

## Genesis Three

1. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3. But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5. 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.

6. And when the woman 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, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

## Romans Eight

18. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope,

21. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23. And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

## ***The Two Trees In the Midst of the Garden***

“Eat of that tree and you will die,” warned God.

“Eat of that tree and you will not die,” answered the serpent.

What will Eve do? Up to this moment her every need had been met; her every desire had been granted.

God had planted a beautiful garden and had watered it in abundance. In it He had planted *“every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.”* (Gen. 2:9). Low branching trees and large bushy trees; little shrubby trees and great sentinels of the forest. There were choice fruit trees and spreading shade trees. Trees with ripe luscious fruit. It was a scene of peace and beauty.

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### ***The Two Trees***

God had planted *“the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”* (Gen. 2:9). Eat of the tree of life and live; eat of the tree of knowledge and die.

But had not the serpent said that she would not die? Had he not even said that it was a tree to be desired to make her wise? Was God indeed withholding some good thing?

Eat of the tree and die. Eat of the tree and not die. Certainly, both could not be true. Either God or the serpent was the source of truth and the other the father of lies. If she refused to eat and thus receive God's testimony, she would set to her "*seal that God is true*" (John 3:33). If she believed not God, she would make Him a liar. What should she do?

She did eat and "*gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*" Immediately something died within. The sunshine of God's smile faded away and death took its place—spiritual death, and with it the seeds of sickness, disease, and finally death for their mortal bodies.

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### ***A Merciful Act***

What are they going to do? Run to the Tree of Life, pluck its fruit and live forever. Nay, but God steps in, and here is recorded one of God's most merciful acts. God drove them out and "*He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims and a*

*flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of Life.” (Gen. 3:24).*

Imagine if we can the fearful issues of life in a deathless mortal body. Imagine if we can the fearful ravages of cancer with all its fearful sufferings and no relief in death. God drove them out and blocked the way to the tree of life until that glad day when He that overcometh shall “*eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*” (Rev. 2:7).

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### ***Contrasting the Trees***

If eating of the forbidden fruit has brought such dire results to the human race; if the eating of that fruit has so tremendously influenced my own life, is it not only natural that I ask what would have been the result had Eve first eaten of the tree of life?

Our answer is short and simple. Nobody knows but God. However, might we not take a look at the tree of Death and by way of contrast catch a glimpse of the fruit of the tree of Life? Can we not add up some of the suffering of God's creation about us, and contrast them with the joys that are laid up for God's children ahead of us? Can we not

thus open a spring of joy within our heart that will flow out in everlasting praise to Him who has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood?

Paul does this very thing. He figures up the sufferings of this present time, a fearful figure. Then turning his face toward the future and catching a glimpse of the glory ahead, he turns with a wave of finality and cries: *“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”* (Rom. 8:18).

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### ***Creation Groans***

“Not worthy to be compared.” What words are these? Are not the sufferings of this present moment mountain high? Were they not the same yesterday and the day before? Yea, and for thousands of years the fearful pangs and pains of creation have piled up until it staggers the human mind. And all of this from the tree of Death. Yet add it all up and they are not worthy to be compared with the glory attending the tree of Life.

*“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,”*

(Rom. 8:19) with an earnest expectation, “*waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God*” (v.19). Even creation about us is suffering, patiently waiting for the time when the redeemed of mankind shall reach forth their hand and pluck fruit from the tree of Life. At that time creation “*shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*” (Rom. 8:21), and even “*the wolf shall dwell with the lamb... and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*” (Isa. 11:6,7).

The whole creation groans. Even the wind groans out a mournful tone as it hurries around the corner of our house; the cow lows in the minor key, while just beneath our feet there lies a struggle so great and a cry so long as to be unfathomed by human mind.

The whole creation groans. I am constantly alert to catch the spiritual truths set forth by our natural surroundings.

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### ***The Wasp and the Worm***

Recently I watched a wasp tugging with all its might at a green worm much beyond its own weight, and I knew the fate of that worm as it

groaned and travailed in silent pain. There is a tiny microscopic nerve center on the worm. The wasp is enabled to find that center with unerring accuracy, thrust in her sting and leave a tiny bit of poison. The worm does not die but lies paralyzed and perfectly helpless. The wasp has only to work her victim to her nest, lay a tiny egg, pack in the worm head up, and go out to die.

The little egg is hatched. The tiny creature moves about in search of its first small breakfast. And there it is. It eats and eats and eats again, and still the helpless worm lives on until some vital point is reached and death puts an end to its miserable existence.

### ***The Spider and the Fly***

“Will you walk into my parlor?”  
Said the spider to the fly.  
“It's the prettiest little parlor  
That ever you did spy.”

Not long ago as I stepped out upon my front porch, I noted a silken spider web, and busily engaged at its construction was the architect, a most fearful creature to look upon. The web seemed to be constructed in the path of the flies as they came out of a leafy vine just below. Over



and over again an unwary fly was entangled in those flimsy meshes. The loud “buzz” was telegraphed to the ugly owner and instantly all work was stopped. If the spider is not sure just where to catch is held, he will run to the center of his “wheel” and put a foot on different “spokes” until he feels the vibration that locates the intruder. Out he dashes and secures his prey.

My flesh almost creeps as I imagine the fearful fate of that poor fly. I imagine myself caught and helpless, great ugly creature, many times my size, bearing down upon me. Great, glaring eyes; horrible, fuzzy body; long, hairy legs; and terrible jaws reeking with poison. Sometimes instant death is meted out upon the victim and sometimes he is carefully wrapped in a nice silken shroud and carried away for a “rainy day.”

### ***The Snake and the Frog***

I was one day in a thick woods in Michigan. Hearing a peculiar croaking cry of fear and distress, I looked about and there was a frog with one leg already in the serpent's mouth. I watched as the poor creature was drawn in between those powerful jaws. Croaking and crying in terror and fearful distress, the frog put forth every effort to free himself, but, alas, its fate was sealed and

slowly but surely it was passing down that cruel throat to a terrible living death.

My heart went out in deep sympathy for the frog, and I debated in my mind whether to fly to its rescue or let the writhing reptile have its prey. Yet that fearful scene is repeated ten thousand times ten thousand, as the whole creation groans and travails in pain, anxiously awaiting the time when God's redeemed ones will reach forth the hand and pluck fruit from the tree of Life.

### ***The Chicken and the Hawk***

In my younger days I was a farmer in Indiana. One spring day I was plowing in a field between the house and the woods. A shadow flitted across the poultry yard. A mighty swoop and a little chick was held fast in the grasp of those cruel talons.

How my heart beat within me for just one good chance at that hawk as it flew past me with my little chick, writhing in agony and crying for pain, yet held within the relentless grasp of those claws.

Well did I know that soon those little wings and legs would be torn from the tender little body and devoured, while the miserable little creature groaned in pain, waiting for death to add its little form to the countless millions that had gone

before.

### ***The Worm and the Ants***

A few weeks ago, while walking in an open field here in Pennsylvania, I happened upon a scene so common in the realm below our feet. The ants had sighted a nice, fat caterpillar and had proceeded to call a feast. However, the poor worm was objecting with all its might. One ant had hastened itself upon the victim's nose, while others were jabbing their cruel pincers into the tender flesh along the creature's body.

The worm was throwing the fore part of its body from side to side with all the force that fear and pain could generate. Oh, for a moment's rest! But there was no rest.

Exhausted it lay, only to again break forth in violent objections to the instant demands of its tormentors. Only a few more strokes and the victim would add one more to the countless billions of teeming life that groans and travails in every leafy forest and on every plot of ground on this old earth.

### ***The Toad and the Bugs***

After preaching in a church in Ohio, I went

home with one of the congregation for dinner. In the afternoon we noticed a toad sitting on the cellar steps, and with speed our eyes could not follow, the tongue was snapping in the little bugs that crawled about so unconscious of the terrible death that awaited them. What terror lay before them as they slid alive down the throat of that dread reptile, there to be packed together with scores of their fellow bugs, all squirming about in awful darkness, and being squeezed and smothered till death itself would bring relief.

### ***The Crabs***

I was holding meetings in Long Beach, California. Walking along the shore one day, I came to a place where great rocks were piled high along the water's edge. Peering over the edge, I noticed that the rocks farther down were teeming with crabs about one or two inches across.

I crawled down, determined to catch one of the dangerous little creatures that flitted everywhere about. Soon I heard a peculiar gasping, choking cry of pain, and I looked in that direction. A larger crab had grabbed a smaller one; the pincers of the larger crab held the smaller one tightly across his little body, while the numerous little legs and two little pincers were flailing wildly

about for self-defense.

The larger crab held the little fellow in one pincer and, taking the other like a pair of scissors, he clipped off the little creature's legs close to the body and carried him away at leisure.

Certainly, Paul was right. The whole creation groans and travails in pain until this day.

But it is all "*in hope*" (Rom. 8:20) of that blessed day of "*manifestation of the sons of God;*" (v. 19) that great day when our Lord shall appear and we shall "*also appear with him in glory.*" (Col. 3:4).

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### ***The Hateful Heart***

And so it goes, as this terrestrial ball on which we live spins round its long orb year after year, loaded with precious freight and teeming with life so susceptible to pain and death.

But "*cursed is the ground for thy sake*" (Gen. 3:17) Not for itself does creation groan. It was man who ate of the tree of Death. It is for man's sake that creation groans. It was man who won the knowledge of good and evil. And it is man who lacks the power to do the good and shun the evil.

He may boast of his love so good and kind; he

may vaunt his benevolence and hide his shame; he may pass resolutions and call for peace conferences; he may turn over a new leaf and pass legislation, but beneath that breast there beats a heart that simmers and smolders with hate for his fellow men.

He may talk and even long for peace, but cannons are booming and shells are bursting; airplanes are flying and bombs are dropping; rifles are cracking and machine guns are rattling. Armies are marching and tanks are lumbering; men are dying and women are suffering; widows are moaning and orphans are crying.

The sufferings of humanity at this present moment staggers the human mind. And so it was yesterday, and the day before, and so it was last year, and the year before.

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### ***Suffering Humanity***

Not only is man's heart filled with hate, but his blood runs thick with disease and death. He may know the good, but fall a victim to the evil; he may boast of his medical science, but fall beneath its helpless crutch. Medical science may graduate its thousands every year, but still the fruit of that

dread tree stalks throughout the land and haunts the helpless mind.

There are homes for the orphans and houses for the aged; there are infirmaries for the weak and asylums for the insane; there are institutions for the blind and sanitariums for the tubercular; there are colonies for the lepers and hospitals for the sick; there caskets for the dead and graves for the caskets. The rich must help the poor; the strong must support the weak; the well must care for the sick. The living are taxed to the limit to care for the weak, the dead, and the dying. Everywhere is misery and woe; suffering and sorrow, pain and death.

And not only does humanity in general groan in pain and death, but even God's own dear children; even we who have the *“first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”* (Rom. 8:23)

And so it goes, on and on and on. Creation groaning in pain and earnestly looking forward to the manifestation of the children of God. Even God's own redeemed ones are groaning and waiting for that time when with a new and incorruptible body, they will walk those golden streets.

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### ***What Is It All About?***

But what is it all about? Why did God plant the tree of Death? Why did He permit its fruit to bring such sorrow to the human race? Why does He permit His own to suffer? Our answer is plain and simple. *“Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”* (II Cor. 4:17)

Ah! That is our answer. Only those who have eaten the bitter can enjoy the sweet; only those who have thirsted can appreciate the cooling drink; only those who have hungered can truly thank God for food. Only the weary know true rest; only the sick appreciate health; only the troubled can fully drink from the fountain of peace. There will be a note in the song of the redeemed that is lacking from the angelic praise; there will be a joy in their heart that is lacking from the seraphim's song. A gratitude will burn in their soul, and a love will shine from their eyes that will gladden the heart of their God and bring joy to the Lord who redeemed them.

But when I sing redemption's story  
They will fold their wings.



For angels never felt the joy  
That my salvation brings.

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### ***Counting the Cost***

When a man intends to build a tower, he sits down first and counts the cost. (Luke 14:28) Is the glory that is to be revealed in us worthy of all the sufferings of this present time? Will the fruit of the tree of Life recompense fully for the tree of Death?

God, through His unerring foreknowledge, looks down through the ages and answers, "Yes." The Son, beholding the happy end of things, answers back, "*Lo, I come to do thy will.*" (Heb. 10:9), and with His eyes on the "*joy that was set before Him*" (Heb. 12:2), He does not even count His place in the Godhead a thing to be grasped at (Phil. 2:6), but willingly became a man and endured the cross and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, having received a name that is above every name.

So, with our faith in God, we can face the sufferings of this world, knowing that He who worketh all things after the council of His own will, will make the sufferings of this present time not

worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. And not only so, but we can even glory in tribulation also, knowing that if we suffer with Him, we will also be glorified together.