



FROM ETERNITY PAST

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Chapter 1—Why Was Sin Permitted?

“God is love.” His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be. Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The history of the great conflict between good and evil from the time it first began in heaven is also a demonstration of God’s unchanging love. {EP 9.1}

The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate who could appreciate His purpose and share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. See John 1:1, 2. {EP 9.2}

Christ the Word was one with the eternal Father, one in nature, in character, in purpose. “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6. His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2. {EP 9.3}

The Father wrought by His Son in the creation of all heavenly beings. “By Him were all things created, ... whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers.” Colossians 1:16. Angels are God’s ministers speeding to execute His will. But the Son, the “express image of His person,” “the brightness of His glory,” “upholding all things by the word of His power,” holds supremacy over them all. See Hebrews 1:3, 8. {EP 9.4}

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. {EP 9.5}

So long as all created beings acknowledged the allegiance of love, there was perfect harmony throughout the universe of God. There was no note of discord to mar the celestial harmonies. {EP 10.1}

But a change came over this happy state. There was one who perverted the freedom that God had granted to His creatures. Sin originated with him, who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God and was highest among the inhabitants of heaven. Lucifer, “son of the morning,” (Isaiah 14:12) was holy and undefiled. “Thus saith the Lord God: Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty... . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so. Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” {EP 10.2}

Little by little, Lucifer indulged the desire for self-exaltation. “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness” Ezekiel 28:12-15, 17. “Thou hast said in thine heart, ... I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; ... I will be like the most High.” Isaiah 14:13, 14. Though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. This prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone. {EP 10.3}

Now the perfect harmony of heaven was broken. In heavenly council the angels pleaded with Lucifer. The Son of God presented before him the goodness and justice of the Creator and the unchanging nature of His law. 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 resistance. Lucifer allowed his jealousy of Christ to prevail, and became the more determined. {EP 10.4}

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 Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy angels, "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." Revelation 5:11. Before the inhabitants of heaven, the King declared that none but Christ could fully enter into His purposes and execute the mighty counsels of His will. Christ was still to exercise divine power in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. {EP 10.5}

The Battle in Lucifer's Heart

The angels joyfully acknowledged the supremacy of Christ and poured out their love and adoration. Lucifer bowed with them; but in his heart there was a strange, fierce conflict. Truth 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, the spirit of evil seemed vanquished; unutterable love thrilled his entire being; his soul went out in harmony with the sinless worshipers in love to the Father and the Son. But again his desire for supremacy returned, and envy of Christ was once more indulged. The high honors conferred upon Lucifer called forth no gratitude to his Creator. He gloried in his brightness and aspired to be equal with God. Angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was exalted above him. "Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the supremacy?" {EP 11.1}

Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. For a time he concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God. He insinuated doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that angels needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide. All their thoughts were holy; it was no more possible for them than for God Himself to err. The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer. If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven, for it was his object to secure freedom for all. Subtle deceptions through the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts. {EP 11.2}

The true position of the Son of God had been the same from the beginning. Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer's deceptions. He so artfully instilled into their minds his own distrust and discontent that his agency was not discerned. Lucifer had presented the purposes of God in a false light to excite dissent and dissatisfaction. While claiming for himself perfect loyalty to God, he urged that changes were necessary for the stability of the divine government. While secretly fomenting discord and rebellion, he caused it to appear as his sole purpose to promote loyalty, and to preserve harmony and peace. {EP 12.1}

While there was no open outbreak, division of feeling imperceptibly grew up among the angels. Some looked with favor upon Lucifer's insinuations. They were discontented and unhappy, dissatisfied with God's purpose in exalting Christ. But angels who were loyal

maintained the wisdom and justice of the divine decree. Christ was the Son of God, one with Him before the angels were called into existence. He had ever stood at the right hand of the Father. Wherefore should there now be discord? {EP 12.2}

God bore long with Lucifer. The spirit of discontent was a new element, strange, unaccountable. Lucifer himself 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. He was made to see what would be the result of persisting in revolt. {EP 12.3}

Lucifer was convinced that he was in the wrong. He saw that “the Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works” (Psalm 145:17), that the divine statutes are just and that he ought to acknowledge them as such before all heaven. Had he done this, he might have saved himself and many angels. If he had been willing to return to God, satisfied to fill the place appointed him in God’s great plan, he would have been reinstated in his office. The time had come for a final decision; he must 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! {EP 12.4}

Lucifer pointed to the long-suffering of God as an evidence of his own superiority, an indication that the King of the universe would yet accede to his terms. If the angels would stand firmly with him, he declared, they could yet gain all that they desired. He fully committed himself to the great controversy against his Maker. Thus it was that Lucifer, “the light bearer,” became Satan, “the adversary” of God and holy beings. {EP 13.1}

Rejecting with disdain the entreaties of the loyal angels, he denounced them as deluded slaves. He would never again acknowledge the supremacy of Christ. He had determined to claim the honor which should have been given him. And he promised those who would enter his ranks a new and better government under which all would enjoy freedom. Great numbers of the angels signified their purpose to accept him as their leader. 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. {EP 13.2}

Still the loyal angels urged him and his sympathizers to submit to God; they set before them the inevitable result should they refuse. 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 and confess the error of questioning His wisdom and authority. {EP 13.3}

Many were disposed to repent of their disaffection and seek to be again received into favor with the Father and His Son. But Lucifer now declared that the angels who had united with him had gone too far to return; God would not forgive. For himself, he was determined never again to acknowledge the authority of Christ. The only course remaining was to assert their liberty and gain by force the rights which had not been accorded them. {EP 13.4}

Satan Cast Out of Heaven

God permitted Satan to carry forward his work until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature might be seen by all. God’s government included not only the inhabitants of heaven, but

all the world that He had created; and Lucifer concluded that if he could carry the angels with him in rebellion, he could carry the worlds also. All his acts were so clothed with mystery that it was difficult to disclose the true nature of his work. Even the loyal angels could not fully discern his character or see to what his work was leading. Everything simple he shrouded in mystery, and by artful perversion cast doubt upon the plainest statements of God. And his high position gave greater force to his representations. {EP 14.1}

Why God Did Not Destroy Satan

God could employ only such means as were consistent with truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. It was therefore necessary to demonstrate before the inhabitants of heaven and all the world that God’s government is just, His law perfect. Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe. The true character of the usurper must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works. {EP 14.2}

All evil he declared to be the result of the divine administration. It was his own object to improve upon the statutes of God. Therefore God permitted him to demonstrate the nature of his claims, to show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him. The whole universe must see the deceiver unmasked. {EP 14.3}

Even when Satan was cast out of heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy him. The allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of the world could not then have seen the justice of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted out of existence, some would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages he must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light and that the justice of God and the immutability of His law might be forever placed beyond question. {EP 15.1}

Satan’s rebellion was to be a lesson to the universe through all coming ages—a perpetual testimony to the nature of sin and its terrible results. Thus the history of this experiment of rebellion was to be a perpetual safeguard to all holy beings to prevent them from being deceived as to the nature of transgression. {EP 15.2}

“His work is perfect; for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He.” Deuteronomy 32:4. {EP 15.3}

Chapter 2—Creation: God’s Answer to Evolution

This chapter is based on Genesis 1 and 2.

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth... . For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” Psalm 33:6, 9. {EP 16.1}

As the earth came forth from the hand of its Maker, it was exceedingly beautiful. The fruitful soil everywhere produced a luxuriant growth of verdure. There were no loathsome swamps nor barren deserts. Graceful shrubs and delicate flowers greeted the eye at every turn. The air was clear and healthful. The entire landscape outvied in beauty the decorated grounds of the proudest palace. {EP 16.2}

After the earth with its teeming animal and vegetable life had been called into existence, man, the crowning work of the Creator was brought upon the stage of action. “God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over ... all the earth.” “So God created man in His own image: ... male and female created He them.” {EP 16.3}

Here is clearly set forth the origin of the human race. God created man in His own image. There is no ground for the supposition that man evolved by slow degrees from lower forms of animal or vegetable life. Inspiration traces the origin of our race, not to a line of developing germs, mollusks, and quadrupeds, but to the great Creator. Though formed from the dust, Adam was “the son of God.” Luke 3:38. {EP 16.4}

The lower orders of being cannot understand the sovereignty of God, yet they were made capable of loving and serving man. “Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet, ... the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air.” Psalm 8:6-8. {EP 16.5}

Christ alone is “the express image” (Hebrews 1:3) of the Father, but man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God, his mind capable of comprehending divine things. His affections were pure; his appetites and passions were under the control of reason. He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God, and in perfect obedience to His will. {EP 17.1}

As man came forth from the hand of his Creator, his countenance glowed with the light of life and joy. Adam’s height was much greater than that of men now living. Eve was somewhat less in stature, yet her form was noble and full of beauty. The sinless pair wore no artificial garments: they were clothed with a covering of glory such as the angels wear. {EP 17.2}

The First Marriage

After the creation of Adam, “God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” God gave Adam a companion, “an help meet for him,” one who was fitted to be his companion, and who would be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam. She was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, loved and protected by him. She was his second self, showing the close union that should exist in this relation. “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth

and cherisheth it.” “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one.” Ephesians 5:29; Genesis 2:24. {EP 17.3}

“Marriage is honorable.” Hebrews 13:4. It is one of the two institutions that, after the fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race and elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature. {EP 17.4}

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed.” In this garden were trees of every variety, many of them laden with delicious fruit. There were lovely vines, growing upright, their branches drooping under their load of tempting fruit. It was the work of Adam and Eve to train the branches of the vine to form bowers, thus making for themselves a dwelling from living trees covered with foliage and fruit. In the midst of the garden stood the tree of life, surpassing in glory all other trees. Its fruit had the power to perpetuate life. {EP 18.1}

“The heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.” “And God saw everything He had made, and, behold, it was very good.” No taint of sin or shadow of death marred the fair creation. “The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” Job 38:7. {EP 18.2}

The Blessing of the Sabbath

In six days the great work of creation had been accomplished. And God “rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.” All was perfect, worthy of its divine Author; and He rested, not as one weary, but as well pleased with the fruits of His wisdom and goodness. {EP 18.3}

After resting on the seventh day, God set it apart as a day of rest. Following the example of the Creator, man was to rest upon this sacred day that he might reflect upon God’s work of creation, that his heart might be filled with love and reverence for his Maker. {EP 18.4}

The Sabbath was committed to the whole human family, its observance to be a grateful acknowledgment that God was their creator and rightful sovereign. They were the work of His hands, the subjects of His authority. {EP 18.5}

God saw that a Sabbath was essential for man, even in Paradise. He needed to lay aside his own interests for one day of the seven. He needed a Sabbath to remind him of God and to awaken gratitude because all that he enjoyed came from the hand of the Creator. {EP 19.1}

God designs that the Sabbath shall direct the minds of men to His created works. The beauty that clothes the earth is a token of God’s love. The everlasting hills, the lofty trees, the opening buds and delicate flowers, all speak to us of God. The Sabbath, pointing to Him who made them all, bids men open the book of nature and trace therein the wisdom, power, and love of the Creator. {EP 19.2}

Our first parents, though created innocent and holy, were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. God made them free moral agents with liberty to yield or to withhold obedience. But before they could be eternally secure, their loyalty must be tested. At the beginning of man’s existence a check was placed upon self-indulgence, the fatal

passion that lay at the foundation of Satan's fall. The tree of knowledge was to be a test of the obedience, faith, and love of our first parents. They were forbidden to taste of this, on pain of death. They were to be exposed to the temptations of Satan; but if they endured the trial, they would be placed beyond his power, to enjoy perpetual favor with God. {EP 19.3}

The Beautiful Garden of Eden

God placed man under law, a subject of the divine government. God might have created man without the power to transgress; He might have withheld Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would have been forced. Such a course would have been contrary to God's plan, unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. {EP 19.4}

God made man upright, with no bias toward evil. He presented before him the strongest possible inducements to be true. Obedience was the condition of eternal happiness and access to the tree of life. {EP 20.1}

The home of our first parents was to be a pattern for other homes as their children should go forth to occupy the earth. Men in their pride delight in magnificent and costly edifices and glory in the works of their own hands, but God placed Adam in a garden. This was a lesson for all time—true happiness is found not in the indulgence of pride and luxury, but in communion with God through His created works. Pride and ambition are never satisfied, but those who are truly wise will find pleasure in the enjoyment God has placed within the reach of all. {EP 20.2}

To the dwellers in Eden was committed the care of the garden, "to dress it and to keep it." God appointed labor as a blessing to man, to occupy his mind, to strengthen his body, and to develop his faculties. In mental and physical activity Adam found one of the highest pleasures of his holy existence. Those who regard work as a curse, attended though it be with weariness and pain, are cherishing an error. The rich often look down upon the working classes, but this is at variance with God's purpose in creating man. Adam was not to be idle. Our Creator, who understands what is for man's happiness, appointed Adam his work. The true joy of life is found only by working men and women. The Creator has prepared no place for stagnating indolence. {EP 20.3}

The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God, but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels and were granted communion with their Maker with no obscuring veil between. They were full of vigor imparted by the tree of life, their intellectual power but little less than that of the angels. The laws of nature were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan among the waters to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all. On every leaf of the forest, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God's name was written. The order and harmony of creation spoke of infinite wisdom and power. {EP 20.4}

So long as they remained loyal to the divine law they would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer conceptions of the immeasurable unfailing love of God. {EP 21.1}

Chapter 3—The Predicament of Our First Parents

This chapter is based on Genesis 3.

No longer free to stir up rebellion in heaven, Satan found a new field in plotting the ruin of the human race. Moved by envy, he determined to bring upon them the guilt and penalty of sin. He would change their love to distrust and their songs of praise to reproaches against their Maker. Thus he would not only plunge these innocent beings into misery but cast dishonor upon God, and cause grief in heaven. {EP 22.1}

Heavenly messengers opened to our first parents the history of Satan's fall and his plots for their destruction, unfolding the nature of the divine government which the prince of evil was trying to overthrow. {EP 22.2}

The law of God is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom. The harmony of creation depends upon perfect conformity to the law of the Creator. Everything is under fixed laws, which cannot be disregarded. But man alone, of all that inhabits the earth, is amenable to moral law. To man, God has given power to comprehend the justice and beneficence of His law, and of man unswerving obedience is required. {EP 22.3}

Like the angels, the dwellers in Eden had been placed upon probation. They could obey and live, or disobey and perish. He who spared not the angels that sinned, could not spare them; transgression would bring upon them misery and ruin. {EP 22.4}

The angels warned them to be on guard against the devices of Satan. If they steadfastly repelled his first insinuations, they would be secure. But should they once yield to temptation, their nature would become so depraved that in themselves they would have no power, and no disposition, to resist Satan. {EP 22.5}

The tree of knowledge had been made a test of their obedience and love to God. If they should disregard His will in this particular, they would incur guilt. Satan was not to follow them with continual temptations; he could have access to them only at the forbidden tree. {EP 23.1}

To accomplish his work unperceived, Satan employed a disguise. The serpent was one of the wisest and most beautiful creatures. It had dazzling brightness. Resting in the forbidden tree, regaling itself with the delicious fruit, it was an object to arrest attention and delight the eye. Thus in the garden of peace lurked the destroyer. {EP 23.2}

The angels had cautioned Eve to beware of separating from her husband. With him she would be in less danger than if alone. But she unconsciously wandered from his side. Unmindful of the angel's caution, she soon found herself gazing with mingled curiosity and admiration upon the forbidden tree. The fruit was beautiful, and she questioned why God had withheld it from them. {EP 23.3}

Now was the tempter's opportunity. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Eve was startled to hear the echo of her thoughts. The serpent continued with subtle praise of her surpassing loveliness, and his words were not displeasing. Instead of fleeing from the spot, she lingered. She had no thought that the fascinating serpent could be the medium of the fallen foe. {EP 23.4}

She replied: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; 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. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; 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.” {EP 23.5}

By partaking of this tree, he declared, they would attain a more exalted existence. He himself had eaten and had acquired the power of speech. He insinuated that the Lord had jealously withheld it from them, lest they be exalted to equality with Himself. It was because it imparted wisdom and power that He had prohibited them from tasting or touching it. The divine warning was merely to intimidate them. How could it be possible for them to die? Had they not eaten of the tree of life? God had been seeking to prevent them from reaching a nobler development, and finding greater happiness. {EP 24.1}

Such has been Satan’s work from the days of Adam to the present. He tempts men to distrust God’s love and doubt His wisdom. In their efforts to search out what God has withheld, multitudes overlook truths which are essential to salvation. Satan tempts men to disobedience, to believe they are entering a wonderful field of knowledge. But this is all a deception. They are setting their feet in the path that leads to degradation and death. {EP 24.2}

The Subtlety of Satan’s Appeal

Satan represented to the holy pair that they would gain by breaking the law of God. Today many talk of the narrowness of those who obey God’s commandments, while they claim to enjoy greater liberty. What is this but an echo of the voice from Eden? “In the day ye eat thereof”—transgress the divine requirement—“ye shall be as gods.” Satan did not let it appear that he had become an outcast from heaven. He concealed his own misery in order to draw others into the same position. So now the transgressor disguises his true character; but he is on the side of Satan, trampling upon the law of God and leading others to their eternal ruin. {EP 24.3}

Eve disbelieved the words of God, and this was what led to her fall. In the judgment, men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth. We must set our hearts to know what is truth. Whatever contradicts God’s Word proceeds from Satan. {EP 24.4}

The serpent plucked the fruit of the forbidden tree and placed it in the hands of the half-reluctant Eve. Then he reminded her of her own words, that God had forbidden them to touch it lest they die. Perceiving no evil results, Eve grew bolder. When she “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.” As she ate, she seemed to imagine herself entering upon a higher state of existence. {EP 25.1}

And now, having herself transgressed, she became the agent of Satan in working the ruin of her husband. In a state of strange, unnatural excitement, her hands filled with the forbidden fruit, she sought his presence. {EP 25.2}

Adam appeared astonished and alarmed. To the words of Eve he replied, that this must be the foe against whom they had been warned. By the divine sentence she must die. In answer she urged him, “Eat,” repeating the words of the serpent that they should not surely

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