

## But It Sounds So Good!

Joe Slater

Now this I say, lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words (Colossians 2:4).

John described Satan as the one who deceives the whole world (Revelation 12:9). In the garden of Eden, the devil did this in person (Genesis 3:1-6). Most often, though, he uses people to spread his lies.

The Christians in Colosse faced an onslaught of error which Paul urged them to reject. Consisting of a mixture of Greek philosophy, Jewish speculation, and just enough Bible to make it palatable, this novel system resulted in denying the gospel and forfeiting salvation!

Why would anyone buy into it? Because it sounded good, especially when presented by a skillful speaker. For example, it taught the Colossians to worship angels (Colossians 2:18). Angels are great! What could be wrong with getting the angels on our side? Sounds good! But in fact such is idolatry which robs us of our reward! Today the same type of reasoning tells us to pray to “saints,” especially Mary. Who would have more influence with her Son than Mary? So get her on your side! Sounds good! But Biblical teaching says Jesus Himself is the one mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). We come to God through Him (John 14:6; 15:16).

Paul warned against being deceived by “*persuasive words*” (Colossians 2:4). Persuasive means they sound reasonable, but are, in fact, false. Such was Satan’s tactic in Eden: “Eve, you won’t die! You’ll be like God, knowing good and evil!” How reasonable and good that must have sounded; but what a disaster resulted from believing it!

Beware of those who “*by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple*” (Romans 16:28). Just because it sounds good doesn’t mean it is!

## You Become What You Live

Max Beerbohm wrote a story called *The Happy Hypocrite*.” Sounds impossible, doesn’t it? The story was about a mean man who looked the part, too. His face was evil personified! One look from him could either frighten you “out of your wits” or cause you to run away.

He loved a woman who refused to marry a man who didn’t look “saintly.” So, he had a mask made. With the mask, he looked very saintly, the perfect picture of a perfectly “Christian” man. The young woman married him, not knowing the face underneath the mask. He loved her with attentive, unselfish care.

One day an enemy, jealous of his beautiful wife and happy *fake* life, tore off the man’s mask in front of his wife. However, instead of a cruel, grotesque face, the man had become what he had lived for many years. Kindness, not evil, radiated from his face!

One of my favorite sayings of Paul Faulkner (noted family counselor) is, “Act yourself into a better way of feeling.” When we strive to act like Christians, praying and studying and imitating Christ, we become more like Christ every day!

Someday we will look like Him in Whom we believe (1 John 3:2).

--Dean Whaley (Amarillo, TX) via *Old Paths*

## WHEN I AM TEMPTED

*When I am tempted I dare not stray  
For many people look my way;  
Loved ones to sicken and distrust  
If I betray my sacred trust;  
Weak ones to stumble and to fall  
If I should heed temptation's call;  
Young ones to follow in my wrong  
If my heart's not kept pure and strong;  
Older ones to mourn and grieve  
If I the way of truth should leave;  
The holy church to suffer, too,  
If my soul is not right and true.  
My charge is plain--my duty clear,  
My soul to keep, my Lord to fear,  
My light to shine, my savor keep--  
Truth to teach, souls to reap,  
A hope to gain, a crown to wear--  
A race to run, Heaven to share.  
When I am tempted, I dare not stray--  
Too many people look my way.*

--Owen Cosgrove

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“Heaven goes by favor; if it were awarded by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in.” –Mark Twain