

TWO GLORIES ON EXHIBITION IN EARTH'S FINAL CRISIS - Part 2

In our last lesson we established ,from the Bible, that unchanging, unconditional, unselfish, self-sacrificing, infinite Agape Love is the very essence of God's Character and Government . This Divine Agape Love is called Light and Life , and in it there is **no** darkness at all.

1John1:5 to 7; 1John4:8; John1: 1 to 4; Matthew4:16; James1: 16,17.

In contrast to God's pure character of eternal Agape Love, Light and Life, Satan exhibits his *sinful* character and government as a mixture or a mingling of good and evil; truth and error, in order to conceal the total depravity of his evil systems and also in order to deceive.

We also saw that this Satanic *mode* of operation was represented by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Throughout the history of the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan , this has been Satan's strategy and it will be on full display or exhibition in the final crisis. In order to better understand Satan's devices in the end of time we need to analyze his strategy in the beginning of the great Controversy on earth.

In the book **Education** chapter 3 the Spirit of Prophecy gives an insightful analysis of Satan's strategy and its representation by the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

“As they refused to have God in their knowledge,” “their senseless heart was darkened.”

Though created innocent and holy, our first parents were not placed beyond the possibility of wrong-doing. God might have created them without the power to transgress His requirements, but in that case there could have been no development of character; their service would not have been voluntary, but forced. Therefore He gave them the power of choice—the power to yield or to withhold obedience. And before they could receive in fullness the blessings He desired to impart, their love and loyalty must be tested. *Ed 23.1*

In the Garden of Eden was the “tree of knowledge of good and evil.... And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat.” Genesis 2:9-17. It was the will of God that Adam and Eve should not know evil. The knowledge of good had been freely given them; but the knowledge of evil,—of sin and its results, of wearing toil, of anxious care, of disappointment and grief, of pain and death,—this was in love withheld. *Ed 23.2*

While God was seeking man's good, Satan was seeking his ruin. When Eve, disregarding the Lord's admonition concerning the forbidden tree, ventured to approach it, she came in contact with her foe. Her interest and curiosity having been awakened, Satan proceeded to deny God's word, and to insinuate distrust of His wisdom and goodness. To the woman's statement concerning the tree of knowledge, "God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die," the tempter made answer, "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:3-5. *Ed 23.3*

Satan desired to make it appear that *this knowledge of good mingled with evil* would be a blessing, and that in forbidding them to take of the fruit of the tree, God was withholding great good. He urged that it was because of its wonderful properties for imparting wisdom and power that God had forbidden them to taste it, that He was thus seeking to prevent them from reaching a nobler development and finding greater happiness. He declared that he himself had eaten of the forbidden fruit, and as a result had acquired the power of speech; and that if they also would eat of it, they would attain to a more exalted sphere of existence and enter a broader field of knowledge. *Ed 24.1*

While Satan claimed to have received great good by eating of the forbidden tree, he did not let it appear that by transgression he had become an outcast from heaven. *Here was falsehood, so concealed under a covering of apparent truth* that Eve, infatuated, flattered, beguiled, did not discern the deception. She coveted what God had forbidden; she distrusted His wisdom. She cast away faith, the key of knowledge. *Ed 24.2*

When Eve saw "that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat." It was grateful to the taste, and, as she ate, she seemed to feel a vivifying power, and imagined herself entering upon a higher state of existence. Having herself transgressed, she became a tempter to her husband, "and he did eat." Genesis 3:6. *Ed 25.1*

"Your eyes shall be opened," the enemy had said; "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:5. Their eyes were indeed opened; but how sad the opening! The knowledge of evil, the curse of sin, was all that the transgressors gained. There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in yielding to appetite. It was distrust of God's goodness, disbelief of His word, and rejection of His authority, that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil. It was this that opened the door to every species of falsehood and error. *Ed 25.2*

Man lost all because he chose to listen to the deceiver rather than to Him who is Truth, who alone has understanding. *By the mingling of evil with good, his mind had become confused, his mental and spiritual powers benumbed. No longer could he appreciate the good that God had so freely bestowed.* *Ed 25.3*

Adam and Eve had chosen the knowledge of evil, and if they ever regained the position they had lost they must regain it under the unfavorable conditions they had brought upon themselves. No longer were they to dwell in Eden, for in its perfection it could not teach them the lessons which it was now essential for them to learn. In unutterable sadness they bade farewell to their beautiful surroundings and went forth to dwell upon the earth, where rested the curse of sin. *Ed 25.4*

To Adam God had said: “Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Genesis 3:17-19. *Ed 26.1*

Although the earth was blighted with the curse, nature was still to be man’s lesson book. It could not now represent goodness only; for evil was everywhere present, marring earth and sea and air with its defiling touch. Where once was written only the character of God, the knowledge of good, was now written also the character of Satan, the knowledge of evil. From nature, which now revealed the knowledge of good and evil, man was continually to receive warning as to the results of sin. *Ed 26.2*

In drooping flower and falling leaf Adam and his companion witnessed the first signs of decay. Vividly was brought to their minds the stern fact that every living thing must die. Even the air, upon which their life depended, bore the seeds of death. *Ed 26.3*

Continually they were reminded also of their lost dominion. Among the lower creatures Adam had stood as king, and so long as he remained loyal to God, all nature acknowledged his rule; but when he transgressed, this dominion was forfeited. The spirit of rebellion, to which he himself had given entrance, extended throughout the animal creation. Thus not only the life of man, but the nature of the beasts, the trees of the forest, the grass of the field, the very air he breathed, all told the sad lesson of the knowledge of evil. *Ed 26.4*

But man was not abandoned to the results of the evil he had chosen. In the sentence pronounced upon Satan was given an intimation of redemption. “I will put enmity between thee and the woman,” God said, “and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Genesis 3:15. This sentence, spoken in the hearing of our first parents, was to them a promise. Before they heard of the thorn and the thistle, of the toil and sorrow that must be their portion, or of the dust to which they must return, they listened to words that could not fail of giving them hope. All that had been lost by yielding to Satan could be regained through Christ. *Ed 27.1*

This intimation also nature repeats to us. Though marred by sin, it speaks not only of creation but of redemption. Though the earth bears testimony to the curse in the evident signs of decay, it is still rich and beautiful in the tokens of life-giving power. The trees cast off their leaves, only to be robed with fresher verdure; the flowers die, to spring forth in new beauty; and in every manifestation of creative power is held out the assurance that we may be created anew in “righteousness and holiness of truth.” Ephesians 4:24, margin. Thus the very objects and operations of nature that bring so vividly to mind our great loss become to us the messengers of hope. *Ed 27.2*

As far as evil extends, the voice of our Father is heard, bidding His children see in its results the nature of sin, warning them to forsake the evil, and inviting them to receive the good. *Ed 27.3*

SUMMARY

The education that consists in the training of the memory, tending to discourage independent thought, has a moral bearing which is too little appreciated. As the student sacrifices the power to reason and judge for himself, he becomes incapable of discriminating between truth and error, and falls an easy prey to deception. He is easily led to follow tradition and custom. *Ed 230.3*

It is a fact widely ignored, though never without danger, *that error rarely appears for what it really is. It is by mingling with or attaching itself to truth that it gains acceptance. The eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil caused the ruin of our first parents, and the acceptance of a mingling of good and evil is the ruin of men and women today.* The mind that depends upon the judgment of others is certain, sooner or later, to be misled. *Ed 230.4*

The power to discriminate between right and wrong we can possess only through individual dependence upon God. Each for himself is to learn from Him through His word. Our reasoning powers were given us for use, and God desires them to be exercised. “Come now, and let us reason together” (Isaiah 1:18), He invites us. In reliance upon Him we may have wisdom to “refuse the evil, and choose the good.” Isaiah 7:15; James 1:5. *Ed 231.1*