

## BY ONE MAN'S SIN THE DEATH-CURSE

– JANUARY 19. – GENESIS 3. –

**"Every one that committeth sin is the bond-servant of sin." – John 8:34.**

ADAM'S FIRST SIN brought the penalty specified in this lesson; but it is not the thought that subsequent sins brought other additional penalties. The Bible proposition is that God, having made Adam perfect, required perfect obedience as the condition of his continuance in Divine favor and everlasting life. One act of disobedience broke the covenant between God and Adam by which he was treated as a son and guaranteed everlasting life. (Hosea 6:7, Margin.) As a sinner he dropped from favor immediately, under the sentence, "Dying thou shalt die."

Nothing that Adam or his children could do subsequently could alter that sentence or recover to him covenant relationship with God. The death penalty was the limit. It could not be increased by any subsequent sins, just as a murderer sentenced to be hanged could not receive a more severe penalty, whether he had committed one murder or a thousand. By a law of nature, heredity, Father Adam transmitted to his race a share of what he possessed, both good and bad. Hence we were all born in sin and "shapen in iniquity; in sin did my mother conceive me." – Psa. 51:5.

As Adam could not increase his penalty, neither can his children. As Adam could not restore himself to covenant relationship with God, neither can his children. But as Adam could, by obedience to the Divine Law, prolong the process of his dying, so may his children. He was nine hundred and thirty years dying before the death penalty was fully attained. But the impairment wrought by sin has so progressed that many of Adam's children die in infancy, and few can maintain the struggle for existence for a hundred years.

## **DEATH THE CURSE – NOT TORTURE**

Our forefathers during the Dark Ages, before the day of printing and Bibles and general education, got some strange misunderstandings of the Heavenly Father's character and Plan. And their errors of doctrine naturally led them on to errors of conduct, that, to us, are abhorrent. Misunderstanding the Bible to teach that God arranged for the eternal torture of all mankind except a saintly few, the true Church, they sought to copy their misconception of Jehovah by torturing their fellow-creatures. Some were stoned, some sawn asunder, some made outcasts, some tortured on the rack, some had their tongues cut out by the roots, some were skinned alive and some were roasted at the stake.

But we must not think of these, our forefathers, as fiendish at heart, but as deceived by what St. Paul calls "doctrines of demons." (I Tim. 4:1.) We sympathize with their godly intentions, but reprobate their devilish procedures. It is because God's people have been gradually getting back nearer and nearer to the teaching of His Word, and its spirit, that the horrible practises of the past are no longer approved. But many have much yet to learn respecting the true Plan of God – the true teaching of the Bible. We must be zealous for ourselves and patient with others.

One of the first lessons for us to learn is that the curse which God pronounced against our race is not a sentence to eternal torment at the hands of devils, but plainly and simply, as the Apostle says, "The wages of sin is death." Then he points us to the remedy, a resurrection from death, secured for all through the Redeemer's death at Calvary. The Apostle therefore adds, "But the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." – Rom. 6:23.

All experience the death penalty, with its weakness, pain, sorrow, tears. All will have an opportunity sometime of learning of God's grace in Christ and of manifesting obedience to the Divine will and of regaining everlasting life through Messiah's redemptive work and His Millennial Kingdom with its Restitution. For some, a few, a Little

Flock, who in this Age have ears to hear and hearts to obey the Master's voice, God has provided glorious things, far superior to anything that Adam had or lost.

To those who now hear, consecrate, sacrifice their own wills, and walk in Jesus' footsteps, God promises a share in the First Resurrection, to glory, honor, immortality, the Divine nature. These will constitute the Bride **[R5150 : page 391]** class and be joint-heirs with the Master as His Elect, in His glorious Kingdom, which soon is to be established for the rolling away of the curse of sin and death and the lifting up of humanity – of all who will – to all that was lost in Eden and redeemed at Calvary.

### **THE LESSON OF THIS STUDY**

If our Christian forefathers could but properly have studied and appreciated today's lesson, they would have known what the Bible teaches respecting "the wages of sin," and would soon have seen how seriously public thought had drifted away from the Divine testimony to "doctrines of demons." How plain the Scriptural account! How distinctly God forewarned our first parents that the eating of the forbidden fruit would be disobedience and would bring upon them the death penalty!

After they had disobeyed, can we not see the force of the declaration that God drove them out of the Garden of Eden that they might die – that the penalty He pronounced against them might be accomplished? Had they continued in Eden, eating of its life-sustaining fruits, they would have continued to live indefinitely. In order that the sentence of death might be executed upon them, they were driven out and the angel's flaming sword protected the entrance to Paradise.

Moreover, after their expulsion from Eden God explained to our first parents the whole procedure, saying, "Cursed [unfit] is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee...In the sweat of thy face shalt

thou eat bread, until thou return unto the ground;...for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." – Genesis 3:17-19.

## **WHY EVIL WAS PERMITTED**

The Bible distinctly tells us that God foreknew the fall of man, and that before the foundation of the world, in His purpose, He had provided the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world and thus to effect ultimately a reconciliation for all of Adam's race desirous of living righteously. God had a glorious purpose interwoven with His permission of sin, which the majority, even of Bible students, evidently but faintly discerned until lately.

The words of Jesus intimate that shortly, before the establishment of His Kingdom, His Church will be like a company of virgins, all pure and justified, but some of them wise and some of them foolish. He intimates that at that time the Wise Virgin class will understand features of the Divine Plan previously kept secret. Evidently we are living in such a time now. It is on this account and not by their own superior wisdom that the Wise Virgin class is today attaining an appreciation of God's Plan, including His reasons for having permitted a reign of Sin and Death amongst mankind for six thousand years – which is to be abolished by Messiah's Reign of Righteousness during the Seventh Great Thousand-Year Day. We may deal with this subject in a later study.

## **THE TEMPTATION OF EVE**

How Lucifer and holy angels became disloyal to God, and how Lucifer acquired the name Satan, or Adversary of God, we will inquire into later. In this lesson he is shown as seeking to alienate the affections of our first parents from the Creator, and, by tempting them to sin, to bring them under the death penalty, that he might enslave them as servants of sin. A spirit being, he would be unseen to Mother Eve, except as he would assume some kind of a material body. It suited his purposes to possess a serpent and through it to tempt Mother Eve.

The serpent doubtless spoke by signs, as we sometimes say, "Actions speak louder than words." The serpent ate of the forbidden fruit in the sight of the woman and then manifested its wisdom, its sagacity. The woman perceived. She craved knowledge. Why had God forbidden that particular fruit? It did not kill the serpent. Why should it kill her? The serpent seemed wise. Why should not that fruit make her more wise? Could it be that God wished to keep them in ignorance, and for that reason had forbidden their eating of the fruit?

Such disloyal thoughts should have been promptly spurned. Confidence in their Creator should have been complete. But the insidious poison worked. More and more Mother Eve craved knowledge and imagined what wonderful blessings it would bring. She surmised that her husband would not consent, so she ate alone. She was not deceived as respects the wrongdoing, but she was deceived regarding the result. Seeing that the serpent was not poisoned by the fruit, she did not realize that the poison to her was that of disobedience, bringing the death sentence. Father Adam's eating of the fruit was with full knowledge of the result. In love with his wife, he ate knowingly, preferring to die with her rather than to live without her.

