

IT PAYS.

It pays to wear a smiling face
And laugh our troubles down,
For all our little trials wait
Our laughter or our frown.
Beneath the tragic of a smile
Our doubts will fade away,
As melts the frost in early spring
Beneath the sunny ray.

It pays to make a worthy cause,
By helping it, our own;
To give the current of our lives
A true and noble tone.
It pays to comfort heavy hearts
Oppressed with dull despair,
And leave in sorrow-darkened lives
A gleam of brightness there.

It pays to give a helping hand
To eager, earnest youth;
To note, with all their waywardness,
Their courage and their truth;
To strive with sympathy and love
Their confidence to win;
It pays to open wide the heart
And "let the sunshine in."

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

LESSON IV. [Oct. 22.]

EZRA'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM.

Ezra 8. 21-32. Memory verses, 21-23.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him.—Ezra 8. 22.

A LESSON TALK.

If Ezra had not been a wise and good man it is not very likely that the heathen king of Persia would have been so ready to let him go to Jerusalem to teach the laws of God more perfectly to the Jews who were there. The king believed in Ezra's God because Ezra was a good man. Do we remember to behave so that people will believe in our God?

It was a dangerous journey that Ezra and his company had before them. They had a wild, desert country to cross, and they carried much gold and silver which the king had given them for the temple in Jerusalem. The land was full of enemies waiting to rob them. Ezra had told the king how strong and good was his God, and he was not willing to ask the king to send soldiers to protect them on the way. He did not need to do this, for he had a mightier King than the king of Persia—even the king of Heaven! How wise he was to call his men together and ask God for protection and help! And he soon had the answer to his prayer, for he went forward in peace and perfect safety, reaching Jerusalem in about four months from the time he left Babylon.

QUESTIONS FOR THE YOUNGEST.

Who was Ezra? A priest and teacher.

Where did he live? In Babylon.
Where did he want to go? Home to Jerusalem.

What for? To teach God's laws to the Jews.

What did the king give him? Permission to go.

What more did he give him? Money and vessels for God's house.

Who went with Ezra? Many Jews, both old and young.

Why was the journey a dangerous one? There were many enemies.

To whom did Ezra go for help? To God.

Who always hears and helps his children? God.

How long did it take to go to Jerusalem? Four months.

Did any harm come to them? No; God kept them all the way.

LESSON V. [Oct. 29.]

PSALMS OF DELIVERANCE.

Psalms 85 and 126. Memory verses, Psalm 126. 1-6.

GOLDEN TEXT.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.—Psalm 126. 5.

A LESSON TALK.

How hard it must be to be driven away from one's own home! Do you remember that the Jews, God's own people, were taken away into captivity by heathen people, and had to serve them as slaves? Does it seem strange that God would let his children become slaves? But it was all the fruit of their disobedience. If they had loved and served God he would not have let such sorrow come to them. Now many of them had come back to their own country, and this is a song of praise to God, who had brought them back.

When a child has been naughty and disobedient, and has had to be punished, how happy he feels when it is all over and he knows that he is forgiven! It was so with the Jews. Their hearts were full of praise to God for the kindness and love which had been shown to them in their sin, and now they meant to do right and please God once more. Little children have many things to praise God for, and one can never be too young to be thankful to the good God for sending Jesus into the world to be our Saviour by showing us the way to heaven and eternal life! Will you not learn the third verse of the 126th Psalm?

QUESTIONS FOR THE YOUNGEST.

Why had the Jews been in great trouble? Because they had sinned.

What had God told them to do? To love and serve him.

What had they done? Served idols.

What had God told them? That he must punish them if they did this.

Why did they not stop? They liked to have their own way.

What happened to them? They were carried into captivity.

Who brought them back at last? The Lord.

How did they feel? Very glad and thankful.

To whom did they sing songs of praise? To the Lord.

Who wants to make captives of us? Satan.

Who can set us free from his power? The Lord.

What can make us glad and thankful? To have the Lord make us free.

CHINESE WORSHIP.

"I thought the Chinese worshipped their ancestors," said Hugh with emphasis, as little Kitty showed him the picture of a strange-looking Chinese idol. "And so they do," said mamma, "and a great many other things besides. They have 'gods many,' which they worship according to their necessities or fancies. There are so many, indeed, that it would be impossible to collect the names of them all. Besides the gods of the woods and the fields, of thunder and rain, with many others of like kind, there are local deities without number. Then they worship oddly-shaped stones, gnarled bits of wood, and any queer thing that comes to hand. All these, besides the spirits of their ancestors."

"Whew!" said Hugh; "I should think they'd have to keep at it all the time."

"Human nature is the same everywhere," said mamma. "If men have no motive of love to draw them to a superior being, they seek him only as they feel their need of help beyond themselves."

"But how do they worship the idols?" asked Kitty.

"They bring offerings of cakes, meat, fruits, or anything they chance to have. They set them before the god and burn incense sticks before him. Then they get down on their hands and knees, and bow their heads to the floor, in the meantime telling the god what they want. Then they carry away the food and eat it."

"Then I think I read somewhere," said Hugh, "that every god has its birthday, and has to be specially worshipped then."

"Yes; and in new moons and when they are full. There are many other strange things to be learned about Chinese worship; but the most important thing to remember is gratitude that we know the only true God."

A SECRET.

"How is it you never go with bad boys nor get into bad scrapes?" asked a child of his playmate. "Oh," said the other, "that's because I don't say 'no' easy." We thank that child for his secret. It is worth much more than a bag of money. I have no doubt saying "no" easy has ruined many a child and man and woman too,—saying "no" as if you did not quite mean it. When a bad boy or girl tries to coax you to do a doubtful thing, say "no" as if you meant "no"; when sin whispers an excuse for doing wrong, say "no" loudly.