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TORONTO EASTER FRATERNAL GATHERING - 1993

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Study #3

The Serpent - Fact or Fiction

The two trees which were standing in the midst of the garden, apparently, and very fittingly, side by side, we have seen that that is really the choice for our first human parents. Will they accept God implicitly at His word, or will they disobey? Will they accept the consequences of their own free choice? Well, it's something they had to do anyway, wasn't it, brethren and sisters? But, can they even, at this point of their development, under the angelic instruction, even understand the results of either their wisdom or their folly? Remembering who they are, a man and a woman, who are yet in a state of nudity, shamelessness, and fearlessness, that's the situation in which we find them now. They are both full grown in body, yet completely void of experience or character, because if God had injected them with experience or character, He would have been unfair. He would have been unjust. That was to be developed and it was to be developed in the face of trial, because there is no obedience that is worthy of the time it takes to practice, except it be on the background of scope for disobedience.

And now we've got, brethren and sisters, two inanimate things in the trees; the first human pair, and we've got the angels. What are the angels going to seek to impress upon the minds of these two people? Well, they're obviously only going to seek to impress upon their minds, the things of God. The Spirit of the Almighty is going to give them understanding through the ministrations of the angels. It is their job to take these two little infantile minds and to impress them with things that it was impossible for them to conceive of themselves. And if their obedience and their loyalty to the instructions of God is going to be worth anything, it has got to be upon the background of some alternative view. Are the angels going to teach them an alternative view? Would God, Himself, interfere directly, and teach them some alternative view? Could they learn an alternative view just from the trees that were there?

No, they couldn't, because as we found when they were given a law, there was not an instant excitement of something which we all have. Those things were foreign to them, as God made them. So where is God going to bring to bear the test of their loyalty to Him? There is no possibility, brethren and sisters and young people, of us even suspecting, that God might be, in some small and devious way, responsible for sin coming into the world. So, we have a difficulty from our minds' point of view, and that is, how is God going to make them aware of some other views? And that's when we need to go back into our first condition and just briefly look at one particular aspect of these

two people.

They are made up then, of three dimensions in their mind. They are made up of instincts. We all know what instincts are, every animal has them. We are animals; we're animals of the highest order, but we are animals. And our instincts tell us to eat, to drink, to sleep. They tell us that we have the ability to procreate, none of which are wrong in themselves. Adam and Eve had those, they had those things, brethren and sisters. They were told that they were to be fruitful and multiply, and to replenish the earth and subdue it. They were told that they were to have dominion over every other created thing and if God really wanted them to fulfill that requirement, to have dominion over the animals, then they must have something different than the animals have got. If God asked us to do a job, He'll give us the tools to do it with. And when he said to them , 'have dominion', He gave them something by which they could verily accomplish dominion over the animals. And God wanted them to have dominion over the animals.

Now, brethren and sisters, what does constitute 'dominion over the animals'? Have we got it today? Has man got today, 'dominion over the animals'? You ask a lion tamer. Take his gun away, does he have 'dominion over the animals'? He certainly does not have dominion over the animals. So when God was telling Adam and Eve 'have dominion over the animals', we know that He has given man something which God had in mind, when He talked about 'dominion over the animals' He was talking about physical strength. He was talking about a special condition of the mind in which the man is above the animal. And He wanted the man and the woman to maintain the dominion over the animals, and what's the difference if we turn to Psalm 49 and at verse 20 we are told what the difference is. This is a very commonly used quotation by us all, in our attempts to persuade the interested friend, the truth of God's word and of the reason for life. Verse 20 of Psalm 49, 'Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish'. There are ways in which man and the beasts are the same, but there is a way in which man is different from a beast, and this is what we must understand before we consider the serpent tonight.

What is man made up of? He's made up of instincts, he's been given an intellectual capacity. Beasts have instincts, beasts have intellectual capacity, but very narrow. But, what a man has that a beast doesn't have is the ability to understand. It's the ability to understand the things of God, and so when man was invited to have 'dominion over the beasts', God was asking him to use that power of his mental faculties which separate him from the beasts. And the department is commonly called among us, the moral sentiments, in other words, that part of our brain which is given over to understanding the things of God, in their moral and spiritual bearings. We can't teach a dog to love his neighbour. You can teach men that, but you can't teach a dog to love his neighbour. And so, into the arena of God's dealings with Adam and Eve, comes a serpent. A serpent. We don't know, brethren and sisters and friends, how he moved along. And it doesn't matter, but we do know that he was a literal beast. And something else we know about the serpent is vitally important, brethren and sisters, and that's this. That the serpent, as we would expect because he is a created part of God, was very good. He's very good. There is nothing sinister or evil or bad about the serpent. He's not a vehicle that's manipulated by some spirit being. He's very good

and like our bowl of flowers, he's very good in kind and he's very good in condition, and like our bowl of flowers also, he's very good for the purpose that God had in mind for him. He's altogether very good.

Don't ever think, brethren and sisters, that God has brought something sinister or evil into his world by furnishing the garden with a serpent. Everything that God made was 'very good' and we need to underline that in our bibles and in our minds that we never forget that. God won't do anything else than what is 'very good'. And He won't make anything else than what is 'very good'. And then we read in Genesis chapter 3 verse 1, 'that the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made'. And there's an equation in that first part of the verse, it is saying that the serpent is a literal beast. He just happens to be endowed in a special way, a little more than all the other beasts. Now, what are the capabilities of a beast? It's got instincts, it desires food. It doesn't say, 'I would like roast lamb and mint sauce and blueberry pie and whipped cream, because its train of intellect is very narrow.

We've got instincts too, and we say, 'we'd like Sunday dinner', and we imagine all the niceties that we can think of, that we would like for dinner. The field of our intellect is much wider. Still intellect, but much wider than a beast's, and all a beast does is satisfy his instincts by means of his intellect. That's nothing else, brethren and sisters, in our biblical definition than 'eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. That's what it is, it is satisfying our instincts by means of our intellect, and the choices are wider now than they were in the garden of Eden. But, there is this other department, which a beast does not have, and that is the department that separates from the rest of God's creatures. We have moral sentiments, we have a part of our brain to which God can appeal, and His word makes sense to that. He has made our mentality and He has tailor-made our mentality to suit what He has taught, what He wants us to understand. And here comes a beast, a serpent, more subtle than any other beast of the field, but it cannot understand the things of God. It is therefore, totally irresponsible to God's commands. It is not subject to God's commands, and you can talk till the cows come home to your pet dog, 'thou shalt not steal thy neighbour's dog's food', but if he's hungry and sees the food he'll eat it, because there's nothing higher than his instincts and his intellect.

And, brethren and sisters, that's exactly how God made it, because along comes a serpent and he's going to offer, to Eve and to Adam, another set of principles. He's going to offer them, in his innocence and his non-malicious intent, because he hasn't even got an intent, he's going to offer them an alternative. And the whole reason why this being came into the garden was so that God could offer the man and the woman, another way of thinking, and yet be completely absolved of any responsibility, in the production of sin. And there he is, God made him, He made him with ears, He made him with the power of speech, yet He made him incapable of answering to God's laws, and along comes another set of ideas. And we don't know how many times or how many combinations He tried on Adam and Eve, but we do know one thing, that on one occasion his ideas worked and he was just operating in that narrow field of the intellect that he was given, a bit wider than other beasts of the field. Operating on the basis of what felt right and good to him, and therefore, offering a way of conduct which God

wanted desperately for those people to reject out of hand.

The whole intent of God, brethren and sisters, in this situation in Genesis chapter 3 is, to develop people along a course, which will eventually lead to maturity in glorifying His Name. At the end of which time, He obviously had in mind to reward them for a job well done. But unfortunately, that was intercepted by the serpent and by his cunning deceit of Eve and by Adam's foolish going along with her.

Now, let's have a little more of a look at this particular individual, the serpent. We know he's a literal beast. We know he's more subtle than any other beast of the field. We know also, because we have had God tell us, 'he's very good'. He is, however, a creature who cannot receive the ideas of God. He's given the power of speech, and in whatever form it took, he was made upright because he was cursed to go on his belly.

Now, let's have a look at some of the other things here. He was as we've already said 'an absolute necessity in the case'. Because our finite minds, brethren and sisters, cannot think of any other way whereby God could put these people to the test. God's not going to offer them different ideas. He's intent on teaching them His ways, and that's the only thing in which He is intent. He wants them to faithfully obey. He wants them to grow in maturity and in faith before Him. He wants them to learn to love Him and so keep His commandments. What part then does this serpent play? God wanted them, brethren and sisters, not only to love what's right, He wanted them to hate what's wrong. And insofar as we love what is right, we'll find that we have an equal and opposite hatred of that which is wrong. And God knew that. He knows His own creatures' minds. He knows their needs. And although we cannot accuse God of being directly involved in the production of sin, He knew the needs of those people.

Their obedience to Him would have been valueless unless on the background of these alternative views which the serpent offered them. And so He was inviting them to be 'overcomers'. Not to succumb to that wisdom and that philosophy of the flesh, but to overcome it by the wisdom of the Deity. 'Be not overcome of evil' God was saying to them, 'but overcome evil with good'. And there was the production of the thing which eventually and sadly brought sin into the world. It is brought to their notice through the serpent, through a creature that is not accountable to God.

When we turn our bibles to Genesis chapter 3, we can see that the things that we have already seen, are verified by what God does. Turn to Genesis 3 and at verse 9. We are going to deal with these things more specifically and more fully in our subsequent classes tomorrow, but in verse 9, we know the record and it says, 'And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked'. And the Elohim immediately replied, 'How did you come to find out you were naked?' How did you come to find out you were naked? There's only one way. You must have eaten of the tree, Adam. 'Have you eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?' That's the only way in which their eyes could be opened. That's the only way in which they could possibly, at this point of their development, know that they were naked. It's

the only way in which they could appear before anyone else naked and ashamed and fearful. And the Elohim hits the nail on the head, brethren and sisters, He knows what the man has done without even the man having it evoked out of his own mouth.

So, then it says in verse 12, 'the man said, the woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And there is a simple confession of the facts. God did give him the woman, the woman did give him of the fruit, and he did eat. But we're subsequently going to find, brethren and sisters and young people, that that statement was fraught and thoroughly filled with an implication that puts the blame right at the feet of Deity. He says the trouble is, you gave me a woman, you told me she was going to be a help meet for me, but have a look at what's ended up. That's what he says to the angel. Adam is shown up in a bad light, even though he said the facts. Nothing that he said was untrue, but the implication was slanted against the Almighty, and God deals with him on that basis, we'll see later on. Not tonight, but tomorrow, God willing. And then it says in verse 13, 'that Yahweh Elohim said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And she said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat'.

She said the facts too, when she was brought before the bar of God's judgment, and she said them in a way that was altogether acceptable to God. She was a woman of truth, we'll know that, brethren and sisters, by how God deals with her as we outline it tomorrow. And while they both said the facts, the intent, that was connected to those two sets of facts, was entirely different as light is different from darkness. And then it says in verse 14, 'And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou has done this thing'. Now what did Elohim do to the man and the woman? He asked them both, 'what hast thou done?' He didn't ask the serpent that. And the reason He didn't ask the serpent that, brethren and sisters, is because the serpent could never have answered. He can't perceive the difference between right and wrong. He's just an animal. What's the point in asking your pet dog why he went and stole his neighbour's food? What did you do that for? Try and reason with him and tell him he shouldn't have done it on the basis of his love for his God. It goes on deaf ears. There's no moral sentiments and there's none in the serpent. And the way in which God deals with the serpent tells us that God knew he couldn't answer for what he had done. He's quite outside the judgments of God, but there is however, no doubt, that God does start off his judgment on the serpent by saying, 'because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life'. There is obviously a curse upon the serpent.

How are we going to marry the justice of God, the righteousness of God, the appropriateness of what God does, and our trustworthiness before Him, how are we going to marry that with the idea of Him cursing something that isn't even responsible to His law? How do we marry those ideas? Well, they can be married, brethren and sisters, because, what else is cursed in verse 14? The cattle were cursed, the earth was cursed, what did the earth do? what did the other cattle do? and our minds come forward to 1 Corinthians 9, don't turn it up now because we won't have time, but it says there that Paul takes a principle out of the law of Moses, and he says, 'thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen'?

The obvious answer in the context is 'No, He doesn't'. He doesn't take care for oxen. Not that He doesn't take care for oxen, parse, because He does provide the rain from heaven and the sun that causes the grass to grow. He does take care for oxen on that level, but the level about which Paul is speaking, He doesn't take care for oxen. But why does God say it in the law? Paul says, 'it's altogether for our sakes, it's altogether for our sakes that God cursed the serpent. It is altogether for our sakes, brethren and sisters and young people and friends, because when we stand back, and we haven't really got this far in our other considerations of Genesis, and Adam and Eve in particular, but when we stand back and have a look, we see this one thing, that Adam and Eve have only committed one sin, and God cursed them, the serpent, He cursed all other beasts of the field, He put a curse on the whole earth, just because Adam and Eve did one thing wrong. IS THAT HOW WE VIEW SIN?

Is that how we view one sin? That it really does take from God all those measures to reinforce how hideous a monster it is in His sight? Do we think of sin like that? It's altogether for our sakes. And take it a little bit further, brethren and sisters, say we had a pet dog right here tonight, and we were able because we were specially qualified medical men, we were able to have a dog that could listen, that could speak, that could make a certain amount of sense out of those things which it heard and which it saw, because the channel of its intellect was just a bit wider than other dogs. And then we put a curse on it, and its curse was that we cut off its legs, changed its dietary habit and made it fly. Would the dog know anything about that? Would the dog be able to understand what had been done to it? It would still be able to eat, to drink, to sleep, to procreate. So could the serpent. What has God done to it? Well, He's changed his locomotion, He's put a curse upon it, but it wasn't a curse that could be understood in a moral sense, it was a curse altogether for our sakes.

And, brethren and sisters, do you know what really was the biggest curse that God put on that serpent? Well, if any of you know anything about snakes, you will know that snakes don't have ears. That's the biggest curse that God put upon the serpent. He can no longer hear, he has got no hearing device. He's only got a device in his tongue that is essential to sense sound vibrations. There's no hearing device in the normal sense of things that other animals have got. He's got no ears, so therefore, his curse is that he cannot hear. Now the apostle Paul knew this, if we turn up to Romans chapter 8 we will be able to prove that he knew that. What did God say when He was continuing to deal with serpent in verse 15 of Genesis chapter 3? He said, 'because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, for upon thy belly shalt thou go, dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life, and I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed'. God said He's going to put enmity between the woman and the serpent. Now let's have a look in Romans 8 and there's one word out of Genesis 3:15 that we pick up in this passage, between verses 5 and 8, and just see, brethren and sisters and young people, if this does not confirm all that we have been saying so far about God's dealings with men in the garden in Eden.

Verse 5, 'They that are after the flesh, (there's only the flesh and the spirit) they that are after the flesh do mind (or think about) the things of the flesh; but they that are after the

Spirit (think about) the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death'. What did Adam and Eve get? They got death. They must have been carnally minded. That was the condemnation. 'But to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind, the carnal mind (properly paraphrased) the thinking of the flesh, is enmity against God'. What did God say in Gen.3:15, 'I will put enmity'. There's our enmity. What is the enmity between? It is between the thinking of the flesh and the thinking of the spirit.

Verse 7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God. Was the serpent subject to the law of God? He wasn't subjected to the law of God. Now, let's put this is a modern term. We're travelling along the road in our motorcar and we see a sign, 100 km per hr. maximum, and we do 110. We're not subject to the law. We're acting as if there were no law. But, brethren and sisters, if you could actually, and young brethren, if you could actually convince the officer who caught you, that there was nothing you could do about disobeying the law. If you could actually convince him that it was just impossible for you to disobey the law, you might receive a little bit of leniency. Look what it says about this mind. It doesn't only say that the thinking of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, but it says, it cannot be. The thinking of the flesh, just cannot be subject to the law of God. Not only is it not, but it can't be. That's us, that's all of us, brethren and sisters. There is not one of us, who, a natural human being, is anything else than that. Not one of us. We cannot even be subject to God's law in our present state, that is, without a knowledge of God's truth. There are still our moral sentiments. God can still appeal to us, but if we came into existence, and we were shielded and curtailed from any influence of God's word, direct or indirect, we would be just like a beast.

And the thinking of the flesh is quite alright in a beast. All he does is fulfil his own sensations by his narrow channel of his intellect. That's alright in a beast. God has never made the beasts answerable to Him. That's all they can do. They can operate in that low and narrow field, but us, we have been given moral sentiments. We've been given the secrets of the purpose of life. We've been given a part of our mind that is able to be appealed to by God, by higher things. And as the thoughts of God are as high as the heavens are above the earth, so those thoughts have got to come into our minds, brethren and sisters, and infiltrate us, to influence us in a pathway of righteousness, so that we will be able to be what the Elohim and God Himself desired Adam and Eve to be, reflections of Him.

Now, we'd like to go a little further in our consideration of this serpent. What is the serpent, and why did God curse the serpent? Paul tells us here in Romans chapter 8. He says the serpent, while it was a literal beast, while it did truly deceive Eve and partly deceive Adam, it was a literal beast, it was more subtle than any other of the beast of the field, it does stand for something against which God has pronounced endless warfare, until the last war to end all wars. He says, 'I will put enmity' and He's going to put enmity there until the last bastion of that monster called 'sin', which is enthroned in the mind of every man and woman that's been born of man and woman, is done away with. And He wants to enter into our minds by the power of His word, so that He might get around and take the strong man. Because, there's the strong man, he's in the

castle of our mind, and God has liberated through His word, the principles which will bind that strong man, and throw him out. And that's what He wants to do, and brethren and sisters, let's look at a couple of passages, first of all, from John chapter 3 and then John chapter 8, and see how the scriptures deal with this power, the serpent mind, the thinking of the flesh.

First of all in John chapter 3, I'm sorry, it should be Matthew chapter 3, and it's talking about the baptism of John. Verse 7, 'But when John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers'. O generation of vipers. He could not have placed upon them a more severe denunciation. He's telling them, he's pointing right to the issue, brethren and sisters, that Paul has drawn to our attention in Romans chapter 8, because he said, 'the enmity is between that and that. And that over there, the thinking of the flesh, not only is not subject to God's law but it can't be. And it can't be subject to God's law because it can't hear it. Hearing is the device by which faith comes. It is impossible for a serpent to have faith, it is impossible for a serpent mind to have faith. And so when John called these people 'a generation of vipers', he's making a forecast just as much as making a statement. And he says these people are vipers because they can't hear, and they won't hear, and then we come over into John chapter 8. In John chapter 8 we have an incident, a very interesting incident, in which the Lord Jesus Christ and the Pharisees are discussing their origins, so that in chapter 8 and verse 30 we read, 'As he spake these words, many believed on him'. We know what belief involves. It involves the most exacting and difficult work that our God ever undertakes. Many believed on Him, then Jesus said to those Jews who believed on Him, 'if you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered Him, (We've got a pedigree that goes right back to Abraham); we were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth in the house forever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that you are the offspring of Abraham; but you seek to kill me, (why) because my word hath no place in you'.

Now, brethren and sisters, these were the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the Jews. They knew the statement of faith. You couldn't tell them that the kingdom of God was not going to be the kingdom of Israel restored. You couldn't tell them that God is a Trinity. They knew the statement of faith, but He said, 'my word has no place in you', and then He said, 'I speak that which I have (learned) from my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen'. Seen. Faith comes by hearing not by sight. They do what they have seen with their father. He says, 'we're a different family'. They answered and said unto Him, 'Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the same things as Abraham did. But now ye seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard of God. This did not Abraham; ye do the deeds of your father. Then they said unto Him, 'We've got a pedigree, but what's this story about you being born of a virgin'. There's got to be some fornication there, that's where you came from. Jesus said unto them, 'If God were your Father, ye would love me:' What's the answer, brethren and sisters? Why don't they understand? It's

because they're serpents, it's because they have no ears, it's not because they would not hear, it's not because it was impossible for them to hear, or was it? Yes, it is. It's impossible for you to hear My word. You cannot hear My word. Now, brethren and sisters, you won't find more religious people than that, anywhere upon the face of the earth than those people, who probably had a statement of faith almost identical to ours. And Jesus Christ says, 'they cannot hear His word'. I wonder if that might apply to us? I wonder if we've learned the art of hearing God's word? I wonder if we give God room to tell us what He wants to tell us? I wonder if we really do know, brethren and sisters, the first principles of the oracles of God? Yes, we can list them off, but what is the concept that is behind those doctrines? What is the concept that over arches them all and makes them meaningful in life?

I'd like to read a section penned by Bro. Robert Roberts in his first diary of a voyage which is on page 70, and he says this, 'God has permitted the recovery of the truth in these latter days, and there is a liability that it might be lost again, through the inability of complacent minds of limited grasp, to see its wide line breadth, and through their tendency to sympathize more readily with the human than the divine bearing of its doctrines. The doctrines of the truth embody the thoughts of God, and the thoughts of God are higher than the thoughts of men, and therefore, the majority of men easily fail to rise to the height of them, or easily fall from the height when lifted up to them. The death of Christ has more to do with the exaltation of God, than the salvation of man. Most men take in the latter more easily than the former and quickly get astray through the power of mere humanitarianism'.

Brethren and sisters, I would like to respectfully suggest that we all here stand in grave danger of grasping hold of the lower level of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and we don't give enough attention to the higher level and why and how it showed God to be exalted. We very easily equate with our needs, and they are our needs, and they're fulfilled in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom an enmity raged, and it was completely nullified because God was stronger than sin. But, do we look at the other side of our Lord Jesus Christ and see just how brilliant was the victory of God in Jesus Christ? We very easily say and we very glibly say, yes, He was a sinless bearer of our nature. Brethren and sisters, he was in that, a representative not of us, but of God. He was a representative of God and He was a representative of God just as much and more, and certainly more importunately, than He was a representative of us. We easily grasp hold of the man Jesus Christ, we don't so readily understand and in fact, I would respectfully suggest, we don't understand, a man who was sinless. Can we understand sinlessness? Can we understand that, brethren and sisters? That's high! God does not want our minds to be down at the 'serpent level'. He wants our minds to be up at that level, and He's done everything in His power to excite our minds. He's laid out all these wonderful truths for us, concealed, yes, but they're just waiting for the taking, and He's always been interested in extending the minds of the people He made from the beginning. We still have the power of moral sentiments. We still have it today, brethren and sisters and young people, and we've got to use it, and we've got to understand that in those moral sentiments and against them, is the power of the sins of the flesh. It's that power that God said He would place enmity against because there it was, personified in the serpent, and there was the truth personified in the woman. And

He said there is enmity between those two parties, and not only so, it will be a continual warfare until the woman's seed comes into the world and smites the serpent power on the head, and gives it a deadly and everlasting blow, in the person of His only begotten Son. Brethren and sisters, we want to leave tonight by placing a couple of propositions before our minds.

I don't know if it has ever occurred to us what God was trying to get Adam to do. Certainly, He was trying to get Adam to be developed to a state of maturity where He could give him a reward for a job well done. But, involved in that, was your destiny and mine, and when we stand back and have a look at the grand purpose of God with Adam and with his wife, Eve, we see God asking Adam and Eve, by means of their conduct, to decide your destiny and mine. And Adam decided it. He decided that all of his progeny would go into the grave forever. And when we come to consider the next part of our considerations, brethren and sisters and young people, we're going to start considering a man, a new man, an unique man, a man who was begotten by the power of the Spirit of God, upon whose head, God placed the responsibility of deciding the destiny of everyone who is in Him. Everyone of us are in Adam, and God said to Adam, by implication, 'On your head Adam lies the destiny of all your progeny'. Can you think of a responsibility more great than that, and likewise, can we think of a responsibility greater than that, which He placed upon his only begotten Son, when He by implication, has asked Him, to decide a different destiny for God's creatures?

And so we leave our thoughts tonight, brethren and sisters, having looked at this serpent, having looked at why he was there, and having come to the conclusion that God, in our infinite minds, had no other way in which he could lay a test at the feet of Adam and Eve. God never intended for that serpent to draw them over that line of unrighteousness. God wanted him to listen to those words, to weigh them up with what the angels were telling them and to reject that out of hand, and to learn to love that and to learn to hate that, so that it might become the basis of eternal salvation. And it is written of the next Adam, the last Adam, Jesus Christ, 'that because He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, God has anointed Him with the oil of gladness, above His fellows'.