

## The Quiet Hour.

### Beginning of Sin and Redemption.

S. S. LESSON.—July 14th 1901 : Genesis 3: 1-15  
GOLDEN TEXT.—Rom. 5: 20. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

The tragedy of sin opens. The chapter tells

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our  
woe."

Now the serpent was more subtil, v. 1. The external exciting cause of sin. The serpent is sly and creeps in when no one is looking, as we know from the stories of the cobra in India, which enters mysteriously and at night works its havoc. Thus also it is with sin, which is subtle enough to creep into our hearts when we are not looking. The serpent fascinates, holding by its charm the fluttering bird which cannot fly away. Sin is also powerful because it fascinates. There is a charm about the promise which it makes, that catches the unwary. Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Under this suggestive teaching we have therefore a warning of the ability of a foe who is able to use all the arts of persuasion. How we should watch and pray lest we enter into temptation! (Matt. 26: 41.)

Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? An insinuating question, meant to suggest doubt and to stimulate curiosity; as when Satan said to Jesus: "If thou be the son of God." (Matt. 4: 6.) Not seldom does the temptation come to ask if it is really God who tells us not to do certain things, and thus we are tempted to argue about a course of action till at last we persuade ourselves that it is not very wrong after all, and that it cannot be against God's commandment. It is not well to reopen our moral decisions. This is often one of the ways in which the enemy is seeking for our soul.

The serpent said, Ye shall not surely die, v. 4. The untruthfulness of sin. It is not afraid to tell a lie, and it rests upon its falsehoods for power. Satan is "the father of lies." Sin says that we shall enjoy the pleasure and not reap any death if we do its bidding. Its boldness in false assertion is appalling.

And when the woman saw . . . she took . . . and did eat, v. 6. The evolution of evil. There are three stages: looked, look, did eat. This verse is the fateful one. The trust in God's goodness and words is shaken, and the longing after self-satisfaction grows strong. The dread glance does the work. Eve could have refused, had she only refused to look, but after she looked the battle was practically lost. It is the beginning always that is hard, and it is hard at first to do wrong. This is the cause why we are told to shun the appearance of evil. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away." (Prov. 4: 14, 15.) The two roads of right and wrong start from the same place and you can at first cross from one to the other, but ere long they diverge in opposite directions, after which it is very difficult to regain the old path. Under these circumstances it is well that we should have strong convictions about the importance of immediate refusal of sin. It seems a very little thing to yield to the first temptation, for then we

cannot see that it is the beginning of sorrows. "The steps by which the occasional criminal develops into the habitual criminal are slow and subtle. This is one of the tragedies of life. The circles of crime extend from heaven to the very murky depths of hell, and yet they are not far from any one of us." Let us avoid the beginnings.

I heard thy voice and was afraid, v. 10. The revulsion of feeling that follows upon doing wrong. The tree and the garden and all things looked very different after the fall; for the innocent heart was lost forever. A beauty had faded from the world. Increased knowledge in this case meant increased sorrow. (Eccl. 1: 18.) This torture of conscience is one of the worst of all forms of punishment; and surely many would be kept back from the deeds of wrong, did they only know that they were selling their most happy moments for nought. It is at least one factor in the favor of Adam and Eve that they were conscious of the wrong. To sin and not be ashamed is worst of all.

The woman gave me . . . the serpent beguiled me, vs. 12, 13. The excuse of sin. We are all prone to shift the responsibility of our faults upon others. Some will plead the circumstances which were too strong to resist. Others will plead their own weakness. But the very circumstances that give us the opportunity of doing wrong are also our opportunity of succeeding. Temptation tests our character, and man is always free to resist circumstances if he will.

It shall bruise thy head, v. 15. The beginning of redemption. God will not be overpowered by sin, but conceives a way to save rebellious man, and from this chapter onward until Jesus came, there is the gradual revelation of the divine love that seeks to save the world.

### In the Night Watches.

In the night watches, when the hours are lonely,  
I would commune with thee, my gracious  
Lord;

Thy face would see, and, thinking of thee only,  
My heart would listen for thy whispered word.

Low-breathed and tender, through the silence  
breaking,

As with the sound of music, faint and far;  
To hear thy still, small voice, my spirit, waking,  
Attentive, waits, where thy great angels are.

The world forgotten, while these hours are drift-  
ing,

I enter into thy most perfect rest;  
As if on wings of gentle strength that, lifting,  
Up-bear me, till I sleep upon thy breast;  
Christian Intelligencer.

The world has only begun to see that no country is great and no cause just that does not help on the world's happiness and the world's good.—The Churchman.

If you would have the priestly gift of sympathy, you must be content to pay the price; like Him—you must suffer.—F. W. Robertson.

The weakest among us has a gift, however seemingly trivial, which is peculiar to him, and which worthily used, will be a gift also to his race.—Ruskin.

### The Well-Spring of Joy.

Unless we "rejoice in the Lord," how can we, through the long work-day of life still chant our morning song? Joy that sprouts by the runlets of April is dead when August comes. He only who is planted by the rivers of water has the unfailing fruit of seasonable joy. Let there be no sap in a man's gladness but that which flows from "the things which he possesseth," and how easily is his moisture turned into the drought of summer. Be joyful in the Lord. Emulate old Habakkuk. He was no dry-weather Christian. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."—Maltbie D. Babcock, D.D., in Sunday School Times.

### Ploughing and Reaping.

The ploughing of the Lord is deep,  
On ocean or on land;  
His furrows cross the mountain steep,  
They cross the sea-washed sand.

Wise men and prophets know not how,  
But work their master's will;  
The kings and nations drag the plough,  
His purpose to fulfill.

They work his will because they must,  
On hillside or on plain;  
The clouds are broken into dust,  
And ready for the grain.

Then comes the planting of the Lord,  
His kingdom cometh now;  
The ocean's deepest depths are stirred,  
And all their secrets show.

Where prophets trod his deserts broad,  
Where monarchs dragged the plough,  
Behold the seedtime of his word:  
The Sower comes to sow.

—Edward Everett Hale.

### Prayer.

Lord abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent. Come into our hearts, and break bread to our soul's hunger, and we shall know of a surety that it is the Lord. We are hungered and are smitten with thirst in the world; we cannot find satisfaction to our best desire; we have hewn to ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water; God pity us and be merciful to us sinners. We long for forgiveness; it means release and liberty and hope and progress. We confess all our sins; we confess them at the Cross; and we behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. We come for light, we come for help; we are often in darkness and our life is a constant need; Lord, guide us with Thine eye, and feed us with Thine hand. And this we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.—Selected.

Sunday School Times: Next to being manly is to appreciate manliness. Next to being womanly is to appreciate womanliness. There is, indeed, a measure of the high quality in a man or woman that makes one recognize it when exhibited in another. It is the lack of the high quality that makes one undervalue it as it stands out in its commendableness. In view of this truth, we must remember that we disclose ourselves by our estimate of others.