

## May 15. A SONG OF PRAISE.

Lesson, Ps. 103 : 1-22. Golden Text, Ps. 103 : 2.  
Memory vs. 1-5. Catechism Q. 76-77.

This Psalm belongs to No. 4 of the Hebrew hymnal, which is supposed to have been collected in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, and was probably one of David's Psalms which had been overlooked in the preparation of Nos. 1, 2 and 3. It is the grandest thanksgiving hymn in the whole range of literature.

I. God's benefits, vs. 1-7.

II. God's goodness, vs. 8-18.

III. A call to praise, vs. 19-22.

I. vs. 7. *Bless; Praise. All that is within me; My thoughts, my heart, my love, my aims, my whole being, let it all be turned to that one song. Forget not; The tendency of human nature is to forget benefits, whether from man or God; to look upon them as our right when we have them, and to complain when they are taken from us. The Psalmist then goes on to tell God's benefits. And what a list! Who can measure their vastness? Forgiveth; O how many iniquities! Healeth; More especially spiritual diseases, and yet Christianity blesses the body as well as the soul. Redeemeth; At such a price. Crowneth Thee; Thy whole life, with nought but loving kindness. Good Things; Not what may seem good, but what He sees good. Renewed; They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. As the eagle's; Referring to the renewal of strength and wings for flight after shedding the feathers. Unto Moses; A pious few always turned to national history for proofs of God's goodness.*

II. vs. 8-18. This section tells of God's goodness of character, and the one outstanding proof of that goodness is His mercy toward sinners. *Full of compassion; His infinite Being, full of compassion in its every part. Slow to anger; How long and patiently He waits upon the sinner to repent, and how wonderful His patience with the shortcomings of His own people. Plenteous in mercy; Whether we look at the degree of mercy shewn, or the magnitude or multitude of the sins towards which it is shewn. Not dealt; If He had, we would be without hope. Fatherpitieth; What a touch! Think parents, how you try to keep evil from your children. Far more tenderly and truly does God love His children. Knoweth our frame; All its weaknesses and infirmities.*

III. vs. 19-22. Looking out from man's narrow sphere he remembers that it is but a small part of that towards which God's goodness is shewn, and His Kingdom, *Ruleth over all; And then he calls, first upon the world above himself, the higher intelligences, to join the song of praise. Angels; Ye experience His goodness. Then he calls upon the world below himself. Ye his hosts; Sun, moon, stars, all the forces of nature. Then rising in rapture, with an all embracing sweep of vision, he cries—All His works—All must join the song, and after this glad outburst he returns once more to Himself "Bless the Lord O my Soul."*

When all Thy mercies O my God  
My rising soul surveys  
Transported with the view I'm lost  
In wonder love and praise.

When nature fails, and day and night  
Divide Thy works no more,  
My ever grateful heart O Lord  
Thy mercy shall adore.

## May 22. DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS.

Lesson, Dan. 1 : 8-21. Golden Text, Dan. 1 : 8.  
Mem. vs. 17-19. Catechism Q. 78.

Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem three times, first in 606 B.C., when he took the city and carried off many captives, among them Daniel, a youth of noble birth 16 or 17 years of age. In 598 B.C. this was repeated, and among the captives was Ezekiel, aged about 22. Again in 585 B.C., the army of Babylon came and utterly destroyed the city and the temple.

The seventy years captivity dates from the first siege, 606-605 B.C. Daniel was then taken captive and the events of this lesson were immediately after 605-603 B.C. Babylon at this time in the height of its fame, ruling all western Asia, was an immense city, 11 miles square, with walls, according to Herodotus, 300 feet high, 80 feet broad at the top, and 100 great brass gates giving entrance to it.

I. The victory over temptation, vs. 8-14.

II. The result, vs. 15-21.

I. vs. 8-14. *Purposed in his heart—An undecided mind in the presence of temptation is sure to yield. As a rule, he who hesitates is lost. Defile himself—There would be the injury to health by the luxurious living, and its dangers of excess; and also the defilement, to a Hebrew, of eating that which had first been laid before an idol as a sacrifice, and then sold in the market. Requested He acted in a wise and conciliatory manner. Brought into favor If one seeks to do right God can help him in many ways. Endanger my head—How uncertain and unsafe the position of one in the service of an Eastern king. Prove thy servants—Wise again. Let it be tried and let results decide. He consented The God who moved and strengthened Daniel to take the stand moved the prince to consent to the trial.*

The temptation was very strong. The young men were not treated as captives but taken to be trained as counsellors of the king. They were young and hopeful. The food was very delicious, and they need not run to excess. Then why appear odd and be subjected to the sneers of the other young men about the court. It is hard to imagine temptation coming in a more subtle and plausible manner. But Daniel's mind was, not to see how much he could allow and still keep himself pure, but to keep as far as possible from all that might tempt. He knew that it was safe to touch not. He might not be safe if he tampered with it. Daniel appears to have been the leader and spokesman. Perhaps the others would not have taken the stand which they did had he not been with them. What an influence one may have for good.

II. vs. 15-21. *Fairer and fatter—The simple food of the boys, their clear consciences and regular habits, resulted, as such things always do, in better health. Besides this there was God's special blessing upon their faithfulness to Him. Ten times better—God given wisdom is always ten times better in the end, than all that the wisdom of the world may teach. First year of Cyrus—Who conquered Babylon and decreed the rebuilding of the temple, so that Daniel lived through the whole 70 years of the captivity, most of the time an honoured counsellor at the royal court.*

There are here two great lessons, (1) To parents, to train their children in the fear of God as Daniel was trained. (2) To boys and young men, obey God, resist sin, and you are safe.

Touch not, taste not, handle not.