

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the Westminster Question Book for 1880.)

THIRD QUARTER.

LESSON I.

JULY 4.]

THE CREATION.

Gen. 1: 1-3; 2: 4-8.

[B. C. 4004.]

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 1-9.

1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
3. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
4. These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.
5. And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.
6. But there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.
7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
8. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."—Gen 1: 1.

HELPS TO STUDY.

V. 1. IN THE BEGINNING—of old. (See John 1: 1.) The one passage illustrates the other. God—Elohim; the simple generic name of God; "the mighty." CREATED—brought into being; originated out of nothing. THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH—the material universe taken in its widest sense.

V. 2. THE EARTH—this planet on which we live. Ages may have passed between the creative act of verse 1 and what is now recorded. WITHOUT FORM AND VOID—shapeless and waste. The same phrase is used Isa. 54: 11. Confusion and emptiness. THE DEEP—the abyss of waters with which the earth was surrounded. SPIRIT OF GOD—the third person of the Trinity. MOVED—was moving, or brooding, as a bird over her young. (See Deut 32: 11.) It denotes a continuous action. UPON THE FACE OF THE WATERS—the abyss. This was the preparation for the grand creative results.

V. 3. GOD SAID, LET THERE BE LIGHT—not that there was any spoken word or audible voice. God's speaking is his willing, and his willing is his doing. AND THERE WAS LIGHT—though it was not until the fourth day that the sun and moon were constituted. The inspired author then gives in detail the work of the six days or creative periods. The work of the first day was light; of the second, the firmament; of the third, dry land with its products; of the fourth, the sun, moon and stars; of the fifth, fishes and birds; of the sixth, land, animals and man, who was created in the image of God. All was made very good, and on the seventh day God rested from his work, and hallowed it as the Sabbath day.

Ch. 2: 4. GENERATIONS—literally, "births;" origins. IN THE DAY—when. THE LORD GOD—The name of Jehovah is here first used.

V. 5. EVERY PLANT OF THE FIELD. Though these plants were created full-grown and seed-bearing (ch. 1: 11, 12), yet none had as yet been produced from the seed, because (1) there was no rain, and (2) there was no cultivator of the soil. Both of these are now furnished.

V. 6. THERE WENT UP A MIST—which, forming into clouds, fell in rain and watered the earth.

V. 7. BREATHED INTO HIS NOSTRILS—a figurative expression to show that man's life originated in a different way from his body, being implanted directly by God. Eccles. 12: 7. BREATH OF LIFE—literally, OF LIVES; not only of animal, but also of spiritual life. A LIVING SOUL—a living being invested with immortality.

V. 8. PLANTED A GARDEN—an extensive park, a paradise. It seems implied that the place was made of superior beauty. EASTWARD—in the eastern part. IN EDEN—"pleasantness" probably an extensive region in the high table-land of Armenia. AND THERE HE PUT THE MAN—with everything needed for his perfect happiness.

LESSON PLAN.

1. MATTER. 2. MAN. 3. PARADISE.

TEACHINGS.

The perfection of God as manifested in the work of creation; his OMNIPOTENCE in making all things of nothing by the word of his power; his WISDOM in adapting the means to the end intended; his GOODNESS in providing bountifully for the wants of all his creatures.... God's goodness to man in making him in his own image, with dominion over his creatures; in fitting up the earth with everything for his comfort and enjoyment.... The glory and dignity of man, created in God's own image and endowed with a portion of his authority.... As we are the creatures of God, we are bound to use all our powers in his service.

LESSON II.

JULY 11.]

THE FALL AND THE PROMISE.

Gen. 3: 1-15.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 9-13.

1. Now the serpent was more subtle 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?
2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

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.
4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:
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.
5. 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.
7. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.
8. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.
9. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?
10. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.
11. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst 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.
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.
14. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.
15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin."—Rom. 5: 12.

INTRODUCTORY.

Adam's location in the garden, ch. 2: 18-25. Formation of woman and institution of marriage, ch. 2: 18-25.

Of the life of our first parents in Eden we are told but little. It was a state of innocence, and therefore of happiness; but it was also a state of probation. How long they continued obedient we are not told. The time had now come when their allegiance to their Maker was to be tested.

HELPS TO STUDY.

V. 1. THE SERPENT—the animal serpent, which Satan used as his instrument, causing it to speak with man's voice. SUBTLE—cunning, crafty. UNTO THE WOMAN—as the most susceptible of impression and the least suspicious of evil. HATH GOD SAID—are you sure that you understand him aright?

V. 2. WOMAN SAID—instead of parleying with the serpent she should have repelled him.

V. 3. THE TREE—of the knowledge of good and evil, ch. 2: 9. TOUCH IT—approach it.

V. 4. NOT SURELY DIE—a positive contradiction of God's words, ch. 2: 17.

V. 5. KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL—without need of divine direction. Such is Satan's promise.

V. 6. THE WOMAN SAW—Satan's promise drove the divine threat out of her mind, and she beheld the tree with other eyes.

V. 7. EYES.... OPENED—nothing like conscious guilt and an accusing conscience to open the eyes. SEWED—plaited; fastened together. APRONS—girdles.

V. 8. VOICE OF THE LORD—God had before spoken to Adam face to face. HID THEMSELVES—conscious of their guilt.

V. 9. WHERE ART THOU—thus calling them to account.

V. 10. AFRAID BECAUSE.... NAKED—the question gave Adam opportunity to confess his sin, but his answer was full of evasion.

V. 11. WHO TOLD THEE—an indirect reprimand for not perceiving his fault in his punishment.

V. 12. THE WOMAN.... GAVE—he seeks to throw the blame upon the woman and on God himself.

V. 13. GOD SAID UNTO THE WOMAN—God gives her also an opportunity for confession and repentance. BEGUILLED ME—deceived me by flattering lies.

V. 14. GOD SAID UNTO THE SERPENT—the curse upon the serpent reaches further, and terminates upon Satan himself. CURSED ABOVE—the cursed serpent is in Scripture a similitude of the most hurtful, venomous and hateful beasts. Deut. 8: 15; Jer. 8: 17; Ps. 58: 5; Matt. 23: 33. THY BELLY—the first doom. DUST SHALT THOU EAT—(second doom); so low as necessarily to mingle dust with his food. Isa. 49: 23.

V. 15. ENMITY—antagonism, hate. This is the third doom. THY SEED—wicked men and devils. HER SEED—Christ and his Church—BRUISE THY HEAD—Satan may injure for a time, but his head shall be crushed at last. To Christ every knee shall bow.

LESSON PLAN.

1. THE TEMPTATION. 2. THE DISOBEDIENCE. 3. THE CURSE. 4. THE PROMISE OF A SAVIOUR.

TEACHINGS.

Sin is of a deceptive character... It is progressive—one sin leads to another... It is dangerous to parley with temptation... Men are prone to throw the blame of their sins upon others... God is not the author of sin—it is hateful in his sight... It is impossible to escape its consequences... It brings shame and misery... Its wages is death... God permitted sin to come into the world, but he has graciously provided a Saviour... By the first Adam all are brought under the curse of the law; by the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, believers are redeemed from the curse, he being made a curse for them.

LESSON III.

JULY 18.]

CAIN AND ABEL.

Gen. 4: 3-15.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 8-13.

3. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.
4. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.
5. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.
6. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?
7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.
8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him.
9. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?
10. And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.
11. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.
12. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.
13. And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.
14. Behold thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.
15. And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."—1 John 3: 15.

HELPS TO STUDY.

INTERMEDIATE.—Curse upon Adam and Eve (ch. 2: 16-19); Driven from Eden (ch. 3: 20-24); Birth of Cain and Abel. ch. 4: 1, 2.

V. 3. IN PROCESS OF TIME—literally, "at the end of days;" either at the end of the week (the Sabbath), or at the end of the year (the time of in-gathering). CAIN (possession)—the first-born. BROUGHT.... AN OFFERING—but neglected to bring what was enjoined by God.

V. 4. ABEL.... BROUGHT.... FIRSTLINGS—the first-born and unblemished. HAD RESPECT—approved and respected.

V. 5. UNTO CAIN.... HAD NOT RESPECT—not approved, because not the prescribed offering and not offered in faith. THE LORD SAID—he stoops to expostulate with him.

V. 7. IF THOU DOEST WELL—if thou obeyest my commandments. SHALT THOU NOT BE ACCEPTED—margin "shalt thou not have the excellency?" He would be accepted if he obeyed the divine command. SIN LIETH AT THE DOOR—at the door of the soul, like a wild beast, ready to devour it. THOU SHALT RULE—referring to the birthright of the eldest born.

V. 8. SLEW HIM—This is the first murder and the first death on record.

V. 9. THY BROTHER—God wished Cain to see and confess his awful crime. I KNOW NOT—he adds falsehood to the first crime.

V. 10. CRIETH—appeals to me for justice, calls out as with a voice.

V. 11. NOW ART THOU CURSED—thus Cain is cast out from God's presence and favor.

V. 12. IT SHALL NOT.... YIELD.... STRENGTH—the former curse laid upon the earth (Gen. 3: 17) is increased for Cain's sake. FUGITIVE—fleeing everywhere for protection, and therefore homeless. VAGABOND—a wanderer in disgrace.

V. 13. MY PUNISHMENT IS GREATER—he complains of his punishment, but gives no sign of repentance.

V. 14. THY FACE—thy presence and protection. SHALL SLAY ME—shall seek to kill me.

V. 15. WHOEVER SLAYETH CAIN—God in mercy spares his life that he might have an opportunity to repent, and that he might be a warning to others. SET A MARK—not necessarily a body-mark, but some sign or assurance that his life should be preserved.

LESSON PLAN.

1. THE OFFERINGS. 2. THE FIRST MURDER. 3. THE CURSE UPON CAIN.

TEACHINGS.

God requires of us offerings. vs. 3-5.... They should be of the best.... They should be made in faith.... It is not the offering that makes the offer acceptable.... God accepts the offerer first, then his offering. v. 4.... Envy and jealousy lead to anger, displeasure. v. 6.... The fault lies at our own door if we are not accepted. v. 7.... Anger in the heart leads to murder by the hand. v. 8.... One crime often leads to another to conceal it.... Every sin will be punished.... God judges the act by the motive.... All our actions are known to the Lord.

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