

The Two Trees

⇒ **Introduction:**

- The scriptures tell us that the Lord God planted a garden and placed man in the garden.
 - **Genesis 2:8**
- In that garden God made to grow every tree.
 - **Genesis 2:9**
- However, there was one tree that man was prohibited eating the fruit of.
 - **Genesis 2:16-17**
 - **The tree of the knowledge of good and evil**
- The scriptures tell us that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was crucified in a garden.
 - **John 19:41**
- In that garden there was a tree that our Lord was crucified on.
 - **Acts 5:30**
 - **1 Pe. 2:24**

⇒ Why should the Cross of our blessed Lord be spoken of as a "tree"?

- Surely there must be some deeper meaning than that which appears on the surface.
- Was it not intended by the Holy Spirit that we should refer back to Genesis 2:9 and compare and contrast these two trees.
- I believe so, and a study and meditation thereon reveals some remarkable points both of comparison and contrast between the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree on which our Lord was crucified.

⇒ **I. Contrasts**

- **1. The first tree was planted by God.**
 - **Genesis 2:9**
 - This tree then was planted not by Adam, but by Adam's Maker— God.
 - But the second tree, the tree to which our Lord was nailed, was planted by *man*.
 - "**And they crucified Him**" (Matthew 27:35) is the brief but terrible record.
 - It was human hands which devised, provided and erected that cruel tree on the hill of Calvary.
 - In marked contrast from the first tree, it was the hands of the **creature** and **not** the Creator which planted the second tree.
- **2. The first tree was pleasant to the eyes.**
 - **See Genesis 3:6**

- Exactly in what this "pleasantness" consisted we do not know, but the Divine record seems to indicate that this tree was an object of beauty and delight.
- What a contrast from the second Tree!
 - Here everything was hideous and repellant.
 - The suffering Savior, the vulgar crowd, the taunting priests, the two thieves, the flowing blood, the three hours darkness—nothing was there to please the outward eye.
 - The first tree was "pleasant to the eyes," but concerning the One on the second tree it is written, "**They saw in Him no beauty that they should desire Him.**"
- **3. God forbade man to eat of the first tree.**
 - "**But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it**" (Gen. 2:17).
 - A divine prohibition was placed upon the fruit of this tree.
 - But again, how different from the second tree!
 - How startling the contrast!
 - There is no restriction here.
 - In this case man is freely *invited* to draw near and eat of the fruit of this tree.
 - The sinner is bidden to "**Taste and see that the Lord is good.**" and
 - "**All things are ready, Come.**"
 - The position is exactly reversed.
 - Just as man was commanded *not* to eat of the fruit of the first tree, he is now *commanded* to eat of the second.
- **4. Because God forbade man to eat of the first tree, Satan used every artifice to get man to eat of it.**
 - In contrast, because God now invites men to eat of the second tree, Satan uses all his powers *to prevent men eating of it.*
 - Is not this another designed contrast marked out for us by the Holy Spirit?
 - Humanly speaking it was solely due to the cunning and malice of the great enemy of God and man that our first parents ate of the forbidden fruit, and can we not also say, that it is now primarily due to the subtle devices of the old serpent the Devil that sinners are kept from eating the fruit of that second tree?
 - **See 2 Cor. 4:3-4.**
- **5. The eating of the first tree brought sin and death**
 - "**For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die**" (Gen. 2:17).
 - It was through eating of the fruit of this tree that the Curse descended upon our race with all its attendant miseries.
 - By eating of the second Tree *comes life and salvation.*

- **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life"** (John 6:53, 54).
- Is there not in these words of our Lord a underlying reference to the history of man's fall, and a designed contrast from the first tree?
- Just as by the act of "eating" man lost his spiritual life, so by an act of "eating" man now obtains spiritual and eternal life!
- **6.** Adam, the thief, through eating of the first tree, was *turned out of Paradise*, while the repentant thief, through eating of the second Tree, *entered Paradise*.
 - We doubt not that once again there is a designed contrast in these two things.
 - A thief is connected with both trees, for in eating of the forbidden fruit our first parents committed an act of theft.
 - Is it not then something more than a coincidence that we find a "thief" (yea, *two* thieves) connected with the second Tree also?
 - And when we note the widely different experiences of the two thieves the point is even more striking.
 - As we have said one was cast out of Paradise (the garden), the other was admitted into Paradise, and to say the least, it is remarkable that our Lord should employ the word "Paradise" in this connection—the only time He ever did use it!

⇒ II. **Similarities**

- **1. Both trees were planted in a garden.**
 - The first in the Garden of Eden, the second in a garden which is unnamed.
 - **"Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden"** (John 19:41).
 - Are we not told this, for one reason, in order that we should connect the two trees?
 - Is it not a striking point of analogy, that both the first Adam and the last Adam *died* in a "garden"!
- **2. In connection with both trees we find the words "in the midst."**
 - **"The tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil"** (Gen. 2:9).
 - The word **"and"** connecting the two trees together and suggests their juxtaposition in the midst of the garden.
 - In like manner we also read concerning our Savior, **"They crucified Him, and two others with Him on either side one, and Jesus in the midst?"** (John 19:18).
- **3. Both are trees of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.**

- Where in all the world, or in all the Scriptures, do we learn the knowledge of good and evil as we do at the second Tree—the Cross?
 - There we see Goodness incarnate.
 - There we behold the Holiness of God displayed as nowhere else.
 - There we discover the unfathomable love and matchless grace of Deity unveiled as never before or since.
 - But there, too, we also see Evil see it in all its native hideousness.
 - There we witness the consummation and climax of the creature's wickedness.
 - There we behold as nowhere else the vileness, the heinousness, the awfulness of sin as it appears in the sight of the holy God.
 - Yes, there is a designed resemblance as well as a contrast between the two trees.
 - The Cross also is the tree of *the knowledge of* good and evil.
 - o 4. Finally, there is another tree beside the one that was planted in Eden, of which Genesis 3:6 is true, **"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."**
 - That second Tree is surely "good for food," too.
 - The Cross of Christ and all that it stands for, is the very meat and marrow of the believer's life.
 - It is "*good*" as "*food*" for the soul!
 - And how "pleasant" it is "to the eyes" of faith!
 - There we see all our sins blotted out.
 - There we see our old man crucified.
 - There we see the ground upon which a holy God can meet a guilty sinner.
 - There we see the Finished Work of our adorable Redeemer.
 - Truly, it is "**pleasant to the eyes.**"
 - And is not this second Tree also "**a tree to be desired to make one wise**"?
 - Yes; the preaching of the Cross is not only the power of God, but "*the wisdom of God*" as well.
 - The knowledge of this second Tree makes the sinner "wise" unto salvation.
- ⇒ **III. Scriptures In Which A "Tree" Figures Prominently.**
- o 1. **The "Tree" Is Seen As The Place Of The Curse**
 - First, from Genesis 3:17 we learn that the "tree" is linked directly with the Curse: "**Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of *the tree*, of which I**

commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: *cursed* is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat' of it all the days of thy life."

- In the light of this how significant are the following passages:
 - **In Genesis 40** we have recorded the dreams of the two men who were in prison with Joseph.
 - When interpreting the baker's dream, Joseph said, "**Within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shalt hang thee on a tree**" (Gen. 40:19).
 - **Joshua 8:29** we are told, "**And the king of Ai was hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree.**"
 - Once more, in **Esther 2:23** we read, "**And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.**"
- What striking illustrations are these of what we find in Galatians 3:13, "**Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, *cursed* is every one that hangeth on a tree!**"
- **2. The "Tree" Is Seen As The Place Where Rest Is Found**
 - **Genesis 18:1-4**
 - How suggestive are the last words of this quotation. *Why* should we be told that Abraham invited his three visitors to rest "under the tree," unless there is some *typical* meaning to his words?
 - The "tree," as we have seen, speaks of the *Cross of Christ*, and it is *there* that "*rest*" is to be found.
- **3. The "Tree" Is Seen As The Ground Of Communion**
 - **Genesis 18:8.**
 - Eating is the symbol of *communion*, and it was under the *tree* these three men ate: so, it is the Cross of Christ which is the basis and ground of our *fellowship* with God.
 - How striking, too, the order here: first, *rest* under the "tree," and then *eating*, or fellowship!
- **4. The "Tree" Is Seen As The Principle Of Action To The Daily Life Of The Believer.**
 - **Exodus 15:23-25**
 - Comment is almost needless, the type is so apparent.
 - Here again, the "tree" typifies the Cross of Christ and the Christ of the Cross.
 - It was our blessed Lord Who, by going down into the place of death, sweetened the bitter waters for us.

- Furthermore, it is only as the believer applies, practically, the principle of the Cross to his daily life, that the Marahs of our wilderness experiences are transmuted into "waters that are made sweet."
 - To enter into "the fellowship of His sufferings," and to be "made conformable unto His death," is the highest Christian privilege.
- o How remarkable is the order, the progressive order, of these passages!
- First, the "tree" is seen as the place of the *curse*.
 - Second, the "tree" is seen as the place where *rest* is found.
 - Third, the "tree" is seen as the ground of *communion*.
 - Fourth, the "tree" is seen as *the principle* of action to the daily life of the believer.