

## Introduction: The Fall

The Fall of Mankind is considered one of the pillars of eternity according to Elder Bruce R. McConkie. The doctrine is supremely important. Any missionary who has tried to explain the importance of the Savior's mission has encountered the investigator who doesn't get it because they don't comprehend their need for a Savior. Without the Fall, the atonement is meaningless. What good is it to "be saved" if you have no idea what you are saved from? What meaning can we ascribe to the atonement without how we have been separated from God? What good is eternal life without an understanding of eternal death?

Without the Fall of Man, there is no Condescension of God;  
Without the Condescension of God, there is no Ascension of Man.

On the other hand, those who comprehend the Fall are those who know what the Master has done for them. They are those who will bend the knee and kiss his feet. They are those who worship, for they know *who* they worship, and they know *why* they worship.

### **Bruce R. McConkie**

The three greatest events that ever have occurred or ever will occur in all eternity are these:

1. The creation of the heavens and the earth, of man, and of all forms of life;
2. The fall of man, of all forms of life, and of the earth itself from their primeval and paradisiacal state to their present mortal state; and
3. The infinite and eternal atonement, which ransoms man, all living things, and the earth also from their fallen state so that the salvation of the earth and of all living things may be completed.

These three divine events-the three pillars of eternity-are inseparably woven together into one grand tapestry known as the eternal plan of salvation. We view the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ as the center and core and heart of revealed religion...

But had there been no fall, there could have been no atonement. The fall of Adam brought temporal and spiritual death into the world, and it is from these deaths that man and all forms of life are ransomed through the atonement

wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ. Adam brought mortality; Christ brought immortality. (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 81.)

### **Wilford Woodruff**

The world, more or less, has found a great deal of fault with Mother Eve and with Father Adam, because of the fall of man; what I have to say with regard to it, I express as my own opinion. Adam and Eve came to this world to perform exactly the part that they acted in the Garden of Eden; and I will say, they were ordained of God to do what they did, and it was therefore expected that they would eat of the forbidden fruit in order that man might know both good and evil by passing through this school of experience which this life affords us. That is all I want to say about Father Adam and Mother Eve. Adam fell that man might be, and men are that they might have joy; and some have found fault with that. (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, edited by G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 233.)

### **Harold B. Lee**

Now, finally, we read again the Lord's great pronouncement, the revelation that came by the power of the Holy Ghost to Eve—one of the greatest sermons. (I suppose the shortest sermon ever preached by a person was preached by Mother Eve.) Mother Eve declared that the power of the Holy Ghost opened her eyes and gave her understanding. She said: "Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient" (Moses 5:11).

So should we, with Eve, rejoice in the Fall, which permitted the coming of the knowledge of good and evil, which permitted the coming of children into mortality, which permitted the receiving of joy of redemption and the eternal life which God gives to all. And so Adam likewise, blessed with the gift of the Holy Ghost, "blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God" ("#moses 5:10Moses 5:10).

May the Lord give us His understanding of the great boon that has thus come to us. And let us honor in our minds and in our teachings the great legacy which Adam and Eve gave to us when, through their experience, by the exercise of their own agency, they partook of fruit which gave them the seeds of mortal life and gave to us, their descendants down through the generations

of time, that great boon by which we too can receive the joy of our redemption, and in our flesh see God, and have eternal life. (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 35.)

### **Gen 3:1 the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field**

A hiker looks down and finds a rattlesnake slithering between his legs. He heard neither rattle nor warning, danger lurks beneath without sound or alarm. A camper knows that a snake can find its way into his shoe or sleeping bag. Of all God's creations, they are known to be quiet and sly, cunning and crafty, dangerous and beguiling. These are the characteristics of the evil one.

### **Neal A. Maxwell**

The serpent is a symbol of Satan because the serpent is "more subtle." (Moses 4:5.) He is a liar and a deceiver, and deceit implies clever use of half truths in order to serve his purposes. (*Deposition of a Disciple* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], 87.)

### **Gen 3:1-3 he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?**

"The report of Satan's temptation of Eve contains that which may be designated as his formula for transgression. In applying his cleverly devised formula, he first played upon Eve's sense of freedom, implying in his initial question that she was unduly restricted in her actions by the commandment of God. "Yea, hath God said-Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" he inquired. His insinuating question aroused within her a false sense of independence. Of course she could partake of the fruit of the tree if she so desired. Was she not free? Could she not do as she pleased in the matter?

"At first Eve sought to suppress this false sense of independence, and she replied, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which thou beholdest in the midst of the garden, God hath said-Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' Observe that the tempting fruit was placed in the midst of the garden, not in some secluded corner. It was not God's plan to exclude the forbidden fruit from man's view. The plan of life requires that man meet temptation and overcome it, though he should avoid even the very appearance of evil.

"Satan's retort implied that God was holding something back from Adam and Eve; that God possessed something He had not given them, nor informed them about; and it was something to be desired. Eve then began to look with desire upon the forbidden fruit." (Hyrum L. Andrus, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1967], 187.)

### **Gen 3:4 ye shall not surely die**

"You won't die," is Satan's lie. He is right, of course, but he is also lying. He knows that Adam and Eve are worried about the death of the body. He knows they have been told that in the day that they eat thereof, they "shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:17) But Adam and Eve expect an immediate physical death. He knows that the Lord means to give them time, a probationary period, an experience of mortality lasting many years. He knows that God's warning of death is according to the Lord's time and not man's. Satan was right to suggest that Adam and Eve won't die immediately. Physically speaking they didn't.

The story with spiritual death is entirely different. Spiritually speaking, the consequence of the Fall was immediate. Adam and Eve were immediately cast out of the garden and cut off from the presence of God. They would die as to the things of the Spirit. Their spiritual death would require a spiritual rebirth. They would need to be born again as sons and daughters of Christ. "How craftily Satan laid his snare! Contrary to what Satan told Eve, spiritual death would be the immediate result of the Fall, and physical death would ensue." (Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, eds., *The Man Adam* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990], 101.)

### **George Q. Cannon**

The devil in tempting Eve told a truth when he said unto her that when she should eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil they should become as Gods. He told the truth in telling that, but he accompanied it with a lie as he always does. He never tells the complete truth. He said that they should not die. The Father had said that they should die. The devil had to tell a lie in order to accomplish his purposes; but there was some truth in his statement. (*Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, selected, arranged, and edited by Jerreld L. Newquist [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987], 14.)

### **Gen 3:5 ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil**

Whenever Satan presents a temptation, he does it in partial truths, half-truths, or twisted truths. He paints a pretty picture, but he never paints the whole picture. With Eve's temptation, that could never be more accurate. Eve is faced with the temptation to eat of the forbidden fruit when Satan tells one of his evil half-truths; she is told that she will become as the "gods, knowing good and evil." This, of course, is true (see v. 22).

However, it is one of the most glaring partial truths in all of scriptural history. There is much, much more to the story than gaining knowledge and Satan knew it. What would Eve had been told if she were given the whole story?

### **1. Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil**

This statement is repeated for completeness sake. Before the Fall, Adam and Eve were in "a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin" (2 Ne. 2:23). Knowledge meant personal experience living with "opposition in all things," light and darkness, health and sickness, sweet and bitter, pleasure and pain (2 Ne. 2:11).

#### **George Q. Cannon**

Their eyes were opened. They had a knowledge of good and evil just as the Gods have. They became as Gods; for that is one of the features, one of the peculiar attributes of those who attain unto that glory—they understand the difference between good and evil. (*Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, selected, arranged, and edited by Jerreld L. Newquist [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987], 14.)

### **2. Ye shall be as gods, with agency to act according to your will and pleasure**

In the garden, Adam and Eve had only two commandments. After the Fall, there would be more commandments, more temptations, more decisions, more trials, more opportunities for success, more opportunities for failure. One of the greatest gifts of God to man is the gift of agency, "placing themselves in a state to act, or being placed in a state to act according to their wills and pleasures, whether to do evil or to do good" (Alma 12:31) The gods have this privilege. (See Dan. 4:35; 1 Kgs. 18:27)

Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh... they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose

captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil. (2 Ne. 2:27)

Behold, I gave unto [Adam] that he should be an agent unto himself... And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet. (D&C 29:35, 39)

Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man (D&C 93:31)

### **David O. McKay**

Next to the bestowal of life itself, the right to direct our lives is God's greatest gift to man. Freedom of choice is more to be treasured than any possession earth can give. It is inherent in the spirit of man. It is a divine gift to every normal being. Whether born in abject poverty or shackled at birth by inherited riches, everyone has the most precious of all life's endowments-the gift of... agency, man's inherited and inalienable right. It is the impelling source of the soul's progress. It is the purpose of the Lord that man becomes like him. In order for man to achieve this, it was necessary for the Creator first to make him free. To man is given a special endowment not bestowed upon any other living thing. God gave to him the power of choice. Only to the human being did the Creator say: ". . . thou mayest choose for thyself for it is given unto thee;" (Moses 3:17.) Without this divine power to choose, humanity cannot progress. (*Conference Report, October 1965, First Day-Morning Meeting 8.*)

### **3. Ye shall be as gods, with power to procreate**

The Christian world does not understand that Adam and Eve were so innocent that they could not have children before the Fall. This critical difference has huge impact on how Adam and Eve are perceived. Most of the rest of Christianity believes that if our first parents had not partaken of the forbidden fruit, then all of humanity would be living in the paradise of Eden. From their perspective Adam and Eve blew it for all of us. Robert L. Millet wrote:

"Some years later I was driving across the country, listening to the car radio as I traveled. I especially enjoy listening to religious channels and networks to better understand the perspective of our Protestant and Catholic friends. On one channel the host of a rather popular program was taking calls from the listening audience, soliciting religious questions. One caller asked, 'Reverend, why did Adam and Eve take the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and

evil?' The minister's answer was simple. 'I don't know,' he said. 'That's the dumbest thing anyone could have done! Why, if Adam and Eve had not been so selfish, so power-hungry, we might all have been in paradise today!' The answer at the time caused me to chuckle. I have since thought again and again about his answer and looked more soberly and sympathetically upon a Christian world which desperately needs what we as Latter-day Saints have to offer." (Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, eds., *The Man Adam* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990], 190.)

The Book of Mormon solves the doctrinal dilemma teaching, "if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen... And they would have had no children" (2 Ne. 2:22-23).

Both plain and precious is the doctrine that the power of procreation is a divine characteristic. Only those who receive the highest degree of the celestial kingdom will retain this power through eternity. Those who are exalted receive "a fullness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. Then shall they be gods, because they have no end." (D&C 132:19-20) When viewed in light of this doctrine, the power of procreation is more holy and sacred than the world could ever appreciate. Violation of God's commands with respect to this power is particularly serious because of the sacredness of the privilege.

### **George Q. Cannon**

The power of procreation is... the greatest power that man possesses on the earth, that is promised unto those who are faithful... By it, and through that principle the worlds are peopled. The planetary orbs which stud our heavens so gloriously are peopled by that principle-the principle of procreation. God possesses it, and we as His children inherit the power. If we do what is right He promises to bestow it upon us... This is the highest pleasure that human beings can attain unto, and we shall have it in eternity, and it shall be the chief source of our enjoyment and of our happiness in the world to come.  
(*Conference Report, April 1899, Afternoon Session*)

### **4. Ye shall be as devils, becoming carnal, sensual, devilish by nature**

So far the consequences have all been good, but knowledge of good and evil must involve as much evil as good. Therefore, Adam and Eve would suffer the evil consequences of the Fall as well. Satan's temptation of Eve never suggested anything bad would happen. His message was "you won't die, but shall be as the gods."

However, the great dichotomy of mortality would mean that man would inherit divine privileges and yet become devilish by nature. The scriptures are clear on this point, "they had become carnal, sensual, and devilish, by nature" (Alma 42:10). The fall "was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual and devilish, knowing evil from good... thus all mankind were lost" (Mosiah 16:3-4). In a manner of speaking, the natural man was born. By nature, man was an enemy to God (Mosiah 3:16). Without the atonement, even children "are conceived in sin, even so when they begin to grow up, sin conceiveth in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good" (Moses 6:55).

### **5. Ye shall be as devils, subject to the power of the devil**

When a third of the hosts of heaven followed Lucifer, they became subject to his power. He boasts of both power and priesthoods. "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 11:9) "And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will" (Moses 4:4). Just as Satan's minions, fallen man, the natural man is subject unto the power of the devil, "For they are carnal and devilish, and the devil has power over them... Thus all mankind were lost" (Mosiah 16:3-4)

Optimists may contest the point that the natural man is indeed subject to the power of the devil. However, without an atonement, all would be forever subject to his oppressive reign, "if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to... the devil... and our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery" (2 Ne. 9:8-9). This message of doom was conveniently omitted from the discussion between Lucifer and Eve.

### **Brigham Young**

In the first place the spirit is pure, and under the special control and influence of the Lord, but the body is of the earth, and is subject to the power of the Devil, and is under the mighty influence of that fallen nature that is of the earth. If the spirit yields to the body, the Devil then has power to overcome the body and spirit of that man, and he loses both.

Recollect, brethren and sisters, every one of you, that when evil is suggested to you, when it arises in your hearts, it is through the temporal organization... [And] many, very many, let the spirit yield to the body, and are overcome and destroyed.

Evil is with us, it is that influence which tempts to sin, and which has been permitted to come into the world for the express purpose of giving us an opportunity of proving ourselves before God. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], 70.)

## **6. Ye shall be as devils, subject to death both temporally and spiritually**

Spiritual death means to be cut off from the presence of God. This is exactly what happened to Satan and his angels. Having not kept their first estate, they were cut off from the presence of God. Adam and Eve were cut off from the presence of God just as the devil; "And now, ye see by this that our first parents were cut off both temporally and spiritually from the presence of the Lord" (Alma 42:7).

To be accurate, Lucifer could have told Eve that if she partook of the forbidden fruit that she would be immediately cast out of the garden and God's presence. He could have explained that without access to the tree of life, her body would become mortal, subject unto death with subsequent sickness, pain, and suffering. Ultimately, she would die a physical (or temporal) death as well. Satan's alluring lie, "you shall not die" was the biggest of all lies from the father of lies.

The consequences of partaking of the forbidden fruit can be summarized in this simple table:

As gods	As devils
Knowledge	Carnal Nature
Agency	Temptation
Procreation	Death

**Gen 3:6 the woman... did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat**

### **James E. Talmage**

Adam found himself in a position that made it impossible for him to obey both of the specific commandments given by the Lord. He and his wife had been commanded to multiply and replenish the earth. Adam had not yet fallen to the state of mortality, but Eve already had; and in such dissimilar conditions the two could not remain together, and therefore could not fulfil the divine requirement as to procreation. On the other hand, Adam would be disobeying another commandment by yielding to Eve's request. He deliberately and wisely decided to stand by the first and greater commandment; and, therefore, with understanding of the nature of his act, he also partook of the fruit that grew on the tree of knowledge. The fact that Adam acted understandingly in this matter is affirmed by scripture. Paul, in writing to Timothy, explained that "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." (1 Tim. 2:14) The prophet Lehi, in expounding the scriptures to his sons, declared: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are that they might have joy." (2 Ne. 2:25) (*Articles of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], 59.)

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

In this manner death came into the world and all men have inherited the seeds of death from their first parents. To amend this broken law and restore life after the mortal death has filled its mission, Jesus Christ was sent into the world. There is another error which has found its way into the religious world, and that is that the transgression of Adam frustrated the divine plan and made it necessary for other means than those first intended to be employed, in order to bring about the proper restoration, and redeem man from this fallen condition. It is sometimes said that all things upon the earth would have been peaceful, men would have lived in love and obedience without the ravages of evil, had not Adam failed in his mission, and hearkened to Satan who endeavored to thwart the plan of the Lord and bring upon man destruction. These well-meaning people speak of Adam's transgression, as "man's shameful fall." It was not a shameful fall, but a part of the great plan to bring about the immortality and eternal life of man. (*The Restoration of All Things* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1945], 268 - 269.)

### **Brigham Young**

Some may regret that our first parents sinned. This is nonsense. If we had been there, and they had not sinned, we should have sinned. I will not blame Adam or Eve, why? Because it was necessary that sin should enter into the world; no man could ever understand the principle of exaltation without its opposite; no one could ever receive an exaltation without being acquainted

with its opposite. How did Adam and Eve sin? Did they come out in direct opposition to God and to His government? No. But they transgressed a command of the Lord, and through that transgression sin came into the world. The Lord knew they would do this, and He had designed that they should. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 10: 312.)

### **Joseph Smith**

I believe in the fall of man, as recorded in the Bible; I believe that God foreknew everything, but did not foreordain everything; I deny that foreordain and foreknow is the same thing. He foreordained the fall of man; but all merciful as He is, He foreordained at the same time, a plan of redemption for all mankind. (*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 Vols. 4:78)

### **Gen 3:8 Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord**

#### **Joseph Smith**

Though man did transgress, his transgression did not deprive him of the previous knowledge with which he was endowed relative to the existence and glory of his Creator; for no sooner did he hear his voice than he sought to hide himself from his presence.

This... shows this important fact, that though our first parents were driven out of the garden of Eden, and were even separated from the presence of God by a veil, they still retained a knowledge of his existence, and that sufficiently to move them to call upon him. And further, that no sooner was the plan of redemption revealed to man, and he began to call upon God, than the Holy Spirit was given, bearing record of the Father and Son. (*Lectures on Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 2:19, 25.)

### **Gen 3:12-13 And the man said, The woman...gave me of the tree, and I did eat**

One of the great testimonies to the truth of the scriptures, whether ancient or modern, is that human nature is represented in such a transparent and real way. In this instance, we see the natural tendency of man to place blame elsewhere. Like a child who displaces blame when asked, "who made the mess?", Adam is quick to explain how his normal perfect obedience could

have been compromised. He even reminds the Lord that the woman was His idea, almost as if to say, "You gave her to me! Now look what happened!"

Eve does the same thing. She points out that if it weren't for the serpent, none of this would have happened.

It is as if Adam wants Eve to get in trouble, and Eve wants Satan to get in trouble. But the Lord in his perfect justice would hold all three accountable.

"We've all seen ourselves as victims of someone else's behavior. Changing our thinking to focus on the given circumstances and our responsibility for current choices can be liberating... If we truly understand and rejoice in agency, then we cannot get stuck blaming others. We also are not allowed the luxury of blaming ourselves for the actions or choices of others." (Susette Fletcher Green and Dawn Hall Anderson, eds., *To Rejoice As Women: Talks from the 1994 Women's Conference* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 38.)

### **Gen 3:14 Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed... dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life**

The serpent in the dust is a metaphor for Satan. The snake is feared and deadly; slithering in the dust, it is never clean. It speaks half-truths with a forked tongue. But outside this reptilian metaphor, what is the meaning of the curse as applied to Satan and his followers? Is it real? The answer, it would seem, has only been partially revealed. They are indeed in a cursed state, separated from God as devils and angels to a devil. If we could look into that evil world, we would better understand the nature of their cursed existence. Much of what we know comes from the New Testament.

The devils are cursed above all the cattle and the beasts because they don't have a body. Hence, entering into swine would seem to be a refreshing change of pace (Matt. 8:28-33). Without a body, it would seem, they wander, "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none." (Matt. 12:43) While we don't know what the Lord meant by evil spirits walking "through dry places," you can bet it relates to this curse in the Garden of Eden.

Heber C. Kimball saw a vision of this hellish world while a missionary in England. His account is reminiscent of the scripture which tells us "I, the Lord, show it by vision unto many, but straightway shut it up again; Wherefore, the

end, the width, the height, the depth, and the misery thereof, they understand not, neither any man except those who are ordained unto this condemnation." (D&C 76:47-48)

### **Heber C. Kimball**

A vision was opened to our minds, and we could distinctly see the evil spirits, who foamed and gnashed their teeth at us. We gazed upon them about an hour and a half... Space appeared before us, and we saw the devils coming in legions, with their leaders, who came within a few feet of us. They came towards us like armies rushing to battle. They appeared to be men of full stature, possessing every form and feature of men in the flesh, who were angry and desperate; and I shall never forget the vindictive malignity depicted on their countenances as they looked me in the eye; and any attempt to paint the scene which then presented itself, or portray their malice and enmity, would be vain. I perspired exceedingly, my clothes becoming as wet as if I had been taken out of the river. I felt excessive pain, and was in the greatest distress for sometime. I cannot even look back on the scene without feelings of horror; yet by it I learned the power of the adversary, his enmity against the servants of God, and got some understanding of the invisible world. (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Kimball Family, 1888], 130 - 131.)

### **Gen 3:15 it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel**

The scripture has been rendered differently in the temple version. To Satan, the Lord says, "you shall have power to bruise his heel, but he (meaning Adam and his posterity) shall have power to crush thy head." The declaration from the Lord is an obvious limit to Satan's power. The scriptures clearly show that God allows Satan limited powers in tempting and trying the children of men. In general, he is not given power to take life (Job 1-2). He cannot possess someone's body except under certain conditions. Although given free reign to tempt mankind, even that has an age limit, for "power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children." (D&C 29:47)

### **Daniel H. Wells**

As to the devil, what have we to do with him? ... the Holy Ghost is ready every moment to administer to our salvation, and the evil spirit is also ready to lead us into temptation. That is true, but look at the word the Lord gave us through our first parents, when He planted us on this earth. He said to the serpent, (quotes Gen. 3:14-15.) We have that advantage over the devil; we can, if we have a mind to, resist him, and he will flee from us. He can be cast out, and

he is subject to us. We have the length and breadth of ourselves clear from being contaminated with him. I will say that, without fearing successful contradiction. If he overcomes us, we first let down the bars, and invite him to enter; or he would not come further than our heels.

The Lord gave us our agency to do as we please, and it is for us to say whether we will be for God or the devil. We may make ourselves angels to the devil, or Saints of the Most High. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 4: 254.)

Every time we submit to temptation, the serpent bruises our heel. Every time we resist temptation, we bruise Satan's head. The proximate victory is ours. We have that power. He may rant and boast, "Now is the great day of my power." But he can have that power only as we allow it by succumbing to temptation. The ultimate victory, however, cannot come from the strength of man. The real head-crushing power comes only through the atonement of Jesus Christ.

### **B. H. Roberts**

Christ to whom reference is made, shall bruise the serpent's head-shall wound him in a vital part; while the serpent shall have power only to wound the woman's "seed" in the heel-an unvital part. The victory shall be given to the seed of the woman. The Christ will overcome Lucifer. A prophecy of the future world-battle of good and evil forces-between the Christ and Lucifer, with assurance from God of victory with the Christ. (*Falling Away*, 188 - 189.)

### **Gen 3:15 I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception**

Any woman who has been pregnant during the hot summer months, who has not been able to sleep because of back pain, or who has delivered a child without an epidural can attest to the truth of this promise. The tragedies of miscarriage and stillbirth only multiply the sorrow. Having babies is no fun. The men just couldn't handle it.

### **Harold B. Lee**

A mother has a different sense of values in considering man's worth. Whether it be a son lying dangerously ill in a hospital bed or a son or daughter caught in the merciless web of sin and crime, she counts the cost in tears of anguish and lonely vigils filled with pleadings and supplications. A mother's love prompts agonized suffering in her almost commensurate with that of her offspring. Since the days of mother Eve, a mother's sorrow has been greatly

multiplied in her conception, and in sorrow has she brought forth children. ("Gen. 3:16Genesis 3:16.) After months of travail she has gone to the gates of death that she might ascend the mountains of life, and to her the cry of her infant child, giving evidence that it is alive, is ample reward for her pain and sacrifice. (*Decisions for Successful Living* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973], 113 - 114.)

### **Gen 3:16 thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee**

"The preposition translated here as 'over' is the Hebrew letter *beth*. Its primary meaning is 'in' or 'with' rather than 'over.' That changes the last phrase to 'he shall rule with thee.' This alternate translation supports President Kimball's preference to read 'preside' rather than 'rule' in this scripture, and it would also better capture God's intent for the family. The Proclamation on the Family declares that although divine responsibilities may differ, 'fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.'" (Dawn Anderson, Dora Dalton, and Susette Green, eds., *Every Good Thing: Talks from the 1997 BYU Women's Conference* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1998], 345.)

### **Gen 3:17-18 cursed is the ground for thy sake... Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth**

All of God's actions are for our benefit. On the surface, the curse on the land would seem to have no redeeming value. No longer would the earth produce beautiful foliage spontaneously. Weeds would be the default pathway. As **Gordon B. Hinckley** stated, "Without hard work, nothing grows but weeds." (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 707.) **James E. Talmage** wrote:

Adam felt directly the effects of transgression in finding a barren and dreary earth, with a relatively sterile soil, instead of the beauty and fruitfulness of Eden. In place of pleasing and useful plants, thorns and thistles sprang up; and the man had to labor arduously, under the conditions of physical fatigue and suffering, to cultivate the soil that he might obtain necessary food. (*Articles of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], 61.)

But working the soil of the earth would be a blessing to Adam and to his posterity. The toil itself has a redemptive quality. Work is good for the soul. We are commanded to work because it is good for us. This part of the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment is often overlooked, for we are commanded to work as

much as we are commanded to rest, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work." (Ex. 20:9)

"The Lord did not curse Adam. He cursed the earth 'for thy sake.' Through the ages man has received more than bread through the sweat of his face. He has received happiness.

"Bismarck, the powerful Prussian statesman, once said: 'To youth I have but three words of counsel: work, work, work.'" (Wendell J. Ashton, "The Sweetness of Sweat," *Ensign*, July 1971, 35)

### **Henry B. Eyring**

I want to tell you a story about waiting on the Lord... Now, you have to know a little bit about my father. His name was Henry Eyring, like mine. His work in chemistry was substantial enough to bring him many honors, but he was still a member of a ward of the Church with his duty to do. To appreciate this story, you have to realize that it occurred when he was nearly eighty and had bone cancer. He had bone cancer so badly in his hips that he could hardly move. The pain was great.

Dad was the senior high councilor in his stake, and he had the responsibility for the welfare farm. An assignment was given to weed a field of onions, so Dad assigned himself to go work on the farm. He never told me how hard it was, but I have met several people who were with him that day. I talked to one of them on the phone, and he said that he was weeding in the row next to Dad through much of the day. He told me the same thing that others who were there that day have told me. He said that the pain was so great that Dad was pulling himself along on his stomach with his elbows. He couldn't kneel. The pain was too great for him to kneel. Everyone who has talked to me about that day has remarked how Dad smiled and laughed and talked happily with them as they worked in that field of onions.

Now, this is the joke Dad told me on himself afterward. He said he was there at the end of the day. After all the work was finished and the onions were all weeded, someone said to him, "Henry, good heavens! You didn't pull those weeds, did you? Those weeds were sprayed two days ago, and they were going to die anyway."

Dad just roared. He thought that was the funniest thing. He thought it was a great joke on himself. He had worked through the day in the wrong weeds. They had been sprayed and would have died anyway.

When Dad told me this story, I knew how tough it was. So I asked him, "Dad, how could you make a joke out of that? How could you take it so pleasantly?" He said something to me that I will never forget, and I hope you won't. He said, "Hal, I wasn't there for the weeds."

Now, you'll be in an onion patch much of your life. So will I. It will be hard to see the powers of heaven magnifying us or our efforts. It may even be hard to see our work being of any value at all. And sometimes our work won't go well.

But you didn't come for the weeds. You came for the Savior. And if you pray, and if you choose to be clean, and if you choose to follow God's servants, you will be able to work and wait long enough to bring down the powers of heaven. (*To Draw Closer to God: A Collection of Discourses* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997], 102.)

### **Gen 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground**

#### **Hugh Nibley**

If Eve must labor to bring forth, so too must Adam labor (Genesis 3:17; Moses 4:23) to quicken the earth so it shall bring forth. Both of them bring forth life with sweat and tears, and Adam is not the favored party. If his labor is not as severe as hers, it is more protracted. For Eve's life will be spared long after her childbearing-"nevertheless thy life shall be spared"-while Adam's toil must go on to the end of his days: "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it *all* the days of thy life!" Even retirement is no escape from that sorrow. (*Old Testament and Related Studies*, edited by John W. Welch, Gary P. Gillum, and Don E. Norton [Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1986], 89 - 90.)

### **Gen 3:21 God made coats of skins, and clothed them**

#### **Bruce R. McConkie**

From the beginning the garments of the saints have enjoyed a special and sacred place in true worship. They cover that nakedness which when exposed leads to lewd and lascivious conduct. They stand as a symbol of modesty and decency and are a constant reminder to true believers of the restraints and controls placed by a divine providence upon their acts. Adam and Eve made for themselves aprons of fig leaves to cover their nakedness and preserve their modesty. The Lord himself made coats of skins to cover the bodies of

our first parents, that they, being clothed and wholesome before him, might attain those feelings which foster reverence and worship.

...We can see how the dress standards given to Adam and Eve taught modesty and placed the new mortals in a frame of mind to live and worship by proper standards. Immodest, ornate, and worldly dress is an invitation to unclean thoughts and immoral acts, which are foreign to that conduct and worship desired by Him whose we are. (*The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979-1981], 2: 295.)

**Gen 3:22 lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever**

What does the scripture mean, which saith that God placed cherubim and a flaming sword on the east of the garden of Eden, lest our first parents should enter and partake of the fruit of the tree of life, and live forever? And thus we see that there was no possible chance that they should live forever.

Now Alma said unto him: This is the thing which I was about to explain. Now we see that Adam did fall by the partaking of the forbidden fruit, according to the word of God; and thus we see, that by his fall, all mankind became a lost and fallen people.

And now behold, I say unto you that if it had been possible for Adam to have partaken of the fruit of the tree of life at that time, there would have been no death, and the word would have been void, making God a liar, for he said: If thou eat thou shalt surely die.

And we see that death comes upon mankind, yea, the death which has been spoken of by Amulek, which is the temporal death; nevertheless there was a space granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead.

Now, if it had not been for the plan of redemption, which was laid from the foundation of the world, there could have been no resurrection of the dead; but there was a plan of redemption laid, which shall bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, of which has been spoken.

And now behold, if it were possible that our first parents could have gone forth and partaken of the tree of life they would have been forever miserable, having no preparatory state; and thus the plan of redemption would have been frustrated, and the word of God would have been void, taking none effect.

(Alma 12:21-26)

## **Russell M. Nelson**

As we consider self-defense, self-repair, and self-renewal, an interesting paradox emerges. Limitless life could result if these marvelous qualities of the body continued in perpetuity. If we could create anything that could defend itself, repair itself, and renew itself without limit, we could create perpetual life. That is what our Creator did with the bodies he created for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Had they continued to be nourished from the tree of life, they would have lived forever. According to the Lord, as revealed through his prophets, the fall of Adam instituted the aging process, which results ultimately in physical death. Of course, we do not understand all the chemistry, but we are witnesses of the consequences of growing old. This and other pathways of release assure that there is a limit to the length of life upon the earth. (*The Power within Us*[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988], 8.)

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