

ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE

# CONFRONTATION



ELLEN G. WHITE



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# **Confrontation**

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**Ellen G. White**

**1971**

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### **About the Author**

Ellen G. White (1827-1915) is considered the most widely translated American author, her works having been published in more than 160 languages. She wrote more than 100,000 pages on a wide variety of spiritual and practical topics. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she exalted Jesus and pointed to the Scriptures as the basis of one's faith.

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## Foreword

Ellen G. White at different times wrote of the temptation and fall of man, the plan of redemption, and of the victory of Christ in the wilderness of temptation. In 1874 and 1875 in a series of 13 articles published in the *Review and Herald* she treated these topics in depth. In these she devoted more attention to lessons drawn from the experience of man and Jesus Christ in meeting temptation than to the sequence of historical events. The series closes with practical applications to present-day situations.

These articles, with some paragraphs added by the author, were later republished in a 96-page pamphlet and became the second of eight pamphlets to make up the Redemption series published in 1878. The other seven present materials published simultaneously in *Spirit of Prophecy* volumes two and three, were later replaced by Ellen White's Masterpiece, *The Desire of Ages*.

Number two of the Redemption series, written quite apart from the others, in its fullness in the treatment of temptation makes a unique contribution to Ellen G. White materials currently available.

In the first printing some articles carried subheadings; many did not. A uniform plan is followed in this reprint. Capitalization and spelling have been brought into keeping with present usage, and some very long paragraphs have been divided for the sake of readability. The text is accurately reproduced.

In this attractive reprint the reader will find encouragement and practical lessons appropriate for these times.

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## **Confrontation in the Desert**

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After the baptism of Jesus in Jordan He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. When He had come up out of the water, He bowed upon Jordan's banks and pleaded with the great Eternal for strength to endure the conflict with the fallen foe. The opening of the heavens and the descent of the excellent glory attested His divine character. The voice from the Father declared the close relation of Christ to His Infinite Majesty: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The mission of Christ was soon to begin. But He must first withdraw from the busy scenes of life to a desolate wilderness for the express purpose of bearing the threefold test of temptation in behalf of those He had come to redeem.

Satan, who was once an honored angel in heaven, had been ambitious for the more exalted honors which God had bestowed upon His Son. He became envious of Christ, and represented to the angels, who honored him as covering cherub, that he had not the honor conferred upon him which his position demanded. He asserted that he should be exalted equal in honor with Christ. Satan obtained sympathizers. Angels in heaven joined him in his rebellion, and fell with their leader from their high and holy estate, and were therefore expelled from heaven with him.

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## **Adam and Eve and Their Eden home**

God, in counsel with His Son, formed the plan of creating man in His own image. Man was to be placed upon probation. He was to be tested and proved; if he should bear the test of God, and remain loyal and true through the first trial, he was not to be beset with continual temptations, but was to be exalted equal with the angels and made, thenceforth, immortal.

Adam and Eve came forth from the hand of their Creator in the perfection of every physical, mental, and spiritual endowment. God planted for them a garden, and surrounded them with everything that was lovely and attractive to the eye, which their physical necessities required. This holy pair looked upon a world of unsurpassed loveliness and glory. A benevolent Creator had given them evidences of His goodness and love in providing them with fruits, vegetables, and grains, and in causing to grow out of the ground every variety of tree for usefulness and beauty.

The holy pair looked upon nature as a picture of unsurpassed loveliness. The brown earth was clothed with a carpet of living green, diversified with an endless variety of self-perpetuating flowers. Shrubs, flowers, and trailing vines regaled the senses with their beauty and fragrance. The many varieties of lofty trees were laden with delicious fruit of every kind, adapted to please the taste and meet the wants of the happy Adam and Eve. This Eden home God provided for our first parents, giving them unmistakable evidences of His great love and care for them.

[11] Adam was crowned king in Eden. To him was given dominion over every living thing that God had created. The Lord blessed Adam and Eve with intelligence such as He had not given to any other creature. He made Adam the rightful sovereign over all the works of His hands. Man, made in the divine image, could contemplate and appreciate the glorious works of God in nature.

Adam and Eve could trace the skill and glory of God in every spire of grass, and in every shrub and flower. The natural loveliness

which surrounded them reflected like a mirror the wisdom, excellence, and love of their heavenly Father. And their songs of affection and praise rose sweetly and reverentially to heaven, harmonizing with the songs of the exalted angels, and with the happy birds who were caroling forth their music without a care. There was no disease, decay, nor death. Life was in everything the eye rested upon. The atmosphere was filled with life. Life was in every leaf, in every flower, and in every tree.

The Lord knew that Adam could not be happy without labor; therefore, He gave him the pleasant employment of dressing the garden. And, as he tended the things of beauty and usefulness around him, he could behold the goodness and glory of God in His created works. Adam had themes for contemplation in the works of God in Eden, which was heaven in miniature. God did not form man merely to contemplate His glorious works; therefore, He gave him hands for labor, as well as a mind and heart for contemplation.

If the happiness of man consisted in doing nothing, the Creator would not have given Adam his appointed work. Man was to find happiness in labor, as well as in meditation. Adam could take in the grand idea that he was created in the image of God, to be like Him in righteousness and holiness. His mind was capable of continual cultivation, expansion, refinement, and noble elevation; for God was his teacher, and angels were his companions.

[12]

## The Test of Probation

The Lord placed man upon probation, that he might form a character of steadfast integrity for his own happiness and for the glory of his Creator. He had endowed Adam with powers of mind superior to any other creature that He had made. His mental powers were but little lower than those of the angels. He could become familiar with the sublimity and glory of nature, and understand the character of his heavenly Father in His created works. Amid the glories of Eden, everything that his eye rested upon testified of his Father's love and infinite power.

The first moral lesson given to Adam was that of self-denial. The reins of self-government were placed in his hands. Judgment, reason, and conscience were to bear sway. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Adam and Eve were permitted to partake of every tree in the garden save one. There was a single prohibition. The forbidden tree was as attractive and lovely as any of the trees in the garden. It was called the tree of knowledge because in partaking of that tree of which God had said, "Thou shalt not eat of it," they would have a knowledge of sin, an experience in disobedience.

[13] Eve went from the side of her husband, viewing the beautiful things of nature, delighting her senses with the colors and fragrance of the flowers, and admiring the beauty of the trees and shrubs. She was thinking of the restrictions which God had laid upon them in regard to the tree of knowledge. She was pleased with the beauties and bounties which the Lord had furnished for the gratification of every want. All these, said she, God has given us to enjoy. They are all ours; for God has said, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest

freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it.”

Eve had wandered near the forbidden tree, and her curiosity was aroused to know how death could be concealed in the fruit of this fair tree. She was surprised to hear her queries taken up and repeated by a strange voice. “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” Eve was not aware that she had revealed her thoughts in audibly conversing with herself; therefore, she was greatly astonished to hear her queries repeated by a serpent. She really thought that the serpent had a knowledge of her thoughts, and that he must be very wise.

She answered him, “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.”

Here the father of lies made his assertion in direct contradiction to the expressed word of God. Satan assured Eve that she was created immortal, and that there was no possibility of her dying. He told her that God knew that if she and her husband should eat of the tree of knowledge, their understanding would be enlightened, expanded, and ennobled, making them equal with Himself. And the serpent answered Eve that the command of God, forbidding them to eat of the tree of knowledge, was given to keep them in such a state of subordination that they should not obtain knowledge, which was power. He assured her that the fruit of this tree was desirable above every other tree in the garden to make them wise, and to exalt them equal with God. He has, said the serpent, refused you the fruit of that tree which, of all the trees, is the most desirable for its delicious flavor and exhilarating influence.

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Eve thought that the serpent’s discourse was very wise, and that the prohibition of God was unjust. She looked with longing desire upon the tree laden with fruit which appeared very delicious. The serpent was eating it with apparent delight. She longed for this fruit above every other variety which God had given her a perfect right to use.

Eve had overstated the words of God's command. He had said to Adam and Eve, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." In Eve's controversy with the serpent, she added "*Neither shall ye touch it.*" Here the subtlety of the serpent appeared. This statement of Eve gave him advantage; he plucked the fruit and placed it in her hand, using her own words, He hath said, If ye touch it, ye shall die. You see no harm comes to you from touching the fruit, neither will you receive any harm by eating it.

[15] Eve yielded to the lying sophistry of the devil in the form of a serpent. She ate the fruit, and realized no immediate harm. She then plucked the fruit for herself and for her husband. "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."

Adam and Eve should have been perfectly satisfied with their knowledge of God derived from His created works and received by the instruction of the holy angels. But their curiosity was aroused to become acquainted with that of which God designed they should have no knowledge. It was for their happiness to be ignorant of sin. The high state of knowledge to which they thought to attain by eating of the forbidden fruit, plunged them into the degradation of sin and guilt.

## Paradise Lost

Adam was driven from Eden, and the angels who, before his transgression, had been appointed to guard him in his Eden home, were now appointed to guard the gates of paradise and the way of the tree of life, lest he should return, gain access to the tree of life, and sin be immortalized.

Sin drove man from paradise; and sin was the cause of the removal of paradise from the earth. In consequence of transgression of God's law, Adam lost paradise. In obedience to the Father's law, and through faith in the atoning blood of His Son, paradise may be regained. "Repentance toward God," because His law has been transgressed, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, as man's only Redeemer, will be acceptable with God. Notwithstanding man's sinfulness, the merits of God's dear Son in his behalf will avail with the Father.

Satan was determined to succeed in his temptation of the sinless Adam and Eve. And he could reach even this holy pair more successfully through the medium of appetite than in any other way. The fruit of the forbidden tree seemed pleasant to the eye and desirable to the taste. They ate and fell. They transgressed God's just command and became sinners. Satan's triumph was complete. He then had the vantage ground over the race. He flattered himself that, through his subtlety, he had thwarted the purpose of God in the creation of man. [16]

Satan made his exulting boasts to Christ and to loyal angels that he had succeeded in gaining a portion of the angels in heaven to unite with him in his daring rebellion; and now that he had succeeded in overcoming Adam and Eve, he claimed that their Eden home was his. He proudly boasted that the world which God had made was his dominion; that having conquered Adam, the monarch of the world, he had gained the race as his subjects, and should now possess Eden, making that his headquarters, and would there establish his throne and be monarch of the world.

But measures were immediately taken in heaven to defeat Satan in his plans. Strong angels, with beams of light like flaming swords turning in every direction, were placed as sentinels to guard the way of the tree of life from the approach of Satan and the guilty pair. Adam and Eve had forfeited all right to their beautiful Eden home, and were now expelled from it. The earth was cursed because of Adam's sin, and was ever after to bring forth briers and thorns. While he lived, Adam was to be exposed to the temptations of Satan and was finally to pass through death to dust again.



## Plan of Redemption

A council was held in heaven, the result of which was that God's dear Son undertook to redeem man from the curse and the disgrace of Adam's failure, and to conquer Satan. Oh, wonderful condescension! The Majesty of heaven, through love and pity for fallen man, proposed to become his substitute and surety. He would bear man's guilt. He would take the wrath of His Father upon Himself, which otherwise would have fallen upon man because of his disobedience. [17]

The law of God was unalterable. It could not be abolished, nor yield the smallest part of its claim, to meet man in his fallen state. Man was separated from God by transgression of His expressed command, notwithstanding He had made known to Adam the consequences of such transgression. The sin of Adam caused a deplorable state of things. Satan would now have unlimited control over the race unless a mightier being than was Satan before his fall, should take the field, conquer him, and ransom man.

Christ's divine soul was exercised with infinite pity for the fallen pair. As their wretched, helpless condition came up before Him, and as He saw that by transgression of God's law they had fallen under the power and control of the prince of darkness, He proposed the only means that could be acceptable with God, that would give them another trial, and place them again on probation. Christ consented to leave His honor, His kingly authority, His glory with the Father, and humble Himself to humanity, and engage in contest with the mighty prince of darkness, in order to redeem man. Through His humiliation and poverty Christ would identify Himself with the weaknesses of the fallen race, and by firm obedience show that man might redeem Adam's disgraceful failure, and by humble obedience regain lost Eden.

The great work of redemption could be carried out only by the Redeemer taking the place of fallen Adam. With the sins of the world laid upon Him, He would go over the ground where Adam stumbled. He would bear a test infinitely more severe than that which Adam [18]

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