The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubets' Notes.

Fourth Quarter.

PSALMS OF DELIVERANCE.

Lesson V. October 29. Psalm 85 and 126.

Read Jeremiah 31. Commit Psalm 126.

GOLDEN TEXT.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy, Psalm 126 : 5.

THE SECTION.—A review of the story of the return as given in Ezra, together with the Psalms of the return.

DATE. — Perowne thinks that these Psalms belong to the times of Neh. 1-3, B. C. 445, ninety years after the first returning caravan.

EXPLANATORY.

I. A PRAYER FOR HELP.—85 : 1-7.

Title. FOR THE CHIEF MUSICIAN. The leader of the choir to be used in public worship. Hence the Polychrome translates "For the Liturgy." THE SONS OF KÓRAH. The name of one of the choirs, taken from the famous Korah, one of David's chief musicians, just as now we have the Handel and Haydn Society, and speak of the Sons of the Revolution.

First there is a grateful remembrance of what God had already done for them.

1. THOU HAST BEEN FAVORABLE UNTO THY LAND : shown by bringing BACK THE CAPTIVITY OF JACOB. This was a most marvelous event and not even to be hoped for in the natural course of things, requiring the reversal of the Babylonian policy, the overthrow of the greatest city in the world by a power which a short time before was insignificant and unknown to them.

This gracious deliverance was a proof that (v. 2) THOU HAST FORGIVEN THE INIQUITY OF THY PEOPLE. Cancelled it, as an account of debt is cancelled, or taken away as a heavy, crushing burden. COVERED ALL THEIR SIN. Blotted it out of sight, covered it with a mantle, so that they were in God's sight as those who had never sinned.

Compare the three names for sin and the three for forgiveness in Psa. 32 : 1, 2.

3. WRATH . . . THE FIERCENESS OF THINE ANGER. Expressed in the devastation of the land and in the sufferings of the people in their long exile. Forgiveness was shown by their restoration to their own country. The most important thing is the forgiveness itself. But there is also necessary the expression of this forgiveness by outward manifestations of favor.

Second. We have a prayer for more of the same blessings. For their repentance had been imperfect and the outward blessings were, therefore, of necessity, incomplete. The process of restoration was very long. Enemies still hindered them. Jerusalem was still far from the picture that had been painted. Prosperity and peace had only partially come. The people were disheartened.

Therefore they pleaded what God had already done as a reason for asking more. He who had been so merciful and forgiving in the past must still be ready to forgive and help.

4. TURN US, or turn to us (R. V. margin), restore us (Polychrome). ANGER. Expressing "a mixed feeling of grief and indignation."

5 ANGER TO ALL GENERATIONS The time of trial and tribulation seemed so long,—as if there were never to be an end.

6. QUICKEN US AGAIN. Give us new life, as the fields in the spring rains and sunshine.

"'Tis life of which our nerves are scant,
Life, not death, for which we pant ;
More life, and fuller, that we want."

7. GRANT US THY SALVATION. From sin and departure from thee, from enemies and oppression, from disasters and sorrows, to holiness and happiness, prosperity and peace.

II. THE ASSURANCE OF AN ANSWER.—Vs. 8-13.

8. I WILL HEAR, or "Let me hear," WHAT GOD THE LORD WILL SPEAK. "He would place himself in the attitude of calm and quiet expectation. Like Habakkuk, he will betake himself to his watch-tower and wait to hear what the Lord will speak."

Peace. FOR HE WILL SPEAK PEACE. "A great word which sums up and comprises all else." BUT LET THEM NOT TURN AGAIN TO FOLLY. The folly of sin, idolatry, and all evil. For then the peace could not continue.

Salvation. 9 SURELY HIS SALVATION IS NIGH THEM THAT FEAR HIM. However dark the night, the dawn must be near at hand. Salvation from enemies, oppressions, sorrows without, and from the enemies within.

Glory. THAT GLORY MAY DWELL IN OUR LAND. God's glory, "the manifest presence of God tabernacling visibly among them as of old."

The cardinal virtues. 10. MERCY . . . TRUTH . . . RIGHTEOUSNESS . . . PEACE. These are the four cardinal virtues of Christ's kingdom. Where these reign among men there must be true and perfect felicity. They belong to God's people because they belong to God's nature. MET TOGETHER . . . KISSED EACH OTHER. All the virtues are together in harmony, as they always will be in a perfect character. God's mercy will come in harmony with the truth of his threatenings and his promises. And there can be no peace without righteousness. "The people being willing to follow after righteousness, find peace granted to them at once. 'The war drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled.'" All are the different parts of one anthem.

11. TRUTH SPRINGETH OUT OF THE EARTH, etc. "The earth brings forth truth as she brings forth the natural fruits, and righteousness looks down from heaven like some approving angel on the renewed and purified earth."

Prosperity. 12 AND OUR LAND SHALL YIELD HER INCREASE. As Haggai (1 : 5-11) told them that drought, and mildew, and meagre crops were the punishment for their sins and irreligion, so now the blessings of prosperity are promised as the visible reward and sign of God's favor.

13. RIGHTEOUSNESS, etc. "Righteousness shall be both his herald and attendant." Without this the blessings cannot come.

III. A PSALM OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE ANSWER.—126 : 1-4.

1. WHEN THE LORD TURNED AGAIN THE CAPITIVITY OF ZION, caused the stream of captives that flowed to Babylon to turn back and flow to Zion, or as margin of R. V., brought back those that returned to Zion. WE WERE LIKE THEM THAT DREAM, *i. e.*, "so unexpected and so wonderful was our redemption from the exile, that we could scarcely believe it was true, and not a dream."

Professor Vincent calls attention to three things which greatly astonished the Jewish exiles. (1) The first was the capture of Babylon by the Medes and Persians. "The popular feeling of amazement is reflected in the vision of Isaiah portrayed in the twenty-first chapter of his prophecy. Those who intelligently read this prophecy will see with what wonder the captives of Judah saw the great empire of the east give way before the comparatively unknown tribes of Persia." (2) "The second source of wonder was the escape of the returning exiles from the perils of the journey." It was a four months' journey over a vast desert, with occasional wells and walled stations. "Ferocious herds of Bedouin robbers then as now swept the whole tract." The journey filled the exiles with all manner of terrors, and yet God made their homeward march a royal procession. The way was prepared, mountains of difficulty were leveled, the stones of hindrance were cast out, the dry lands became springs of water. (3) The third thing which amazed these exiles was, that they should have been permitted to return at all. How could they dream that Cyrus, the Persian, would acknowledge the God of their fathers.

2. LAUGHTER . . . singing were the natural expressions of joy at this wonderful deliverance. THEN SAID THEY AMONG THE NATIONS. The nations that looked on recognized the wonder, and acknowledged that there must have been an interposition of divine power.

4. TURN AGAIN OUR CAPTIVITY, or, turn again to us our captives, the numbers of their brethren who still remained in exile. Turn the stream again from Babylon to Zion. Open the way and make them willing. "The past has been great ; make the future great also."

IV. A GREAT PROMISE FOR ALL TIME. —126 : 5, 6. The prayer of v. 4 is joined with an expression of faith, a claim on the promises of God in nature and in his Word.

5. THEY THAT SOW IN TEARS. "Not far from the literal fact," as when the supply of grain "is so scanty that to use it for sowing is almost to take the bread out of the children's mouth's." "There is much to make the eastern farmer's seed-time a time of sorrow, and weariness, and danger." He sometimes has to go six or seven miles from his village to his field, exposed to robber bands. (Compare Job 1 : 15.) SHALL REAP IN JOY. As with the slide of a magic lantern, the psalmist puts beside this picture of the sad faced sower another picture of the gladness of harvest. "The valleys stand thick with corn." There are no tears now, but only the shouting and the happy faces of the reapers as they gather the full ears. V 6 is a magnified picture of the same scene, and a reinforcement of the same promise.

* * *

Why People Call Her "So Nice."

Always shielding others at her own expense.

Making a sacrifice cheerfully whenever one is made.

Avoiding discussions in the presence of a third party.

Apologizing without reservation when an apology is needed.

Conforming her tastes, when visiting, to those of her hostess.

Always repressing criticism when there is anything to praise.

Inquiring after the friends and families of those whom she meets.

Expressing an interest in that which she sees is interesting to others.

Avoiding jokes of a personal nature likely to wound another's feelings.

Wearing the breast-plate and shield of "malice toward none love for all."

Showing "small courtesies" to humble people without an air of patronage.

Looking at people and speaking pleasantly, although she may feel disturbed.

Taking no notice of accidents which happen to others, unless she can give aid.

Drawing checks on her own happiness to bridge over the impending bankruptcy of another.

Never refusing a gift when it evidently comes from the heart and is bestowed with pleasure.

Making no unnecessary allusion to any subject which is known to be disagreeable to another.

Dressing suitably, with consideration for the feelings and the wardrobes of those about her.

Writing letters to those who have benefited her in any way, or to whom she may give help or cheer.

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FIND

AMONG THESE LETTERS

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Didn't Walk for 5 Months. Doctors said Locomotor Ataxia.

Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills Cure a Disease hitherto regarded as Incurable.

The case of Mr. G. O. Archibald, of Hopewell Cape, N.B., (a cut of whom appears below), is one of the severest and most intractable that has ever been



reported from the eastern provinces, and his cure by Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills the more remarkable from the fact that he was given up as incurable by worthy and respected physicians.

The disease, Locomotor Ataxia, with which Mr. Archibald was afflicted is considered the most obstinate and incurable disease of the nervous system known. When once it starts it gradually but surely progresses, paralyzing the lower extremities and rendering its victim helpless and hopeless, enduring the indescribable agony of seeing himself die by inches.

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"Dr. Solomon, a well-known physician of Boston, told me that nothing could be done for me. Every one who came to visit me thought I never could get better.

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