

Satan's One and Only Lie

By Paul N. Ellis

Jesus called Satan "the father of lies." It was the occasion of a severe rebuke directed to the Pharisees (Jn. 8), and Jesus charges Satan with being "a murderer from the beginning; he is a liar, and the father of it."

The incident recalls the Biblical record of the fall of man. Tempted by the serpent, the woman said, "God hath said, Ye shall not eat of (the fruit of the tree), neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die." (Gen. 3:24).

This is Satan's one and only lie. And because of its fatal consequences, Jesus calls him a murderer. The devil has lied more than once, of course, and his lie has taken many forms. But, whatever form the lie may take, it is always this first lie, repeated again and again. And it is murderous! It is the one lie that kills and damns the soul, and defeats the purpose of God. It is this: God does not mean what He says. Man shall not die for his sins. Sinners believe it and are lost. Backsliders believe it and are lost. The Church believes it, and sin continues to hold Dominion. Satan rejoices and the work of God languishes.

For isn't this ancient lie the very one Satan is still using to deceive the backslider? And isn't it true that he is getting good assistance from many ministers in our day?

One such minister, a radio preacher, is reported to have said that when Jesus comes some of His children will be found in shameful places. They will come from taverns, the brothels, the theaters — reproached and ashamed, but saved, as by fire! "What a tragedy!" he cried. And, with another thought in mind, I echo his word. What a tragedy! That a man who calls himself a preacher of the gospel should so voice Satan's one and only lie!

And it is a murderous lie, no matter how you try to decorate it by naming it "eternal security," or anything else. It is a lie that Satan is using today to inspire carelessness in Christians, to quiet the conscience of backsliders, and to ease the burden of concern that we should rightly have for our loved ones. A young lady said to me, "It is such a comforting doctrine." Indeed! And so is universalism. But it is false comfort.

Listen to God on the matter. Read it yourself in Ezekiel, chapter eighteen: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die . . . when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass . . . and in his sin . . . shall he die."

But Satan (and those who preach eternal security) cry: "God doesn't mean what He says. If you're once His son, you're always His son. Nothing can separate you from the love of God."

Interesting enough, some who will argue vociferously for verbal inspiration of the scriptures, will say, when confronted with the scripture just quoted, "But that is from the Old Testament." As if it mattered. These verses come from a context that cannot be mistaken. Close study will reveal that it is a warning for us now as much as it was for the ancient Jew.

But let's turn to the New Testament. A portion from Hebrews, chapter ten, is selected

from many others we could use. "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Backslider, for your soul's sake, don't listen to Satan. This is God's word, and it agrees with reason as well. If you sin wilfully after you have been the recipient of God's grace and blessing, your sin is blacker than if you had never known God. God's sacrifice for sin does not avail for you any more than for any other sinner, and only on the same terms. And in your heart, unless you smother the cry of conscience, you know guilt and condemnation and the fear of judgment, just like any sinner.

Of course there is hope for the backslider. Hope in Christ. If you will repent, and turn from your evil, and return to the God you have forsaken, He will graciously receive you. Repent and believe—that is the gospel call to the backslider and pagan alike. But to hope that your relationship with God has never been broken by wilful sin is to put your trust in a rope of sand.

There is a word of warning here for Christians, too. We listen too much to Satan's lie, and we are therefore without passion and concern for the lost.

Do you know that just now as you read this there are one billion souls in this world who are "without God and without hope?" Maybe that doesn't mean much to you. After all it is simply a statistical estimate. And it is so enormous as to be beyond our comprehension.

But we may bring it closer to us. That unsaved husband of yours will spend eternity in hell, lost, away from God forever, unless he is saved now, while mercy is offered! That son, that daughter, that mother or father, that friend! All around us are people who are rejecting the way of salvation—the only way. And God warns that their death will be eternal.

We need to be awakened, we Christians. The Church is asleep, or aroused only to the point where we can quibble about non-essentials, while souls are dying without God. Our scientists today seem to be more concerned for the world's fate than many of us who love the Lord. And they are thinking only of physical destruction. If we live to see the widespread devastation of atomic warfare, we shall not see anything to compare to the spiritual destruction that has come upon man because of his unbelief. The warnings of God are sure—as certain as His promises. Let's take Him at His word.—Canadian Free Methodist.

LIVING FOR SELF

Conforming to the world in fashion, you show that you do not hold yourself accountable to God for the manner in which you lay out money. You practically disown your stewardship of the money that is in your possession. By laying out money to gratify your own vanity and lust, you take off the keen edge of that truth which ought to cut that sinner in two who is living to himself.

Now suppose a person loved God, and the souls of men, and the kingdom of Christ, does he need an express prohibition from God to prevent him from spending his money and his life in following the fashion? No indeed, he will rather need a positive injunction to take what is needful for his own comfort and the support of his own life.—Charles G. Finney.

The Lord is Coming Again...

It is no mere fancy—no poet's dream, no mere fabulous device, but immutable reality, as sure as the desolations which have been upon Mt. Zion for these * * * years. Though men may think but little of it, and put it far away from them, it is one of the infallible verities of Almighty God, as the angels at His ascension said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so **come in like manner** as ye have seen him go into heaven." Henceforward, therefore, could His followers say, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven." "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him."

Henceforward could the disciples go forth, "looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," and beseech men "by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering unto him," and exhort their fellow believers "to wait for His Son from heaven," and proclaim the glad "rest, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels," and encourage the fond hopes of the persecuted and desponding, with the assurance that "when he shall appear; we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is."

No, no! "We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." As certainly as the words of Jesus are true, as surely as the pillars of the eternal throne are steadfast, Jesus himself, in glorified humanity, shall return again to this very world of ours. All the prophets have predicted it; all the pious, from the foundation of the world, have in some form expected it. Jesus declared it, both before His death, and after His resurrection; and the very last words in the Holy Testament which He left us are: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly. Amen."

Even apart from what the Scriptures contain upon the subject, with the account of His humiliation before us, reason itself might almost anticipate His return. We cannot suppose that such a glorious Personage will always remain under the reproach and stigma of the Cross. Natural justice seems to demand that Christ should come again, in the majesty that appertains to Him, in order to sweep away the infamy which wicked men in every age have sought to heap upon Him.

As He whose right it is to reign; and as He whose "is the kingdom, the power, and the glory," will not forever leave His enemies to usurp His place; so we are driven to expect Him yet to come, "glorious in his apparel, and triumphing in the greatness of his strength."—J. A. Seiss.

"The man who lives to make money is the least estimable of mortals, but the man who lives to make joy for others is little lower than the angels."

A life of fellowship with God cannot be built up in a day. It begins with the habitual reference of all to Him, hour by hour, as Moses did in Egypt. But it moves on to longer periods of communion; and it finds its consummation and bliss in days and nights of intercession and waiting and holy intercourse.—F. B. Meyer.