

# The Sunday School

## BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

Third Quarter.

THE NEW HEART.

Lesson VI.—August 6. Ezekiel 36: 25-36.

Read Ezek. 11: 14-25; Jer. 31: 31-34.

Commit Verses 25-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.

A new heart also will I give you, Ezek. 36: 26.

EXPLANATORY.

SUBJECT: THE NEED OF A NEW HEART AND A NEW LIFE.

I. CLEANING FROM PAST SIN.—V. 25. In the previous verses the prophet pictures the corruption and idolatry which defiled the people, and the punishment which was inflicted by God on account of it; then the promise of return, for the sake of his kingdom.

25. THEN. When the time shall come for God to restore Israel to their own land (v. 24). WILL I. God is speaking. SPRINKLE CLEAN WATER UPON YOU. The conception of cleansing by sprinkling clean water comes from the Mosaic ceremonial system. (See especially Num. 19: 17-19, and also Psa. 51: 7.) (Also Heb. 9: 13, 14). Clean water is a natural symbol of cleansing, used everywhere and in all ages. FROM ALL YOUR VILTHINGS. Sin is to the soul what filth is to the body,—defiling, unhealthful, uncomely, repulsive. AND FROM ALL YOUR IDOLS. The exile completely cured the Israelites of idolatry. They never again fell into that sin. There would have been little use in restoring the Jews to their own land, if they were to fall again immediately into the sins for which they were exiled.

With all the imperfections that were still left, it is marvelous what a change God wrought in the Jews during the exile.

New Testament Light. Cleansing from sin is absolutely essential to the salvation of the individual and of the nation. God saves not in sin but from sin (Rom. 5: 12; 1 Cor. 3: 17; 6: 9; Rev. 21: 27). (1) We are cleansed from the guilt of sin by forgiveness. (Col. 1: 14; Tit. 2: 14; Rom. 5: 18; 8: 11). (2) From the consequences of sin, (John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 9). (3) From the love of sin, by the new heart referred to in v. 26.

II. THE NEW HEART.—V. 26. A NEW HEART ALSO WILL I GIVE YOU. The heart is the centre of life to the body; it sends the life-blood to every part; if it is weak or imperfect, the whole body is weak and sickly. Such the character, the supreme love, the will, are to the soul and the life. From a right heart flows a right life, from a wrong heart flows a wrong life. The deepest and most essential need of men is a heart that loves and chooses righteousness and God. No outward forms or control can make a person truly good. A man in state prison cannot steal or become drunk; but he is not, on that account, honest or temperate. The honest man is one that loves honesty. The temperate man is one who is controlled by right principles. The righteous man is righteous in heart and character. A NEW SPIRIT. A new motive, new principle of action, a new love.

AND I WILL TAKE AWAY THE STONY HEART.

New hearts are necessary to the salvation of the world. No outward advantages or prosperity can save a nation from immorality and ruin. No form of government will preserve a people. The one thing absolutely necessary is the new heart, a love of good implanted in the nature by the Holy Spirit. Revivals of religion, the work of conversion, the saving of men from sin by implanting faith in Jesus Christ, love to him, consecration to him,—these are the only powers that can preserve us.

This is the great doctrine of the New Testament, taught forcibly by our Lord himself in his statements respecting the new birth (John 3: 3-8), and everywhere presented as pre-eminently the work of the spirit of God.

III. THE NEW LIFE.—V. 27. I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU. This is the gift of the Holy Spirit, promised by Joel (2: 28). It is the power that gives life, that inspires and cherishes everything good. It is the power of springtime over the earth.

The new spirit will be his Spirit,—life like his, a nature like his, to which a right life is as natural as apples are natural to an apple tree, or roses to a rose bush. And this came in its fullness when the Pentecostal gift was bestowed, and God sent his Spirit, in large measures, upon his people. The source of the new life was the Spirit of God. KEEP MY JUDGMENTS. His laws, his decisions, as to what was right. The effects of the new heart and the gift of the Holy Spirit will be manifested in a new outward life.

Illustrations. The effect of the coming of spring is shown in blossoms and fruits.

IV. MOTIVES FOR CHOOSING THE NEW LIFE.—V. 28-36.

First Motive: A Promise of Restoration (v. 28). 28. AND YE SHALL DWELL IN THE LAND. They shall be restored to their own land, and no outward power can overcome them, or take them again into exile, unless they depart from God. AND I WILL BE YOUR GOD. Every good is included in this promise. They should abide under the shadow of his wings. All the blessings of worship, of love to God, of God's love to them, of his care, of his spirit, should be theirs. He would be their Shelter, the Rock of their Defense, their Sun, their Shield, their Father, their Fountain of Life.

Second Motive: Deliverance from Sin (v. 29). 29. I WILL ALSO SAVE YOU FROM ALL YOUR UNCLEANNESS. The outward blessings promised could not continue unless they should first be saved from sin. Therefore God promises them his sustaining grace.

Third Motive: A Promise of Prosperity and Plenty (v. 29, 30). I WILL CALL FOR THE CORN (grain). God, as the owner of the earth and controller of all its forces, will summon them to supply the grain needed for their support. So we pray "Give us this day our daily bread" because it is the gift of God.

30. AND I WILL MULTIPLY THE FRUIT OF THE TREE. There shall be plenty of food. NO MORE REPROACH OF FAMINE. The heathen seem to have reproached the Israelites with having a God who would allow them to suffer hunger. The heathen did not understand the reason. (See v. 23).

Fourth Motive: A Nature Refined, Purified, Ennobled (v. 31, 32). 31. THEN SHALL YE REMEMBER YOUR OWN EVIL WAYS. . . AND SHALL LOATHE YOURSELVES. When they see their own sins in contrast with God's goodness, then they will realize how mean and disgraceful their sins were. They measured their conduct by the true standard, and were convicted of sin. Sin, all sin, is not only wicked, it is mean and debasing. Nothing so convinces of sin as a consciousness of God's goodness, especially as shown in the love of God in Jesus Christ. From no place is sin so black, so loathsome, so hateful, as when seen from Calvary. "It is when the child of God takes his station by the cross, and sees the price which has been paid for his pardon, and comes to some apprehension of the amazing love of which he is the subject, that he learns to abhor himself and to repent in dust and ashes."

V. 32. And, lest the goodness of God in restoring them should lessen their feelings as to their own character, God tells them, NOT FOR YOUR SAKES DO I THIS. They did not deserve it.

Fifth Motive: A Promise for Their Country, Patriotism (v. 33-35). 33. IN THE DAY THAT I SHALL HAVE CLEANSED YOU. They must never forget that this was the necessary condition of salvation.

35. THIS LAND THAT WAS DESOLATE IS BECOME LIKE THE GARDEN OF EDEM. In these verses the temporal side (so to speak) of these promises stands forth prominently. But the spiritual side furnishes the richer instalments and stands guaranteed to us by the fulfilment, already past, of the temporal part in the restoration from Babylon, and in the external prosperity which succeeded that great event.

Sixth Motive (v. 36). 36. THEN THE HEATHEN . . . SHALL KNOW. The Jews should not only be blessed themselves, but become a missionary people, making known the true God to the surrounding nations. This work is essential to the highest good, the noblest character of any man or nation.

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### Shipments of Bells Abroad.

Recent shipments of great bells from the McShane Bell Foundry at Baltimore, illustrate the wide spread demand that exists for these famous musical toned bells throughout the world. Shipments have been made not only to all parts of our land but to Ceylon, Isle of Ceylon; David, South America and Shanghai, China. These shipments abroad, as well as domestic sales, increasing year by year, tell a tale of good bells well made which carry and spread abroad, among other messages, of the fame their founders.

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### Start at the Bottom.

Two boys left home with just enough money to take them through college, after which they must depend entirely upon their own efforts. They attacked the collegiate problems successfully, passed to graduation, received their diplomas from the faculty, also commendatory letters to a large ship-building firm with which they desired employment. Ushered into the waiting-room of the head of the firm, the

first was given an audience. He presented his letters.

"What can you do?" said the man of millions.

"I would like some sort of clerkship."

"Well sir, I will take your name and address; and should I have anything of the kind open will correspond with you."

As he passed out, he remarked to his waiting companion, "You can go in and leave your address."

The other presented himself and his papers.

"What can you do?" was asked.

"I can do anything that a green hand can do, sir," was the reply.

The magnate touched a bell which called a superintendent.

"Have you anything to put a man to work at?"

"We want a man to sort scrap-iron," said the superintendent.

And the college student went to work sorting scrap-iron.

One week passed, and the president, meeting the superintendent, asked, "How is the new man getting on?"

"O," said the boss, "he did his work so well, and never watched the clock, that I put him over the gang."

In one year the man had reached the head of the department, and an advisory position with the management, at a salary represented by four figures, while his whilom companion was maintaining his dignity as "clerk" in a livery stable, washing harness and carriages—Philadelphia Methodist.

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### The Travelled Bumble-bee.

A tumble-bee belted with brown and gold On a purple clover sat:

His whiskers were shaggy, his clothes were old,

And he wore a shabby hat;

But his song was loud, and his merry eye

Was full of laughter and fun,

As he watched the bob-o-links flutter by,

And spread his wings in the sun.

A butterfly spangled with yellow and red

Came flying along that way;

He had two little feathers on his head,

And his coat was Quaker gray;

He carried a parasol made of blue,

And wore a purple vest;

And, seeing a bumble-bee, down he flew,

And lit on a daisy's crest.

Then from the grass by a mossy stone

A cricket and beetle came,—

One with black garb, while the other shone

Like an opal's changing flame.

A swaying buttercup's golden bloom

Bent down with the beetle's weight,

And high on a timothy's rounded plume

The cricket chirruped elate.

The bumble-bee sang of distant lands,

Where tropical rivers flow;

Of wide seas rolling up shining sands

And mountains with crowns of snow;

Of great, broad plains with flower-gems

Bright,

Of forests whose fragrant glooms

Showed crumbling ruins, ghostly and

White,

Old forgotten nations' tombs.

Then wisely the beetle winked his eye;

The cricket grew staid and still,

The butterfly, in his great surprise,

Went sailing over the hill;

The beetle scrambled beneath his stone;

The cricket, he gave a hop;

And there the bumble-bee sat alone

On the purple clover top.

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