

Changing Cleveland One By One

Bishop Stephen D. Lewis

Message Notes

Careless Praise

Holy angels often visited the garden, and gave instruction to Adam and Eve concerning their employment and also taught them concerning the rebellion and fall of Satan. The angels warned them of Satan and cautioned them not to separate from each other in their employment, for they might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. The angels also enjoined upon them to follow closely the directions God had given them, for in perfect obedience only were they safe. Then this fallen foe could have no power over them.

Satan commenced his work with Eve, to cause her to disobey. She first erred in wandering from her husband, next in lingering around the forbidden tree, and next in listening to the voice of the tempter, and even daring to doubt what God had said, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” She thought that perhaps the Lord did not mean just what He said, and venturing, she put forth her hand, took of the fruit and ate. It was pleasing to the eye and pleasant to the taste. Then she was jealous that God had withheld from them what was really for their good, and she offered the fruit to her husband, thereby tempting him. She related to Adam all that the serpent had said and expressed her astonishment that he had the power of speech. {*Early Writings*, Pg. 147}

The angels had cautioned Eve to beware of separating herself from her husband while occupied in their daily labor in the garden; with him she would be in less danger from temptation than if she were alone. But absorbed in her pleasing task, she unconsciously wandered from his side. On perceiving that she was alone, she felt an apprehension of danger, but dismissed her fears, deciding that she had sufficient wisdom and strength to discern evil and to withstand it. Unmindful of the angels’ caution, she soon found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the forbidden tree. The fruit was very beautiful, and she questioned with her-

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self why God had withheld it from them. Now was the tempter's opportunity. As if he were able to discern the workings of her mind, he addressed her: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Eve was surprised and startled as she thus seemed to hear the echo of her thoughts. But the serpent continued, in a musical voice, with subtle praise of her surpassing loveliness; and his words were not displeasing. Instead of fleeing from the spot she lingered wonderingly to hear a serpent speak. Had she been addressed by a being like the angels, her fears would have been excited; but she had no thought that the fascinating serpent could become the medium of the fallen foe. *{Patriarchs and Prophets Pg.53}*

I saw a sadness come over Adam's countenance. He appeared afraid and astonished. A struggle seemed to be going on in his mind. He felt sure that this was the foe against whom they had been warned, and that his wife must die. They must be separated. His love for Eve was strong, and in utter discouragement he resolved to share her fate. He seized the fruit and quickly ate it. Then Satan exulted. He had rebelled in heaven, and had gained sympathizers who loved him and followed him in his rebellion. He had fallen and caused others to fall with him. And he had now tempted the woman to distrust God, to inquire into His wisdom, and to seek to penetrate His all-wise plans. Satan knew that the woman would not fall alone. Adam, through his love for Eve, disobeyed the command of God, and fell with her.

The news of man's fall spread through heaven. Every harp was hushed. The angels cast their crowns from their heads in sorrow. All heaven was in agitation. A council was held to decide what must be done with the guilty pair. The angels feared that they would put forth the hand, and eat of the tree of life, and become immortal sinners. But God said that He would drive the transgressors from the garden. Angels were immediately commissioned to guard the way of the tree of life. It had been Satan's studied plan that Adam and Eve should disobey God, receive His frown, and then partake of the tree of life, that they might live forever in sin and disobedience, and thus sin be immortalized. But holy angels were sent to drive them out

of the garden, and to bar their way to the tree of life. Each of these mighty angels had in his right hand something which had the appearance of a glittering sword. Then Satan triumphed. He had made others suffer by his fall. He had been shut out of heaven, they out of Paradise. *{Early Writings, Pg. 147-149}*

We need to educate and train the mind so that we shall have an intelligent faith, and have an understanding friendship with Jesus. Unless we continually cherish friendship between God and our souls, we shall separate from him, and walk apart from him. We shall make friends of those around us, and place our trust in humanity, and our affections will be diverted from the true object of worship. We must not allow coldness to chill our love for our Redeemer. If we have fellowship with him, we must ever set the Lord before us, and treat him as an honored Friend, giving him the first place in our affections. We should speak of his matchless charms, and constantly cultivate the desire to have a better knowledge of Jesus Christ. Then his Spirit will have a controlling power upon life and character. But how often is the Lord neglected for the society of others, and for things of no value! Jesus says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." "The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." Never let amusements, or the companionship of others, come between you and Jesus, your best friend. Set the Lord always before you. When natural inclination draws you in the direction of fulfilling some selfish desire, set the Lord before you as your counselor, and ask, Will this please Jesus? Will this increase my love for my best Friend? Will this course grieve my dear Saviour? Will it separate me from his company? Will Jesus accompany me to the pleasure party, where all will be lightness and gaiety, where there will be nothing of a religious nature, nothing serious, no thought of the things of God? If Jesus sends me there as a missionary to warn some soul of his danger, then I am sure Jesus will not separate from me; but if I go simply to please myself, I cannot be sure of my Saviour's presence. If I choose to go where Jesus cannot enter, where he cannot make his abode, where the hearts of those present are saying, "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us," I choose another counselor than Jesus. *{The Youth's Instructor, July 19, 1894}*