**Serpent and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil**

**Genesis 3:1–6, 9, 11–13**

Only Eve confronts the serpent in genesis (3:1). She is the one beguiled by the serpent. Think of all the problems Eve had to confront: the concept of subordination to man; being thrust out of her home (Eden); being the mother of Cain (“the type of mortal and material man” SH 540:28; responsibility for the downfall of the human race (Tertullian, an early Christian writer, called her “the devil’s gateway”); the curse upon her progeny –“in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children” (Gen. 3:16). It seduces and manipulates the woman and gives the impression that the serpent must think for humanity.

 1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

A synonym for the **serpent** is found in Rev. 12:9 – “the great **dragon** was cast out, that old serpent, called the **Devil**, and **Satan**, which deceiveth the whole world.”

*More subtil* – in Hebrew “subtil” is *arum* which can mean “crafty” (Strong 6175). A synonym for the serpent is found in Rev. 12:9 – “the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.”

Only Eve confronts the serpent in Genesis, chapter three, verse one. She is the one beguiled by the serpent. It seduces and manipulates the woman and gives the impression that the serpent must think for humanity.

“The serpent is characterized as ‘more crafty’ (*arum*) than any of the others God formed; this is a play on the word for ‘naked” (*arummim*) in 2:25. The link suggests that human beings may be *exposed* at times to shrewd or crafty elements in the world, language often associated with temptation” (*NIB*, Vol. 1, 359).

“On two grounds the writer was left to fix upon the serpent as the medium of the temptation. One was the natural habits of the creature, its stealthy movements, its deadly venom, and the instinctive feeling of repulsion which the very sight of it provokes. These things are all suggestive of the insidious approach and fatal power of temptation. The other was the fact that already the serpent in older mythologies was associated with the powers of darkness” (Dummelow 9).

 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

In Hebrew the word *serpent* is *nachash* – “figurative of enemies; figurative of oppressor, simile of perniciousness of ungodly; crafty tempter; symbolic of world-powers; of sea-monster” (B-D-B 638).

 3 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.

“Eve’s response seems motivated by an effort to explain the situation to the serpent. She evidences familiarity with the prohibition (not established to this point in the narrative); she both paraphrases the permission/prohibition in her own words and quotes God directly” (*NIB* 1.360).

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**Tree is *ets* in Hebrew which means a tree from its firmness; wood; timber; etc. related to *atsah*: to fasten or make firm, i.e. to close the eyes or shut the eyes.**

Tree of knowledge of good and evil will shut our eyes to ‘man’s God-given dominion over the earth.’ 165:1

DON’T TOUCH DUALISM! The tree of knowledge of good and evil!

SH 165:1

Physiology is one of the apples from **“the tree**

**of knowledge.”** Evil declared that eating this fruit

would open man’s eyes and make him as a god. Instead

of so doing, it closed the eyes of mortals to man’s God-

given dominion over the earth.

SH 197:8-15

God said of the **tree of knowledge**, which bears the fruit of sin, disease, and death, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

    The less that is said of physical structure and laws, and

the more that is thought and said about moral

and spiritual law, the higher will be the stand-

ard of living and the farther mortals will be re-

moved from imbecility or disease.

SH 220:26

    The belief that either fasting or feasting makes men

better morally or physically is one of the fruits of **“the**

**tree of the knowledge of good and evil,**” concerning which God said, “Thou shalt not eat of it.” Mortal mind forms all conditions of the mortal

body, and controls the stomach, bones, lungs, heart, blood,

etc., as directly as the volition or will moves the hand.

SH 299:18-20

    Knowledge gained from material sense is figuratively

represented in Scripture as a tree, bearing the fruits of

sin, sickness, and death.

SH 538:14-15

The “tree of knowledge” typifies unreality.

Mis. 198:21-26

All suffering is the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of *both* good and evil; of adherence to the “doubleminded” senses, to some belief,

fear, theory, or bad deed, based on physical material law,

so-called as opposed to good, — all of which is corrected

alone by Science, divine Principle, and its spiritual laws.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

“The serpent grows bolder on seeing that the woman is willing to argue the matter, and now flatly denies the truth of the divine warning. . . . The serpent avers that the threatened penalty will not be exacted, that God has selfishly kept out of their sight a great boon which men may gain; that He is unwilling to see them rise too high. So the serpent sows discord between man and his Maker, by misrepresenting God’s character” (Dummelow 9).

5 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.

“The Word of God was to be the model, the rule by which man was to differentiate between good and evil. . . . It is at this point that man first encounters animal logic in the form of its most subtle exemplification; the serpent. Even the most intelligent animal is incapable of understanding how man could possibly remain indifferent to the best, the most beautiful and appealing physical delights” (Hirsch 17).

The serpent tailors the truth to incite envy. Mrs. Eddy writes, “Envy, the great red dragon of this hour, would obscure the light of Science, take away a third part of the stars from the spiritual heavens, and cast them to the earth” (*Mis.* 254:18).

The serpent becomes bolder in its assertions and proceeds not only to assure her of perfect impunity, but also to promise great benefits from partaking of it (Jamieson 19).

**The serpent claims that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil will open the eyes, but the truth is that corporeal sense closes the eyes of man.**

**Opened is *paqch* (6491) in Hebrew which means to open the senses especially the eyes, figuratively to be observant; open;**

6 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.

“Eve gazed and reflected when she should have fled. Here we see the physical basis of temptation, the lust of the flesh, which ‘when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin’ (James 1:15)” (Dummelow 9).

“With one efficient sweep, the serpent removes the only curb that the Lord God has been able to put upon his creation: fear of punishment. He assures Eve that the eating of the fruit will not bring death. On the contrary, it will bring a wonderful reward, the ‘gift of wisdom’ (Gen. 3:6). Naturally the Lord God does not want any rivals, and it is for this reason alone that he has forbidden the fruit to Adam and Eve.

“The argument is ingenious, and it convinces Eve. She shares the fruit with Adam, they eat, and at once the results of their new knowledge begin to appear. The first result is guilt and the second, fear. Nakedness is used as the symbol of the guilt . . . the fear is more fundamental, being the universal and inevitable fear of consequences, and in their terror Adam and Eve try to hide themselves from their creator among the trees of the garden.

“This attempt at concealment is actual confession that the command has been broken, although the Lord God, who is by no means omniscient, is obliged to inquire pointblank

if he has been disobeyed. Adam immediately uses his disastrous intellect in an attempt to avoid punishment, and undertakes to divide the blame equally between the Lord God and Eve” (Chute 52-53).

Tree is *ets* and means to fasten, close the eyes of (TWOT)

The eyes often deceive and lead one astray. “Eve gazed and reflected when she should have fled. Here we see the physical basis of temptation, the lust of the flesh, which ‘when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin’ (James 1:15)” (Dummelow 9).

 9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

“In this section God conducts a judicial inquiry. Whereas the woman functioned as the dialogue partner in vv. 1-5, the man serves that function in vv. 9-12” (*NIB* 1.362).

“*Where art thou* implies that the Lord was aware of their endeavor to hide themselves from Him” (Murphy 120).

11 Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

 12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

“To the direct interrogatory of the Almighty, he confesses who made him acquainted with his nakedness and the fact of his having eaten of the forbidden fruit: ‘The woman’ gave me of the tree, and ‘I did eat’ ” (Barnes online, http://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/3-11.htm).

13 And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

“*Beguile* in Hebrew is *nasha*: “deceive, a primitive root; to lead astray, i.e. (mentally) to delude, or (morally) to seduce.” (Strong 5378)

“The woman makes a similar confession and a similar indication of the source of her temptation. She has now found out that the serpent ‘beguiled her.’ The result has not corresponded to the benefit she was led to anticipate. There seems not to be any disingenuousness in either case. Sin does not take full possession of the will all at once. It is a slow poison. It has a growth. It requires time and frequent repetition” (Barnes online, http://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/3-13.htm).