against God. People are often attracted to it with some promise of worldly wealth, fame, power, happiness or special knowledge. However, when one turns from God it actually leads to a state of darkness. The spiritual forces behind spiritualism are themselves chained in darkness and in rebellion against God (2 Peter 2:4), so it is natural that those who enter their territory also become chained in darkness. This leads to a state of delusion where people believe right is wrong and wrong is right (Isaiah 5:20); they think they can live as they want to and at the same time cheat death and the final judgement (Isaiah

¹ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy, Conflict of the Ages Series, Volume 5* (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911) chapter 29 "The origin of evil" pp. 492-504

28:15-18). But the judgement hour will come, and as though in a dream Babylon will suddenly fall before their eyes (Revelation 18). By then it will be too late to escape destruction; there will be no healing balm for those who by their own actions have destroyed themselves. We need to study carefully what the Scriptures say about the end time delusions so we are not caught in its net. Whatever promises the road to Endor makes, it ends in nothing but trouble, emptiness, darkness and destruction. The broad road may seem to be better (Matthew 7:13-14), but it lacks the vital companionship of Christ who gave His life and shed His blood for sinners. He trod the narrow path which does not promise wealth, fame or power, but nevertheless leads to an eternal city and a reward beyond computation (Hebrews 11:10). The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life (Romans 6:23); this is what the narrow path offers, companionship with God and an eternal existence in paradise (Revelation 21:3-4).

In His Word, God has outlined a final message of warning to the world before this final deception appears (Revelation 14:6-12). This message (the three angels' message) is the perfect antidote to the end time spiritualistic deception. All that the one denies the other message affirms as outlined in this book. The lawless doctrine of devils is ultimately a denial of Christ as our Saviour (1 Timothy 4:1; 1 John 2:22-23). Jesus is the true God, the Saviour of mankind, and the only name under heaven by which men may be saved (Acts 4:12).

Sometimes people get ensnared in spiritualism and it is impossible for them to escape without divine aid or in some cases the intercessory prayers of a righteous person(s)² (James 5:16). It is far better not to get involved in such things in the first place (Proverbs 28:26). I hope this book will help to steer people away from the

² Ellen White, Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1 (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1855) p. 344

dangers and make readers aware of the issues at stake. As the saying goes, look before you leap!

We need to be careful in how to approach spiritualism; our steps need to be guided by God's Word and prayer; this will be ever more important as we near the end of time. Some Christians have lost their way by entering into enemy territory, thinking they were strong enough to combat the forces of darkness³; they rushed into places where angels fear to tread. When we move with Jesus at our side, we have nothing to fear because He has conquered the forces of darkness:

¹⁵ *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*" (Colossians 2:15)

³ Ibid., p. 428

Chapter 1: The Nature of the Final Deception

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, **that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;**” (1 Timothy 4:1)

In Paul’s first letter to Timothy, he warns of a future apostasy in the latter days. Its precepts were already being manifested in the teachings of the Gnostics. They were forbidding their followers from getting married or from eating certain types of food which God had given man to eat (1 Timothy 4:3). The Gnostic philosophy originated with the pagan belief that the material world was inferior⁴. When mixed with Christianity it degraded Christ from His divinity and role as our only Saviour. Salvation according to the Gnostics was to be achieved through the intercession and worship of angels (Colossians 2:18); Christ was viewed as just one of these mediators. Paul made it clear that there was only one mediator between man and God, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). The Gnostics saw Jesus as too holy to be material and yet not holy enough to be equal to the Father. They believed that God the Father was too pure to get involved in the creation of a material world⁵, contrary to what is recorded in the Scriptures (Genesis 1:1). To counteract this philosophy, Paul had to emphasise that in Jesus dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). Jesus is fully God yet also a real human being. The Gnostic teaching struck at who Jesus really is, and His pivotal role in the atonement. In effect it was a denial of Jesus and as such was also a denial of the Father (1 John 2:22); this is the spirit of the

⁴ Francis D. Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 6* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978) p. 55

⁵ Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, John W. Reeve, *The Trinity* (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002) pp. 126-128

antichrist. Today, it is popular to say that there are many ways to God, but the Scriptures acknowledge only one name by which men may be saved (Acts 4:12).

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul expands on the nature of this falling away:

“¹ This know also, **that in the last days perilous times shall come.** ² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ... ⁵ **Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:** from such turn away.” (2 Timothy 3:1-2, 5)

This apostasy would lead Christians to have an outward form of godliness but without the power to live a godly life, which can only come from a relationship with Jesus, the living Son of God. By degrading the status of Jesus, one cuts oneself off from the source of eternal life (John 15:1-8). The emphasis was on head knowledge rather than practical godliness; they were forever learning but never coming to a knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 3:7). The only way to guard against such false teachings was to be conversant with the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

We can expect that a similar type of teaching will arise at the end of time, before Christ returns:

“⁸ And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: ⁹ **Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,** ¹⁰ **And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish;**

because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” (2

Thessalonians 2:8-10)

This time however the false teachers will have at their aid the powers of darkness and will be able to perform signs and miracles to deceive people. In effect it will be the ultimate form of Gnosticism. This event is connected with the return of Christ who puts an end to these false teachers and the antichrist.

The reason why these deceptions will be so misleading is that the devil can appear as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14-15); he even has ministers who appear in a holy garb but are under the devil’s power. People expect the devil to appear as a hideous monster, but in reality he masquerades as an angel of light.

The Apostle Paul was once troubled by a slave girl possessed by a demon, who kept on calling out and disturbing his ministry:

“The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.” (Acts 16:17)

This shows that demons can speak the truth in order to deceive people. In the Book of Revelation we are told that evil spirits perform miracles so they can gather the kings of the earth to the final battle (Revelation 16:14). Such will be the power of these miracle workers that they will even be able to bring fire down from heaven (Revelation 13:13) as Elijah did on Mount Carmel, but their purpose is not to save but to deceive people. Many false miracles and signs will abound and the only way of discerning truth from error will be a knowledge of the Scriptures and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus warned those who say “Lord, Lord,” who perform miracles, and cast out demons that they would not enter God’s kingdom if they are workers of lawlessness (Matthew 7:21-23). This implies that the source of their miracles was not Christ but some other power. Before the true Christ returns many false Christs and prophets will arise to deceive if possible even the elect (Matthew 24:24). The fact that someone can perform miracles, or appears to be an angel of light does not confirm that they are what they claim to be. The vital clue is given in Matthew 7:23, they are workers of lawlessness (Gk. anomia). While claiming to be from God, they actually break and teach others to break God’s laws! Every kingdom has laws which govern its subjects and one shows allegiance to the king by keeping his laws. The laws of God are not burdensome; they are there for our own happiness and safety (1 John 5:3). Those who break the laws of our heavenly King thereby show that they are not genuine citizens of heaven.

The reference to spirits in 1 Timothy 4 suggests that the final apostasy is linked to spiritualism. Ancient pagan religions sought to discover the future, or learn the will of the gods through various meaning including astrology, examining animal parts, omens, casting lots and communication with dead spirits⁶. Today we have the modern counterpart in diviners, astrologers, mediums, and faith healers⁷ as well as those who use tarot cards and crystal balls. No matter how the modern forms of spiritualism are dressed up, it is still a form of witchcraft which is an abomination according to the Bible:

⁶ Francis D. Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 4* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978) p. 763

⁷ Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings, Conflict of the Ages Series, Volume 2* (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1917) p. 211; *Acts of the Apostles, Conflict of the Ages Series, Volume 4* (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911) p. 290; *Signs of the Times, March 24, 1887 in Evangelism* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946) pp. 608-609

“¹⁰ There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, ¹¹ Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. ¹² **For all that do these things *are* an abomination unto the LORD:** and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

The spirits that communicated with those of old are the same today, and are identified as demons (1 Timothy 4:1). This is further confirmed by the fact that when the pagans offered sacrifices to the dead (Psalm 106:28), thinking that their ancestors were deified beings⁸, the Scriptures identifies these beings as devils (1 Corinthians 10:20). Psalm 106:28 refers to the time when Israel was enticed into a pagan feast on the borders of the Promised Land with tragic consequences; those who were ensnared and did not repent, ended up losing their lives when they had almost reached their destination.

The whole system of spiritualism is a grand deception, so that demonic powers can gain control over human lives. The evil spirits can masquerade as saints, departed loved ones⁹, angels or even Jesus in order to deceive people; they are able to perform miracles and counterfeit healings. A story is told of a lady whose son was reported as missing in action, presumed dead. In her grief she consulted a medium, and soon a ghostly figure of her son began appearing and speaking to her. Then one day her real son returned home having been found alive. It was clear then, that the being that had appeared to her was a counterfeit!

⁸ Ellen White, Patriarchs and Prophets, Conflict of the Ages Series, Volume 1 (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1890) p. 684

⁹ Ellen White, The Great Controversy, p. 560

God would not permit his angels or saints to communicate using a practice described as an abomination! The prohibition was so strong that anyone in ancient Israel caught practising spiritualism was put to death (Leviticus 20:6, 27; Exodus 22:18). The prophet Isaiah warned the people of his day to turn from such things to the living God; to His Word and His prophets:

“¹⁹ And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? ²⁰ **To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is because there is no light in them.***” (Isaiah 8:19-20)

The “law” (Hb. Torah) is a reference to the Books of Moses, and the “testimony” (witness) are the words of God’s prophets who witness for Him. Put simply, any message that contradicts the Bible does not come from God; His light is not in such things. We are counselled not to regard wizards or those with familiar spirits otherwise we will become defiled by them:

“³¹ **Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God.**” (Leviticus 19:31)

Another way of verifying the authenticity of these mediums is to check to see whether their prophecies always come true (Deuteronomy 18:21-22). If you examine the claims of many so called prophets, you will find that some of the prophecies have failed and others are very vague. If a prophet is truly from God there will not be any mistakes, because God knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10).

In summary, the final deception will involve a denial of the divinity of Christ and His role as our only Saviour; its teaching will lead to godless behaviour and lawlessness. The infiltration of spiritualism into the church under a religious garb will be accompanied by signs, miracles, and healings; all of a spectacular nature. You may ask how can we be protected from this final deception. The only way to be safe will be from a thorough knowledge of the Bible.

An hour of temptation is soon to come upon the earth (Revelation 3:10) and the devil knows his time is short (Revelation 12:12), but if we commit ourselves to prayer then we will not fall into temptation (Mark 14:38). In the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter learned the hard way that it does not pay to sleep when we have been counselled to be watching and praying (Matthew 26:41). His own strength was not sufficient for what was to come and he ended up denying his Lord three times (Matthew 26:69-75). After the resurrection the boastful Peter became the humble and gentle Peter (1 Peter 5:1-7) who eventually died for his Lord (John 21:17-19). He had learned the lesson of submission to God in all things.

Chapter 2: Rebellion against God

The true nature of spiritualism is rebellion against God. This is clearly seen in the downfall of Saul. Although chosen by God to be king, he began to reject the guidance the Lord had given him through the prophet Samuel. When commanded to wait for the prophet for seven days (1 Samuel 10:8), he became impatient at the increasing numbers of Philistines who had gathered to attack Israel and the desertions from his own forces. So he decided to offer the burnt offering himself instead of waiting as instructed (1 Samuel 13:11-14). This disposition to follow his own will contrary to the Lord's commands continued when Saul was asked to slay the wicked Amalekites and not to take any prisoners or cattle as booty (1 Samuel 15:1-3). The sentence on the Amalekites had been delayed for four hundred years to give them time to repent, but their debasing idolatry, their defiance of God and the fact that they were the first to attack Israel had made them ripe for judgement¹⁰ (Deuteronomy 25:19). Contrary to the command given, Saul decided to keep the best of the cattle, and excused this by saying he was going to sacrifice them to the Lord. The Lord was displeased and the prophet Samuel rebuked Saul:

²² And Samuel said, **Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD?** Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams. ²³ **For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft**, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.” (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

¹⁰ Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 627-628

Here we see that rebellion is linked to witchcraft, because it is in effect turning from God to do one's own will. This is further illustrated in Saul's final battle with the Philistines when in desperation he sought out the witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28:7). This was his final act of rebellion against the Lord, for which he lost his life (1 Chronicles 10:13-14). Had Saul genuinely repented, the Lord would have forgiven him, but he was beyond counsel. He had become obsessed with hunting down the man chosen by God to be his successor¹¹. He had become paranoid, slaying the priests of the Lord when he suspected them of being in league with David (1 Samuel 22:13-19). In his pursuit of David he recklessly left the realm unguarded and the Philistines had invaded in large numbers. In desperation Saul went to the witch of Endor and this sealed his own fate; he had chosen Satan over the Lord.

Another example of rebellion was when the children of Israel were on the borders of the Promised Land (Number 22:1; 25). They were led into a pagan festival by the Moabites and Midianites at which sacrifices were made to the dead (Psalm 106:28), which are in fact demonic beings (1 Corinthians 10:20). The people were led into immorality and idolatry when they should have been preparing to enter the Promised Land by praying and reciting the sacred writings. This apostasy is a warning to us (spiritual Israel) today (1 Corinthians 10:11; Romans 9:6; 11:25) who are also on the borders of our Promised Land – the New Earth (2 Peter 3:13). A similar apostasy will arise in an attempt to stop God's people from taking possession of their inheritance. Once more in a repeat of history, it will involve demonic forces and disobeying God's laws.

¹¹ Francis D. Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 2* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978) p. 586

Spiritualism may seem harmless but it is in fact a turning away from the Lord which is why it is so serious. People may think faith healing is good, or that consulting the stars is a bit of fun, but they are entering enemy territory and are in danger of being ensnared. The better alternative is to turn to the Lord and walk according to His statutes which alone can bring true happiness:

“⁸ The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes.” (Psalm 19:8)

Impatience to get wealth or learn about future, or seeking to find a cure from a disease from a faith healer can arise from a lack of faith in God. Consulting spiritualistic forces is a dreadful blunder; the end is separation from God. To wait patiently on the Lord brings the blessings we truly need (Psalm 27:14; 37:7, 9, 34). God’s people are counselled to wait patiently for the coming of the Lord (James 5:8).

King Ahaz is another example of someone who rebelled against the Lord when advised to submit to the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar by the prophet Jeremiah, as a punishment for the sins of the nation (Jeremiah 25:6-7). The king’s false prophets prophesied lies to him and to the people (Jeremiah 27:9-10), telling them what they wanted to hear. But the result would be that the king’s fears would come upon him, and the nation would be taken away to Babylon. Had they heeded the Word of the Lord and turned from their false gods, they could have remained in their own land. In the end, the promises of the spirits came to nothing. Only God’s promises are sure and worthy of trust, even if we have to wait for them (Isaiah 55:11). The earthly man wants his wealth today, but the spiritual man waits for his reward in the life to come. The reason many turn to spiritualism is the desire to be wealthy in this life.

Covetousness is at the heart of rebellion against God. Simon Magus the sorcerer thought he could buy the Holy Spirit with money (Acts 8:18); Balaam wanted to use divination to get rich (Number 22:7) even though he had once been a prophet of the Lord! At the end of time the church is pictured as having become materialistic and infiltrated with sorcery:

“...for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.” (Revelation 18:23)

Any who seek to become rich in this world are looking for trouble, and will pierce themselves through with many sorrows (1 Timothy 6:10). Ultimately the love of money leads people to reject God (Matthew 6:24). If we wait patiently, God will give us riches beyond our imagination in the world to come; the New Jerusalem is paved with gold and is a place of perfect peace and happiness with no sin, suffering, sorrow or death (Revelation 21:3-4). God wants us to love Him and accept the great sacrifice made on our behalf by His Son (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10). The true way to heaven, the narrow way, does not offer riches in this life but leads to the eternal city (Hebrews 11:10). The broad way, down the road to Endor, may promise wealth and happiness but ends in disappointment and destruction (Matthew 7:13-14). Jesus is calling us, showing His great love and sacrifice for us, which paid the price for our sins (1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 2:24). He wants us to be part of His kingdom, based not on selfishness but unselfish love for others. Not accumulating wealth for ourselves but ministering to others is the basis of heaven (Luke 12:13-21).

A story is told of someone being shown a picture of heaven and hell. In one room the people were skinny and hungry; they all had bowls of soup but their spoons

were too long to feed themselves. In the other room the people were well fed even though they were in the same situation, the difference was that they were feeding each other!

Chapter 3: A State of Darkness

The result of rebellion against God and turning to evil spirits is a state of darkness as described in Isaiah chapter 8:

“²¹ And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. ²² **And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and *they shall be driven to darkness.***”

(Isaiah 8:21-22)

As the people of Isaiah’s day turned from God, they sought the advice of idols and demonic forces to guide them. The advice of these beings was more in harmony with what their sinful hearts wanted to hear. But these forces are themselves chained in darkness because of their rebellion against the Lord:

“⁴ For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, **and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;**” (2 Peter 2:4)

Peter is using symbolic language; the fallen angels are chained by their rebellion, they can no longer repent nor have any desire to do so. They are not literally chained, but are in spiritual darkness awaiting the final judgement. Were God to give them a million years they would not change. Therefore those who consult them will also end up in rebellion against God and in a state of darkness also.

When I was living in student accommodation, on one particular evening they decided to turn off the electricity for a short time. I remember the place being in total darkness and wondering if there was a fire whether people might struggle to find their way out of the building. I had never realised how dark the place could be. Living with artificial lighting makes it hard to appreciate total darkness. Where I live it is never truly dark unless there is a power cut which takes out the street lighting. Only then, in the absence of light do we really appreciate what we take for granted every day. In a spiritual sense, we are greatly privileged to have the light of God in our lives, but if we turn from God we inevitably end up in spiritual darkness.

Those who seek after the spirits also turn from the law of God. As a consequence of this they reject the Word of the Lord and live sinful lives. People prefer the messages of false prophets who prophesy smooth things to them (Isaiah 30:10); at the end of time people will no longer endure sound doctrine but find teachers who will tell them what their itching ears want to hear (2 Timothy 4:3-4). The Book of Ezekiel is full of excuses the people made to ignore the unpopular messages of the prophet; they said the days were prolonged and the visions failed (Ezekiel 12:22), they tried to blame their fathers for the calamities that had befallen them (Ezekiel 18:2), and they preferred to listen to false prophets who gave them a false sense of security (Ezekiel 13:3, 10-11). The sinful heart rebels against the law of God (Romans 8:7-8) and is naturally evil (Jeremiah 17:9). Throughout history, people have tended to ignore the true messages of God which called them to repentance and warned of a coming judgement day. The reason for rebellion against the Word of the Lord is that it rankles with the sinful heart and disturbs the conscience; people want to be told they can do as they please without suffering any consequences. They want an easy gospel which has a get out of jail card to excuse their way of life. In the days of

Noah, the people would not heed the preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5) who called them to repent, and as a result they perished in the flood. The result of disobedience to God's law is destruction because it is a rejection of the Author of Life (Acts 3:15).

We should not think of God's laws as restrictive; they were made for our benefit. Think what society would be like if everyone followed the Ten Commandments! Or imagine what the roads and highways would be like if no one followed the rules. How long would it take for the streets of a town to become blocked if there were no parking restrictions?

Like the people of Isaiah's day, we also have a choice to make. Jesus the Sun of Righteousness has risen with healing in his wings for His people (Malachi 4:2). We can walk in the light if we choose to because the Light of the world has come to enlighten us (John 8:12). Jesus came not only to heal physical blindness but also to heal those who are spiritually blind. We don't need to stumble about in the fog of error or the darkness of unbelief; ample help has been provided to guide us on the path to eternal life (John 12:35-36). Without Jesus we can never find our way back to our eternal home; we cannot save ourselves without divine assistance.

Being lost can be a frightening experience, I heard of a walker who got lost for days in a dense forest. When he finally emerged he was ecstatic to meet other people! Many travellers have perished near to help in snow storms, sometimes only a few feet away from help. In this world God has provided a Guide, it's up to us how we respond; our eternal life depends on that choice. We don't need to get frozen in the storms of this life, or stumble about in darkness until we perish.

One of the greatest obstacles to spiritual restoration and choosing the path of life is the love of money. Jesus linked darkness to serving mammon:

²³ **But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.** If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness! ²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. **Ye cannot serve God and mammon.**” (Matthew 6:23-24)

The love of money chokes the soul as weeds choke a growing seed (Matthew 13:22). Those who turn to mammon also turn away from God; we cannot serve two masters. The love of money is an overpowering force than turns into a god. This is often the motivation for turning to spiritualism: to become rich, famous or powerful in this life. These were the very same temptations that Satan used to try to get Jesus to give up His mission of self-sacrifice for mankind (Matthew 4:1-11). The result of trying to serve God and mammon is that a bitter root grows up in the soul¹² (Hebrews 12:15-16). In the dark places of the soul, roots of bitterness grow up and finally blossom into open rebellion against God.

A story is told of a beggar who won a million dollars at a gambling casino; his whole life could have changed, but within a week he had gambled it all away and returned to his homeless life. Spiritualism is a bit like that, promising millions but leaving the soul destitute. It is often said about some bargains that, “it’s too good to be true”. Financial advisers who claim that the credit boom will never end, or that the money markets are on a new platform and cannot crash, or that your investment will grow at 500% each year, are making claims that are too good to be true and inevitably the bubble bursts; too many greedy people get on the treadmill hoping to get rich but see the whole structure collapse under their weight. In the time of Amos the people

¹² Francis D. Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978) p. 486

were described as an overloaded cart, ready to collapse (Amos 2:13). Spiritualism is like that, its sounds great in the beginning, premonitions of danger are ignored because so much has already been invested and the promises sound so great, but it ends in tears.

The people of Isaiah's day ended up in perplexity, hunger, darkness and anger because they were suffering the results of their own disobedience¹³. In anger they tried to blame their leaders and God, but their own choice had led them into this condition. They were like people searching for something they could not find, like the teachers of Paul's day who were ever learning but never coming to a knowledge of the truth. In this world people search for something better, but they don't know what they are looking for. The good news is that a light has been kindled to guide us through the darkness, like a lighthouse amid a storm or stars that shine in the night sky (Daniel 12:3). If the deceived are willing to follow the light before it is too late, it will guide them safely to the heavenly shores and avoid the shipwreck of their souls on the rocks of apostasy.

A story is told of a lighthouse keeper who was asked if he could be sure that none of his lights would go out. The man replied that he would be sure to know about it because he would get a letter from a far off port telling him that the lights were burning dim or that ships were put in danger¹⁴. Christians have a duty to let their light shine in the darkness of this corrupt world; it is not safe to put out the light for even a moment, for who knows whether a lost soul may be following it on the storms of life. As the light of the sun shines in every corner of the world, so the light of God must

¹³ Francis D. Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Volume 4, p. 144

¹⁴ Ellen White, *Signs of the Times*, May 24, 1910, paragraph 7

shine everywhere¹⁵. We have no right to hide our light under a bushel (Matthew 5:15-16).

[Chapters 4-7 omitted in the preview]

Chapter 4 Delusion

Chapter 5 Apostasy

Chapter 6 Destruction

Chapter 7 The Antidote

To obtain a copy of this book, please go to www.adventtruth.co.uk or www.amazon.com/author/mrasell

¹⁵ Ellen White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1896) p. 42