

'Your enemy the devil'

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No neutral ground

The cosmic terrorist

Be alert but not alarmed

Options:

Ignore the devil	'Your enemy the devil'	Give the devil too much power, and too much attention
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C.S. Lewis: There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.

What does it mean if we ignore the devil?
Practice of ministry
Practice of the Christian life ¹
Ignore the devil
Ignore angels
Neglect Christ the ascended and reigning priest and king
Neglect the work of Christ in his victory over the devil in his atoning death ²
Neglect God's active interventions in our universe
Neglect God's active kingly rule
Neglect God the creator

¹ Brooks, Thomas, *Precious remedies against Satan's devices*, Banner of Truth, [1652] 1997, Jensen, Peter, *Using the shield of faith: Puritan Attitudes to Combat with Satan*, St Antholin Lectureship, 1995; McGinnis, Timothy Scott, "Subtitle" Exposed; Pastoral Perspectives in Witch Belief in the Thought of George Gifford, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 33.3, 2002, 665-686; and Timothy Scott McGinnis, *George Gifford and the Reformation of the Common Sort*, Truman State University Press, 2002, ch. 5.

² Blocher, Henri, 'Agnus Victor', in John G. Stackhouse, Jr., ed., *What does it mean to be saved? Broadening Horizons of Salvation*, Baker, 2002, pp.67-91.

i. Angels created by God

Angels were originally created by God: Ps. 148:2,5, and Col. 1:16...They are described as angels, spirits, holy ones, thrones, dominions, authorities, principalities, sons of God, and include cherubim, seraphim, living creatures, archangels, and princes...They are described as 'spirits:' [Mt. 8:16, Lk. 7:21, Acts 19:12, Eph. 6:12, Heb. 1:14], meaning that they do not have bodies, flesh and bone, Lk. 24:39; do not marry Mt. 22:30; and are invisible Col. 1:16...They have intelligence: 2 Sam. 14:20, Mt. 24:36, Eph. 3:10, 1 Pet. 1:12...They can only be in one place at one time: Lk. 1:26...There are many of them: 'ten thousands of holy ones,' Deut. 33:2, 'innumerable angels,' Heb. 12:22, 'myriads of myriads,' Rev. 5:11.

They have a moral nature: for there are 'holy angels' Mt. 25:31, Mk. 8:38, Acts 8:44, those who are 'elect', 1 Tim. 5:21...They have great power, as God's army, Ps. 103:20, Eph. 1:21, 3:10, and are sent by God to help believers, Heb. 1:14, Ps. 91:11-12...They praise God, Isaiah 6, Rev. 5:11, Ps. 103:20, rejoice at the conversion of sinners, Lk. 5:10, watch over believers, Ps. 34:7, Mt. 18:10, bring messages from God, Gen. 22:12, Lk. 1:11-19, and are present in the church 1 Cor. 11:10, 1 Tim. 5:21...They also administer the judgements of God, 2 Sam. 24:16,17, Matt. 13:41, Acts 12:23, Rev. 16:1.

ii. The 'fall' of the devil and his angels

All angels were originally good, [Gen. 1:31, Ex. 20:11], 2 Pet. 2:4, and Jude 6. Otherwise we make God the direct originator of evil beings.

Their original 'fall' is described in 2 Pet. 2:4 and Jude 6. We may also see it described in Isaiah 14, [and only possibly in Ezek. 28]. It is implied in 1 Jn. 5:19, 'the whole world is in the power of the evil one'...There are angels who have disobeyed God, Jn. 8:44, 'who do not do right,' 1 Jn. 3:8-10. Evil angels serve the devil: Lk. 11:21. 2 Thess., 2:9, and 1 Pet. 5:8. Good angels fight the devil and his angels: Dan. 10:13, Rev. 12:7-8, 20:1-3.

iii. The devil's activities.

The originator of sin. Gen. 3, 2 Cor. 11:3.

The liar and the father of lies. Jn. 8:44.

The murderer. Jn. 8:44, and see Lk. 22:3.

The one who has the power of death. Heb. 2:14

The accuser of believers. Zech., 3:1, Rev. 12:10.

One who promoted false religions and idolatry, and who receives the worship of idolators. Deut. 32:16,17, Ps. 106:35-37, 1 Cor. 10:20.

One who brings temptation. 1 Chron. 21:1, Mt. 4:4-11.

One who has power in this world: 'the ruler of this world,' Jn. 12:31, 'the prince of the power of the air, who is now at work...' Eph. 2:2. I know where you are living, where Satan's throne is.' Rev. 2:13.

One who oppresses people. Mt. 11:18, Lk. 7:33, 13:11,16, Jn. 7:20.

One who opposes God's gospel plan. Mt.16:23.

One who brings false doctrine. Gal. 1:8, 1 Tim. 4:1, 2 Tim. 2:26.

One who does miracles to deceive people. Rev. 13, and 16:13,14.

One who persecutes the church. Rev. 12, 13.

The false and miracle-working prophet. Rev. 19:20.

The unholy three: the serpent, the first beast, and the second beast, Rev. 12,13.

iv. Kept under God's control.

Job 1:12, 2:26... 'Kept in eternal chains' Jude 6... 'No one will ever snatch them out of my hand' Jn. 10:28... For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' Rom. 8:38,39. John 17:15-17. 'Protect them from the evil one...sanctify them by the truth.'

v. Defeated by God's power through Christ, his death on the cross and his resurrection and ascension.

'Now the prince of this world is cast down.' Jn. 12:31...'The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.' 1 Jn. 3:8...'That through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who through fear of death were subject to life-long bondage.' Heb. 2:14...'God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.' Eph. 1: 20, 21...'Now have come the salvation and the power the kingdom of our God, and of his Messiah, for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down...they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb.' Rev. 12:10,11.

vi. Finally overpowered and judged at the return of Christ.

'He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet' 1 Cor. 15:25...'And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is apparent in the working of Satan, who uses all power, signs, lying wonders, and every kind of wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false, so that all who have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned' 2 Thess. 2:8-12...'And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever' Rev. 20:10.

vii. Now resisted by believers

'Even the demons are subject to us' Lk. 10:17...'Resist the devil and he will flee from you' James 4:7...'Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour, resist him, steadfast in faith' 1 Pet. 5:9...'Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, and give no opportunity to the devil' Eph. 4:26...'Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world' 1 Jn. 4:1-3...Holding to the apostolic gospel, Gal. 1:6-8, 2 Cor. 11:1-6... 'The weapons of our warfare are not worldly, but have divine power to destroy strongholds...bringing every thought captive to Christ' 2 Cor. 10:4,5...'Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm...Eph. 6:10-13

Calvin on angels [See *Institutes* 1.14.3-12]

'Angels are God's ministers ordained to carry out his commands...they are also his creatures.' 1.14.4...'Let us examine in the simple teaching of Scripture what the Lord would have us know of his angels' 1.14.4...'Because [God] exercises his authority in the world through them, they are sometimes called principalities, sometimes powers, sometimes dominions' 1.14.5...'They are also more than once called gods [e.g. Ps 138:1], because in their ministry as in a mirror they in some respect exhibit his divinity so us.' 1.14.5...'Scripture recalls that they keep vigil for our safety, take upon themselves our defense, direct our ways, and take care that some harm may not befall us' 1.14.6...'The angels ministered to Christ [Matt. 4:11] and were present with him in all his tribulation [Lk. 22:43].' 1.14.6...'I do not know whether one ought to infer that each individual has the protection of his own angel' 1.14.7...'It is certain that spirits lack bodily form, and yet Scripture matching the measure of our comprehension, usefully depicts for us winged angels...that we might not doubt that they are ever ready to bring help to us with incredible swiftness' 1.14.8...'Angels are "ministering spirits" [Heb 1:14], whose service God uses for the protection of his own, and through whom he both dispenses his benefits among men and also carries out his remaining works' 1.14.9...'One thing, indeed, ought to be quite enough for us: that the Lord declares himself to be our protector. But when we see ourselves beset by so many perils, so many harmful things, so many kinds of enemies...we would sometimes be filled with trepidation or yield to despair if the Lord did not make us realize the presence of his grace according to our capacity. [See 2 Kgs 6:17]' 1.14.11. 'As God does not make them ministers of his power and goodness to share his glory with them, so he does not promise us his help through their ministry in order that we should divide our trust between them and him' 1.14.12.

Calvin on the devil [See *Institutes* 1.14.13-19]

'We have been forewarned that an enemy relentlessly threatens us, an enemy who is the very embodiment of rash boldness, of military prowess, of crafty wiles, of untiring zeal and haste, of every conceivable weapon and of skill in the science of warfare...we should not let ourselves be overwhelmed by carelessness or faintheartedness' 1.14.13...'Scripture makes known that there are not one, not two nor a few foes, but great armies, which wage war against us' 1.14.14...'If we have God's glory at heart... we ought with all our strength to contend against him who is trying to extinguish it. If we are minded to affirm Christ's Kingdom as we ought, then we must wage irreconcilable war with him who is plotting its ruin' 1.14.15 ...'They were when first created angels of God, but by degeneration they ruined themselves and became the instruments of ruin for others.' 1.14.16...'We ought to accept as a fixed certainty the fact that [Satan] can do nothing unless God wills and assents to it.' 1.14.17...'The promise to crush Satan's head [Gen.3:15] pertains to Christ and all his members in common.' 1.14.18

Christ's defeat of Satan

'Christ, by dying, conquered Satan, who had the power of death... and triumphed over all his forces...the devil is said to occupy this world unchallenged until he is cast out by Christ' *Institutes* 1:14.18. **In the temptation in the wilderness:** Christ won an objective victory 'in single combat with the devil, that by his victory he might obtain a triumph for us.' He also provided an example of how we should withstand the devil. As a result of his combat with Satan and his prayers in Gethsemane, 'he was furnished with new arms' for the struggle ahead. **In his exorcisms:** 'The whole of Satan's kingdom is subject to the authority of Christ. For the devils, when Christ summons them to appear before him, are no more at their own disposal than were the wretched men whom by their tyranny was wont to drive about in every direction.' He obtained what he prayed for, 'sustained by the saving hand of the Father, when after a short conflict he gained a glorious victory over Stan, sin and hell.'...'Christ attacked Satan in open combat, threw him down, and...stripped him completely of all his armour...Everybody knew that Christ had driven Satan from his possession, and nothing was plainer than all his miracle tended to this object; and hence it was easy to conclude, that his power, which was so opposed to Stan, was divine'...On 'I beheld Satan falling from heaven,' Calvin comments, 'From the one instance, Christ leads them to the whole class; for he commanded his Gospel to be published for the very purpose of overthrowing Satan's kingdom...its tendency is to extirpate the tyranny which Satan exercise over the whole human race...Behold, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy.' **In the raising of Lazarus:** 'Christ does not approach the sepulchre as an idle spectator, but as a champion who prepares for a contest; and therefore we need not wonder that he again groans; for the violent tyranny of death, which he had to conquer, is placed before this eyes.' **In the cross:** 'the body of the Son of God was bound, that our souls might be loosed from the cords of sin and Satan.' 'He must also grapple hand-to-hand with the armies of hell and the dread of everlasting death'...'by his wresting hand-to-hand with the devils power, with the dread of death and the pains of hell, he was victorious, and triumphed over them, that in death we may longer dread those things which our Prince has swallowed up.'

In the resurrection: 'For although our redemption and satisfaction was accomplished by his death, by which we are reconciled to God, yet the victory against sin, death and Satan, was gotten by his resurrection. Hence, also, came righteousness, newness of life, and the hope of blessed immortality.' **In the ascension:** 'The noblest triumph which God every gained was when Christ, after subduing sin, conquering death, and putting Satan to flight, rose majestically to heaven, that he might exercise his glorious reign over the church.'³

Luther

'A Christian should steep himself in the thought of Christ's victory, in which everything is already done and we have everything we need. From now on we live only to show forth the victory that Christ has won and given to us, and bring other people to it, exhorting and attracting them by word and example. For this victor has accomplished everything, so that we can do nothing, cancel or crush the devil or overthrow death - they are all laid low already...The battle must be already won and the victory achieved if I am to have comfort and peace. Christ says, " I have done it already, just accept it and use the victory by singing about it, glorying and making a show of it." 'I, Jesus Christ have conquered and won the victory.' Christ 'trampled down sin, death, and the devil, by the exalted work of his death and resurrection.'

From 2 Corinthians

Text	Context	What Satan does	What we should do
2:5-11	Pastoral misunderstanding and confusion	'That Satan may not outwit us'	'We are not ignorant of his schemes'
4:3-6	Evangelism	'The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers...'	'We preach Jesus Christ as Lord' [and 'God shines in human hearts']
6:14-18	Serving idols	'What harmony is there between Christ and Belial?'	'Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers' [in their worship of idols]
11: 13-15	False teachers, false apostles, servants of Satan	'Masquerading as apostles of Christ...for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light'	Be faithful to Christ, with spiritual and theological chastity
12:7-10	Paul's 'thorn in the flesh'	'A thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me'	'Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me...but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'

³ The quotations from Calvin in this last section are taken from: Hall, Charles A. M., *With the Spirit's Sword: The Drama of Spiritual Warfare in the Theology of John Calvin*, John Knox Press, 1968, pp. 90-100].