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Fruits of the Fall

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Abstract: This article discusses the conditions in the premortal life including a description of the war in heaven, an account of the Fall, and what has been gained from it.

FRUITS OF THE FALL.

BY J. PRESTON CREER, OF SPANISH FORK, UTAH.

[The four Mutual Improvement associations of Spanish Fork, Utah county, held an annual oratorical contest, on September 24, 1902, at which the prize, a silver cup, was awarded to Elder J. Preston Creer, for this oration, for a copy of which the ERA is indebted to Elder Heber C. Jex.—*Editors.*]

The fact that man enjoyed the immediate association of his Heavenly Father, long before he was privileged to claim the earth as his home, has long been known and promulgated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is true, our information on this point is not so extensive as on other points of doctrine, nevertheless, we have sufficient evidence to justify us in accepting this glorious truth.

The Pearl of Great Price informs us that previous to mortality, we lived and communed with Jehovah. We are further told that we had reached the highest degree of perfection enjoyed in the spiritual state, consequently, according to the law of eternal progress, it was necessary that a more advanced estate be granted us, that in our righteous ambition we might become more perfect—like unto our Father in heaven.

Our association with God in the spirit world was, no doubt, most delightful as well as most desirable. We were his sons and daughters, living under his divine care, and enjoying the full fruition of his holy influence. Surrounded as we were with all this celestial glory, yet within our beings there was a constant yearning for something more advanced. The inspiration we imbibed from Jehovah forced us on to eternal perfection.

God desired that we should become like unto him—fathers as well as sons; kings as well as subjects; creators as well as things

created. This righteous desire enjoyed alike by man and by his creator, could be materialized only by coming to earth and taking upon ourselves bodies wherein our spirits might gain experience. We were to emerge from beneath divine protection, and be thrown into the midst of sin and degradation. We were to become acquainted with grief, and to be known as men of pain, and sorrow. Yet the knowledge that we should some day be redeemed and exalted in the presence of our Maker, banished our fears, filled our souls with hope, and afforded us such gladness, that in our delight, we sang and shouted for joy. .

Wonderment now fills our minds, and the questions intuitively arise: Who is the author of this plan, whereby we are to be granted the benign privilege of coming to earth and acquiring such experience? Where was this scheme, for the eternal exaltation of man, devised? Where were we when it was ratified? What part, if any, did we take in its adoption?

In the *Book of Abraham* are found answers to each of these questions. Before the elements of this planet had the opportunity of yielding obedience to the wondrous voice of God; before the foundation of the earth was laid, the Gods met in council and there laid out the plan by which we might progress eternally. Nor was this accomplished without great division and disputation.

At this council, two plans were submitted: one by Lucifer, the Son of the Morning; the other, by Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Satan, in the language of Jehovah, came before his Father and said: "Behold here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that not one soul shall be lost, and surely I will do it, wherefore give me thine honor."

Conversely to this plan, Jesus presented himself before his Father, and offered himself as a Redeemer, saying: "I will go down and save all those who obey thee, and unto thee will I give the glory and honor forever." The latter scheme of salvation, being in harmony with the mind and will of God, who gave man his free agency, was accepted by the celestial council.

Indignant at the decision rendered, Satan immediately arrayed himself against his brethren. The great battle for the supremacy of God's will and the free agency of man, was now to take place in heaven. The consequences of this conflict were to affect man as

well as his creator; consequently, to the multitudes of the spirit world, Lucifer submitted his plea. Zealously, he labored with all the powers of his soul; arguing, persuading, influencing whosoever desired to be serfs, rather than men endowed with the inalienable right of absolute freedom to choose between good and evil. With his mighty eloquence and great personality, he succeeded in drawing into his mesh of misery and woe one-third of the hosts of heaven.

Being greater in influence, mightier in spirit, nobler in character, and upholding principles of unparalleled beneficence, Christ, in his dignity, vanquished Satan, subjugated his devotees, and forever established the authority of God and the prerogative of man. So great was our joy upon this occasion that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Sorrow and misery unspeakable—the common lot of those who endeavor to frustrate the righteous desires of Jehovah—were now visited upon the heads of Lucifer and his votaries. Heaven would claim them no longer. The presence of God they could not endure, and the plan of salvation they would not receive. Therefore, banished from heaven, cut off from the presence of Jehovah, and thrown without the pale of salvation, they fell to earth again to war against the righteousness of Omnipotence. John the Revelator has made use of these words illustrating the fall: Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe unto the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea; for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath because his time is short.

The earth having been created with all its grandeur and beauty, the night having been separated from the day, and all things prepared for the advent of man, Jehovah came down and performed the crowning act of the great work of creation. Man was formed in the image of his Father in heaven. Eastward in Eden was prepared a garden for his reception. Truly, the home of our first parents was most beautiful and desirable. Fresh from the hand of God, it stood embellished in all the magnificence of celestial art. A spot choice above all other spots, and calculated to furnish its occupants with all the enchantment that would tend to make the soul happy and contented.

How long Adam talked to the laughing brooks and singing

birds, scripture fails to inform us; but finally God saw that it was not good for man to be alone; so, according to his benign providence, he formed woman to be a helpmate unto man. Adam, beholding the handiwork of his Creator, received unto himself Eve, his wife, and they in their majesty ruled the earth.

They listened to the commands of God, the first being, "Multiply and replenish the earth." The second, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die; nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee, but remember, I forbid it." With these divine injunctions ever fresh in their minds, Adam and Eve wandered in the garden of Eden.

The hour of temptation soon came. Lucifer, who had so lately been consigned to the regions of anguish and woe, again waged war against the righteousness of Jehovah. Cunningly, he laid his plans to foil the purposes of the Almighty, and wittingly did he, with specious argument, deceive the weaker of Eden's occupants. To Eve he made his appearance, and, in phrases most pleasing, persuaded her to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, saying: "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." Seeing that the tree was beautiful, and the words of Satan delightful, the woman plucked and ate of the forbidden fruit whose mortal taste brought death with all its woes into the world. Adam learning of what had been done, and remembering the two commandments of God, studied well his peculiar position. Being honest and faithful, he desired to obey the will of his Father, but under existing circumstances, this was impossible. Eve, having disobeyed God, became mortal, and could no longer enjoy the pleasurable companionship of her husband. This Adam knew, and undoubtedly he argued: how can the first and great commandment be fulfilled unless I break the second? So with a knowledge of the attendant consequences, he chose to follow his wife, and eat. Of this disobedience Paul says, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

Previous to the breaking of this commandment, Adam and Eve had lived in innocent immortality, but now they had fallen, bring-

ing upon themselves and their posterity the trials incident to this life; and, in the end, the pangs of death.

By many, it has been thought that the fall of our first parents was a great calamity—an unpurposed event. Yes, they have denied the Father of humanity the right to stand as chief Patriarch of the race, and in their ignorance they have most bitterly denounced him who, in his wisdom, disobeyed God that the spirits of heaven might come to earth and acquire such experience as would eternally exalt them in the presence of their Father. Adam partook of the forbidden fruit that man might be, and thus bequeathed to his progeny the glorious privilege of gaining exaltation and eternal life on the battle field of mortality.

The fall opened the eyes of our first parents, and they now discerned between good and evil. For the first time, they beheld their own nakedness, and made garments of the leaves of the trees of Eden. Soon the voice of Jehovah was heard, and in reply the feeble words of Adam, "Here I am," broke upon the ear of his Creator. Calmly, the Father spoke unto the woman saying: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee"; while unto the man he 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."

In order that Adam and Eve might not partake of the fruit of the tree of life and live forever, being as gods, knowing good and evil, they were expelled from the garden, and Cherubim with a flaming sword was stationed to guard the gate.

What a radical change our first parents must have been constrained to endure. One day living in paradise, surrounded with all the grandeur that divine art could display, feeling no pain, sorrow, nor regret, ignorant of the frailties of mortality, and rocked in the cradle of universal peace; the next, living amidst the hills and dales of mother earth; sheltered by the blue canopy of

heaven; encircled by dreary plains and barren bluffs; tasting of the pangs incident to this probation, and sensing most keenly the follies of the flesh. Fear now invaded the field of hope, while anxiety strolled the path of contentment. And all this was done not to satisfy the exigencies of chance, but to fulfill the purposes of a most benign Father, that in his glory, he might be sustained and upheld by the undying loyalty of an exalted, glorified, and immortalized family.

GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE.

King David, speaking of "time," says: "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday;" and Job asks the question: "Are thy years as man's days?" The compliment of this idea as applied to space is not found in so many words, but the Bible and the Book of Mormon teach that the same idea holds good. The infidel, the atheist and the skeptic laugh at the proposition that God is in more places than one at the same instant of time, and the average Christian is content to accept it as one of the miraculous powers of the Godhead without taking the trouble to investigate the why and the wherefore, or prove it as a fact. Do not the recent discoveries of Marconi and others along the same line provide a key to the mystery? If Marconi could at the beginning of the year eliminate a space of one hundred and ten miles between the steamships *Etruria* and *Umbria*, and at the close of the year a space of two thousand two hundred miles across the Atlantic, what possibilities open up to the mind of man? Today, pictures are transmitted from one end of a cable and reproduced at the other. Soon, no cable will be required. We will talk across continents, oceans, and possibly to other planets, and see each other as if no space existed. I submit that this power is now, and has been throughout the past eternities, with God, and in a modified form with those who have put off mortality. Space is eliminated, and God sees us eye to eye, although his corporeal body is enthroned in his courts on high. It is no miracle, it is a law of the kingdom, but heretofore hidden from mortal man. There are many things our finite minds cannot understand. Let us not be impatient, but await God's own good time, when we shall know even also as we are known.—*Dr. Frederic Clift, Lehi, Utah.*