



LESSON IV.—OCT. 25.

David's Joy Over Forgiveness

Psalm xxxii.

Golden Text.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Ps. xxxii., 1.

Home Readings.

Monday, Oct. 19.—Ps. xxxii., 1-11.
 Tuesday, Oct. 20.—Rom. iv., 1-12.
 Wednesday, Oct. 21.—Rom. v., 8-21.
 Thursday, Oct. 22.—Ps. lxxxvi., 1-13.
 Friday, Oct. 23.—Ezek. xxxvi., 22-31.
 Saturday, Oct. 24.—Ps. ciii., 1-14.
 Sunday, Oct. 25.—Luke xv., 1-10.

1. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

6. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

7. Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

8. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

9. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

10. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.

11. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

(B. R. M. Kurtz.)

INTRODUCTION.

In the last lesson, Psalm li., we had David's confession of sin, his plea for pardon, and the possibilities of the new life that would come to the forgiven and restored soul. In the present lesson we have the joy of David over forgiveness, Psalm xxxii. The order in which these psalms appear in the Scriptures does not necessarily denote the order of events in David's life, to which the psalms refer.

David, indeed, suffered sorrow and humiliation for his sin in the events which followed it, but so far as his relations to God were concerned, he and his Heavenly Father had become reconciled, and David's joy is expressed in this Psalm.

THE LESSON STUDY.

Verses 1, 2. 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,' etc. In these two verses we have three expressions for evil and three for its forgiveness. The idea of the blessedness that follows forgiveness of sin is emphasized. Blessing means divine favor. Therefore God favors the forgiven man, his love is especially manifested toward him. No wonder David exults, for he has something to rejoice over; from

the position of a lost sinner, he comes to that of a soul pardoned and restored to peace with God.

3, 4. 'When I kept silence,' etc. Here, in a few words, is a vivid description of the unrest of the guilty soul. When David kept silence, when he refused or put off the confession of sin, there was no peace. A bad conscience is a terrible companion. Being silent toward God in refusing to confess, David's 'bones waxed old' through his 'roaring,' his soul's unceasing cry of agony.

What caused this? 'Thy hand was heavy upon me.' There was no rest from the God David had wronged. Like a wise earthly parent God would not allow the wrongdoing of his child to be covered over and forgotten, out of a sentimental notion of love or mercy, but he persisted in keeping it fresh in David's mind until he should yield, acknowledge his transgressions and seek pardon.

Only the rebellious, unforgiven soul complains of God's anger and punishment, and longs for peace, for the contrite, submissive heart, is soon restored to the joy of salvation.

5. 'I acknowledged my sin,' etc. Here we have the turning point. How was this deep-dyed sinner to have peace? By works? 'Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.' Romans iii., 20. 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.' Ephesians ii., 8, 9. David himself shows the hopelessness of man's attempt to justify himself, when he says, Psalm cxliii., 2, 'For in thy sight shall no living man be justified.'

So David opens his heart to God, and makes no attempt to hide his iniquity. Then what follows as the very next step after he had reached this decision to confess his transgressions? 'And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' Salvation through Christ is not a complicated but very simple matter, though we, by our learned discussions, may cast a haze about it. But seen in the light of God's Word, one has but to confess and look to Christ, as the suffering Israelites had but to turn their eyes upon the brazen serpent to become healed.

6, 7. 'For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto thee,' etc. On account of God's loving mercy and forgiveness, which David has just proved, men should pray to God. As the Revised puts it, 'For this let everyone that is godly,' etc. 'In a time when,' etc., that is not to tax God's patience to the point where he will no longer strive with man.

'Surely in the floods of great waters,' etc. The man who is thus forgiven has nothing to fear. The wrath of God may overtake those who have disregarded him, as the flood overwhelmed all but Noah and his little company in the ark, but the waters shall not reach the forgiven man who is right with God. So in verse 7 God is referred to as the hiding place of the soul, and the one who should compass it with songs of deliverance.

8, 9. 'I will instruct thee and teach thee,' etc. David has been expressing his reliance upon God, and God now confirms and encourages such faith by promising to instruct and to guide.

'Be not as the horse, or as the mule,' etc. Do not live in the attitude of unreasoning animals that must be controlled by bit and bridle, but be open to instruction and guidance that you may freely do what is right, without compulsion.

10, 11. The last two verses are a contrasting of the condition of the godly and the wicked, and they show the exultation and joy of the upright in heart. The man who persists, in his obstinate blindness, to remain unforgiven has no part in this triumphant shout.

Next week the lesson is 'David and Abigail,' II. Samuel xv., 1-12.

C. E. Topic

Sunday, Oct. 25.—Topic—What the Bible teaches about giving. III Cor. ix., 6-11; viii., 23, 24.

Junior C. E. Topic.

INTEMPERANCE.

Monday, Oct. 19.—Makes poverty. Prov. xxxiii., 21.

Tuesday, Oct. 20.—Makes woe. Isa. xxxviii., 1.

Wednesday, Oct. 21.—Makes us careless. Luke xxi., 34.

Thursday, Oct. 22.—Makes us forget God. Isa. v., 11, 12.

Friday, Oct. 23.—Sets a bad example. Rom. xiv., 21.

Saturday, Oct. 24.—Makes captives. Isa. v., 13.

Sunday, Oct. 25.—Topic—Why I will never use strong drink. Dan. i., 8-18.

What Hinders?

(Rev. Charles Lutt Palmer, in 'Christian Intelligencer'.)

Doubtless incompetent and unconverted Sunday school teachers are often an obstacle to the conversion of children. Not intentionally, but having had no change of heart themselves, they are unable to direct those under their charge to Christ. The Sunday school is more important today than it has ever been, and it is becoming even more so, since home teaching has been so largely discontinued and assigned to the Bible school. It is not only necessary to impart systematic instruction in the Word of God, but the application should direct the young mind to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. It is therefore of great consequence that only intelligent Christian teachers should be employed in our Bible schools, so that from them they may learn of Him who came to seek and save. The teaching in our Bible schools would be more efficacious if the lesson leaves were left at home and only Bibles brought. We must master the words of Scripture if we expect to grasp its sacred teachings.

Church officers may discourage children in their efforts to become disciples of Christ by refusing them admission into the Church. Not a few of our most spiritual and most aggressive churches are receiving children into full communion. There are others of the more conservative type, which deny the privileges of church membership to those under a certain age. It is by no means the purpose of the writer to insinuate that the latter are actuated by a wrong motive, but to affirm that he believes no child should be excluded merely on account of age. Again, only such children should be admitted as are able to give evidence of a new heart and a desire to serve the Master. One cold, bleak afternoon a farmer was gathering his sheep and lambs into the barn. Just then his pastor happened along, and seeing the farmer caring for the lambs, asked him why he was so particular to put them in a warm place. The farmer replied that they would perish if left out all night in the cold. But, said the minister, why not leave them out all night for several nights to see if they will 'hold out?' The farmer saw the lesson. He had recently advised his child not to unite with the church until she was older. But the illustration of the lambs suggested his mistake. It is not safe for church officers to exclude children from full communion membership simply because they are children. Such as are able to give the required evidence ought to be welcomed among the people of God.

Don't let your teaching be too formal, and, above all, don't spend all your time in simply teaching such things as that at the Deluge it rained exactly so many days; that Noah was in the Ark precisely so many months; that a certain king began to reign in such and such a year, and reigned just so many years, and he died. But let every word be calculated to make the children better, never forgetting that the supreme object is to bring them to Christ.—'Spectator.'

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