

## MOTHER EVE'S TEMPTATION.

There is a lesson in our mother Eve's transgression which we presume few have carefully considered and profited by. In a recent number of the TOWER (March '87) attention was called to the manner in which the serpent beguiled Eve by his sophistry, and also to Paul's warning to the Church, the prospective bride of the Second Adam, lest she be beguiled in a similar manner. Further thought upon the subject leads naturally to the question, Where did the tempter's power over Eve begin? and did God leave her subject to such a deceptive, ensnaring temptation, without sufficient knowledge to show her *at once* the absurdity and falsity of the arguments used?

The adversary chose a deceptive and attractive form in which to present the temptation, and Eve was young, innocent and inexperienced. She had never been deceived, nor had any experience with evil. The tempter came unbidden, and with malicious design. Whether he believed that God was able to inflict the death penalty or not; or whether he questioned God's firmness, thinking his love for his glorious creature would be strong enough to cause him to ignore the penalty of his broken law, there is room to question.

The tempter first suggested the question to his unsuspecting victim – "Hath God indeed said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" "And the woman said, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it; neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye will surely not die; for God doth know that on the day ye eat thereof, [R1024 : page 4] your eyes will be opened and ye will be as God, knowing good and evil."

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and the tree was desirable to make one

wise, she took of its fruit and did eat, and gave to her husband and he did eat."

Now where did the danger of Eve begin? True the argument looked plausible. Satan first stated that, if she should partake of the forbidden fruit, she would not die, and then suggested that God was depriving them of privileges which they ought to be enjoying, treating them ungenerously and as though they were dependent upon him and under his authority. This calumny upon God's goodness, Eve failed to resent, as she should have done. She should have replied at once, that God had been so good to them, and had so abundantly showered his blessings upon them, that it would be base ingratitude to harbor such a thought of him even for an instant, and that she had no reason whatever to doubt his truthfulness; that he never had deceived them and therefore they had no reason to believe he ever would, and that his authority was rightful, since he was their Creator and generous benefactor; that such authority was an evidence of his love exercised over them for their good, his wisdom and knowledge and experience being most necessary for their protection and continuous welfare. And with this repulse she should have utterly refused to hear or heed one whose suggestions were so disloyal.

Had she thus repulsed the very first suggestion of evil, instead of harboring a suspicion for which there was *no cause*, further suggestions would have been warded off. She should have obeyed the impulse of benevolence, promptly refusing to harbor suspicion of evil from a source whence nothing but goodness had flowed. Continued and unchanged manifestations of love and justice and goodness leave no room for reasonable suspicion of evil. And such suspicion whenever and by whomsoever harbored is wrong and leads to evil. There, then, Eve's danger began – in consenting to harbor suspicion as to the truthfulness of God. God's command had been so explicit and positive that there was no mistaking his meaning: They were neither to eat of the tree, nor to touch it. It was most plainly labeled, HANDS OFF. And any suggestion to the contrary should not have been entertained for a

moment. The penalty for violation of this command was to be *death* – a most just penalty; for if, after all God's goodness and favor in giving them existence and every blessing, they would not gladly obey his just and loving authority exercised for their protection and well-being, they were surely unworthy of continued existence. And God wisely and justly deprived them of it, when they had so disobeyed.

Since, the apostle Paul has forewarned the church of an effort of the very same adversary, to beguile the second Eve, the prospective bride of the second Adam, in a very similar manner; and that the temptation would assume its most deceptive and ensnaring form in the last days of the Gospel age, when the church is nearest to the glorious consummation of her hope, it behooves all the consecrated therefore to be on guard, awake and watchful. We need not for a moment be in doubt as to what is the present counterpart of Eve's temptation. It is as Paul suggests (2 Cor. 11:3), a temptation to depart from *the simplicity of the doctrine of Christ*, and to accept the theories of "the enemies of the cross of Christ," whom Satan seduced into his service, who "transform themselves as angels of light" [R1025 : page 4] (2 Cor. 11:14,15), who represent themselves as messengers of truth, wresting the Scriptures and perverting them to establish another gospel, which indeed is not another. – Gal. 1:8.

It has been the constant effort of the TOWER, since its first observance of this special effort of the adversary to undermine the foundation, and then overthrow the faith of the saints, to assist the church in putting on the whole armor of God that they might be able to withstand the sophistry of error, and to thus stand approved of God, firmly established upon the only foundation of the gospel – Redemption through the precious blood of Christ – rooted and grounded in the faith. Indeed, this was the very cause in the interest of which the TOWER was started.

Let the consecrated ones apply the lesson of Eve's temptation and fall, as Paul suggests, that they may not be overcome as she was by the

art and sophistry of the tempter, even though his messengers appear as messengers of light (truth).

Led, like Eve, mainly by curiosity, many have given valuable time and attention to following up these no-ransom theories, until they are lost in a labyrinth of confusion, uncertain as to what they believe on any subject. This is most plainly noticeable in the confusion of those journals which advocate these various theories. Driven by the queries of their correspondents and their endeavor to make their theories appear plausible, and to twist and distort the Scriptures into an appearance of conformity with their theories, they are continually involving themselves deeper and deeper in the labyrinths of error, and shutting and barring themselves in to their false conclusions by pride and self-will. And those who are following them, giving time and attention to their false and foolish imaginings, as they attempt to build upon premises known at the outstart to be false, are step by step drifting away from all truth, when they should be growing in the knowledge of *the* truth, if the same time and effort were spent not in seeing how many ideas can be built upon *no* foundation, but in building wisely and carefully upon the only foundation for faith, "the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a *ransom for all.*"

Many will say, Well, I cannot understand their teaching exactly, but I am not afraid to read anything. I will read and hold on to what is good in their teaching and let the rest go. It cannot hurt me. But they forget that it can and does hurt them. It is with them as with mother Eve; the power of the temptation is in their inexperience. Those *perfect in experience*, as well as perfect in mental powers, can doubtless fully meet and repulse the tempter, no matter by whom represented or how deceptive the arguments, but for all others the sure way and the only way to escape is to say: Get thee behind me Satan, *because* thou savorest not of the things that be of God, but of men.

But how can investigation of anything injure the honest searcher? In the first place, it consumes the time which might otherwise be spent

in gaining a more thorough acquaintance with the real plan of God, in building up themselves and others in *the truth*. And while they are pursuing these false theories, they are losing sight of and forgetting the true plan. And the mind thus filled with false doctrines, and set to work in a vain endeavor to understand them and to see how they can be *made to appear* consistent, even with themselves, cannot at the same time be occupied in meditation upon God's truth. Such therefore must measurably cease to be guided by the spirit of truth into more and more truth, and strengthened and confirmed in the truth already gained; and thus they are constantly losing both the truth and the spirit of it, while imbibing error and the spirit of error. Yes, they have confidence in themselves, that they can discern and will accept only the truth, advanced by false teachers, and reject the error; and this is much of their difficulty – they have too much self-confidence and not enough of the meek, child-like spirit which listens for the Father's voice and trusts his plan and not its own philosophising. Very soon they find themselves befogged and bewildered in the maze of confusion and they have forgotten, "*let slip*" (Heb. 2:1), so much of the truth with which they should be armed, that they seem utterly incapable of reasoning, or of rightly applying the Scriptures on the most simple subjects; so distorted and colored do the plain teachings of the Scriptures become under a false light.

But need we seek for truth in such polluted channels? Does God anywhere tell us that, if we would find the pure waters of truth, we must wallow in every miserable gutter, because there is a little water in it; or that we should try to filter the polluted mass to get the little bit of good Satan permits to remain in it as a bait for the unwary? No, never! You will find a fragment of good in every false system under the sun. But God never gave you the hopeless task of filtering all or any of those muddy streams to find the truth. He sends you to the pure, unmixed fountain of truth – his Word; and though among his consecrated children he has appointed some *apostles*, and some *prophets*, and some *evangelists*; and some *pastors*, and *teachers*, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body

of Christ...that we might be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:11-14) – he would have us test all their teachings by his Word. We must diligently and faithfully prove all things for ourselves, as our attention is called to them by faithful teachers. As heretofore stated in the TOWER, (See March '85 No. – "Theories True and False") the mission of the faithful teacher is to stand as an index finger helping the household of faith to trace for themselves, on the sacred page, the great principles, as well as the minor details, of the divine plan. And no faithful student thus assisted, and guided by the spirit of truth, which is meekness and true holiness – a desire to know the truth that he may obey it and work in harmony with the divine plan – can fail to recognize the truth, and to be convinced of and established in it. And those thus guided to the end are *the elect*, whom it is "*impossible to deceive.*"

Why impossible? Because their spirit of meek obedience and fidelity to God will not permit them to give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines. They *first* look well to the foundation upon which any teachings claiming to be the gospel rest, and if the foundation be any other foundation than that which the Scriptures have laid so broad and deep, viz.: Redemption through the precious blood of Christ (1 Cor. 15:3; Eph. 1:7), they have no further interest in it, except to point it out to others as a snare and trap of the great enemy.

Let all the dear household of faith take heed, lest as the serpent beguiled Eve by his subtilty, so your minds be corrupted from the *simplicity* of the doctrine of Christ. God had plainly said they should not eat of that tree; *neither should they touch it*, lest they die. Therefore those who fall are without excuse. Had they remained obedient to God, they would never have had anything to do with that tree, except to warn their children against partaking of or touching it, and to inform them of the prescribed penalty in case of violation of that command. So the saints should give no heed to those who invite them to build their hope of salvation upon any other than the true foundation,

nor handle their pernicious doctrines in an attempt to build up another plan in opposition to the plan of Jehovah. Those full of the spirit of obedience will refuse to take these steps and will never fall. The Word of God to Eve was clear and explicit, and so now it is to the prospective bride of the second Adam. It clearly tells her that the death of Christ was the "propitiation" [satisfaction] for her sins, that "he died for our sins," "the just for the unjust," and that "by his stripes we are healed," "being justified freely *by his blood:*" that "by him we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins." It repeats this testimony in hundreds of forms, and shows her how it was illustrated for centuries in the thousands of Israel's sacrifices, and bids her beware of false philosophies which would pervert this gospel and lead her into error "as the serpent beguiled Eve," and it points out that the *willful* rejection of the precious blood leads to the second death.

It should be the Christian's rule to give no heed to any theory built upon any other foundation than that laid down in the Scriptures. And that foundation is so simply and clearly laid down therein, and so oft repeated – being mentioned, and emphasized, and referred to, on every page and in every possible instance, from Genesis to Revelation – that none could fail to recognize it, save those led captive under the blinding influence of the great enemy. If any teacher, no matter how good or wise he may *seem* – yea, if an angel from heaven (Gal. 1:8.) should present a theory of salvation ever so plausible, and quote ever so many scriptures to make it appear so, yet built upon any other foundation than that laid down in the Scriptures – "*Redemption* through the precious blood of Christ" – reject it promptly. Resent the insult against your faithful God, and give no heed to the seducing spirit of error, though it come to you as a messenger of light.

Another notable feature of the temptation of Eve which has its counterpart here was her deception as to the penalty in case of her violation of God's command – "Thou shalt surely not die." So *all* these false teachers who deny the ransom, loudly proclaim this same lie – "Thou shalt surely not die." They talk loudly of the love of God, but

have little to say of his justice, and boldly teach that the second death which God has warned all to shun, is the greatest blessing that men could desire.

"Take heed:" let Eve's tampering with the evil one, and harkening to, and heeding his suggestions, and her lack of faith in the Word of God, be a lasting lesson to the church. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Beware of the first encroachments of the enemy.

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"To HIM that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life."  
– Rev. 2:7.

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