

The Danger of Being Deceived

The fact that men everywhere are inclined to worship God confirms the truth of Paul's words; "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." It is evident that God would have all men turn from their evil, selfish ways which lead to discord and often to the painful severing of friendly ties, accompanied – and rightly too – by remorse of conscience. God offers instead, redemption in Christ with a hope of heaven.

From the beginning man has failed to obey his God. He may realize that he has failed to keep His commands and may make efforts to do good to please God and find favor with Him. When he offends his fellow man he may deal kindly with him and his efforts to make amends will have a soothing effect, and time too will help to heal all wounded feelings. But with God, only humble repentance for past sins and a prayerful heart desiring to be obedient to His will can find acceptance.

For the humble penitent, Christ is Savior and intercessor. He came to infuse His good Spirit into every one who will ask for it, feeling that great need. Self-knowledge will create

an anxious desire to renounce the old selfish spirit of pride, envy, hatred, and all evil that brought with it remorse of conscience. Love will rule the heart and mind which have been renewed by the Spirit of Christ. This is the new birth or conversion.

To the carnal mind the new birth is a mystery. But to the spiritual, the new birth is simply the effect of accepting, and obeying God's word in confidence and faith.

Many souls are deceived by a service of works, and seek comfort from spiritual advisors without carefully and prayerfully reading God's word. They are often counseled to live correctly, believe on Jesus, be baptized and observe the ordinances, with the promise that the Lord will accept them. They may find comfort in following this counsel and may rejoice and feel assured in their faith, just as those do who have a living faith. But there must be a sure ground for faith, and that is God's word; it is the guide. When it speaks one free then only is he free, and then only has he the promise.

Solomon well knew the danger of being deceived. In Proverbs he

wrote, "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14: 12. The Savior mentions two ways: the strait gate and narrow way with few to travel thereon, and the wide gate and broad way with many to travel on it. The broad way seemeth right but the end thereof is death. The narrow way is the way of self-denial, which leads unto eternal life.

The popular profession of religion does not include the cross of self-denial. It finds no harm in many pleasures, idle pastimes and amusements; it may well be called the broad and easy way.

The true religion of Christ calls not only for faith in Christ, but an open confession of Him before the world.

The foolish virgins in our Lord's parable were rejected for they had lamps without oil.

May no one be so foolishly deceived as to have a hope without a change of heart. A change from self-love to a love for God and His word is the evidence. His Spirit will teach all who are willing to obey, to strive to overcome self; and it creates unity of heart and mind among His followers. Born of the same

Spirit they become a true brotherhood in Christ. The bond of union is stronger than death. They are no more their own, they are bought with a price; they are Christ's. His Spirit rules them and prompts them to obey His commands.

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