

# Satan And His Gospel

IS the Devil a living reality, or is he nothing more than a figment of the imagination? Is the word “Satan” merely a synonym for wickedness, or does it stand for a concrete entity? In cultured circles it has become the custom to return a negative answer to these questions, and to flatly deny the existence of the Tempter. Among such people it is regarded as a mark of intellectual superiority to repudiate the personality of the Devil. By many, Satan is now looked upon as a product of priestcraft, a relic of superstition, the myth of a bygone age. With others, Satan is simply an abstraction, a mere negation, the opposite of good. “All the Devil there is is the devil within you,” is the last word of “modern thought.” The words which Goethe puts into the mouth of Mephistopholes—“I am the Spirit of Negation”—is accepted as a good workable definition of the Devil. He is regarded as a mere abstract principle of evil. As someone has quaintly put it, “They spell Devil without a ‘d’, as they spell God with two ‘o’s’. Good and evil is their scheme.”

But the more general conception of Satan is different from the above. The popular idea, the one that prevails among the masses, may be gathered from the pictorial representations of him which appear on the street posters, which are to be met with in our illustrated magazines, and which are displayed upon the stage—where he is pictured as a grotesque monster in human form, having horns, hoofs and forked tail. Such a conception is an insult to intelligent people, and in consequence, the Devil has come to be regarded either as a bogey with which to frighten naughty children, or as a fit subject for jest and joke.

It need hardly be said that both of the above conceptions are far from the truth. The fact that they have gained such wide credence is due largely to ignorance—ignorance concerning the teaching of God’s Word, ignorance concerning the Satan of Holy Scripture. But it is to Satan’s interests to keep people in such ignorance.

An intelligent enemy always keeps in the background and remains hidden out of sight. It is an important consideration with him that his identity should be concealed. Many an evil enterprise owes its success to its perpetrator remaining secreted. The assassin who plunges a knife into the back of his victim is usually hired for the purpose. The one who throws the bomb is merely a tool, the mastermind that planned the deed is unseen and unsuspected. Therefore, it need not surprise us to find that the masses do not believe in the existence of a personal Devil. It serves his purpose well to keep his dupes in ignorance concerning his real existence. The Devil has always worked secretly and sought to hide his true identity. When he beguiled Eve he did so through a serpent. When he appeared before God to accuse Job, he waited until a day when “the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also *among them*” (Job 1:6). When he sowed his “tares,” he did so secretly, *in the night* —“while men slept” (Matt 13:25). When he betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ into the hands of His enemies, he worked through Judas! Satan is an adept at disguising himself: he comes to us not as a Dragon of Darkness but “*is transformed into an Angel of Light*” (II Cor 11:14).

## I. THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN

### 1. *Personal Names Are Ascribed To Him.*

Thirty-five times he is denominated “The Devil,” which means “The Accuser” or “Slanderer”—accusing the saints before God and traducing the character of God before men. Fifty-two times he is called “Satan,” which means “Enemy” or “Adversary.” He is God’s enemy and man’s adversary. “Satan” refers to his *character*: the malignant Adversary of all good—in God or His creatures. “Devil” refers to his *mode of carrying out his evil designs*: by lying slanders, false accusations, evil traducings. He is termed “The Prince of this world” (John 14:30), which defines his position in relation to our earth. He is named “Beelzebub” (Matt 12:27), which regards him as the head of the demons. He is spoken of as the “Wicked One” (Matt 13:19) which refers to him as the primemover of *all* wickedness. He is styled “Apollyon,” that is “Destroyer” (Rev 9:11), which links him with the Bottomless Pit. He is referred to as “The Prince of the

power of the air” (Eph 2:2), which points to his present home and sphere of operations—cf. Eph. 6:12. He is termed “Lucifer” which means “Morning Star” (Isa 14:12), a title which seems to have belonged to him before his apostasy. He is called “The god of this world” (II Cor 4:4) because he is the inspirer and director of all spurious religion. He is termed “Liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44) because he is the inveterate opposer of the truth. These and other titles of Satan are meaningless unless he is a personal being.

## 2. Personal Characteristics Are Predicated Of Him.

Intelligence: His temptations are spoken of as “the *wiles* of the Devil” (Eph 6:11); while in Rev. 2:24 we read of “The depths of Satan” (Greek, “deep things”). Further, in Rev. 12:9 he is termed “That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which *deceiveth* the whole world.” To deceive implies design, and design is the product of intelligence, and intelligence is inseparable from personality.

Memory: In his conflict with our Lord he *quoted* from the Old Testament Scriptures (Matt 4:6). A mere abstraction could not do this.

Knowledge: In Rev. 12:12 we are told he has “great wrath, because he *knoweth* that he hath but a short time.” But that which is impersonal cannot be said to “know”.

Will: “...that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him *at his will*” (II Tim 2:26). “How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, *I will* ascend into heaven, *I will* exalt my throne above the stars of God: *I will* sit also upon the mount of the congregation” (Isa 14:12,13). That Satan possesses a will or the power of choice, is further proof that he is a personal being.

Moral character: Satan is spoken of as a “deceiver,” “liar,” “murderer,” “tempter,” all of which are terms implying moral character—i.e., that of which duty or obligation, and right and wrong may be predicted.

Speech: He is represented as talking with God (Job 1:9,10), arguing with our Lord, and as “accusing” the brethren. This is a further indication that Satan possesses the same characteristics as ourselves.

Emotions: He desired Peter that he might sift him as wheat (Luke 22:31). *Pride* is spoken of as “the condemnation of the Devil” (I Tim 3:6). While in Rev. 12:12 we read, “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great *wrath* .” But pride and anger cannot be predicated of the law of gravitation—they are inseparable from personality.

Executive and organizing ability: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels” (Rev 12:7). “Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, *to gather them together to battle*” (Rev 20:7,8). Here we find Satan marshalling his legions to engage in warfare. Eph. 6:12 more than hints that he is the head of graduated and organized forces.

## 3. Personal Acts Are Attributed To Him.

He tempts. The first time this mysterious being is introduced to us in the Word of God he appears in this capacity, inciting our first parents to disobey their Maker. In Matt. 4:3 he is expressly termed “The Tempter.” And again, in I Cor. 7:5 and I Thess. 3:5, the saints are warned against his machinations. To tempt implies design and argues intelligence and moral qualities, and these are inseparable from personality.

He accuses. To “accuse” unquestionably argues a conscious and rational entity. “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the Accuser of our brethren is cast down, which *accused* them before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10). This verse affords us a glimpse into the Unseen, and presents our Enemy maliciously impugning the saints before God. Two striking illustrations of this part of his work are furnished in Scripture. In Job 1:9-11 we find him charging the old patriarch, and in Zech. 3:1-5 he is seen standing before God to resist Joshua the high priest. Upon these interesting passages we cannot now comment. Blessed it is

to know that Satan's efforts in this direction are all in vain—"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Rom 8:33).

He makes war. We have already quoted Rev. 12:7, and 20:8,9 in another connection. We do not comment further on them now except to say that they furnish another proof that Satan is an intelligent, and albeit, malignant being.

He performs miracles. This opens up a wide subject in itself, into which we cannot now enter at length. We content ourselves with two scripture references. When Moses and Aaron wrought their miracles before Pharaoh as credentials of their Divine commission, we read that "Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; now the magicians of Egypt, *they also did in like manner* with their enchantments" (Ex. 7:11, etc.). And again we read concerning the "Man of Sin" (Antichrist) that his coming shall be "After the working of Satan with all power and *signs and lying wonders*" (II Thess. 2:9).

He causes bodily sufferings. The first two chapters of the book of Job clearly intimate that all the trials and afflictions which came upon Job were directly caused by the malignant assaults of the Devil. When vindicating Himself for healing a sufferer on the Sabbath day our Lord said, "Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, *whom Satan hath bound*, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" (Luke 13:16). Again; after the apostle Paul had been caught up to the third heaven, an affliction was sent him lest he should be exalted above measure at the abundance of the revelations which he had received, and this affliction is described as "a thorn in the flesh, *the messenger of Satan*" (II Cor 12:7).

He works in and through the wicked. Just as we read that "It is God which worketh in you [the believer] both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil 2:13), so, also, we read that Satan is "The spirit that now *worketh* in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2). Another evidence of his activities is furnished in Matt. 13. In imitation of our Lord who scattered the "good seed" in the field, Satan went and *sowed* tares.

#### 4. *The Temptation Of Our Lord By Satan Proves Him To Be A Personal Being.*

No unbiased mind can read carefully the fourth chapter of Matthew without coming to the conclusion that we have recorded there a real conflict between two persons—our Lord Jesus Christ and Satan. If we deny that the latter is there definitely brought before us as a person, we must logically affirm the same of the former. To say, in reply, We admit that Christ there *is* a real person but that "the Devil" must be regarded as a personification of evil, is blasphemy, for it impugns the character of our blessed Lord.

Unlike every fallen son of Adam who is shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, the Lord Jesus Christ was *sinless*. He is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb 7:26). "In Him is no sin" (I John 3:5). He is "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). He declared, "The prince of this world cometh, and *hath nothing in Me*" (John 14:30). As then there was no evil in our blessed Saviour, the one who tempted Him must have been external and personal.

To deny that Matthew 4 presents Satan as a personal entity is either to traduce our Lord's character, or, it is to reduce the entire narrative to meaningless jargon. Everything that is said of Satan in this chapter indicates and intimates that he is as real and actual a person as the Lord Jesus Himself. The tempter "came to Him." He spoke, yea, reasoned and argued. He took Christ up into the holy city. He quoted to Him from the Psalms. He showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. He sought worship from the Saviour. At His word "he departed from Him for a season." All of which is proof positive—to one that believes in the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures—that Satan is a living person.

#### 5. *Finally, The Fact That The Word Of God Announces That Satan Shall Yet Be Cast Into The Bottomless Pit, And Afterwards Into The Lake Of Fire, Argues That He Is An Accountable Being.*

A mere abstraction cannot be punished. That which is nothing more than a negation could not be tormented. That which was incorporeal and intangible could not be "cast into the Lake of Fire." The fact that the Scriptures declare that Satan *shall* be punished is conclusive evidence that he is a person, and a person endowed with moral responsibility.

## II. SATAN'S ORIGIN

It must be apparent to all who have any acquaintance with the holy and righteous character of God, that He could not have created anything that was essentially and originally evil. Man today is a sinful creature, but he has not always been such (Eccl 7:29). Originally, man was created in the image and likeness of God, but by an act of wilful disobedience he corrupted his nature and *became* sinful. The same is true of that part of the angels that apostatized. They were not created in a fallen condition. Peter tells us that the angels “sinned” (II Pet 2:4), and Jude declares that these angels “Kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation” (Jude 6).

From these two examples furnished by sinful man and fallen angels we might reasonably conclude, from the law of analogy, that the same principle would hold good concerning Satan. It is unthinkable for us to suppose that God should create the Devil, though we must believe that He created the one who subsequently *became* the Devil. But we are not left to the uncertain speculations of reason, the Word of God itself gives us definite information which establishes this principle. Speaking of Satan our Lord declared: “He was a murderer [Greek: “man-slayer”] from the beginning [i.e., of human history], and *abode not in the truth*” (John 8:44). The first estate or standing of the Devil is here stated to be “in the truth,” but he “abode not” in it—he apostatized. With this agrees James 2:19. Having once stood in the truth, Satan intellectually knows the truth, hence “the devils *also believe*, and tremble.”

How different this from the current notions of Satan drawn from imagination and popularized in the English tongue by the poet Milton, notions which are, for the most part, without a vestige of scriptural authority. As the great Evil Spirit is at present confined to the realm of the Unseen, we can *know* nothing whatever about him save what is revealed in the Word of God. The Holy Scriptures are the only reliable source of information that we possess concerning the first estate, the apostasy, and the history of this mysterious being. And, as the Bible has not been written to satisfy idle curiosity, comparatively little is told us therein respecting Satan's origin and nature.

One of the few passages of Scripture which seems to throw light upon the origin of Satan, and of his condition and position before his apostasy, is to be found in Ezek. 28:11-19. As this passage is of such interest and importance we quote it at length:—

“Moreover the Word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the King of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness; I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee; and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee; thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.”

We cannot enter now into a detailed exposition of this mysterious passage, but must content ourselves with a few comments thereon. A careful reading of these verses produces the conviction that the prophet is there referring to some other than an earthly king or mere human being. He must have been borne by the Spirit of prophecy into some other time and place, and to some other person. Just as the apostle John was “in the Spirit” and was projected forward to future scenes and seasons, so, it appears, Ezekiel must have been taken

back to a far distant period of time. While we believe that the king of Tyrus was a historical person, nevertheless, we are compelled to think that he must also have been a typical character—a figure of Satan himself. We repeat, these verses present to us the picture of a person hardly existing among men, the outlines of which none but the Devil himself seems to fill.

“Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the King of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; *Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty*” (v12). Surely such terms as these could never have been employed to describe any mere human king. They could not with any propriety or regard to truth be applied to any *human* being whatsoever. This language, which be it noted, is carefully prefaced, “The Word of the LORD which came unto” Ezekiel (v11), is altogether unintelligible unless we understand it to refer to *the highest* of all God’s creatures, and, as we shall seek to show, this is none other than Satan himself.

Assuming for the moment that these verses describe the person of Satan as he left the hand of his Maker, verse 12 tells us three things about him. First, that he is “the sum” of all created perfection, i.e., the most exalted of all God’s creatures. Second, that he is (was) inwardly “full of wisdom,” i.e., possessed the full measure of creative wisdom. Third, that he is (was) outwardly, “perfect in beauty,” i.e., was endowed with the full measure of creative excellency. The next verse (13) amplifies the last clause of verse 12, giving in ten items a description of his beauty.

“Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire” (v14). These words tell us something of the *nature* of Satan, declare his *subordination* to God, and throw light upon the *position* which he occupied before his fall.

First, in regard to his *nature*. The being that is here referred to is termed a “cherub”—we need hardly say that “cherubim” is the plural form. It would lead us too far from our present inquiry to examine all the scriptures which treat of the “cherubim”—deeply interesting as they are—suffice it now to say that the cherubim are distinguished from the angels, appear to outrank them, and are probably the highest class of all God’s creatures, for as Rev. 4:6-9 intimate, they are seated nearest to God’s Throne and lead the worship of the entire universe. For a *description* of the cherubim the reader may be referred to Ezek. 1:5-14; 10:8-22; Rev. 4:6-9. It is to be noted that here in Ezek. 28:14 Satan is not termed a cherub, but “*the cherub*,” which seems to show that he was the prince or chief of the cherubim—cf. Matt. 12:24, “The prince of the devils.”

Again, note he is here described as “the *anointed* cherub.” Scripture furnishes us with a number of examples where “anointing” is connected with induction to an office, and in the verse now before us the reference is evidently to God’s appointment of Satan to fill a certain position. What that position is perhaps we may learn by “comparing spiritual things with spiritual things.” It is a point of deep interest to observe that in Old Testament times men were anointed to fill but three offices—the prophetic (I Kings 19:16), the priestly, and the kingly, and it is not difficult for us to infer from the hints dropped in Scripture that Satan originally filled each of these offices himself! The reference to “every precious stone” being his covering (Ezek. 28:13), and the description of them which follows (when compared with Ex28:17-20), seems to hint at his priesthood; the words “thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries” (Ezek 28:18) may have reference to his prophetic office, officiating in these sanctuaries as the mouthpiece of God—delivering His oracles to a world of created spirits; and Isaiah 14:13, “*my throne*,” intimates his kingship, hence the reference in Ezek. 28:17 to his yet being laid “before kings” as a part of his future humiliation. Before we pass from this deeply interesting point of Satan as the “*anointed* cherub,” in view of I Chron. 16:22 (“Touch not my anointed”) and of Ex. 22:28 (“Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people”)—we may perhaps better understand why Michael the archangel *dared not* to bring against the Devil a “railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9).

Second, we learn from Ezek. 28:14 of Satan’s *subordination to God* —“I have set thee so.” The exalted position which Satan occupied as prophet, priest, and king, was his, not by inherent merit or achievement,

rather was it delegated to him by his Creator. It was the gift of his Sovereign—cf. Psa. 75:7; Dan. 2:37,38; Rom. 9:17, etc.

Third, the *position* which he occupied before his fall. Concerning this branch of our subject we shall have more to say in a subsequent chapter, and at the moment a brief glance at the words, “Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God, thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire,” must suffice. By comparing II Pet. 1:18 and other similar scriptures, the reference to “the holy mount” here seems to point to *the place where God visibly manifested His glory*. The next expression appears to confirm this conclusion. Ex. 24:10, and Ezek. 1:25-27 (R.V.) apparently indicate that the “stones of fire” are located at *the foot of God’s Throne*. Hence, we think Ezek. 28:14 is designed to teach that, before his fall, Satan, as the “anointed cherub”—the highest of all God’s creatures—was placed by his Maker in a position close to the very Throne of Deity.

To sum up this branch of our subject. The teaching of the Scriptures that we have but briefly considered seems to be that: first, Satan was *created* by God (Ezek. 28:15). Second, that by nature he belonged to the cherubic order. Third, that he was the chief or head of this highest class of all God’s creatures—“*the cherub*.” Fourth, that as such he was next in rank to God Himself, “the sum” (of created perfection, Ezek. 28:12). Fifth, that inwardly he was full of wisdom. Sixth, that in outward appearance he was bright and beautiful (Ezek. 28:12,17). Seventh, that he appears to have filled the offices of prophet, priest and king—“*the anointed cherub*.” Eighth, that his dwelling was next to God’s Throne. Ninth, that he was “set” or placed in this position by God. Tenth, that originally he stood “in the truth” (John 8:44).

### III. SATAN’S FALL

The *fact* that Satan fell only goes to prove what we said at the beginning of the last chapter, namely, that God did not create the Devil, though He created the one who subsequently became the Devil. The fact that Satan *did* fall is declared not only in Old Testament prophecy—to which we shall have need to again refer—but was explicitly taught by the Lord Jesus Himself: “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke 10:18). The words “as lightning” suggest three ideas. First, the *brightness* of the one who fell—agreeing with Ezek. 28:17—“Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” Second, the *suddenness* of his fall. Third, his *condemnation*, lightning being one of the Divine judgments.

The *immediate* cause of his fall is clearly revealed to us. Several scriptures shed their light upon this solemn aspect of our subject. To quote again, Ezek. 28:17—“*Thine heart was lifted up* because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” As another has said, “Here was the first sin that broke the calm of eternity, and stirred up the storm that has not ceased to rage, with ever increasing violence; and shall, till He quells it forever by His Word, ‘Peace be still’” (“Satan” by F.C. Jennings). The words “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty” suggest that, instead of “the anointed cherub” finding his chief delight in the contemplation of the Divine excellencies, he became occupied with his own beauty and, as Prov. 16:18 declares, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall,” so these lofty thoughts which Satan had of himself brought about his ruin. With this agrees I Tim. 3:6, “lest being lifted up with *pride*, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil.”

The *direction* of Satan’s pride is clearly brought before us in Isa. 14:12-15. “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning, how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.” In our examination of the Ezek. 28 scripture we noted that the words “I have set thee so” (v14) intimated that Satan’s position of authority was delegated to him by God. His sin, therefore, consisted in the *disowning of the supremacy of his Maker*. He determined to be equal with the Most High. He was not satisfied with a subordinate place, but aspired to equality with the Almighty.

What was *the occasion* of Satan's fall? Does the Word of God set forth or suggest any answer to this query? Not directly perhaps, yet we are inclined to believe that it *does* furnish a *hint*. In Rev. 13:8 we are told that Christ was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," i.e., in the purpose of God, and we pause to ask, Was this Divine decree made known to angelic intelligence before Adam was created? We think it may have been! To what does the Holy Spirit refer when He says, "Then Thou spakest in vision to Thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon One that is mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of the people" (Psa. 89:19)? To whom was God speaking when He made this declaration? Who were His auditors when He continued, "I have found David my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed Him...He shall cry unto Me, Thou art My Father, my God, and the Rock of My Salvation. Also I will make Him My Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Psa. 89:20-27)? "*Then* Thou spakest." When, we are tempted to inquire? Was God revealing to the inhabitants of heaven, before our world was formed, that it was His purpose to place our earth under the dominion of man—the Man, Christ Jesus, and that this Man should be made His "firstborn"—a title which speaks not merely of priority, but of a position of chief honor, dignity, and privilege?

It is to be noted that in the above scripture, as in other passages, the Lord Jesus is spoken of as "David," which means *the Beloved*. Was there anything then which took place at the anointing of David that tells us, in type, of what happened when God made known to heaven's inhabitants His purpose to anoint the One who was to be David's Root and Offspring? The answer to this query may possibly be found in I Sam. 16. "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him [David] in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward" (v13). Observe that the anointing of David was no secret act, but took place "in the midst of his brethren"

Now what do we read as the very next thing that occurred after David's anointing? "But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him" (v14). May it not be that a deeper tragedy is hidden beneath these words than appears on the surface, one which they faintly echo? We know that in many particulars David was a remarkable type of the Lord Jesus. For example. David was born in *Bethlehem*. By occupation he was a shepherd. During his shepherd life he entered into *conflict* with wild beasts. From the obscurity of shepherdhood he was exalted to Israel's throne. He was *anointed* as king years *before* he was coronated. He was the one who *slew Goliath* — *the opposer* of God's people and another type of Satan. He is the only one termed in Scripture: The "man after God's own heart," etc., etc. We also know that Saul is an equally clear type of Satan. The first thing told us about him is, that from his shoulders up he was taller than any in Israel, hinting at the exalted position which Satan originally held as chief of the angels. Saul occupied a throne; so, also, did Satan (Isa. 14:13). But Saul sinned and was deposed by God. David was the special object of his hatred and enmity, as David's Son was of Satan's. The link between Saul and Satan is clearly brought out in I Sam. 28, where we see Israel's first king seeking unto a witch for information. Saul's humiliating and tragic death plainly foreshadows the doom which yet awaits Satan.

As then David is such a clear type of Christ and Saul of Satan, and as we learn that *the time when* the Spirit of the Lord left Saul and an evil spirit took His place was on the occasion of David's being *anointed*, we inquire, May it not have been, that when God made known unto the celestial hierarchies His intention to yet exalt a Man to His Throne, that envy seized upon "the anointed cherub," that pride for the first time filled his heart, and it was *then* he said, "I *will* exalt *my* throne above the stars of God... I *will ascend* above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High" (Isa 14)? We do not know for certain. We cannot give a dogmatic reply. But perhaps it is more than likely that so it was.

The *immediate* result of Satan's apostasy seems to be intimated in Rev. 12:4, a chapter which gives us more information concerning the history of Satan since his fall than any other in the Bible. It will be noted that in this verse two things are stated of the Dragon—"And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." The second statement clearly refers to the assault which he made through Herod on the young child Jesus. The first part of the verse then is concerned with something which occurred prior to the Divine Incarnation, and apparently looks back to the time of Satan's apostasy.

What are we to understand by “the stars of heaven”? Job 38:7 informs us—“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” Here the morning stars are represented as singing together and shouting for joy on the occasion of the earth’s creation. The “morning stars” are termed “sons of God,” and in this same book of Job, namely in 1:6, we find Satan appearing in their midst. These “morning stars” or “sons of God,” were undoubtedly *the angels*, cf. Isa. 14:12. Hence Rev. 12:4 appears to teach that at the apostasy of Satan one third of heaven’s inhabitants rallied to his standard. This apparently throws light on II Pet. 2:4 and Jude 6 and explains the fact that Satan is now at the head of mighty legions of fallen spirits who do his will and perform his bidding.

#### IV. SATAN’S POSITION SINCE HIS FALL

It seems to be a principle in God’s governmental dealings to “endure with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.” Apparently, He gave the antediluvian world one hundred and twenty years in which to repent of their wickedness and accept the overtures of His mercy made through Noah. With infinite patience He dealt with Pharaoh, and it was not until after the ten plagues had failed to soften his heart that he was cut off out of the land of the living. It was the same with Israel. His judgments fell upon the chosen people only after long and repeated provocation, and then but mildly at first. At the beginning they were subjugated by unfriendly neighbours; later they were carried away into captivity, but it was not until after fifteen centuries of unbelief and rebellion that they were dispersed throughout the world. In like manner, God did not consign Satan to the Lake of Fire on the occasion of his first sin, rather has He permitted him a long spell of freedom, in which to demonstrate the inveteracy of his enmity against God, ere he shall finally be cast into that fire “prepared for the Devil and his angels.” Before we consider the position which Satan is allowed to hold today, we must again refer briefly to that which he occupied *before* his fall.

On three different occasions our Lord described Satan as “The Prince of this world”—John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11. In passing, be it noted, He does not own him as “King” but as “Prince,” that is, as one who occupied a subordinate position—implying his responsibility to own and acknowledge One above him. When it may be asked, did Satan become the “Prince of this world”? To this question, we think, a two-fold answer may be returned. First, God’s Word furnishes several broad hints which point to the fact that Satan was Prince of this world long before Adam was created. For this suggestion we are, in part, indebted to a book by the late Mr. G.H. Pember, entitled “Earth’s Earliest Ages.”

The thoughtful reader of Genesis 1 will doubtless be puzzled by the contents of the first two verses. He will naturally ask, Why should an earth created by God be “without form, and void”? or, as the Hebrew suggests “an empty waste, or ruin.” Surely a perfect Creator would not create an imperfect earth. Nor did He. Isa. 45:18—which contains the same Hebrew words to be found in Gen. 1:2—expressly declares, “For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain,” or, if the Hebrew here be rendered as in Gen. 1:2: “He created it *not without form and void*,” i.e. a ruin. How then harmonize this statement with Gen. 1:2? The answer is, Gen. 1:2 *ought to* have been translated “And the earth *became* without form, and void,” or, “an empty waste or ruin.” But how, and when did it become such? Probably, long after the point in mind referred to in Gen. 1:1. Between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis one there is room for a long interval of time, during which some terrible calamity occurred, resulting in the earth, originally created by God, becoming a ruin. But what calamity could have been commensurate with such a disaster? We reply, the only answer which appears to be adequate is, *the fall of Satan*.

Referring again to the Ezek. 28 scripture, it will be observed that in v.13 God declares of the anointed cherub, “Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God,” and this, be it noted, occurs in the passage *before* any reference is made to his fall. We believe the “Eden” here referred to was a *pre-adamic* garden. There is another scripture which points to a pre-adamic earth, and one that was inhabited, namely, Jer. 4:23-26: “I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void;...the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the

LORD, and by His fierce anger.” This is the only other scripture besides Gen. 1:2, and Isa. 45:18 which contains the Hebrew words “Tohu i’bohu”—without form and void.

It appears then, that God entrusted to Satan the government of this pre-adamic earth, making him its “prince” or ruler. This conclusion is fully borne out by the language of Isa. 14:13,14 already quoted—“For thou hast said in thine heart, *I will ascend* into heaven, I will *exalt* my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. *I will ascend* above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High”—language which certainly implies that the geographical position occupied by Satan was *below* the heaven. Hence, we conclude that, consequent upon the apostasy of this world’s “Prince” his dominions were desolated and destroyed by God. On no other hypothesis can we explain the catastrophe which occurred between the first two verses of Genesis one, resulting in an earth “without form and void” and covered by the waters of judgment.

In further corroboration of the position here advanced, namely, that there existed a world prior to Adam, a world that was inhabited and peopled, and over which Satan ruled as “prince,” we may note God’s command to our first parents to “be fruitful, and multiply, and *replenish* the earth”—i.e., repeople it. Moreover, the above conclusion makes it easier for us to understand why Satan should seek to seduce our first parents and cause them to disobey their Maker—being filled with envy and hatred at seeing *a man* placed over the realm which once he had governed. Finally, we are in a better position to discern the significance of that word in Gen. 2:15, “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to *keep it*.” The Hebrew word here is frequently translated “preserve.” Mark its occurrence in Gen. 3:24 which well defines its scope. The usage of it in Gen. 2:15 seeming to hint at the prospect of someone coming to Adam to contend with him the right of ownership.

This brings us to the second part of our answer to the question. When did Satan become the “Prince of this world”? We have suggested that the government of the pre-adamic earth was originally placed in Satan’s hands, and that upon his apostasy God destroyed his dominions. In Gen. 1 we learn that in six days God *made* the present world in which we now live. Over this world God set Adam as the language of Gen. 1:28 clearly intimates—“And God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; *and have dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Dominion over every living creature connected with this earth was committed into his hands—cf. Psalm 8. But, Adam, in turn apostatized, and, Satan succeeding in *wresting from his hands the sceptre of earth’s sovereignty*, again became the “Prince of this world.” That this is the case is clearly proved by Luke 4:5,6, “And the Devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, shewed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the Devil said unto Him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; *for that is delivered unto me*; and to whomsoever I will I give it.” Satan declared that all the kingdoms of the world belonged to him, and Christ did not challenge or repudiate his claim. On the contrary, as has been pointed out, three times He owned him to be the “Prince of this world.”

But there is one further thought to be considered before we turn from this interesting part of our subject. Satan is here in this world today as a *usurper*. This world no longer belongs to him. He is here only upon Divine sufferance. The sceptre of the earth has, in turn, been wrested from *his* hand, and ere long he shall be removed from these dominions which are now owned by Another.

In Matt. 13:44 we read, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and *buyeth that field*.” In the thirty-eighth verse of this chapter we learn that “the field is *the world*.” On the Cross our Lord purchased that which Adam forfeited at the fall—the earth and dominion over it. Hence in Rev.5, compared with Jer. 32:6-15 we find that Christ alone possesses *the title deeds* to this earth: Therefore we say that Satan is here in this world today as a usurper. Christ is its legitimate “prince”—The Prince of Peace. Consequently, the first thing that will take place when Christ returns to this earth will be the removal of Satan from it.

Mr. F.C. Jennings in his admirable work on “Satan” has pointed out that we have in the Old Testament scriptures a confirmatory type of Satan’s present *usurpation*, namely, in the history of King Saul:—

“But Saul disobeys, or, to use language that suggests the parallel I desire to keep before us:— *‘iniquity was found in thee,’* see Ezek. 28:15; and he was set aside from his kingly office: the kingdom was rent from him (I Sam. 15:27,28), and then God anointed another king of His own choice: *A shepherd king, David!* Now no one questions David being a type of the beloved Son of God; why should not Saul afford us also a type of His opponent? He surely does.

“But,—and this is the point that must be carefully noted and weighed,— *Saul retains the throne of Israel, and is still recognized as the king long after he is divinely rejected;* the sentence is pronounced, but judgment is not at once executed, whilst David, the now true king, is ‘hunted like a partridge upon the mountains or finds his refuge in the cave of Adullam!’ God does not at once intervene by *power*, and take the dignities of the kingdom from Saul,—although he has lost all *title* to them—and put them in David’s hand; the power is Saul’s—the title is David’s. The latter is king *de jure*, and former *de facto*.”

Do you not see the marvellous and clear analogy? Satan, too, whilst he may have forfeited all *title* to the throne of the earth—we shall consider this more carefully directly—still cleaves as did Saul, to its power and dignity; claims, as did Saul, all the power of its government; whilst the true David, to whom all belongs in *title*, is as it were, in the cave of Adullam, where a few “discontented” ones, those who are not satisfied with such a condition of things—have found their way to Him, and own Him even in the day of His rejection, as rightful Lord of all. Therefore whilst Satan is the prince of this world at the present time, we are led by analogy of the inspired history, as by every clear scripture, to regard him as its *usurping* prince; a prince in *power*, but not in *title*.

Yet whilst now a usurper, as Saul was: still since he was, also as Saul, Divinely anointed as king, the dignity of that anointing still lingers on him, so that Michael recognized that dignity—not speaking evil but reverently (even as David spoke of Saul ever as “the LORD’s Anointed”), and saying “*the LORD rebuke thee.*”

## V. THE WORK OF SATAN

Having dwelt at some length on the person of Satan and the position he has occupied both before and since his fall, we turn now to a consideration of his work. The Apostle declared “we are not ignorant of his devices” (II Cor 2:11). Not only does God’s Word throw much light upon the nature and character of the Devil, but it also informs us concerning his work and the methods he employs in the prosecution of it. We have already seen that the popular ideas of the masses in regard to the person of Satan are utterly erroneous and misleading, and still more is this the case respecting his *work*. The general belief is that Satan is responsible for all the wickedness which pertains to the moral sphere (thus does man seek to shift the burden of responsibility from off his own shoulders), that he tempts men to sins of theft, drunkenness, vice, etc., whereas the Scripture of truth reveals to us the fact that his energies are chiefly confined to *the spiritual realm*.

Now it is a law of scriptural interpretation that *the first mention* of anything in God’s Word hints at and forecasts much of what is subsequently developed. An illustration of this principle is seen in connection with Satan. The first time he is brought before us in Holy Writ his true character is unveiled, the sphere in which he works is clearly revealed, and the methods he employs are expressly set forth. His *subtlety* is indicated in that he used a serpent through which to approach our first parents; his *cowardice* in that he assaulted the woman rather than the man; his *evil nature* in that he lied to her and sought her ruin; his *character* of tempter in that he captured his victim by means of an attractive bait (“Ye shall be as gods”); his *sphere of operations* in that he incited Eve to commit not a moral but a spiritual sin—transgression of God’s command; his real *object of attack*—God’s Word: “Yea, hath God said?”

In the sentence which God pronounced upon that old serpent the Devil, Satan’s purpose and program is definitely revealed—“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15). There is much in this remarkable announcement which calls for study and comment, but for our present purpose we limit ourselves to one

declaration—"Enmity...between thy seed and her seed." We are here informed that the woman's "Seed"—the Lord Jesus Christ—is to be the object of Satan's unrelenting hatred. This reveals to us in a word the age-long work in which Satan has been engaged. Ever since this first Messianic prediction was uttered in Eden Satan has been the Enemy of the woman's Seed. The Person and Work of the Lord Jesus have been the objects of his attack. His methods of opposition have followed two lines, namely, first a work of anticipation, and second a work of imitation, and these we shall now consider at some length.

Having learned that the woman's Seed was destined to "bruise" his head, Satan, by way of anticipation, *sought to prevent His entry into this world*. It may be his first attempt along this line is to be seen in the death of *Abel*. Possibly Satan thought that Abel was the promised "Seed" of the woman, and for that reason stirred up Cain, "who was of that wicked one" (I John 3:12) to kill his brother. His next attack was more daring. It appears from Genesis 6 that a considerable number of Nephilim, termed "sons of God"—fallen celestial beings—left their own habitation (Jude 6), came down to this earth and cohabited with the daughters of men in an attempt to destroy the human species by producing a race of monstrosities. How nearly Satan succeeded in this attempt the student of the Word is well aware—with the exception of a single family, Noah and his house, all mankind were destroyed by God at the flood.

At a later date God revealed to Abraham His purpose that all families of the earth should be blessed through his "Seed," in other words, that the coming Redeemer and Bruiser of Satan should be one of his descendants according to the flesh. Hence, we may understand why, some four hundred years later when in Egypt the offspring of Abraham began to wax numerous, that Satan again attempted to frustrate the purpose of God by seeking to destroy *the channel through* which the promised "Seed" was to come. There can be no reasonable doubt but that it was Satan who moved Pharaoh to issue the edict commanding that all the *male* children of the Hebrews should be put to death.

At a still later date God made known the fact to King David that the promised Messiah should be born of the royal tribe of Judah. Shortly afterwards we find Satan making another attempt to thwart God as may be seen in the dividing of the Kingdom, when the ten tribes made a determined and prolonged effort to exterminate the tribe of *Judah!* Other examples might be cited from the Old Testament (Haman's plot to slay all the Jews, etc.) in which may be seen the efforts of Satan attempting to prevent the advent of the woman's Seed; but we turn now to the New Testament.

When the fulness of time was come and God sent forth His Son, born of a woman (Gal 4:4), Satan promptly made an effort to destroy the young child's life (Rev 12:4). Through Herod he slew all the children in Bethlehem from two years old and under. But his effort was in vain, for being warned of God in a dream, Joseph had taken the young child and His mother and had fled into Egypt.

At the commencement of our Lord's ministry, in the temptation, Satan sought to make Him throw Himself down from the temple. A little later he so stirred up the hearts of our Lord's auditors that we read, they "rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might *cast Him down headlong*. But He passing through the midst of them went His way" (Luke 4:29,30). On another occasion, when, wearied out with the day's work, our Lord sought sleep in the bow of a boat, another attempt was made upon His life. The Prince of the Power of the air, lashed the Sea of Galilee into a fury, until the storm was so fierce that the disciples feared their little ship was doomed, and it was not until the Creator of the sea commanded it to be still that the plot of the Devil was foiled.

From Matt. 16:21-23 we may learn how Satan sought to turn our Lord from the great purpose of His incarnation and mission. Having declared that "He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and *be killed*," Peter turned to Him and said, "Be it far from Thee, Lord" (margin, "Pity Thyself")—spare Thyself such humiliation as that. But Christ instantly detected the source from which emanated this plausible appeal, and turned and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind Me, *Satan*: thou art an offence unto Me."

The trail of the Serpent is plainly to be seen around the Cross itself. There it was that the great Enemy made his last stand prior to our Lord's death. Weakened by His terrible sufferings, tortured by His merciless enemies, hanging there helpless between earth and heaven, Satan, it was, who challenged Him to demonstrate His Deity by descending from the cruel tree—"Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross" (Matt 27:40). But glory to His blessed Name, He never faltered. Patiently and majestically He bore His sufferings, until He cried in triumph, "It is finished," and surrendered His spirit into the hands of His Father. But even then Satan did not give up in despair. The sacred body of our Lord having been borne from the Cross and laid in the sepulchre, Satan then made it his business to see that the tomb was securely sealed and guarded by a company of Roman soldiers. Ah! Satan, if thou canst only succeed in keeping in the tomb *that* Body, thou hast triumphed indeed. But no, again thou art defeated. The grave cannot retain its victim; death cannot hold the Lord of Life: "Up from the grave He arose, with a mighty triumph o'er His foes—Hallelujah, *Christ arose*," and today He lives and is alive for evermore.

Having been thwarted and defeated then, at every point; having failed to prevent the incarnation of our blessed Lord, having failed to keep Him from offering Himself as a Sacrifice for sin, having failed to hold His body in the confines of the grave, it behooves us to inquire whether or not Satan has given up in despair, whether he has ceased to attack the person and work of the Lord Jesus, whether he has changed his attitude toward God's beloved Son; or, whether he is still prosecuting his wicked designs, still endeavoring to frustrate the purposes of God, and whether or not he is now aiming to nullify the virtues of Christ's Atoning death. An answer to these inquiries is of the greatest possible importance.

Again we must turn to God's infallible Word if we are to obtain reliable information upon this subject. In the Parable of the Tares our Lord has exposed the methods which Satan is employing during the time of His absence from this earth. In the previous parable our Lord likens Himself to One who went forth sowing precious seed—wheat, and in the parable now before us He declares that Satan also did some sowing, that he went and scattered tares among the wheat. It is to be noted that he sowed neither thorns nor thistles, but something *which so closely resembled* the genuine grain that it is not until the time of harvest that one can be distinguished from the other; then it is seen that the tares, though so like the wheat in stalk, bear no fruit, produce no increase. In a word then, just as formerly the enmity of Satan was directed against the person and work of Christ by way of *anticipation*, so now he is busily engaged in seeking to nullify the virtues of our Lord's vicarious sacrifice by a *method of imitation*.

Satan is not an initiator but an imitator. God has an only begotten Son—the Lord Jesus, and so has Satan—"the son of Perdition" (II 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" (Matt 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" (I Tim 3:16), so also is there a "mystery of iniquity" (II 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" (I Cor 2:10), then Satan also provides his "deep things" (See Greek of Rev 2:24). Did Christ perform miracles, so also can Satan (II Thess 2:9). Is Christ seated upon a throne, so is Satan (Rev 2:13—Greek). 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" (II Cor 11:14). Did Christ appoint "apostles," then Satan has his apostles, too (II Cor 11:13). And this leads us to consider:

## VI. THE GOSPEL OF SATAN

Satan is the arch-counterfeiter. As we have seen, 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

cleaver 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” (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 us.” It aims to make this world such a comfortable and congenial habitat that Christ’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 God’s Word—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 Satan—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 God’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 praise-worthy, yet we read of them—“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” (II 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 for themselves. The family altar, where a

portion of God'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 the 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 Prov. 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 Devil's Delusion—the gospel of Satan—a way of salvation by human attainment. It is a way which "seemeth right," that is to say, it is presented in such plausible language 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 history—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 *atonement* 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 II Cor. 4:3,4 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 Prov. 14:12—"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 commenced life with good intentions, honest resolutions and exalted ideals—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 Devil's Delusion is that we can be saved by our *own* works, and justified before God 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.”

Perhaps an illustration from personal experience may be pardoned. 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 his 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 Christ’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 seven 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 the 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 Christ’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, my reader, 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 that 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” (Luke 19:14) you? 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”—death spiritual and eternal. However pure our motives, however noble our intentions, however well-meaning our purposes, however sincere our endeavors, God will not accept us as His sons, until we accept His Son.

A yet more specious form of Satan’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 that 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, to turn from it. It is the result of the Spirit’s 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” (Matt 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 *God’s* authority, to yield to His dominion, to give ourselves over to be ruled *by Him*. The one who has never taken Christ’s “yoke” upon him, who is not truly and diligently seeking to *please* Him in *all* the details of his 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 Christ’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 have cast out devils, 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, and the Church knows us, yet to be *unknown to the Lord!* How necessary it is 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 Christ Jesus. 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.

Finally, just a word upon Satan’s inevitable doom:

Revelation 20:10 brings before us the last of the great conflict between Satan and God—“And the Devil that deceived them was *cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone*, where the Beast and the False Prophet are, *and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*” Powerful though the great Adversary be, he has now to reckon with One whose name is “The Almighty,” by whom he shall be cast into that fire “prepared for the Devil and his angels.”