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INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter Lesson 2 July 14 1901

BEGINNING OF SIN AND REDEMPTION.—Genesis 3: 1 15.

GOLDEN TEXT—*Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*—Rom. 5 : 20

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—Not long after the creation of man. The date in most of our Bibles is 4000 B C, according to Usher's calculations. And his dates will do very well to help us understand the relations of the various parts of the history to one another, provided that we understand that they are not authoritative, but are human calculations on insufficient data

Place.—The Garden of Eden, *i. e.*, a pleasure ground with trees, streams, flowers, and fruits in the land of Eden. It is impossible to tell precisely where Eden was situated. Delitzsch says that "Paradise is lost." We only know that it must be somewhere on the Euphrates. Some think it to be near the head waters. Perhaps the most probable site is on the lower Euphrates, near where the Tigris unites with it

MAN IN PARADISE.—Man was placed in the most favorale circumstances for his development and growth; in a beautiful garden; in a natural communion with God, with plenty of work in taking care of his home farm; with a perfect family life;—all of which were educational forces. Almost every nation has early traditions of a golden age, Edenic blessedness and innocence, of the serpent, the tree, and degeneracy. These traditions point to some actual fact in the early history of the race.

Two opposite errors are frequently held in regard to the Bible account of the first man. One, that he was a typical savage. The other, that he was the most splendid specimen of the race the world ever saw. He simply was complete with all the possibilities of manhood. He was innocent but inexperieneed, untrained and uneducated.

The Two Trees in the Garden. 1. The tree of life in the midst of the garden was probably a tree which, by divine endowment with medicinal qualities, would keep their bodies from decaying with age, and would heal any accidental injuries. It thus becomes a symbol of the tree of immortal life in Revelation, with twelve manner of fruits, and its leaves for the healing of the nations; a symbol of the healing power of Christ, and of the gospel of the kingdom of God.

2. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was in the midst of the garden. It was not to prevent them from knowing good and evil. It was to teach them that knowledge. It was not there to make them fall into sin, but to train them in virtue by resisting temptation. All who would become strong and useful gain their power largely through victory over temptation. Men cultivate courage through things that test courage. They grow in faith through the things that try their faith. People without trials are always failures.

THE BATTLE WITH TEMPTATION.—Vs. 1-5. Satan used the most fitting instrument for his purpose,—the crafty, subtle, fascinating, graceful serpent with fangs of deadly poison.

The Attack. Coming into the garden in the guise of a serpent, Satan begins his attack by an insinuating question. God is very good, but has he not laid some useless and trying restrictions upon you? If he loved you, could he shut you away from the delicious fruit on yonder tree? Are you to live in paradise and not be able to enjoy it?

Satan persistently points to the few restrictions, and not to the wide range of privileges. Millions of trees and countless varieties of fruit were free to Eve, but Satan led her to dwell on the one forbidden thing. This is still a specimen of his tactics.

The Defense. Eve replied that they had wide liberty, and could eat of all the trees except one.

Eve made a mistake in parleying with the temper When one dallies with temptation instead of praying "lead me not into temptation," he is already half fallen. *And the serpent said.... Ye shall not surely die.* This was the most deadly of lies, for it was a half truth. There was no bodily poison in the tree, and the most deadly death was that of the spirit, not of the body. Death as the wages of sin (Rom. 6 : 23) includes not only the death of the body, with all the ills attendant upon a state of mortality, but also spiritual death, the alienation of the soul from God, final exclusions from God and holiness.

Death would begin the very day they should eat of that tree (2: 17) Neither kind of death was completed on that day, but in both body and soul the process was begun. All diseases and pains and ruin of body come from sin.

His Weapons. His weapons were falsehoods and glittering promises. *For God doth know.* The tempter represents God as unwilling that they should have the best things. *Your eyes shall be opened.* He meant her to understand that she would have new visions of happiness and knowledge, far beyond her present acquirements. But he knew that her eyes would be open only to sin, misery, and remorse. *And ye shall be as gods* He meant her to understand that she would be like Creator. But he knew it would make her like the fallen angels, consumed in misery. *Knowing good and evil* They would indeed know good and evil, not in God's way but in Satan,—evil by experience and good by contrast.

THE GREAT DEFEAT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. — Vs. 6-15 The threefold nature of this temptation. *Saw that the tree was good.* So it appeared. So Satan had said. So ever Satan presents the attractions of evil. *Good for food.* Tempting the senses. *Pleasant* (a delight) *to the eyes.* Appealing to the sense of beauty. *To be desired to make one wise.* Some unknown good that would lift her into a position like that of God. *She took of the fruit thereof* She yielded to the temptation. *And gave also unto her husband....and he did eat.* He believed Satan more easily because the threatened death did not seem to fall upon Eve. According to Paul, Adam was not deceived (1 Tim. 2 : 14). He disobeyed God with open eyes. *And the eyes of them both were opened.* They saw, but not what they had expected. They saw shame and sin and misery. *And they knew that they were naked.* Their innocence was gone. They were conscious of guilt and unworthiness. They had nowhere to hide from one another or from God. Hitherto they had not wished to hide. *And they sewed fig leaves together* to serve as *aprons*, or wrappings, or girdles. But their very shame was a sign that there was hope for them. *And they heard the voice.* The sound as of some one approaching. *Of the Lord God.* It was God their Creator, who as God the Redeemer was seeking the lost. *In the cool of the day*, or "the wind of the day," the evening breezes It is the most natural thing in the world that God did in some way commune with his young children. *Hid themselves....amongst the trees* Consciousness of guilt made them afraid to meet God whom they had disobeyed. *God called.* God will seek after man. *Where art thou?* This question proved two things: (1) that man was lost; and (2) that God had come to seek. *And I was afraid.* Sin makes cowards of us all. *Because I was naked.* He confesses not his sin, but only his fear and shame. *And I hid myself* Sin is always foolish and mean as well as wicked. Adam hid himself from his father and friend. *Who told thee?* Adam's acknowledgement of his sin. *The women whom thou gavest....me.* Here we find him actually laying the blame of his fall on the circumstances in which God had placed him, and thus, indirectly, on God himself. This is ever the way with fallen man. The meanness of laying the blame on his wife is another effect of his sin. *And the woman said.* She, too, lays the blame on another. *The serpent beguiled me.* Led me astray; deceived me by flattering lies. *Unto the serpent....cursed above all cattle.* Degraded, execrated. *Upon thy belly shalt thou go.* The serpent is the only animal among those having bony skeletons that goes upon its belly. *Dust thou shalt eat.* To eat dust does not mean the proper nourishment of the serpent, but to lick the dust, the involuntary result of writhing in the dust. *And I will put enmity between.* There was to be perpetual antagonism between man and the serpent, the representative of the basest animal nature.

Spiritual death. They lost their likeness to God, their innocence, their condition of righteous living. The divine life was gone from them.

Suffering. Pain, sorrow, trouble, and anxiety. Eve was to suffer in her sphere as mother and wife. Adam was to suffer in his sphere.

Further Consequences. Loss of paradise They were driven from Eden. The misery entailed upon their children.

HOPE, VICTORY, AFTER A LONG CONFLICT, PARADISE TO BE REGAINED.—V. 15.

The Divine Promise. *It shall bruise thy head*, etc. The word may mean bruise, or lie in wait for, for the sake of destroying. There shall be a conflict. The serpent shall injure man, but man will destroy the serpent. *Thy seed.* A general word for her descendants, but among those descendants was to be the Messiah. Man as a race, by means of its Messiah, shall gain the victory. Though man's heel should be wounded, the race suffer many losses, finally the good shall triumph over evil.

The Consciousness of Sin and Danger. A consciousness of sin a sign that life and goodness and redemption are possible. The sense of sin is a step toward the light. When any part of the body is insensible to pain, it is hopelessly diseased. Pain is a proof of life and hope both to body and soul.

A PICTURE OF HUMAN LIFE.—Whatever view we take of this chapter, it is so true a picture of human life on earth that it must be a true statement of the facts of early history. It is a fact that sin is in the world. It is a fact that God cannot be the author of sin. It is a fact that sin came from a will, a free act in revolt against God's will.

It is a picture into which every man may look and see himself, and shudder at the cost of sin. It is the greatest sermon ever preached as a warning against sin; a sermon which will never cease to be preached so long as man is man and God is God. But there is also here a promise of a time when man will conquer his great enemy, sin; when light will take the place of night; peace, the place of war; life eternal life, the place of death. Christ gained the victory in his battle with temptation, and gained to help us, and showed the way to paradise regained.

Here is the announcement of a great principle, that human life is a restricted life, a life subjected to law; and he who confesses the subjection remains in Eden; and he who denies it is banished. The forbidden tree stands in every paradise of virtue and enjoyment. God has made a boundless provision for natural appetites, but there is always a limit, in going beyond which paradise is lost. God wants us to enjoy, but in the heavenly way; and to gain any enjoyment of any kind of wrong is to eat the forbidden fruit and lose paradise.

Confidence With Mother

He was a shy little fellow, quite undemonstrative in his nature. But he had a secret in his little heart—a secret which he wished to share with the dearly loved mother.

The mother was sitting by the window with her sewing basket at her side. She was darning a hole in the knee of the shy little fellow's stocking. The boy edged up to his mother with an important look on his face, as if he were to divulge something of great importance, as he whispered:

"Mamma, I wish to tell you a great secret, but I wish you to promise never to tell it—not even to papa, or Leslie, or Kate, will you?

"Most certainly, my dear, I will promise never to tell my little boy's secret. What is it?

The boy bent down lower and whispered in his mothers ear:

"Majorie Greenough is my sweetheart. Now don't you ever tell!"

The boy's fingers was held up as a sign of guarantee for his mother, and with his face covered with blushes that he had been so communicative, he looked up into his mother's face. A smile was on it as she said: Majorie is a sweet little girl.

The boy had confided to his mother what to him was a sacred secret; it was in her keeping. Mother liked Majorie. With what a happy heart he went off to his play!

Two hours later he came back to his mother in tears, and in broken tones exclaimed:

You told, mamma, you told, and you promised you would not! Kate has told Leslie and the boys, and they have been laughing at me!

Why, what do you mean, my child? I did not tell Kate a word. I promised I would not.

No, but you told Aunt Helen when she came to see you this after noon, and Kate was in the hall and heard you, and she said you and Aunt Helen laughed. O mamma, I did not think you would, after you promised! I will never tell you any of my secrets again!

What could that mother say? To her the little fellow's secret was a trivial affair—a cause for a smile and a little merriment with Aunt Helen—but nevertheless her promise was sacredly given to the child.

Ah! it is often the case that children are kept from confidences with mother for just such reasons. A promise given to a child should be as sacred as that to grown persons. One may say that such affairs are not of much moment beside weightier ones that come up every day, but they are.

The little fellow's secret was one of great importance to him. The telling of it to mother required a long deciding, but mother would never make a promise and break it. The secret was safe with mother, and so he told her. There is nothing so helpful to children as confidence in their mothers. The knowledge that they can go to them with their troubles and joys and talk them over, getting wisdom and good counsel regarding them, has proved a safeguard to many a child. The mother spoken of above not only broke her promise, but exposed her child to ridicule, which with his sensitive nature was more than he could bear.

The wise mother encourages her children's confidences by not treating lightly the subjects which to them are matters of weight. It can hardly seem credible, but hearing with one's own ears establishes the proof of one mother's dishonorableness. A little girl had told her mother something in strict confidence. The mother not long afterward entertained some guests at the table with what had been told her. The girl came in and heard her mother's last words on the matter. Her face showed the greatest astonishment at her mother's dishonorable action, and she exclaimed, in an injured tone of voice: Way, mother, what did you tell that for? You promised me sacredly you would not tell it, and you have broken your promise! The weak mother made the matter still worse by trying to clear herself, in saying: But I made a mental reservation! What sort of principle was she inculcating in her child by such a remark as that? There is need for very careful thought on this subject.

Home life is peculiarly sensible to the influences within. The sensitiveness of the home hearts makes it all the more important that the mother should be very careful what she does or says. Encourage the children with little confidential talks for the time is not far distant when the boy and the girl will need a close, intimate counselor in the wiser mother.

Such intimacies in mother and children are beautiful to see. The grown-up daughters will not go wrong if they have been brought up to have close confidences with mother and have learned that trust reposed in her are sacred ones.—Zion's Herald.

A Watch and Its Idiosyncrasies.

An old jeweler who handled thousands of watches in his lifetime and has observed a few of their numerous peculiarities was talking one day on this subject. In the course of his conversation he said:

Watches, all joking aside, are really almost human sometimes. They take cold readily. Never lay a watch on a cold marble table or near an open window, all night, after you have worn it next to your warm body all day; it will contract a sort of pneumonia, and ten to one it will stop before long if the practice be continued. The cold contracts the metal pivots, which, small as they are, must not be smaller, and they shrink. Thus the wheels cannot move.

Watches are magnetized, too, by the persons who wear them. I have seen the statement that watches vary in time-keeping with the health of the wearer, and that if changed from one person to another they will also show slight variations. All of that is true. The static electricity of a person may affect a watch. All of us throw this off; some more than others. Dark persons give off more than light ones do, and a dark woman more than anyone else. Dark women should have rubber cases for their watches, if they wish to have them keep perfect time.

Never lay a watch flat, at night, after it has been worn in a vertical position all day. It throws it off its base, so to speak. If the pivots be worn, the wheels will not run level.

A watch should be fed or oiled every eighteen months, even if running in the best of time. The oil dries in that time, and the wheels are likely to wear one another. Wind your watch in the morning. No, not at bedtime, but when you get up. That gives it the full spring to work on during the day, when the jars and jolts are more numerous. And hold your watch still when you wind it, and wind the key.

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