



It is necessary that Christians always be on the alert against the attacks of Satan from the outside, as he raises up opposition to Christian teaching, or makes direct attacks upon our freedom to spread the gospel. We must diligently guard against his assaults.

As we do so, we must constantly seek wisdom from above. Although Satan often comes as a roaring lion (1 Pet.5:8) "seeking whom he may devour," he may also come disguised as an angel of light (2 Cor.11:14) so that he would deceive the very elect if that were possible. All too often he is able to cause unnecessary disagreements among true Christians, so that they spend time and energy in actions that do not advance God's cause.

One of his most effective means of doing this is through stirring up controversy over matters on which the Scripture is silent or which it does not make clear. A half-century ago the Christians of a certain area were engaged in vigorous controversy over the question whether a congregation should kneel or should stand when public prayer was being offered. This was just at the time when unbelief was beginning to move effectively into these very churches. Its victory was hastened by the fact that so much Christian energy that should have been spent in vital aspects of the Lord's work was being wasted in fruitless and silly argument over a matter of form.

A little later a fine Christian church in New Jersey almost split over a heated division among its people as to whether the crucifixion occurred on Friday or on Wednesday. While there is a long Christian tradition that it occurred on Friday, there is no clear proof that this is the case. On the other hand, it is extremely difficult to figure any way that the "three days and three nights" indicated by our Lord (Matt.12:40) could fit the time between Wednesday afternoon and Sunday morning. This is one of the many subjects on which we do not have definite knowledge; in addition, it is something that makes little difference to our Christian life or thought.