

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubets' Notes.

Third Quarter.

EZEKIEL'S GREAT VISION.

Lesson VII.—August 13, Ezekiel 37: 1-14.
Read John 3: 1-18. Commit Verses 5, 6.

GOLDEN TEXT.

I will put my spirit within you, Ezek. 36: 27.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE VISION OF DRY BONES.—Vs. 1, 2, 11. I. THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS UPON ME. "The hand is the instrument and symbol of active exertion and strength. Jehovah laid hold of the prophet, took possession of him, in order to send the exiles a message through him." CARRIED ME OUT IN THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD. He was inwardly transported, in an ecstatic state, from the things around him. All (the expressions) indicate most conclusively that this was purely a prophetic vision. IN THE MIDST OF THE VALLEY. Not any real valley, but one seen in the vision. WHICH WAS FULL OF BONES. Such as doubtless the prophet had seen more than once after the devastations of Nebuchadnezzar.

2. CAUSED ME TO PASS BY THEM ROUND ABOUT. Through the whole collection in every direction, so that he could see and realize that THERE WERE VERY MANY (vast numbers) IN THE OPEN VALLEY. Literally, "on the face" or surface of the valley, exposed to view. AND, LO, THEY WERE VERY DRY. This "is mentioned to show that they were utterly dead, and could not be made alive by any human power."

Interpretation of the Symbol of the Dry Bones. In v. 11 we have the meaning of this symbol by him who presented the vision.

II. THESE BONES ARE THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL. The nation was dead as a nation, as dead as the dry bones in the valley of vision, through the destruction of the city, the sweeping out of all the principal people from the land, and by the annihilation of the temple and the whole system of religious services by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. As these bones were scattered everywhere over the valley, so the Jews were scattered over the wide regions of the Babylonian empire. The nation was like a beautiful tree cut down, all the branches removed, and only a bare stump remaining to show where the tree had flourished. OUR BONES ARE DRIED. Each individual was like a dry bone, far apart from the other bones of the man of which each bone was a part, so that they say WE ARE CUT OFF FOR OUR PARTS, i. e., for our part, as for us, separated from the rest; and OUR HOPE IS LOST. They had no more hope of becoming a nation again in their own land than a dry and parched bone of becoming a part of a living animal again. The national spirit was extinct, and as hopeless of recovery as the former life of a dry bone.

III. THE PROPHET'S SUMMONS.—Vs. 3-6, 12. 3. SON OF MAN, CAN THESE BONES LIVE? Is it possible? Is there any hope? Of course to human power and human view it was impossible. AND I ANSWERED, O LORD GOD, THOU KNOWEST THOU hast powers we cannot comprehend. Nothing is impossible to God.

4. PROPHECY. Not predict, but speak God's message. O YE DRY BONES, HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD. They were nationally annihilated, but each individual could hear. They were to hear not the prophet's opinion, but God's message.

5. BEHOLD I, the Lord Jehovah, the source of all power, the controller of all nations, WILL CAUSE BREATH TO ENTER INTO YOU. As into the first man when God created him.

6. LAY SKELETONS . . . FLESH . . . SKIN. I will restore you to the form of the perfect and complete man you once were. AND PUT BREATH IN YOU. You shall not only have the form but the soul of a man, and become a living, thinking, loving, acting being. AND YE SHALL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD. The wonder will be so great that they shall realize that no being but Jehovah could have performed the miracle.

III. THE RESTORATION.—Vs. 7, 8, 12, 13. 7. AS I PROPHESIED, THERE WAS A NOISE. "Thundering," or the rustling or rattling of the bones as they came together. A SHAKING, R. V., "an earthquake," as at the resurrection of Christ. BONES CAME TOGETHER, i. e., those which belonged to one body; while BONE TO HIS BONE specializes a single bone in relation to another.

12. I WILL OPEN YOUR GRAVES. The figure is slightly varied here. The nation is regarded as dead and buried, but there shall be a resurrection as wonderful as the raising of a body buried for a long time. This marks the marvelousness of the return from Babylon.

8. THE SKELETONS AND THE FLESH CAME UP UPON THEM. This corresponds to the words in v. 12, AND BRING YOU INTO THE LAND OF ISRAEL. When the exiles should return to their own land, rebuild Jerusalem, restore the temple and its worship, and set up a government, then they would be like the scattered bones coming together, clothed in flesh, and having the form of a man. It would be a resurrection from the dead. BUT THERE WAS NO BREATH IN THEM. As yet it was only a form. There was need of a new spirit, a new life, before the restoration would be perfect. "First the natural, then the spiritual."

IV. THE NEW LIFE.—Vs. 9, 10, 14. 9. PROPHECY UPON THE WIND. The same word is used for wind, and breath, and spirit, as in the New Testament. The spirit of life was needed, a spirit of worship, of obedience, of faith, of courage, before they could really be alive spiritually to God, and continue as a nation. Thus in v. 14 he says, I SHALL PUT MY SPIRIT IN YOU.

COME FROM THE FOUR WINDS. "A symbol of the universal life-giving Spirit of God." All the forms and manifestations of God's Spirit would be inspired within them,—for life, faith, wisdom, worship, love; the divine life interpenetrating every part of the nation.

10. THEY LIVED . . . AN EXCEEDING GREAT ARMY. The nation, on its return, was inspired with new life. Ezra's time was one of great religious and literary activity. The Bible then became a new book. And though the nation declined, yet in Christ there was a new graft in the old stock, so that now the kingdom of God, which the returned exiles represented, has indeed already become "an exceeding great army," the greatest kingdom now on earth.

The Novel And The Rose.

A mother and daughter walked along a country road. The daughter carried a volume in her hand. It was a modern novel. Its pages were large and closely written. Their number ran into the hundreds.

A great moral, or great truth, was contained within. The daughter spoke of the truth conveyed by the famous writer through the medium of its pages, but the mother did not approve of this method of teaching even truths. It was not that she doubted truth was there. She knew the teaching of the book was not evil. The book was a story of erring human nature. It was realistic. It portrayed the temptations, the sins, and the vices of some of God's people. The daughter said she read only for the great truth it contained. Her energy was unflagging.

As they walked they passed a barnyard. Cattle walked deep in mud and filth. The air was filled with sickening odors.

The mother plucked a rose growing by the wayside. She held it towards her daughter. "Is it not beautiful?" she asked.

"It is perfect," answered the daughter. The mother cast the rose into the mud and filth of the barnyard, and bade her daughter go and pick it up.

The daughter instead lifted up her dainty skirts and walked away. She preferred clean shoes to the rose.

"It is yet a perfect rose," remarked the mother.

"But I must wade through filth for it."

"It still is fragrant."

"True! But not fragrant enough to kill the odor of the barnyard that will cling to me."

The mother said no more, but walked on. The daughter followed.

The mother glanced back. The book, in pieces, was flung into the mire.—Jean K. Baird, in Presbyterian Banner.

Temperance Tidings.

If the liquor traffic is not wrong, then nothing is wrong.—Lever.

Show your colors and stand by them; it is the only way to fair play and honorable warfare.—Our Best Words.

Tolstoi, we are told, is a teetotaler and a vegetarian. He never takes tea, coffee, butter, eggs, milk, cheese or sugar.

The woman who does not understand the art of making over her last year's bonnet should never marry a drunkard to reform him.—American Issue.

Frances E. Willard made herself popular by doing unpopular things, and she made unpopular things popular because she did them.—Union Signal.

The drinking customs of our day are a relic of the pagan worship of their devils, and yet they have the legal sanction of a so-called Christian civilization.—The Cornerstone.

Good coffee will gradually destroy a liking for alcohol. In Brazil, where coffee is grown extensively, and the inhabitants drink it many times a day, intoxication is rarely seen.

The only possible way to bring about a better day for women, when they will one and all possess the choicest gift of pure and unsullied life, is to begin with men and try to elevate them to the standard of manhood.—Jessie Ackerman.

So long as the licensed saloons are permitted to sell spirits to anyone, so long will crime, disease and pauperism exist. It is cause and effect as clearly as any operation of nature. Saloons are veritable pest houses, whose presence is a menace to all progress and civilization.—Journal of Inebriety.

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Snake Serum For Leprosy.

A despatch from New Orleans announces some remarkable results attained by Dr. Isidore Dyer of that city in treating leprosy with Dr. Calmette's famous snake serum. The serum in question is made from the poison of serpents and is designed solely as a cure for snake bites. Dr. Dyer visited Dr. Calmette's laboratory in Paris and brought away with him some of the serum for the purpose of experimenting with it on leprosy. It appears that among the traditions of the leper colony in Louisiana was one that several lepers who had been bitten by venomous snakes were cured. Dr. Dyer applied the serum to five cases of leprosy in New Orleans, and in two of the cases absolute cures were effected. In two other cases there was a marked improvement, and the cases were lost sight of, so that the final result was not known. In the fifth case the man's system proved repellent to the poison, and the change was for the worse rather than the better.—Buffalo Express.

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The large stock barns of the overseer of Brook farm, Monticello, N. Y., were burnt to the ground Monday. Two young sons of McCullough, aged three and five years, were burnt to death. The children are supposed to have been playing with matches.

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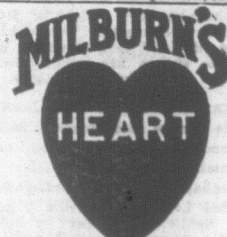
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