

Stent Lie

The assurance that if you  
disobey God's known will, you  
will not surely die, is false:

1. From Eve's Experience
2. From the assurance of a better  
than Satan, viz., God Himself
3. From the nature of the case;  
clay can't live without the ani-  
-mating breath of God
4. From the self-condemning  
screery of those who disobey

~~XCIII.~~  
Satan's Lie

Gen. iii, 4: "Ye shall not surely die."

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These words were spoken in Paradise to our first mother. They were spoken by the great Enemy of her & us; but she did not perceive what he was. They are a lie; but they were taken by her for truth. She accepted them to her mind.

Surely, truth is stranger than fiction. We read many exciting tales of imaginary people, & our interest deepens with the gravity of their situations. What could be more impressive than this first real story of people in the world? ~~The race of men & women~~

The Supreme Being had ~~just~~ created a man & a woman, & had placed them in a pleasant garden on earth, & given them the care of it for their occupation in life. Among the many trees with which it abounded, He had pointed out one, & forbidden them to ~~touch~~ eat its fruit. He gave them all but one; He demanded nothing of them; He forbade them but the best that He could. What a happy lot was theirs! They had a beautiful home, a work that God deemed happy & good & pleasant for them, the favor of God, & everything on earth but one! ~~What could they ask more? They~~ they could not possess more than this; for if they should take the forbidden tree's fruit, they must lose a more precious thing which they

they had, viz., God's favor, or life itself. One is naturally interested to know the rest of their history. Alas! how well we should anticipate — if we were reading this story for the first time, — that they would not be content with what they had, & would end by ~~being~~ having more & reason for discontent — yet? For we have their nature; we recognize a family likeness ~~fast~~ in their chafing against being forbidden anything on earth.

There was a serpent that soon spoke to the woman. It is not worth our while to stop the Bible story to inquire for facts not told in it — how the serpent could speak, why he is called a beast of the field, etc.; he spoke to the woman, <sup>as the mouthpiece of her betrayer, the devil.</sup> that is the

fact importantly <sup>4</sup> connected with the rest of the story. He asked her, in an ingenious form of words, if God had forbidden her to eat of every tree of the garden. ~~If her answer should show that her mind judged the~~

~~prohibition of one tree~~ Why is this asked? <sup>now that Eve had considered this!</sup> O what an evil spirit

this serpent has! he wishes to awaken this happy woman & consider

what she has not. Is there any thing that you have not? And the

temptation succeeds. Yes there is one thing, she says, that she is forbidden.

As she speaks the feeling of dissatisfaction grows upon her, & she exaggerates God's command: she has

been forbidden <sup>on</sup> even to touch the tree. That is not true; she may only

forbidden to eat; what matters the touching? It is plain she is ~~about~~ turning her thoughts all on that one forbidden tree, she has forgotten all the rest already. Now the world has changed when in a moment! There is only that one tree in it now, & she wants to dress that & keep it, while the rest of Paradise may become a wilderness, & bring forth thorns & thistles.

Now that her attention is <sup>regretfully</sup> fixed on it, the serpent has the whole field, & will succeed. The woman has forgotten that she has a friend in her Mother, & her only thought of Him is as 'the One who has kept from her what she wants. She is ready when anything good of the one forbidden tree. She grieves in heart that she has it not; she craves it; she is in

in a mood even to welcome a lie,  
 if it will serve the new control-  
 ling thought of her mind. Nothing  
 but the penalty God has named deters  
 her from taking of the tree at once;  
 she remembers that because the  
 tree itself brings it to mind; she has  
 forgotten all the other real of the  
 garden but it was of this tree that  
 God said "Eat not lest ye die."

Such ~~these~~ are the circumstan-  
 -ces in which her enemy & ours  
 says "Ye shall not surely die." Then,  
~~takes it for truth, mark,~~ he goes on  
 to promise her; tells her what good there  
 is in it; even clinches her new  
 anger against her Maker by telling  
 her how ~~the~~ God will be envious  
 of her for its gift. O mother Eve!  
 if you could ~~hear~~ <sup>express</sup> such words of spirit



7  
your gracious Maker, it needed  
not that you should reach forth  
your hand, to show that you  
preferred this to Him!

She took the tempter at his  
word, & did what God had forbidden  
her to do. In her turn, she became  
now a tempter; the ~~devil~~ unseen  
spirit of evil no longer needs to speak  
thro' a serpent, he has a mortal  
now to do his work on earth. She  
goes to the man, & tempts him; and  
the world is undone.

Now, friends, why is this story given  
us to read? Is it not more than inter-  
-esting to us — do we not recognize  
our nature in the one that there  
surrendered itself to an evil tempta-  
-tion? God, Who was merciful to

poor minded Adam & Eve, has mercy  
for us their children like them, & would  
teach us the danger to which we  
are exposed, of ~~meeting~~ <sup>meeting</sup> a lie &  
receiving it as the truth. His  
word tells us (Rev. xii, 9) that there is  
an enemy "who deceiveth the whole  
world"; we are exposed to him; & it  
behoves us to be familiar with the  
inspired narrative that tells us  
what an hereditary peril from this  
tempter is, & in what manner he  
may succeed in destroying us.

~~Let no one say he is not a  
child of Eve, is not deceived along  
with the rest of the world, is not  
tempted.~~

Let no one vainly fancy that he  
is not put on such a probation as  
was Eve's, nor exposed to her peril

from Satan, <sup>9</sup> because he has  
never looked upon him nor heard  
his voice. Every man, says St. James,  
is tempted, when he is drawn away  
by his own lust & enticed. Sa-  
tan, then, is no longer in a garden;  
he is in the heart; nay, here is the  
bearing of the story to us: our  
hearts are the gardens which God  
has given us to dress & to keep, & Sa-  
tan has found his way therein,  
as he did into Paradise. Beware  
of your enemy, then, he is in  
your heart! This justifies &  
explains the testimony of Jeremi-  
ah (xviii, 9), that the heart is de-  
ceitful above all things & des-

perately wicked. Who among  
 you, my hearers, does not find  
 himself longing sometimes for  
 possession which his conscience,  
 enlightened by God's word, denies  
 to him? Who does not, in the presence  
 of that forbidden pleasure, hear the  
 voice of the Devil within, crying:  
 Thou shalt not surely die! How  
 what matters it to you whether  
 the specious false words come to  
 your ear, or your mind direct-  
 ly? What matters it that you should  
 behold the serpent with the eye,  
 so that he can speak his charm-  
 ing to your secret soul — a charm-  
 ing which you know to be against

the holy will " of God? See! God  
has set your mill in the garden  
of your heart to dress it & to  
keep it; not so pure & clean a  
garden as Eve had, alas! it is  
true! as the prophet's word has  
reminded us, but yet a garden to  
be kept, & where great good is  
given you, & only a little that  
is in your sight, restrained from  
you. God has given you friends,  
shelter, & food, & shelter, & all  
good gifts, but there is one thing  
He has not given you: He has  
put up the restrictive bars of  
His Providence agt. your seeing  
& knowing the evil there is in  
the world, perhaps, & you are

tempted to seek <sup>12</sup> that. O young  
man! the tree of knowledge of  
good & evil is within your reach, &  
if you chosse, if you dare, to ~~put~~  
put forth your hand & take of its  
forbidden fruit, nothing but God's  
curse - you understand that  
- restrains you. Is the Devil mis-  
pering in your heart? Yea, hath God  
said, thou shalt know nothing  
of the world? O brother! he  
named aft. his lie; God has  
not said, by the mouth of your  
mother, or your Sabbath-school  
teacher, or your pastor, or your  
Mr. friend, thou shalt know noth-  
ing of the world; see, there are  
realms of good knowledge, of

curious know- ledge, of valuable  
 knowledge, in books, in the arts,  
 in the sciences; why fasten all  
 your thoughts, nay, why give any  
 thoughts at all, to that bad  
 curiosity which you know is the  
 Arch-Tempter's whispering? Does  
 he say: Thou shalt not need die!  
 Believe him not! Let the an-  
 gels of the first sinners name  
 you, & say: Get thee behind me,  
 Satan!

Or, it is another temptation:  
 Yea, hath God said, Thou shalt  
 have no pleasure in youthful  
 years? Dear young friend, if God  
 has filled up your bright life with  
 His choicest blessings: indulgent

tender-hearted<sup>4</sup> parents, the  
charms of person & disposition,  
& mind, friends, & health, & set  
only one restriction; if God has said  
to you by the serious voice of  
the Church, of all the pleas-  
ures of youth thou mayst freely  
take, but of the pleasures which  
distract the heart from fer-  
vent piety thou mayst not take:  
will you let the tempter exag-  
gerate the restriction, & lead you  
astray? God has said lovingly to

you:

☉ Rejoice, ~~young man~~, in thy youth,  
and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of  
thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine  
heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but  
know thou, that for all these things God  
will bring thee into judgment.

☉ Therefore remove sorrow from thy  
heart, and put away evil from thy flesh:  
for childhood and youth are vanity.

Will you then believe the lie  
that Satan whispers to you, &  
turn your beautiful young life  
into the misery of Eve? Be-



lieve not the <sup>15</sup> Tempter who says  
by your trembling, renouncing  
conscience: Then shalt not  
by die, there is no harm in  
it!

Or, you hear the temptation,  
in the midst of all good  
things but one other. Like Ha-  
man the Persian, tho' you have all  
that heart can wish - friends, &  
wealth, & honor, & all - it all  
profits you nothing so long as  
Mordecai the Jew sitteth at  
the King's gate; so long as some  
one in the world has some-  
thing you want, or ~~does or does~~  
~~not~~ do acts contrary to your  
wishes, or is more favored than  
you. Does Satan say to you, when

God's voice within you for-  
 bids the word of envy, the  
 act of malice, the petty mean-  
 ness: Do it, never fear, thou shalt  
 not surely die! A friend! will  
 you read God's inspired account  
 of the first temptation, in vain:  
 Envy is death, malice is death, to  
 the soul. Turn a deaf ear to the  
 Devil, & hear what God's holy word  
 saith:

(Ps. (XV)) LORD, who shall abide in thy taberna-  
 cle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?  
 2 He that walketh uprightly, and work-  
 eth righteousness, and speaketh the truth  
 in his heart.  
 3 He that backbiteth not with his tongue,  
 nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh  
 up a reproach against his neighbour.

Or, once more, is the Devil dis-  
 pering to you, in the midst of  
 a business which <sup>can</sup> afford you a  
 competence by legitimate using,  
 which fires you therefore every-  
 thing hate me, that is great pro-

perity & wealth <sup>17</sup> is the devil  
whispering a temptation to doubt-  
ful measures, tricks of trade, coun-  
plicity with the dishonesties which  
are rampant now among men?

Is he saying: ~~Yes~~ offering you  
a lie: Yes, hath God said, Thou  
shalt starve, thou & thine? Or  
thou shalt <sup>die;</sup> ~~not~~ such <sup>die;</sup> ~~die;~~  
with the multitude; do as  
the rest do; be not righteous  
overmuch, why shouldst thou  
destroy thyself? ~~Thou shalt not~~  
~~such die by endeavour to succeed~~

Ah! brother, can you distin-  
guish God's voice from Satan's?  
Satan is lying to you; but God  
has said: "A false balance (Prov. xi) is  
abomination to the Lord;"

Better is a little with righteousness  
than great revenues without right.

Better it is to be of an humble  
spirit with the Lord

to the world goes. I may not have named the peculiar temptation which shows Satan to you, but I may have succeeded in suggesting that God, your Maker, has laid upon you some one particular restriction which is His test of your love for Him, or of your secret inclination ag<sup>t</sup> Him, & that there are times in your life when you are more than half disposed to ~~do~~ sin, on the hope, that the consequence to yourself, beside the pleasure, may not be utter ruin. There are times when sin seems so pleasing that you are willing to risk God's displeasure, hoping only that that displeasure may

will not be so <sup>19</sup> very severe,  
Against such perils let me urge  
upon you now some consid-  
erations of ~~Satan's~~ ~~falsehood,~~  
the falsity of Satan's assurances.

1. If you sin, you must  
die. Eve found it so. Consider  
her experience. She gratified her  
wish for more knowledge than  
God had deemed meet for her, to  
her own speedy ruin. The  
first gain she made, was a loss;  
she was ashamed. She hid her-  
self from the face of God, she then  
husband — could that be a  
comfortable condition! And when  
God called to them where art thou?  
& they were brought to His face for

judgment, the ~~crises~~ <sup>crises</sup> that  
 were pronounced on them per-  
 erally, were ~~that's the assurance~~  
 the earnest of God's assurance,  
 that "the soul that sinneth, it  
 shall die." If you would believe  
 the Tempter when he bids you  
 sin without fear of death, look  
 around you upon the world lying  
 in sin & misery, & behold the  
 proof of his ~~the~~ lie & of the truth  
 of God's warning. The miseries  
 adjudged upon the first <sup>sinner</sup> ~~part~~ are  
 daily repeated in your sight.  
 No longer in the peaceful Eden,  
 their unhappy children raise a  
 constant wretched warfare with  
 the earth & with one another.  
 Thorns & thistles the earth brings

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forth to them, that their labor  
is hard & almost a living death;  
in sorrow indeed do they eat; in  
the sweat of his face truly sees  
man eat bread while his body  
remains animated by the soul;  
but at last even this struggling  
existence has an end, & the union  
of body & soul which God devised  
for good, is dissolved by the hope-  
less corruption of sin, & the earth  
receives once more its kindred  
clay. Consider this, when Satan  
would persuade you of the harm-  
lessness of the sin to which you  
he tempts you; consider that as  
the first pair were driven from  
their happy home thro' a world of

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miserly to the grave, so  
upon all men likewise death  
has passed, for that all have  
sinned. Consider, aft<sup>r</sup> your  
besetting temptations, this proof  
of the falsity of your Tempter, &  
seek rather the counsel & lead-  
ing of the Lord Jesus X<sup>t</sup>, Who will  
show you the path of life, & in  
Whose hand are pleasures forever-  
more.

The punishments of sins, are  
wonderfully fitted to the sins  
themselves. Unworthy curiosity meets  
its censure, to corruption & shame.  
Worldly pleasures are ashes at the  
last, — poverty, enmity, <sup>friendlessness</sup> & disease.  
Envy & malice returns upon those  
who use them. Dishonesty is



sure to be found out, sooner or later, & ends in failure & contempt. All, end at last in death, malice, & vice, lying, & self-indulgence, are pitiful companions in the hour of death. To die as one has lived, is the dread of a sinner; & yet what truer word was ever spoken, than this, that men generally turn out to be what they always were!

Be persuaded to dread the inner voice of Satan, then. He who could persuade to the follies of death an innocent, sinless woman, still tempts with infernal skill the soul of every one of us. Let us watch at the door of our hearts, that he may not find us an easy

per.

2. Consider, however, better, the glorious purpose of God, in that restrained condition which Satan knows well is distasteful to our natures. It is not arbitrarily, nor for the mere sake of putting a test upon us, that God has set limitations to ~~the~~ our wishes. He would, by laying small restraints upon us, teach us & develop within us, the noble power of self-control. What is more satisfying than this? Even the heathen have taught us to admire, & desire this virtue. Plato (Spectator, No. 237) lays it down as a principle,

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that whatever is permitted to  
befall a just man... shall either  
in life or death conduce to his  
good" — & Seneca, as Mr Addison  
has said, "rises into that celebrated  
sentiment that there is not on  
earth a spectacle more worthy the  
regard of a Creator intent upon  
his works, than a brave man's su-  
fferion to his sufferings; to which  
he adds, that it must be a pleas-  
ure to Jupiter himself to look  
down from heaven & see Cato  
amidst the ruins of his coun-  
try preserving his integrity."

Truly, my hearers, this is far  
above the petty spirit of those  
who lend a willing ear to the

Tempter. If the light of  
 nature, aided only by the feeble  
 shimmering of long-mixed remains  
 of revelation, could move those hea-  
 rters to write thus, how should  
 we hail the plain Mosaic nar-  
 rative which tells us that  
 the Creator, our God, has in-  
 deed chosen to order our life  
 in the path to self-restraint!  
 Look on every hand & behold  
 the provisions which He has  
 made for this soul-culture: the  
 petty hindrances & cruelties of those  
 with whom we have to do; the  
 rivalries & enmities of business;  
 the oppositions of the elements

- storms beating <sup>27</sup> back the ships  
& cars, water flooding the mines,  
base metals mixed with the  
precious minerals, moth & rust  
compelling constant watchfulness  
- all these familiar trials are  
evidences of a wise & beneficent  
purpose of God to teach us to  
possess our souls in quietness,  
& live fervent in spirit, not sloth-  
ful in business! Against this  
evident plan, how shameful  
must they appear who lend  
a willing ear to temptation! nay,  
who are not living day by day  
an earnest life, striving by  
Divine Grace to get the mas-  
tery of sin & self, & develop

spiritual  
a strength

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that shall be

an eternal joy!