

Sabbath School Lesson #1 – Education in the Garden of Eden – 26 Sep-2 Oct 2020

Christ would have us allow Him to impart to us the saving education from His Father. “Behold, God exalteth by His power: who teacheth like Him?” (Job 36:22). Christ has all the learning from everlasting (Proverbs 8:22-30) to impart to all who follow Him. That Christ is able to impart saving education is seen in His working in His disciples. The fishermen having joined the ministry of our Lord Jesus, after three or so years of ministering with Jesus, there was a marked change in those disciples. The learned doctors of theology could indeed see that they were of the common people, and that they lacked the peculiar polish of theological schools, but “they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus,” and they marvelled at their words (Acts 4:13). No one who follows Christ need have occasion to mourn his lack of opportunities. Following Christ is not a substitute for education, but supplies the genuine article, if one is willing to undergo the necessary discipline.

The Lord is a Teacher. He invites all men to attend His school. “Come now,” He says, “and let us reason together” (Isaiah 1:18). “Learn of Me” (Matthew 11:29), He pleads. And the lessons can be learnt only of Him, for He alone has power to teach them. The study is God Himself, through Christ, – His life and power and glory, as manifested in saving men. This is not as other knowledge and cannot be learnt by merely mental exercise. “And this is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3). It is life to know this, and it can be taught only by the Teacher who can put the knowledge into the life. We come to the Teacher and say, “Teach me Thy way, O Lord” (Psalms 86:11), and He takes us by the hand and leads us in it. We would learn His meekness, and gentleness and righteousness, and lo, He subdues the sin and headstrong selfishness and lives His gentle life within us. He gives to us the knowledge of the power of eternal life by His own indwelling presence, living the Divine life in the soul. Heaven cannot contain Him, but He dwells with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, and that trembleth at His word. What a Teacher we have in Him, so patient in instructing and strong with power to teach us. Yet only the meek, the one willing to live His life, can even He teach His way.

Sunday: The First School – Ellen White wrote: ‘The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all aftertime. As an illustration of its principles a model school was established in Eden, the home of our first parents. The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students’ {Ed 20.1}. ‘Created to be “the image and glory of God” (1 Corinthians 11:7), Adam and Eve had received endowments not unworthy of their high destiny. Graceful and symmetrical in form, regular and beautiful in feature, their countenances glowing with the tint of health and the light of joy and hope, they bore in outward resemblance the likeness of their Maker. Nor was this likeness manifest in the physical nature only. Every faculty of mind and soul reflected the Creator’s glory. Endowed with high mental and spiritual gifts, Adam and Eve were made but “little lower than the angels” (Hebrews 2:7), that they might not only discern the wonders of the visible universe, but comprehend moral responsibilities and obligations’ {Ed 20.2}.

Monday: Intrusion – The peaceful environment of Eden was interrupted by intrusion of Satan. The somewhat trite saying, ‘while there is life there is hope,’ contains more truth than most people realise. When Satan beguiled “the mother of all living,” almost his first words were, “Ye shall not surely die,” and Eve, seeing “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,” and willing to incur the divine displeasure if only she might gratify her curiosity and still live, “took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” Satan’s greatest incentive to wickedness was sprung upon our race in the words, “thou shalt not surely die.” The dread of perishing is a most fearful thought, and with that removed, a vast majority of our race are willing to gamble, as it were, upon the chances of attaining felicity in some way, and at some time, in the eternity of conscious existence promised them by the enemy of all righteousness. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” is the divine sentence, and whoever he be, whether philosopher or theologian, that teaches the natural and unconditional immortality of the soul, only re-echoes the words of the intruder in Eden, and arrays himself against an

eternal truth that underlies the very government of God. As our first parents were beguiled, so are many. Millions of souls, supposing themselves secure in their existence, have defied the God of Heaven, stimulated by the delusive thought that, whether righteous or wicked, their lives would measure with the life of the self-existent and eternal Creator of all things.

Tuesday: Missing the Message – The mean cunning of the serpent may be seen in the way that Satan approached Eve. From the fact that while they were talking Eve took of the forbidden fruit, and ate, indicates that when the conversation began they were near the tree. Said the serpent, 'Is it so, that God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?' 'Is it possible that God would make so arbitrary and unjust a command?' The object of this speech can be seen at once. It was threefold, namely, to cause her to doubt the goodness of God; to raise himself in her estimation to the same extent that he lowered God; and to make her feel that she was being deprived of her "rights." Pride and discontent were aroused, which prepared the way for open rebellion. "And the serpent said unto the woman, 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 gods, knowing good and evil." Here was a square issue between Satan and God, and Eve had been worked into such a condition of doubt and discontent that she readily sided with Satan. This was the first sermon on the natural immortality of the soul of man; it is this teaching that is responsible for all the evil that has ever come to mankind.

"For God doth know," etc. Here again Satan charged God with deliberately withholding a good thing from Adam and Eve, so that he might keep them in a position inferior to that which their natural talents entitled them to. What was that position? "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof ye shall be like God" – this is just what Satan said, and a literal translation of the Hebrews. Said Satan, 'You might as well be like God; he knows this, and has placed this prohibition upon you, so that he may keep you down. Now will you consent to be thus imposed upon? Do not do it; assert your rights and be free.' Who is there that does not recognise this kind of talk? We see that Satan caused Eve to fall, by instilling into her mind the same ideas that caused his fall (see Isaiah 14:12-14). We see, also, whence Spiritualism comes, which claims that what the Bible calls evil is a necessity, that men cannot die, no matter what they do, and that each individual is the judge of his own acts, and is therefore equal to God. But read in Isaiah 5:20-24 the fate of those who call evil good.

Wednesday: Regaining What Was Lost – Keeping the Sabbath holy is a sure way of regaining what was lost when man sinned and lost Eden. God has given us the Sabbath to keep it holy, – the memorial of His creative power, – that we may know that He is the God that sanctifies us. This is the rest that Christ gives to all that come to Him. He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." We are to come and rest upon the Word that upholds the universe. This is what the Sabbath means. It commemorates creation; but redemption is simply the power that created all things, working to restore them. So the Sabbath marks the highest Gospel attainments.

The Sabbath was given in Eden, and it is a part of that rest upon which God entered. When kept in spirit and in truth, it is a bit of Eden preserved for us, through all the changes wrought by the curse. And as God made not the earth in vain, but formed it to be inhabited by the same class of people whom He first placed upon it, so it will yet be. Therefore the Sabbath is not only a portion of the original Eden preserved for us, but it is also identical with that rest that will be enjoyed by the saints of God throughout eternity. Heaven does indeed begin upon earth for those who fully accept the Saviour, and who give themselves to Him without reserve. The Sabbath – a fragment of Paradise – spans the chasm from Eden lost till Eden restored, and as it is the memorial of the first, it is the pledge of the second Eden.

Thursday: The Despisers of Authority – Since the death of our Adventist pioneers, our theological schools have failed to guard us against those, Peter warns, "who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them" (2 Peter 2:1). Most of our leaders have acquired qualifications from non-Adventist theological schools, even in our Adventist schools they have used non-Adventist books that are full of satanic theology, and inspired by such evil sentiments, they have changed our doctrines and changed our religion to the extent that our pioneers would today not recognise the church were they to resurrect!