

TEACHING GOAL

To study God's specific acts of providence in the Garden of Eden.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?
- A. When God created man, He entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, upon pain of death.

S.C. 12; L.C. 20; W.C. of F. V; Savoy 5; Young 21-23

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Genesis 1:26-2:25

Support Passages: Exodus 20:8-9, 31:12-17; Psalm 104:24-30;
Ephesians 5:22-33; II Thessalonians 3:6-15;
Hebrews 13:1-6

BIBLE STORY

Exodus 24; An example of God's fellowship, His extending of Himself to mankind in such a manner as this is a direct act of Providence.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one." (2 Thessalonians 3:3, ESV)

APPLICATION

Let us obey God's commandments and His creation ordinances, that the joy of Christ may be in us and that our joy may be made full.

SUMMARY

Last week we undertook the subject of "Common Grace" or the ruling and governing of all God's creatures. We were also reminded that the saints are "precious in the sight of God." Now let us turn to several specific acts of providence which were present at Eden, but also have a most immediate and powerful impact on mankind today. The Larger Catechism summarizes them as follows:

- 1) Adam was placed in Paradise, the Garden of Eden.
- 2) Adam was appointed to cultivate the Garden.
- 3) Adam was granted liberty to eat of the Garden.
- 4) Adam was granted dominion over the creatures.
- 5) Marriage was ordained for Adam's help.
- 6) God extended Himself in fellowship to Adam.
- 7) The Sabbath was instituted for Adam's benefit.
- 8) God agreed to give life to Adam, requiring only that Adam obey His commands to receive it.

One can readily observe the far-reaching effects of these creation ordinances. God was infinitely gracious in extending this providence to mankind, but man has misused and done evil with each one of God's graces.

Eden is an example of heaven. In Eden, there was no curse, and before the fall of Adam and Eve, no death. None of the miseries of this life were present originally in Eden. The Tree of Life was there, and also in heaven, which John terms the "new heaven and the new earth" (Revelation 21-22). John sees there "a river of the water of life." Like Eden, heaven will not be a place of inactivity where we sit on clouds and play harps and sing. Of course there will be singing and choirs, but there will also be the activities of Eden, the cultivating of God's gardens. We will have resurrected bodies which are not cursed, and they will probably be similar to Adam's original body. Eden was Paradise, and to an Eden-like existence we go after death and the resurrection of our bodies. Isaiah and Zechariah give explicit pictures of this existence (Isaiah 65:17ff; Zechariah 14) and John as well, and these prophets claim that the New Jerusalem will be there. This Paradise to come will be never-ending, whereas Eden ended with Adam's sin. The Paradise to come will not depend on Adam, but on Christ, so it shall never fail.

What a privilege for Adam to cultivate and work in God's garden. Certainly he sweat and exercised his marvelous body, but what a joy to labor! Labor is a privilege and when properly done, a great source of joy and satisfaction to mankind. What a wonderful repast at God's hand, both food and fellowship. The joy of marriage, of cleaving to one's wife was exquisite and we note that the only marriage relationship blessed by God in Scripture was between one man and one woman. Then, too, the day of rest and worship was a complete delight. While the

Garden of Eden has passed away for the present, its great ethical and moral principles remain. If we would obey God's gracious commandments, we today may have a foretaste of Paradise.