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mar31-1v

JUST FOR TO-DAY.

Lord, for to-morrow and its needs
I do not pray;
Keep me, my God, from stain of sin
Just for to-day.

Let me both diligently work
And duly pray;
Let me be kind in word and deed
Just for to-day.

Let me be slow to do my will,
Prompt to obey;
Help me to mortify my flesh
Just for to-day.

Let me no wrong or idle word
Unhappily say;
Set thou a seal upon my lips
Just for to-day.

Let me in season, Lord, be grave,
In season gay;
Let me be faithful to thy grace
Just for to-day.

So, for to-morrow and its needs
I do not pray,
But keep me, guide me, love me, Lord,
Just for to-day.

The Sabbath-School.**INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.**

[FROM PELOUBET'S NOTES.]

FIRST QUARTER.—Lesson 13.—Mar. 28.

REVIEW.—PSALMS cvii. 1-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!—Ps. cvii. 6-8.

SCRIPTURE LESSON.—This (107th) Psalm belongs to the period we have been studying, and sets forth clearly the lessons which the whole history of this period is intended to impress on the mind.

THE EXTENT OF TIME covered by these lessons is almost two and a half centuries, B. C. 640-400, and includes some of the most important changes in the history of God's people.

THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS.—(1) The great revival under Josiah, and the finding of the Book of the Law, B. C. 628-632. (2) The increasing wickedness and idolatry of Israel, in spite of all efforts for their religious life. (3) The first captivity, B. C. 604, 5. (4) The second captivity, B. C. 598. (5) The third captivity, and the destruction of Jerusalem, B. C. 586. (6) The return of the exiles after 70 years' captivity, B. C. 536, 5. (7) The second temple rebuilt, 534-515. (8) The rescue of the Jews through Esther, 474. (9) Reforms under Ezra and Nehemiah, 457-433. (10) The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, B. C. 444.

VIEW OF THE LANDS.—The larger portions of the lessons have their location in Judah, but throughout the whole quarter this land is in intimate contact with the Eastern empires, and was most of the time tributary to them. There were three of these empires. First, the Assyrian Empire, which ended about 606, when Nineveh was destroyed, and the Babylonian Empire founded. For many years the Israelites were exiles in Babylon and its surrounding country. Here lived Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra, and the three worthies who were companions of Daniel. In 536 Babylon was taken, and the Medo-Persian Empire was founded. It had three capitals,—Babylon, Ecbatana, and Susa (Shushan). At Susa were Esther and Nehemiah. The Persian Empire was much larger than the Babylonian or Assyrian, and lasted till B. C. 330.

THE MOST PROMINENT PERSONS we study in these lessons were,—

KINGS: Josiah, Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, Cyrus, Ahasuerus.

PROPHETS: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

PROMINENT PERSONS: Nehemiah, the Rechabites, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haman, Mordecai, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego.

SUBJECT.—THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

I. THE SAD CONDITION OF THE JEWS (Lesson 1, 2, 3, 4.) Here we note, as given in these lessons (which see), the great degeneracy of Judah. Israel had been carried away captive for the same sins, and yet Judah went on in the same course of evil. They yielded to idolatry, and this root-sin yielded fruit in many sins and crimes. In spite of warnings, in spite of prophets, in spite of a revival of religion and the new-found Word of God, the people grew worse and worse. The tree of Paradise was becoming almost a upas tree, which must be cut down before new sprouts from the old roots would bear better fruit.

II. THE REFINING AS SILVER IS REFINED (Lessons 4-7, 10, 11.)

Under the sad circumstances noted above, it was necessary that God should put his people in the flames of the refining furnace, or soon there would be no people of God, and no true religion on earth. Note the various ways in which God carried on this refining process:

(1) By a great revival of religion under a devoted and religious king.

(2) By a new development of Bible study.

(3) By warnings in the career of others, as the captivity of Israel.

(4) By entreaties and persuasions of the prophets.

(5) By the example of good men, as Josiah, the Rechabites, Daniel and his companions, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah.

(6) By sieges and devastating armies.

(7) By utter destruction of city and temple.

(8) By a long and hard captivity in a foreign land.

(9) By a threatened destruction even there.

ILLUSTRATION. These were like the angel who stopped Balaam in his wrong career, and who would persuade him not to go on in his courses. Barrier after barrier was put in their downward course, but they kept on in their evil way, till only by an almost complete destruction could there be a renewal of true religion, as the field must sometimes be plowed up before the seeds can be destroyed and a new crop be successful.

III. THE DAWNING OF A BRIGHTER DAY (Lessons 5-12.)

(1) We get hints of a brighter day and of dawning hope (1) in the character and career of Daniel and his companions, and in such persons as Esther, Mordecai, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The good seeds was living and true, although most of the tree was cut down.

(2) The process of purification goes on during all the captivity, so that the idolatry is almost entirely rooted out from the Jews, and they cling closer to God,—their only hope.

(3) The word of God, and law of God, is more studied and obeyed.

(4) There is a general improvement in morals, though much remains yet to be done.

(5) They were in a wonderful way (as from God) permitted to return to their own country; and the best, and most religious, and brave, go back to Jerusalem to renew the earthly kingdom of God.

(6) The people in captivity are preserved in a marvellous deliverance, by means of Queen Esther.

(7) The temple is rebuilt, and Jerusalem is once more a city with walls.

(8) Reformers and prophets are sent to teach them and urge them to a better life.

IV. Apply this history to our own times, and to our individual souls, so that we may see the meaning of God's dealings with us, what God wants us to do and to be, and how his gifts of mercy, his love, revivals, teachers, the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, the troubles, the deliverances, the joys, are all in order to prepare us to be the people of God.

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE IN BUSINESS.

A man has just left my study whose story is worth telling. Thirteen years ago Mr. A. left this place for the north woods of Wisconsin, there to conduct a general trading store. His stand was at the crossing of several roads, commanding a good business from the region about. At the very start he set for himself two rules which should control his business operations.

First, he would not dick. It was difficult to carry this rule into practice, because of the previous habits of the people. They expected to beat him down. But Mr. A. marked his goods in plain figures at fair prices, and insisted on the price mark. Gradually his customers came to understand him, and ceased to haggle. A few, however, had to be taught. This is the way the lesson was given:

Mr. B. came into the store one day and asked the price of linen. Mr. A., knowing that his customer would buy what he supposed to be the better quality, turned to his shelves and selected two pieces of exactly the same quality and price, and secretly changing the mark of one from thirty to thirty-five cents, laid the two on the counter.

"How much are these?" asked B.

"This is thirty cents and this is thirty-five."

"I don't want this," pushing away the cheaper; "it is poor quality; this is what I want, but you ask too much for it."

And then the haggling mill began to grind as usual; but to no purpose, for A. would not budge from his price of thirty-five cents.

Finally the bargain was closed at thirty-five, and the desired length was cut off. Then Mr. A. holding together the two pieces said:

"Mr. B. do you see that these two pieces are exactly the same quality?"

"Why, no! This is dearer."

"Yes, but I marked that up to teach you a lesson. You trouble me a great deal by taking my time to dick. These goods are worth only thirty cents, the same as the other, but if you insist on wasting my time, I must charge five cents extra in order to be even. Furthermore, you see that you are no judge of goods and are entirely at my mercy. I could fix the prices to

cheat you every time. Now I shall charge you only thirty cents for this, but I hope you won't trouble me in this way any more." And he never has to this day.

The people about say, "Yes, we like to trade with Mr. A., for we can send an order by a six-year-old boy and get the goods as cheap as we can buy them ourselves."

Second. He would not trade on Sunday. It was doubly hard to enforce this rule, because the population was almost wholly foreign, with low ideas of Sabbath observance, and because the former trader had kept open store on Sunday, which had been his busiest day. Of course the change was a complete surprise. On Sunday morning the people came, tried the door, knocked in vain, swore roundly, then went to Mr. A.'s house to expostulate with him and make known their wants. His reply was always firm.

"I would like to accommodate you, but I cannot sell on Sunday."

"Very well, if you won't sell when we want to buy, we can go to C.'s [a mile and a half distant, and open on Sunday] and stop trading with you."

"I am very sorry to lose your trade, but it can't be helped, for I regard it wrong to keep open on Sunday."

I asked Mr. A. what the result was. He replied,

"They all came back after two or three months." As to his competitor C., he said, "I never felt his competition."

Holding unflinchingly to these two rules, Mr. A. has always done a flourishing business. His own remark was, "I never lost anything by it, and I think I have proved the truth of the doctrine that 'godliness is profitable unto all things.'—Advantage."

HAVE A HOME.

There are a multitude every year who are commencing home life. With hands and hearts linked together, they enter upon their new stage of existence. To such the voice of experience says, have a home. Do not hang about hotels and boarding-houses; keep house, if there is only one room in it, provided there is wit enough in the firm to do it. It is a wretched policy to live a nomadic, boarding-house life, in trunks and boxes, in the midst of ill-health and flirtation, and finally, after years of wretchedness, have a divorce suit, pack two trunks, and then go different ways to the ends of the earth.

Let there be a home, where household treasures can be gathered, household pleasures enjoyed, the comforts and conveniences of life preserved, and where God can give prosperity and fruitfulness and peace and gladness.

Let the home be not a godless home; let it be a place of prayer or worship, of praise. Let there be church in the house, and the Lord who loves "the tents of Jacob" will deign to bless the abodes of his people, and crown them with his grace, his mercy, and his peace.

From such homes go forth men strong to fight the battles of life, women wise and gentle for all gracious ministries, and children that are like corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.—The Christian.

LEARN TO OBEY.

Is it wise for young men to grow impatient of the counsel and control of a good father? He is much more likely to be right than they are, since he has already been over a bit of the way which is still to them untried. Even when young people cannot help thinking their parents unreasonable in their commands or restrictions, they should not rebel. We are bound to obey our parents "in the Lord"; that is, whenever their law does not lead us to the transgression of some higher law given by God the Father to all his children; and it is generally the case that the parental laws which excite most discontent are laws which only restrain from more than doubtful good. Young people should realize that no insult, but rather honor, is shown them by any such restrictions. It is young, thoroughbred horses, and not donkeys or mules who need restraint, and who are considered worthy to receive it! By obedience alone is the will disciplined into self-command, and only he who has learned to obey can ever know how to rule.—Edward Garrett.

BE A TEACHER.

If you are a Bible class teacher don't be a lecturer. Don't be a preacher. Don't be an exhorter. Don't be a declaimer. Be a teacher. A teacher gets work out of his scholars—gets questions, get answers, get hints, gets a good chance to keep his own mouth shut a good part of the time, and the mouths of his scholars open and their brains busy and their hearts excited. Teach! Teach!

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