

100. Q. What should our knowledge of the circumstances of this first temptation lead us to do?

Lesson Twenty-four

HOW SIN CAME INTO OUR WORLD:
THE SURRENDER

Scripture Reading: Gen. 3:1-8.

Scripture To Memorize: "Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth, sin; and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:15).

101. Q. What was the threefold appeal involved in the temptation of our first parents?

A. The physical, the esthetic, and the intellectual.

(1) Gen. 3:6—"and when the woman saw that the tree was good for food," etc. What did she see? "That the tree was good for food." "What could she see but the serpent eating that same fruit, all the while ascribing to its virtues his own wonderful elevation and superior knowledge?" (Milligan). It seems that in order to give force to his own infidel assertions and insinuations, he actually ate some of the forbidden fruit himself, and presented his own case as a real and veritable proof of its marvelous effects. "That the tree was good for food"—the physical appeal is the most elementary of temptations. Notable examples of it are found in Alexander the Great, Robert Burns, Lord Byron, Edgar Allen Poe, all brilliant men but unable to resist the appeal to physical appetite and desire. (2) "And that it was a delight to the eyes." Here we have the esthetic appeal. This often accompanies the physical, and, though apparently more refined, is quite subtle and powerful. Great geniuses, musicians, poets, artists and the like, have frequently been grossly immoral. The allurements of certain types of music, for example, and of other forms of fine art, accentuate physical desire and make illicit pleasures more attractive. (3) "And that the tree was to be desired to make one wise"—the intellectual appeal. The desire for unlawful knowledge has stranded many a soul in the mire of unbelief. Theologians have used this appeal most effec-

tively in keeping the church divided, the un-Christian teachers have used it widely in pushing young souls over the precipice of doubt into the deadly calm sea of agnosticism, or into the maelstrom of confusion and unbelief.

102. Q. What was the issue involved in this first temptation?

A. The issue of obedience or disobedience to God.

(1) God had said, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Along came Satan saying, "Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil." (2) Thus the issue was clearly joined. It was the issue between the word of God on the one hand, and the lying denials and accusations of Satan on the other. (3) The final choice rested, however, with Eve and Adam. Their unlawful desires blinded them for the moment, led them into believing Satan's lies and into choosing the wrong. Thus they sinned.

103. Q. In what did the actual sin of our first parents consist?

A. In their overt act of disobedience to God.

(1) The sin was not in the temptation, but in the yielding to it. (2) When curiosity becomes whetted by desire, lust is the result. So it was with Mother Eve: she finally reached the point where she actually lusted for divinity—to be as God. But "lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin;" therefore "she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6). The falling away, which had its inception in lust, or unlawful desire, was consummated in the overt act of disobedience to God. Jas. 1:13-15, 1 John 3:4.

(3) "The confluence of all these streams made such a current as swept the feeble will clean away; and blind, dazed, deafened by the rush of the stream, Eve was carried over the falls as a man might be over Niagara" (Maclaren).

(4) In a striking parallel, the consummation of our conversion to Christ is, by divine authority, in our overt or outward act of obedience to His command. This overt act

of obedience is Christian baptism, in which we yield ourselves in body and spirit to the authority of Christ, the head of the church. Gal. 3:27—"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."

104. Q. What was the essential principle of this first sin?

A. It was selfishness — the essential principle of every sin.

(1) Their sin resulted from their following their own desires in opposition to God's command. It was the choice of self above God, which is the essential principle of every sin that was ever committed. Mark 7:21-23, "for from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man" (Jesus). (2) In striking contrast, the essential principle of righteousness is the choice of God above self. Self-giving is the very first principle of our Christian faith; and in the mutual relations between moral creatures, self-denial for the general good must become the law of the universe if peace and joy are to prevail among men. Matt. 16:24—"if any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

105. Q. What followed as a consequence of the fact that our first parents were seduced?

A. It became possible for God to temper justice with mercy, which He did in working out a plan of salvation for the human race.

Because the angels sinned purely of their own volition and without seductive influences having been brought to bear upon them from an outside source, it was impossible for God to maintain the eternal principles of justice and to, at the same time, extend mercy to them. In the case of our first parents, however, the situation was different. They were seduced by Satan the adversary of God and of all good. Therefore it was God's eternal plan to temper justice with mercy, which it was possible for Him to do under such circumstances; and to work out a plan of salvation

for man, that would ultimately result in the complete defeat and subjugation of Satan, and in the complete renovation of our world of the consequences of all his nefarious enterprises and works.

106. Q. What do we learn from all these facts?

A. We learn that Satan, in tempting us, makes use of the same methods and schemes and pleas, that he employed in the seduction of our first parents.

(1) It is sad, but nevertheless true, that their experience has been re-enacted in the life of every human being on reaching the age of accountability. Rom. 3:23—"all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." (2) To read this summarization of the facts connected with the temptation and fall of our first parents, is to realize that the devil has never changed his tactics. Most of us know from personal experience that he still employs the same suaveness, the same cunning, the same deceit, the same half-truths and half-lies, promising so much but actually giving so little!

(3) The best that Satan has to offer you for serving him, is ultimate disillusionment, remorse and despair; and incarceration in hell, the penitentiary of the moral universe. "The wages of sin is death"—not only physical death, the dissolution of the body; but eternal death as well, banishment forever from the presence of God and His saints.

(4) Where, then, will you spend eternity? The choice rests with you. If you choose the wrong, yours will be the responsibility for such a course of action! Gal. 6:7—"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

101. Q. What was the threefold appeal involved in the temptation of our first parents?

102. Q. What was the issue involved in this first temptation?

103. Q. In what did the actual sin of our first parents consist?

104. Q. What was the essential principle of this first sin?

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 106. Q. What do we learn from all these facts?

Lesson Twenty-five

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN IN OUR WORLD

Scripture Reading: Gen. 3:7-24.

Scripture To Memorize: "Therefore as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

107. Q. What was the immediate consequence of the sin of our first parents?

A. The awakening of conscience in them.

Gen. 3:7, 8—"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" (literally, girdles). "And they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah God amongst the trees of the garden." Thus is indicated the beginning of shame and fear in the human heart, as consequences of sin.

108. Q. What did this awakening of conscience signify?

A. It signified that they had become separated from God by sin.

109. Q. What immediate punishment was inflicted upon them in consequence of their separation from God by sin?

A. The immediate punishment inflicted upon them was their expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

Gen. 3:22-24, "And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever—therefore Jehovah God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim,