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**Sabbath School.**

**BIBLE LESSONS.**

SECOND QUARTER

(Condensed from Peloubet's Notes.)

Lesson V. May 3. Amos 4: 1-13.

ISRAEL OFTEN REPROVED.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"He that, being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."—Prov. 29: 1.

EXPLANATORY.

THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY. This may be learned from 2 Kings 14: 21; 15: 7; 2 Chron. 26, and the prophecies of Hosea and Amos. (1) *Its prosperity.* The period of Amos's ministry was one of great external prosperity for the kingdom of Israel. Under Jeroboam II, it stood at the zenith of its power. Its borders were extended on the north to Hamath, north of Damascus and Lebanon, to the Dead Sea on the south (2 Kings 14: 25-28), while Judah under Uzziah had subdued the Edomites and Philistines. Thus the extent of the two kingdoms almost equalled the united kingdom in the golden age of David and Solomon.

prophecy of Moses (Deut. 28: 22) among the other scourges of disobedience. "When your gardens," the garden of the East united the orchard, herb, and flower garden. Being mostly watered artificially, it was beyond the reach of ordinary drought. But even this was not safe, for it was devoured by the "palmerworm," a kind of locust.

Ver. 10. "The pestilence (a plague) after the manner of Egypt." Egypt is the birthplace of the plague or black death, and the circumstances augmenting its horror are here terribly portrayed. Compare Deut. 28: 60. Pestilence was rare in Palestine. "Your young men (who should be your defence) have I slain with the sword," because they were so weak that they could not stand against the enemy. The worst scourge was through man. "And have taken away your horses." By the incursions of enemies. This had taken place, among other things, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, the son of Jehu, and grandfather of Jeroboam II, who reigned at the time of this prophecy. "And I have made the stink of your camps." The stench of the unburied dead soldiers, which, instead of being a defence, was a fresh source of pestilence. "Unto your nostrils." Showing that this happened in their own land. The warning came home to them. "Yet have ye not returned." Even this did not lead them to repentance.

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(2) *Its wickedness* (as learned from Hosea and Amos). The results of the few accumulated, and the mass of the population had grown poorer. Inter course with the heathen communities round; the loose morality of armies; the unscrupulous self-indulgence of the rich, prompting equally unworthy means to acquire it; and the widening gap between the upper and lower classes, were ruining the country. Above all, the old religiousness of Israel was well nigh gone.

(3) *The danger ahead.* For these sins Amos foretold the ruin of the nation. Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land (7: 11, 17). I will command the sword, and it shall slay them, and I will set Mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good (9: 4). I will cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus (5: 27).

(4) *The only way of salvation* was in repentance. Thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye Me, and ye shall live (5: 4, 6). Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice. It may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious (5: 15).

Ver. 4. "Come to Bethel." One chief centre of the idolatrous calf worship. Make pilgrimages here from all parts of the nation. "And transgress ye not," shipping the golden calf, contrary to God's express command. That these verses are sarcasm is seen by the contrary command in 5: 4-5. "At Gilgal." Another centre of their idolatrous worship. (See Hos. 4: 1.) "Multiply harvests." Increase your sin as rapidly as possible by increasing the number of places where your idolatries are carried on. Do your utmost. "Bring your sacrifices every morning, and also your tithes (the required tenth) after three years." Literally, three of days, which means, according to Pusey, three of a circle of days; i. e., three years. But most take it to be three days, as Revised Version.

Ver. 11. "I have seen a fire which I have plucked out of the burning." Once it had been green, fresh, fragrant, with leaf or flower; now, scorched, charred, blackened, all but consumed. In itself, it was fit for nothing but to be cast back into the fire whence it had been rescued. Man would do deal with it. A re-creation alone could restore it. Slight emblem of a soul whose freshness sin had withered, then God's severe judgment had half consumed; in itself, meet only for the everlasting fire, from which yet God withdrew it.

Ver. 12. "Therefore thus will I do unto thee." What He will do is not expressed. He is silent as toward He will do, in order that, whilst Israel is left in uncertainty as to the particular kind of punishment which is all the more terrible because all kinds of things are imagined, it may repent of its sins and so avert the things which God threatens here. "Prepare to meet thy God" at the judgment seat, where man must give an account of the deeds done in the body. Not prepare for thy doom, but to avert it. Prepare by repentance, by returning to God, by making friends with Him. For meet Him you must, and if you are not prepared the irrevocable doom will be yours.

Ver. 13. "For, lo, He that formeth the mountains." This description is given that Israel might see the majesty and power of the God they must most, and thus realize both how useless it was to try to escape from Him, and how powerful He would be to Him. "And declareth unto man what is His thought." To man, a sinner, far more impressive than all majesty of creative power, is the thought that God knows his inmost soul. "I will establish upon the high places." The highest of earth are beneath His feet. "The God of hosts." Hosts are all God's creatures, the angels of heaven, the forces of earth, every power of every kind, all organized into an army to do the will of God.

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A. H. JONES, 57, Moncton, N. B.

"I hate chocolate cake, mother," he said. "I never want to see another piece as long as I live."

So Mother Whitmore knew that Jerry had learned his lesson. She did not believe he would ever again think anything sweeter that he kept to himself.

"Suppose we bring out your cake and eat it for supper," she said to her little boy.

Jerry's face cleared up all in a minute. "O, mother," he said, "that would be so nice!"

And I think that, if Job and Bounce had been allowed to eat all that Jerry wanted them to have, they would both have dreamed of their great-grandfathers that night.—Sunday-school Visitor.

"Grace and peace"—these two go fitly together, because we must seek our peace in the free grace and favor of God. The ark and mercy-seat were never sundered.—Trapp.

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When I am a man, said Jerry Whitmore, searching his plate anxiously for crumbs of his vanished cake, "when I am a man, I am going to have a whole chocolate cake to myself—a whole big round chocolate cake, mother. I am indeed, and nobody shall have a bit of it. I would like to see how it feels to eat a whole cake by myself."

"You need not wait till you are a man," said his mother. "I will make you one to-morrow."

"Will you, really, mother? All to myself?"

"Yes—on one condition; that you will not give anybody a bit of it while it lasts."

"Ho! I can easily promise you that; for I don't want anybody to help me eat it, I can tell you."

Mrs. Whitmore sighed a little, and wondered if Jerry was as selfish a little boy as he thought he was; but she made him the cake, as he had promised, and firm, Jerry cut a big slice for himself, and sat down on the kitchen step to eat it. His little brother, Rob, came and stood in front of him, with his hands behind his back. "Wis! I had some piece," said Rob, looking at Jerry.

"Mother," called Jerry, "can't I give Rob a piece?"

"Certainly not," answered his mother. "Go away, then, Rob, and don't watch me eat it," begged Jerry. But no; there stood the little man, eyeing the cake until it was gone, while two big tears rolled down his cheeks.

"That piece didn't taste good one bit," said Jerry to himself. "I won't eat any more when Rob is around."

The next time Jerry took a piece—he slipped out of the door to hide himself in the woodshed. Bounce, the little black-and-tan terrier, thinking he was going out to play, slipped after him; but, just before the couple got out of sight, the mother called, "Jerry, remember not to give Bounce any cake."

"O, ain't that a pity?" said Jerry to Bounce; and then he had to eat his cake with Bounce begging for every bite. It was worse than Rob, because he could not explain anything to doggie.

"There that's two pieces of cake spoiled for me," growled Jerry, "eating a whole cake ain't half as much fun as it's cracked up to be."

When the tea-bell rang, Jerry was as ready for bread and butter and milk as if he had not tasted anything for twelve hours; and there, on the kitchen step, was a half of what the Whitmore children called a "snob ball." It was a white cake, white inside with white crumbs and citron, and round and white outside with particularly sugary icing. Nobody made just those cakes except Aunt Martha.

"That cake was sent to Rob, Jerry," said his mother; "and of his own accord he asked me to save you a piece," when, lo! to everybody's surprise, big boyish Jerry burst out crying.

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