



LESSON II.—JULY 14.

Beginning of Sin and Redemption.

Genesis iii., 1-15. Memory verses, 14, 15.
Read chapters iii. and iv.

Golden Text.

'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.'—Romans v., 20.

Lesson Text.

(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. (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. (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.

Suggestions.

Adam and Eve lived happily in the beautiful Garden of Eden for some time. Then suddenly there came an awful breaking up of their joy, and the peace and beauty of their simple innocent life was destroyed by one fell blow from the enemy of all righteousness the devil.

But why was sin allowed to enter that first paradise? A question that has often been asked and must be satisfactorily answered. We must understand that God created man's spirit in the likeness of his own with every capacity for fellowship with God, but all these capacities were as it were in their infancy—in need of training and cultivation. God gave man a free will, and in order to exercise and strengthen that will he had to provide something for it to work against. The tree of life was not put in the garden to tempt man to disobedience, but rather to make him strong by resisting that very temptation.

Strong character is not developed by easy circumstances. As long as it is smooth seas and plain sailing any little boat can get along safely, but storms test the craft and only the strong, heavy, sturdy ships are safe in open sea. A child who is always carried can never learn to walk, so a soul that has never known temptation cannot be sure of resisting temptation. The will is exercised and strengthened by resisting temptation. God told Adam and Eve what they were to do and what not to, and if they had simply obeyed him, sin and sorrow would never have had any power over them.

All humanity is subject to temptation, but temptation itself is not sin. On the contrary the soul that strives with temptation and conquers it through the blood of Jesus, has in the struggle come nearer to God than if he had never been tempted. (But this is no reason for putting temptation in anyone's way—an act which always brings its own curse). There is plenty of evil in the natural heart to tempt us to sin without any outside allurements. Because Adam yielded to sin all humanity has suffered from that bondage. But because Christ conquered sin all humanity may by faith in him be freed from the curse. Let no man say he is punished for Adam's sin, for there is no man living who has not himself committed sins for which he must be judged. Nobody will be punished on Adam's account, but every one is accountable for the sins of his own heart.

Sin makes the strong man a coward. It was mean and unmanly of Adam to lay the blame of the sin on his wife. It was silly of Eve to try to put all the responsibility on the serpent for God had made her a responsible soul, and had given her a will with which she should have rejected and resisted the most subtle temptation. But so it is still, men blame others for tempting them to evil, or they blame their circumstances or their own weak wills for making them yield to sin. God is merciful and faithful, he cannot bear to have his children hurt by sin and with every temptation he provides a way of escape. (I. Cor. x., 13; Rom. viii., 1-6; 31, 37-39). And if we do fall, God will quickly set us on our feet again if we plead forgiveness in the name of him who died for us, for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. (I. John 1., 7-10.) And if we ask him, God will put his own Spirit within us to make us love to obey him in all things.

The serpent allowed the devil to enter into it and speak through it to tempt Eve, and for this reason it was cursed above all living creatures and compelled to crawl in the dust and be at constant enmity with mankind. Also the devil is spoken of as a serpent. (Rev. xii., 9; xx., 2.) The first promise of redemption given to fallen humanity was the promise that the seed (or descendant) of the woman should bruise the serpent's head—meaning that the Messiah who should come as the Son of humanity and in his humanity a descendant of Adam and Eve, would break the power of Satan in the world and redeem from sin all those who should put their trust in him. The promise of redemption was given even before the word of judgment and punishment was spoken. (Gen. iii., 15; Galatians iv., 4-7; Rom. xvi., 20; Heb. ii., 14-18; Rev. xii., 9-11). The way to reject temptation is not to look at it or parley with it as Eve did, but to keep one's eye fixed steadfastly on God. When we are earnestly looking to God our eyes will be turned away from temptation, when we are constantly talking to God and listening for his voice in our souls, he can keep us from listening to the voice of the tempter. (Heb. xii., 1-4.) The only way to steadfastly resist temptation is to keep looking unto Jesus the beginner and finisher of our faith. Trust in ourselves will not keep us from falling.

For their sin our first parents were driven out of Eden and kept out by Cherubims who with a flaming sword turning every way guarded the tree of life. It was necessary that the man and woman should be forced to work for their existence, as further ease and luxury would only have been conducive to further yielding to temptation. Work of some kind is necessary to the well-being of every human body, mind and soul. Idleness leads to sin, and sin in every case brings with it its own punishment. The first result of sin is separation from God. The very word sin comes from an old root-word whose primary meaning is separation. Sin separates the soul from God, and each sin makes the soul less able to resist the next temptation. As soon as Adam and Eve realized that they had disobeyed God, their first impulse was to hide themselves from God. But even our most secret thoughts cannot be hidden from him. They could not hide themselves nor their sin. The fruit of their sin was the murder of one of their sons by the other, and from that time the world began to get worse and worse until God had to destroy the people with their wickedness from off the face of the earth.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, July 14.—Topic—Individual work for Christ.—Acts viii., 26-40.

Junior C. E. Topic.

BIBLE QUEENS.

Mon., July 8.—Esther the brave.—Esther vii., 3-6.

Tues., July 9.—Solomon's friend.—I. Kings x., 1, 2.

Wed., July 10.—Cruel Jezebel.—I. Kings xxi., 7-10.

Thu., July 11.—A Babylonian queen.—Dan. v., 10-12.

Fri., July 12.—Revengeful Herodius.—Mark vi., 22-24.

Sat., July 13.—The home queen.—Prov. xxxi., 27, 28.

Sun., July 14.—Topic—Lessons from Bible queens. (Jezebel, the Queen of Sheba, Esther.)



Mother's Boy Asleep.

A little form in snowy white,
One fat arm thrown above his head,
With laughing blue eyes tightly closed,
Lies on his dainty cradle-bed.



Angels watch by that little form
As mother from him softly creeps;
The room is hushed; no sound is heard,
Speak softly, Mother's boy's asleep.

The years roll on. Another room.
With cards and novels strewn around;
A handsome youth with merry heart,
Amidst companions gay is found;



He lifts a glass of sparkling wine,
Marks not that serpents round it creep,
Call loud and clear—he drains the glass—
Rouse him! for mother's boy's asleep.