Another Gospel

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Satan is not an initiator but an imitator. God has an only begotten Son-the Lord Jesus, so has Satan-"the son of Perdition" (2 Thess.2:3). There is a Holy Trinity, and there is likewise a Trinity of Evil (Rev. 20:10). Do we read of the "children of God," so also we read of "the children of the wicked one" (Matthew 13:38). Does God work in the former both to will and to do of His good pleasure, then we are told that Satan is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2). Is there a "mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16), so also is there a "mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess 2:7). Are we told that God by His angels "seals" His servants in their foreheads (Rev 7:3), so also we learn that Satan by his agents sets a mark in the foreheads of his devotees (Rev. 13:16). Are we told that "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10), then Satan also provides his "deep things" (Greek-Rev. 2:24). Did Christ perform miracles, so also can Satan (2 Thess. 2:9). Is Christ seated upon a throne, so is Satan (Greek-Rev. 2:13). Has Christ a Church, then Satan has his "synagogue" (Rev 2:9). Is Christ the Light of the world, then so is Satan himself "transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Did Christ appoint "apostles," then Satan has his apostles, too (2 Cor. 11:13). And this leads us to consider: "The Gospel of Satan."

Satan is the arch-counterfeiter. The Devil is now busy at work in the same field in which the Lord sowed the good seed. He is seeking to prevent the growth of the wheat by another plant, the tares, which closely resembles the wheat in appearance. In a word, by a process of imitation he is aiming to neutralize the Work of Christ. Therefore, as Christ has a Gospel, Satan has a gospel too; the latter being a clever counterfeit of the former. So closely does the gospel of Satan resemble that which it parodies, multitudes of the unsaved are deceived by it.

It is to this gospel of Satan the apostle refers when he says to the Galatians, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6,7). This false gospel was being heralded even in the days of the apostle, and a most awful curse was called down upon those who preached it. The apostle continues, "But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." By the help of God we shall now endeavor to expound, or rather, expose this false gospel.

The gospel of Satan is not a system of revolutionary principles, nor yet a program of anarchy. It does not promote strife and war, but aims at peace and unity. It seeks not to set the mother against her daughter nor the father against his son, but fosters the fraternal spirit whereby the human race is regarded as one great "brotherhood." It does not seek to drag down the natural man, but to improve and uplift him. It advocates education and cultivation and appeals to "the best that is within - It aims to make this world such a comfortable and congenial habitat that ChristÂ's absence from it will not be felt and God will not be needed. It endeavors to occupy man so much with this world that he has no time or inclination to think of the world to come. It propagates the principles of self-sacrifice, charity and benevolence, and teaches us to live for the good of others, and to be kind to all. It appeals strongly to the carnal mind and is popular with the masses, because it ignores the solemn facts that by nature man is a fallen creature, alienated from the life of God, and dead in trespasses and sins, and that his only hope lies in being born again.

In contradistinction to the Gospel of Christ, the gospel of Satan teaches salvation by works. It inculcates justification before God on the ground of human merits. Its sacramental phrase is "Be good and do good"; but it fails to recognize that in the flesh there dwelleth no good thing. It announces salvation by character, which reverses the order of GodÂ's WordÂ—character by, as the fruit of, salvation. Its various ramifications and organizations are manifold. Temperance, Reform Movements, "Christian Socialist Leagues," Ethical Culture Societies, "Peace Congresses" are all employed (perhaps unconsciously) in proclaiming this gospel of SatanÂ—salvation by works. The pledge card is substituted for Christ; social purity for individual regeneration, and politics and philosophy, for doctrine and godliness. The cultivation of the old man is considered more practical than the creation of a new man in Christ Jesus; whilst universal peace is looked for apart from the interposition and return of the Prince of Peace.

The apostles of Satan are not saloon-keepers and white-slave traffickers, but are for the most part ordained ministers. Thousands of those who occupy our modern pulpits are no longer engaged in presenting the fundamentals of the Christian Faith, but have turned aside from the Truth and have given heed unto fables. Instead of magnifying the enormity of sin and setting forth its eternal consequences, they minimize it by declaring that sin is merely ignorance or the absence of good. Instead of warning their hearers to "flee from the wrath to come" they make God a liar by declaring that He is too loving and merciful to send any of His own

creatures to eternal torment. Instead of declaring that "without shedding of blood is no remission," they merely hold up Christ as the great Exemplar and exhort their hearers to "follow in His steps." Of them it must be said, "For they being ignorant of GodÂ's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). Their message may sound very plausible and their aim appear very praiseworthy, yet we read of themÂ—"for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves (imitating) into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing [not to be wondered at] if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

In addition to the fact that today hundreds of churches are without a leader who faithfully declares the whole counsel of God and presents His way of salvation, we also have to face the additional fact that the majority of people in these churches are very unlikely to learn the Truth themselves. The family altar, where a portion of GodÂ's Word was wont to be read daily is now, even in the homes of nominal Christians, largely a thing of the past. The Bible is not expounded in the pulpit and it is not read in the pew. The demands of this rushing age are so numerous, that multitudes have little time and still less inclination to make preparation for the meeting with God. Hence the majority who are too indolent to search for themselves, are left at the mercy of those whom they pay to search for them; many of whom betray their trust by studying and expounding economic and social problems rather than the Oracles of God.

In Proverbs 14:12 we read, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." This "way" which ends in" death" is the DevilÂ's DelusionÂ—the gospel of SatanÂ—a way of salvation by human attainment. It is a way which "seemeth right," that is to say, it is presented in such a plausible way that it appeals to the natural man: it is set forth in such a subtle and attractive manner, that it commends itself to the intelligence of its hearers. By virtue of the fact that it appropriates to itself religious terminology, sometimes appeals to the Bible for its support (whenever this suits its purpose), holds up before men lofty ideals, and is proclaimed by those who have graduated from our theological institutions, countless multitudes are decoyed and deceived by it.

The success of an illegitimate coiner depends largely upon how closely the counterfeit resembles the genuine article. Heresy is not so much the total denial of the truth as a perversion of it. That is why half a lie is always more dangerous than a complete repudiation. Hence when the Father of Lies enters the pulpit it is not his custom to flatly deny the fundamental truths of Christianity, rather does he tacitly acknowledge them, and then proceed to give an erroneous interpretation and a false application. For example: he would not be so foolish as to boldly announce his disbelief in a personal God; he takes His existence for granted and then gives a false description of His character. He announces that God is the spiritual Father of all men, when the Scriptures plainly tell us that we are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26), and that "as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). Further, he declares that God is far too merciful to ever send any member of the human race to Hell, when God Himself has said, "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the Lake of Fire" (Rev. 20:15). Again; Satan would not be so foolish as to ignore the central figure of human historyÂ—the Lord Jesus Christ; on the contrary, his gospel acknowledges Him to be the best man that ever lived. Attention is drawn to His deeds of compassion and works of mercy, the beauty of His character and the sublimity of His teaching. His life is eulogized, but His vicarious Death is ignored, the all-important atoning work of the cross is never mentioned, whilst His triumphant and bodily resurrection from the grave is regarded as one of the credulities of a superstitious age. It is a bloodless gospel, and presents a crossless Christ, who is received not as God manifest in the flesh, but merely as the Ideal Man.

In 2 Corinthians 4:3 we have a scripture which sheds much light upon our present theme. There we are told, "if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them." He blinds the minds of unbelievers through hiding the light of the Gospel of Christ, and he does this by substituting his own gospel. Appropriately is he designated "The Devil and Satan which deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12:9). In merely appealing to "the best that is within man," and in simply exhorting him to "lead a nobler life" there is afforded a general platform upon which those of every shade of opinion can unite and proclaim this common message.

Again we quote Proverbs 14:12Â—"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." It has been said with considerable truth that the way to Hell is paved with good intentions. There will be many in the Lake of Fire who commended life with good intentions, honest resolutions and exalted idealsÂ—those who were just in their dealings, fair in their transactions and charitable in all their ways; men who prided themselves in their integrity but who sought to justify themselves before God by their own

righteousness; men who were moral, merciful and magnanimous, but who never saw themselves as guilty, lost, hell-deserving sinners needing a Saviour. Such is the way which "seemeth right." Such is the way that commends itself to the carnal mind and recommends itself to multitudes of deluded ones today. The DevilÂ's Delusion is that we can be saved by our own works, and justified by our own deeds; whereas, God tells us in His Word : "By grace are ye saved through faith. ..not of works lest any man should boast." And again, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us."

A few years ago the writer became acquainted with one who was a lay preacher and an enthusiastic "Christian worker." For over seven years this friend had been engaged in public preaching and religious activities, but from certain expressions and phrases he used, the writer doubted whether this friend was a "born again" man. When we began to question him, it was found that he was very imperfectly acquainted with the Scriptures and had only the vaguest conception of ChristÂ's Work for sinners. For a time we sought to present the way of salvation in a simple and impersonal manner and to encourage our friend to study the Word for himself, in the hope that if he were still unsaved God would be pleased to reveal the Saviour he needed.

One night to our joy, the one who had been preaching the Gospel (?) for several years, confessed that he had found Christ only the previous night. He acknowledged (to use his own words) that he had been presenting "the Christ ideal" but not the Christ of the Cross. The writer believes there are thousands like this preacher who, perhaps, have been brought up in Sunday School, taught about the birth, life, and teachings of Jesus Christ, who believe in the historicity of His person, who spasmodically endeavor to practice His precepts, and who think that that is all that is necessary for their salvation. Frequently, this class when they reach manhood go out into the world, encounter the attacks of atheists and infidels and are told that such a person as Jesus of Nazareth never lived. But the impressions of early days cannot be easily erased, and they remain steadfast in their declaration that they "believe in Jesus Christ." Yet, when their faith is examined, only too often it is found that though they believe many things about Jesus Christ they do not really believe in him. They believe with the head that such a person lived (and, because they believe this imagine that therefore they are saved), but they have never thrown down the weapons of their warfare against Him, yielded themselves to Him, nor truly believed with their heart in Him.

The bare acceptance of an orthodox doctrine about the person of Christ without the heart being won by Him and the life devoted to Him, is another phase of that way "which seemeth right unto a man" but the end thereof are "the ways of death." A mere intellectual assent to the reality of ChristÂ's person, and which goes no further, is another phase of the way which "seemeth right unto a man" but of which the end thereof "are the ways of death," or, in other words, is another aspect of the gospel of Satan.

And now, where do you stand? Are you in the way which "seemeth right," but which ends in death; or, are you in the Narrow Way which leadeth unto life? Have you truly forsaken the Broad Road which leadeth to death? Has the love of Christ created in your heart a hatred and horror of all that is displeasing to Him? Are you desirous that he should "reign over" you? (Luke 19:14). Are you relying wholly on His righteousness and blood for your acceptance with God?

Those who are trusting to an outward form of godliness, such as baptism or "confirmation!" those who are religious because it is considered a mark of respectability; those who attend some Church or Chapel because it is the fashion to do so; and, those who unite with some Denomination because they suppose that such a step will enable them to become Christians, are in the way which "ends in death"Â—death spiritual and eternal. However pure our motives, however noble our intentions, however well-meaning our purposes, however sincere our endeavors, God will not acknowledge us as His sons, until we accept His Son.

A yet more specious form of SatanÂ's gospel is to move preachers to present the atoning sacrifice of Christ and then tell their hearers that all God requires from them is to "believe" in His Son. Thereby thousands of impenitent souls are deluded into thinking they have been saved. But Christ said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). To "repent" is to hate sin, to sorrow over it, to turn from it. It is the result of the Spirits making the heart contrite before God. None except a broken heart can savingly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, thousands are deceived into supposing that they have "accepted Christ" as their "personal Saviour," who have not first received Him as their LORD. The Son of God did not come here to save His people in their sin, but "from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). To be saved from sins, is to be saved from ignoring and despising the authority of God, it is to abandon the course of self-will and self-pleasing, it is to "forsake our way" (Isa. 55:7). It is to surrender to GodÂ's authority, to yield to His dominion, to give ourselves over to be ruled by Him. The one who has never taken ChristÂ's "yoke" upon him, who is not truly and diligently seeking to please Him in all the

details of life, and yet supposes that he is "resting on the Finished Work of Christ" is deluded by the Devil.

In the seventh chapter of Matthew there are two scriptures which give us approximate results of ChristÂ's Gospel and Satan s counterfeit. First, in verses 13-14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Second; in verses 22-23, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied [preached] in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out demons, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Yes, my reader, it is possible to work in the name of Christ, and even to preach in his name, and though the world knows us, the Church knows us, yet to be unknown to the Lord! How necessary is it then to find out where we really are; to examine ourselves and see whether we be in the faith; to measure ourselves by the Word of God and see if we are being deceived by our subtle Enemy; to find out whether we are building our house upon the sand, or whether it is erected on the Rock which is Jesus Christ. May the Holy Spirit search our hearts, break our wills, slay our enmity against God, work in us a deep and true repentance, and direct our gaze to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.