

This morning I want to speak on a subject that is not so often discussed in Christian circles. Perhaps there have been times when excessive emphasis is given to it, but that is certainly not true today. I have heard of polls being taken to find out what the attitude of the people of the country was, and they find that nearly all or at least a tremendous majority of people believe in the existence of God. But when they ask did they believe in a personal devil, we find there were a comparatively small number who say they do.

The idea of a personal devil has been ridiculed. Jokes have been made about this figure with horns and with all sorts of queer clothing, etc. and people ridicule the idea of a devil. They think it is impossible that anybody today would believe in such an old medieval idea as the existence of a personal devil. I think in that regard the devil has scored a great victory because there is one thing that is very useful to him and that is for people to deny his existence.

Of course we do not have more than a fraction as much in the Bible about the devil as we have about God, and about the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet what we do have is found in many different places. We find the word diabolus in the NT 38 times. Diabolus which we translate devil. In the KJV we find the word devil is used another 60 t. but that is a mistranslation because it is the word diamonius which means demon, not devil. But we have actually the word devil 38 t. We have the word Satan 37 t. in the NT. Then we have a few places where he is referred to as the evil one.

We think of our great Christian leaders and there is no one of there who spoke particularly about the devil. (Ezzzz) Take James. Jas.4:7, "Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." There is a command James gave. Resist the devil. How can you resist him if you don't even recognize he exists. Peter said (1 Pet.5:8-9), "Be self controlled and alert, your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion. Resist him standing firm in the faith." Paul said in Eph. 6, "Put on the whole armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." In 2 Cor. 11:14 he says, "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light." In 2 Cor. 2 he says, "In order that Satan might not outwit us, for we are not unaware of his schemes."

Thus we have James, we have Peter, we have Paul. No one of them devoting a great amount of space to the devil, but every one of them showing very clearly and strongly his belief in the existence of a personal devil and giving us the command that we should resist him.

So in the first place about the devil today I want to say that it is important that we recognize his existence. Some people go overboard on this. Some people act as if they expect supernatural manifestations and all sorts of miraculous things to occur thru the devil's agency. I think we have a great deal of that in some countries. I think it is at a minimum in the U.S.A. That is probably because of the influence that Christianity has had in this country.