

Changing Cleveland One By One

Bishop Stephen D. Lewis

The Steps of Satan

Lucifer had another deception ready. The mighty revolter now declared that the angels who had united with him had gone too far to return;

The only course remaining for him and his followers... was force...

So far as Satan himself was concerned, it was true that he had now gone too far to return. But not so with those who had been blinded by his deceptions. To them the counsel and entreaties of the loyal angels opened a door of hope; and had they heeded the warning, they might have broken away from the snare of Satan. But pride, love for their leader, and the desire for unrestricted freedom were permitted to bear sway, and the pleadings of divine love and mercy were finally rejected. *{Patriarch and Prophets p.37-43}*

There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable. *{Christ's Object Lessons p. 15}*

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love--service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. So long as all created beings acknowledged the allegiance of love, there was perfect harmony throughout the universe of God... But a change came over this happy state...

Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation... Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone... Now the perfect harmony of heaven was broken...

Lucifer's disposition to serve himself instead of his Creator aroused a feeling of apprehension when observed by those who considered that the glory of God should be supreme. In heavenly council the angels pleaded with Lucifer. The Son of God presented before him the greatness, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator, and the sacred, unchanging nature of His law. God Himself had established the order of heaven; and in departing from it, Lucifer would dishonor his Maker and bring ruin upon himself. But the warning, given in infinite love and mercy, only aroused a spirit of resistance. Lucifer allowed his jealousy of Christ to prevail, and became the more determined...

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The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings... The angels joyfully acknowledged the supremacy of Christ, and prostrating themselves before Him, poured out their love and adoration. Lucifer bowed with them, but in his heart there was a strange, fierce conflict. Truth, justice, and loyalty were struggling against envy and jealousy... The influence of the holy angels seemed for a time to carry him with them. As songs of praise ascended in melodious strains, swelled by thousands of glad voices, the spirit of evil seemed vanquished; unutterable love thrilled his entire being; his soul went out, in harmony with the sinless worshippers, in love to the Father and the Son. But again he was filled with pride in his own glory. His desire for supremacy returned, and envy of Christ was once more indulged.... "Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He honored above Lucifer?"

(HE COULD HAVE GONE TO THE FATHER AND TALKED ABOUT HIS TRUE FEELINGS. HE COULD TELL GOD KNEW)

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. He worked with mysterious secrecy... Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer's deceptions.

(SATAN) ...artfully instilled into their minds his own distrust and discontent that his agency was not discerned. He cunningly drew his hearers on to give utterance to their feelings; There were some who looked with favor upon Lucifer's insinuations against the government of God. Although they had heretofore been in perfect harmony with the order which God had established... In great mercy, according to His divine character, God bore long with Lucifer.... Lucifer himself had not at first been acquainted with the real nature of his feelings; for a time he had feared to express the workings and imaginings of his mind; yet he did not dismiss them. He did not see whither he was drifting. **But such efforts as infinite love and wisdom only could devise, were made to convince him of his error...** Lucifer was

convinced that he was in the wrong... and that he ought to acknowledge (it) before all heaven.

The time had come for a final decision; he must **fully** yield to the divine sovereignty or place himself in open rebellion.

He **nearly** reached the decision to return, but pride forbade him. It was too great a sacrifice for one who had been so highly honored to confess that he had been in error, that his imaginings were false, and to yield to the authority which he had been working to prove unjust.

A compassionate Creator, in yearning pity for Lucifer and his followers, was seeking to draw them back... But His mercy was misinterpreted. Lucifer pointed to the long-suffering of God as an evidence of his own superiority...

Rejecting with disdain the arguments and entreaties of the loyal angels, he denounced them as deluded slaves. **BRAIN WASHED FANATIC)**...

(SATAN) announced that he would no longer submit to this invasion of his rights and theirs.

Great numbers of the angels signified their purpose to accept him as their leader.... Flattered by the favor with which his advances were received, he hoped to win all the angels to his side, to become equal with God Himself, and to be obeyed by the entire host of heaven.

Still the loyal angels urged him and his sympathizers to submit to God... They warned all to close their ears against Lucifer's deceptive reasoning, and urged him and his followers to seek the presence of God without delay...

Many were disposed to heed this counsel, to repent of their disaffection, and seek to be again received into favor with the Father and His Son. But