

THE MANNER OF MOTHER EVE'S TEMPTATION

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?"

– Genesis 3:1.

THE SCRIPTURAL teaching that God knows no sin, signifies that He practises no sin. He commits no sin, connives at no sin. He is not an assistant to sin. He cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance. He shows no favor, no light of His countenance, no light of His eye, on anything that is sinful. On the contrary, He would turn His back upon these things. He would not have the slightest sympathy with anything sinful.

If, therefore, man were sinful in the largest possible degree, God would have no sympathy with him. The Scriptures present the thought that man is not thus sinful in the highest degree, but that he is sinful on account of weaknesses; that these weaknesses had their start, or beginning, away back in the disobedience of Father Adam; and that Father Adam's death penalty came upon him as the result of his disobedience, as recorded in Genesis. Because man is thus a sinner by nature rather than by will, therefore God has purposed to redeem him from the curse and to give him full reconciliation with Himself by the Restitution to be accomplished by our Lord Jesus under the Messianic Kingdom.

Such as will not conform to the laws and regulations of that Kingdom will be accounted as *wilful* sinners. God will not look upon them with any degree of allowance. He will take from them every right and privilege. They will be destroyed. As it is written, "All the wicked will He [God] destroy," in the Second Death. – Psalms 145:20.

DECEPTION THROUGH MENTAL SUGGESTION

There is intelligent sin. Those who *know* right and *do* wrong are wilful sinners. The great wilful sinner, according to the Scriptures, is Satan. He was a murderer from the beginning, we read, and abode not in the Truth. (John 8:44.) He murdered our race by his deception. He did not tell the truth, but he misrepresented it. He told Mother Eve that she would *not* die, if she ate of the forbidden fruit; and that she would have wisdom and knowledge such as she craved. We are not to understand that Satan did this in a direct way, but through the serpent.

According to the Scriptures, the serpent at that time did not creep, but was next in intelligence to our first parents. Satan used this serpent to counsel Eve to disobey the Creator. Eve should have said, "Who is this that teaches me to disobey the Great Creator who made man?" The temptation came, however, in a very deceptive manner. The serpent spake not by words, but, apparently, by actions. It went continually to the tree of whose fruit Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat, and ate of the fruit.

Mother Eve saw that the serpent ate of the fruit and that it was the wisest of all cattle. Then the thought occurred to her that the reason why the serpent was the wisest of all cattle was because it ate of the tree, the forbidden fruit. Next the thought came that the reason why they were not to eat of the fruit of the tree was that they might be kept from being as intelligent as they might otherwise be. Lastly, the thought was suggested, If you eat of the fruit of that tree, the influence of that fruit upon you will make you as God Himself. You will know everything. So it was this indirect teaching under the obsession of the serpent by Satan that constituted the serious deception which came to Eve. **[R5238 : page 150]**

DEGRADATION OF THE SERPENT NOT AN INJUSTICE

It might be argued that Mother Eve did not sin. She *did* sin. She knew that she had no right to violate the command which she had received. Every one who does wrong knowingly commits sin. We might just as well excuse the man who steals a thousand dollars. He knows at the time that he is stealing a thousand dollars. Whether he is ever caught or not, the wrong has been committed.

In other words, the wrong starts with the heart, with a willingness or intention to do wrong. Such a one is a sinner – a transgressor of the Law. So Mother Eve was a transgressor of the Law, and in that sense she was amenable to the penalty. The serpent was not, however, a moral being, that he should receive a special punishment as a criminal. The criminal was *Satan*, who will one day be destroyed, as will also all those who have his spirit, his disposition.

There was a certain penalty, however, meted out upon the serpent – not for its punishment, for it had done nothing contrary to its nature, but to make the serpent a synonym of Sin, because it was the tool of Sin. The serpent became the symbol of Satan and of Sin. When **[R5239 : page 150]** the children of Israel were disobedient in the wilderness, God permitted them to be bitten by fiery serpents. He instructed Moses to raise up a brazen serpent upon a pole, that whoever looked upon it might live. (Numbers 21:6-9.) Our Lord said that "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:14,15.) Even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness for the healing of the people, so all may be healed by looking to our Lord for the help necessary.

There was no injustice done to the serpent, when God said, "On thy belly shalt thou go." God has made no covenant with any one except His intelligent creatures. So if an ox were degraded to the

condition of a bullfrog, there would be no violation of justice. The serpent and other beasts have life as an unmerited favor from the great Creator. No creature would have the least right to question whatever privileges or blessings would come to him. To simply degrade the beast from one form of life to another form of life was no injustice. It is, however, a lesson in humility, which has been profitable, more or less, all through the six thousand years of man's history, and will be profitable all through Messiah's coming glorious reign of righteousness.

