

Falling away from the truth - Ellen White

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." ST July 23, 1902, par. 1

Among the inhabitants of heaven, Satan, next to Christ, was at one time most honored of God, and highest in power and glory. Before his fall, Lucifer, "son of the morning," was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled. He stood in the presence of the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glory enshrouding the eternal God rested upon him. ST July 23, 1902, par. 2

Little by little, Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. Because of the exaltation of Christ, the One equal with the Father, he allowed jealousy to arise in his heart. ST July 23, 1902, par. 3

"Why," he questioned, "should Christ have the supremacy? Why is he honored above Lucifer?" ST July 23, 1902, par. 4

Tho all his glory was from God, Lucifer came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, tho honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, he went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. He worked with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God. He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings,—laws that he declared were arbitrary, detrimental to the interests of the heavenly universe, and in need of change. Vital interests were at stake. Would Lucifer succeed in undermining confidence in God's law? Would he make so apparent these supposed defects in the law, that the inhabitants of the heavenly universe would be justified in claiming that the law could be improved? ST July 23, 1902, par. 5

By his rebellion against God's law, Satan brought sin into existence; for "sin is the transgression of the law." ST July 23, 1902, par. 6

God in His wisdom did not use measures of force to suppress Satan's rebellion. Such measures would have aroused sympathy for Satan, strengthening his rebellion rather than lessening his power. If God had at the outset punished his rebellion, many more would have looked upon him as one who had been dealt with unjustly, and would have followed his example. It was necessary for him to have time and opportunity to develop his false principles. There was war in heaven, and the Prince of life overcame the apostate. Satan was cast out of heaven, with the angels who had united with him. ST July 23, 1902, par. 7

In the beginning God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of the divine government, and there can be no government without law. The tree of knowledge, which stood near the tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden, was to be a test of the obedience, faith and love of our first parents. While permitted to eat freely of every other tree, they were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. They were also to be exposed to the temptations of Satan; but if they endured the trial, they would finally be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favor with God. ST July 23, 1902, par. 8

On this earth Satan sought to carry forward the work that he began in heaven. He declared that man could not obey the law of God. Approaching our first parents while they were on trial in the garden of Eden, he succeeded by falsehood and misrepresentation in turning them from allegiance to God's law. Through their failure to resist temptation, they were brought under Satan's jurisdiction. Thus the enemy gained supremacy over the human race. ST July 23, 1902, par. 9

When man rebelled, all heaven was filled with sorrow. The penalty of disobedience to God's law is death. There appeared to be no escape for those who had transgressed the law. The law could not be changed in order to meet man in his fallen condition. But God's love for humanity can never be measured. Instead of condemning the human race to eternal death, He gave His only begotten Son for their redemption. ST July 23, 1902, par. 10

The Son of God, heaven's glorious Commander, was touched with pity for the fallen race. He entered into a covenant with God to save man, and to vindicate His Father's character as expressed in the law. He came to the earth in the form of man to refute Satan's lie, that God had given a law which man could not keep. He came to give Himself as a sacrifice for sin, thus revealing to the heavenly universe that the law is as changeless and eternal as is Jehovah Himself. ST July 23, 1902, par. 11

God is omnipotent, omniscient, immutable. He always pursues a straightforward course. His law is truth—immutable, eternal truth. His precepts are consistent with His attributes. But Satan makes them appear in a false light. By perverting them, he seeks to give human beings an unfavorable impression of the Law-giver. Throughout his rebellion he has sought to represent God as an unjust, tyrannical being. ST July 23, 1902, par. 12

In the beginning it was Satan's purpose to separate man from God. And this purpose he has carried out in every age. Constantly he is at work among the children of men. He sways all classes. The same method of deception, the same logic, that he used to deceive the holy pair in Eden, he has used in all succeeding ages. His plan of work has ever been one of deception. At times he assumes a cloak of piety, purity, and holiness. Often he transforms himself into an angel of light. He has blinded the eyes of men so that they can not see beneath the surface and discern his real purpose. As a result of Adam's disobedience, every human being is a transgressor of the law, sold under sin. Unless he repents and is converted, he is under bondage to the law, serving Satan, falling into the deceptions of the enemy, and bearing witness against the precepts of Jehovah. But by perfect obedience to the requirements of the law, man is justified. Only through faith in Christ is such obedience possible. Men may comprehend the spirituality of the law, they may realize its power as a detector of sin, but they are helpless to withstand Satan's power and deceptions, unless they accept the atonement provided for them in the remedial sacrifice of Christ, who is our Atonement—our At-one-ment—with God. ST July 23, 1902, par. 13

Those who believe on Christ and obey His commandments are not under bondage to God's law; for to those who believe and obey, His law is not a law of bondage, but of liberty. Every one who believes on Christ, every one who relies on the keeping power of a risen Saviour that has suffered the penalty pronounced upon the transgressor, every one who resists temptation and in the midst of evil copies the pattern given in the Christ-life, will through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ become a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Every one who by faith obeys God's commandments, will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression. ST July 23, 1902, par. 14

Christ took upon Himself the nature of man, and by a perfect life demonstrated the falsity of the claims of him who constantly accuses those that are trying to obey God's law. And the blood of Christ shed on the cross is the everlasting, uncontrovertible testimony that God's law is as immutable as is His own character. In the day of judgment, when the death upon the cross is seen in all its meaning, every voice will be hushed. Every one will see that Satan is a rebel, and will acknowledge God's wisdom, justice, and goodness; with one accord declaring, "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." ST July 23, 1902, par. 15