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The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Fourth Quarter, Lesson 5, Oct. 29, '99

PSALMS OF DELIVERANCE.

—Psalms 85 and 126.

Read Jeremiah 31.

Commit Psalm 126.

Golden Text.—They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.—Psa. 126: 5

PLACE IN THE HISTORY.

The exact date for these Psalms is unknown, but they belong in spirit to the long period of the return from the exile, covered by Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

A PRAYER FOR HELP.—85: 17

For the Chief Musician. The leader of the choir to be used in public worship. The sons of Korah. The name of one of the choirs, taken from the famous Korah, one of David's chief musicians.

First there is a grateful remembrance of what God has already done for them. *Thou hast been favorable unto thy land;* shown by bringing back the captivity of Jacob. This was a 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 ago was insignificant. This deliverance was a proof that *thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people.* Cancelled it, as an account of debt is cancelled, or taken away as a heavy burden. *Covered all their sin.* Blotted it out of sight, so that they were in God's sight as those who had never sinned. *Wrath... the fierceness of thine anger.* Expressed in the devastation of the land and in the sufferings of the people in their 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.

We have a prayer for more of the same blessings. Their repentance had been imperfect and the outward blessings were therefore incomplete. The process of restoration was very long. Enemies still hindered them. 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. *Turn us, or turn to us (R. V. margin), restore us. Anger.* Expressing "a mixed feeling of grief and indignation." *Anger to all generations.* The time of trial and tribulation seemed so long, as if there were never to be an end! *Quicken us again.* Give us new life, as the fields in the spring. *Grant us thy salvation.* From sin, from enemies and oppression, from disasters and sorrows, to holiness and happiness, prosperity and peace.

THE ASSURANCE OF AN ANSWER.

Vs. 8-13 *I will hear what God the Lord will speak.* He would place himself in the attitude of calm expectation. *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 when the peace could not continue. *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him.* Salvation from enemies, oppressions, sorrows without, and from the enemies within. *That glory may dwell in our land.* The manifest presence of God tabernacled visibly among them as of old. *Mercy... truth... righteousness... peace.* These are the four cardinal virtues of Christ's kingdom. 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. God's mercy will come in harmony with the truth of his threatenings and his promises. There can be no peace without righteousness. *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. *And our land shall yield her increase.* The blessings of prosperity are promised as the visible reward and sign of God's favor. *Righteousness, etc.* Without this the blessing cannot come.

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

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, caused the stream of captives that flowed to Babylon to turn back and flow 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. 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. 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. *As the streams in the South.* The South was the general term for that plain which stretched southward from Jerusalem to the edge of the Arabian desert. In the heats of summer it lies parched and barren, the watercourses dry. But when the winter snows begin to dissolve upon the mountains and the spring rains to fall, the parched ground becomes a pool. The streams convert the wilderness into a fruitful field. Thus the exiles pray that their brethren may return as the streams flow in the spring. Flood our land with men, so shall the wilderness and the solitary places be glad, and the desert shall rejoice.

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. *They that sow in tears.* There is much to make the Eastern farmer's seedtime a time of sorrow. *Shall reap in joy.* The psalmist puts beside the picture of the sad-faced sower a picture of the gladness of harvest. There are no tears now, but only the shouting and the happy faces of the reapers. *Though he goeth on his way weeping.* Though the colonists were exposed to many trials, yet a glorious future was before them. The weeping should be changed into joy.

PRACTICAL HINTS & C.

The Old Testament history is ever illustrating the principles of God's dealings with his people for all time.

We learn a lesson of hope and faith from the long and slow process of deliverance. We enter upon a new life with songs, like these Jews to whom the return was like a dream.

The sowing in tears ever precedes the reaping in joy. The struggle of life before success can be won. It is true of the christian life. The cross comes before the crown, the discipline of life before sainthood, the success in doing good.

Boys and Benevolence.

So many questions are asked as to methods of holding and interesting boys of fifteen and sixteen in Sunday-school, perhaps the experience of a teacher of such a class may be helpful.

There are nine of them, as bright, wide-awake fellow as you ever saw, most of them attending school, and working out of hours to earn their clothes, books, and extra money. Taking the class after they had for a year or two been entertained with stories of adventure instead of the lesson, and hired by gifts to attend, among the many thing to be done was to arouse an interest in some one thing that should serve to create a class spirit, a real esprit du corps, among the boys.

The first step was a social evening at the home of the teacher, with games, and a good plain supper. This served to establish a hearty good feeling.

Boys like to be appreciated, so the new teacher took it for granted that they would do appreciative things. While it is true that what we love we work for, it is equally true that our interest grows with our work.

If you would like to know how the class came to be interested in and study the lessons, it can be told another time; for it is a fact that not a class in that Sunday school does better work now than these same boys.

But the purpose of this paper is to tell how giving has grown to be a delight.

The class was given me in the fall. Before the end of that year, the boys were led to talk of some thing to aim for as a class for the coming year. Holding up the collection envelope, the teacher said, Let us take hold of this. I'll pledge myself not to skip a Sunday. If I have to be absent, or forget my money, I'll make it up. Who'll agree to stand by me? With a merry laugh, they all agreed. One boy said: How much must we give? And the teacher answered, Just what you think is fair. Nobody but yourself and God will know.

Then it was easy each Sunday, after passing the envelope, to ask some one to count it, and mark on the envelope. The boys themselves would compare the different amounts, and soon it was not uncommon to hear remarks like this, We're three cents short of last Sunday; somebody's short, or, as some boy would shake his head, and say, I forgot, another would say, Well, next time you remember not to forget.

The close of the year showed that systematic giving had put this class as number five in amount of the year's collection. That was a year ago. When 1895 began, the teacher said, When you think about the peanuts and gum and soda and fun, what do you think about our saying we will not be a penny class any more, like the little children? They were not asked to pledge any definite amount, only urged to

be fair with God. The passing of the collection envelope became a delight, and eager eyes watched the counting as if it had been their own. Not once during the year, has a member of the class failed to make up the amount. On one occasion, one of the boys had been away for four Sundays, and, when he returned, the collection was larger by just that amount. It was a happy voice, too, that said, as he dropped his money in, There goes my four Sundays absent, and here goes to-day.

At the end of the first quarter the class ranked fifth, at the end of the second quarter they were second, and, when 1898 closed, our class led the school. To be sure, the pastor's class of men was only three cents behind, but these were boys, and they earned their money faithfully.

Do you say giving money is not the aim of Sunday-school work? No, surely; but the result of this effort has been that these boys are regular, attentive, and earnest students of the lesson, and are striving to grow braver and truer men. It has been but one of the things accomplished, but, as one of the boys said, We're learning how to be fair with God.

It Saves the Boys.

The best argument I have found in Maine for prohibition was by an editor of a paper in Portland, that was political reasons mildly opposed to it. I had a conversation with him that ran something like this:

Where were you born?

In a little village about sixty miles from Bangor.

Do you remember the condition of things in your village prior to prohibition?

Distinctly. There was a vast amount of drunkenness, and consequent disorder and poverty.

What was the effect of prohibition?

It shut up all the rum-shops, and practically banished liquor from the village. It became one of the most quiet and prosperous places on the globe.

How long did you live in the village after prohibition?

Eleven years, or until I was twenty-one years of age.

Then?

Then I went to Bangor.

Do you drink now?

I have never tasted a drop of liquor in my life.

Why?

Up to the age of twenty-one I never saw it, and after that I did not care to take on the habit.

This is all there is in it. If the boys of the country are not exposed to the infernalism, the men are very sure not to be. This man and his schoolmates were saved from rum by the fact that they could not get it until they were old enough to know better. Few men are drunkards who know not the poison till after they are twenty-one. It is the youth the whiskey and beer men want.—North American Review.

They Were Farmer Boys.

There are some people foolish enough to laugh at the homely virtues to farm life. They are fortunately few, and fortunately growing fewer; but it is well sometimes to look at the list of great men who came up from the farm—not all of them, for that would fill volumes, but some of the most notable ones that flash into the mind in a moment.

Nearly three-fourth of the men who have been chosen by the people for the great offices of the nation are men who were familiar with wooded hills and cultivated fields. For example, Washington, Lincoln, Grant, Garfield, Hamlin, Greeley, Tilden, Hayer, Blaine, Harrison, and many others almost equally conspicuous. Henry Waterson spent his early life in rural Kentucky. Murat Halstead was born and lived on a farm in Ohio. Jay Gould spent his early years on his father's farm in New York. Whittier spent his youth in a village, dividing his time between farm employment and his studies. White law Reid was a boy on an Ohio farm. The reader can add names by the score of successful professional and business men of his own acquaintance whose foundations for success were laid on the farm.—Selected.

A Ready Response.

George Cruikshank the famous English illustrator who won distinction by his designs and pictures—for he was wonderfully clever in the use of his pencil—was one day lunching with other distinguished guests at the home of an artist. The host, Mr. Leslie, knowing that Cruikshank was a strict teetotaler could not resist the temptation to tease his friend. Raising his glass of wine and passing the decanter, he said: Mr. Cruikshank, may I

have the pleasure of a glass of wine with you?

No, my dear Leslie, said Cruikshank, I don't drink wine, you know, but I shall be very happy to have a potato with you. Holding up a potato on the end of a fork he nodded to his host, bit a piece off, and wished him very good health, the artist, Leslie, laughed, of course, while sipping his sherry.—Temperance Banner.

Murderous Millinery.

A lady told me the other day a painful little incident relating to wearing birds on your bonnets and hats. I will try and give her own words. She said:

One day our pastor said (during service) that when he was in Florence a lady came to him and said: Do come with me and hear those birds sing, oh such mournful notes! There was a room full of birds in very small cages, and these birds were all blind; they had had their eyes put out.

In the night the owners take them outside the city and hang the cages in trees, the trees are then smeared with tar. These birds keep up their pitiful singing, and other birds are attracted to the cages, and they get stuck on the tar, and then they are caught and their eyes are put out. And these birds are killed and sent to America for ladies to wear on their bonnets!

And I looked around the congregation to see what ladies had birds on their bonnets, and I was glad there was none on mine; and I don't think I can ever wear a bird again.—Wide Awake.

Using the Memory Wise.

Memory has its limits. These ought to be wisely recognized. We can remember what we most want to, but we cannot remember everything, and have the mind free for action. Practice and determined effort will enable us to remember names or dates or statistics, but if we tax our memory beyond a certain point with these items we cannot have our memory free for other service. He who studies most in the line of research learns to limit his remembering to the sources of information, so that he knows where to turn for the details, instead of burdening his mind with a mass of material that is unnecessary to have always in memory. But he who wants to remember the precise score of all the important football games in recent years between the colleges must limit his ever-available knowledge in other lines. Select your subjects of memory if you would remember to the best advantage.—Sunday School Times.

God's Lights.

A little four-year old inquired of her widowed mother one moonlight night.

Mamma, is the moon God's light?

The lamp had just been put out, and the timid little girl, as well as her mother, was afraid of the dark, but presently she saw the bright moon out of her window, and it suggested the question:

Is the moon God's light?

Yes, Ethel, replied the mother, his lights are always burning.

Then came the next question from the little girl:

Will God blow out his light, and go to sleep, too?

No, my child, replied the mother, his lights are always burning.

Then the timid little girl gave utterance to a sentiment which thrilled the mother's heart with trust in her God.

Well, mamma, while God's awake, I am not afraid.

He Kept It.

I have seldom found it to be a lost thing to give a present of a Testament. I was greatly astonished about a month ago. A cabman drove me home, and when I paid him his fare, he said: A long time since I drove you last, sir. But, said I, I do not recollect you. Well, he said, I think it is about fourteen months ago; but, he said, perhaps you will know this Testament? pulling one out of his pocket. What, I said, did I give you that? Oh, yes, he said, and you spoke to me about my soul, and nobody had done that before, and I have never forgotten it. What, I said, haven't you worn it out? No, he said, I could not wear it out; I have had it bound, and he kept it very carefully indeed.—Spurgeon.

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