

Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

SECOND QUARTER.

(Continued from February's Sabbath Notes.)

Lesson I. April 3. Ps. 1:1-6.

THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

GOLDEN-TEXT.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."—Ps. 1:1.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS. This book was the Hebrew Hymnal. The Book of Praises, the hymns being designed to be set to music and used in the worship of God, especially in the synagogues after the exile. It is divided into five books, ending with Ps. 41, 72, 89, 106, and 150, each of which closes with some form of the benediction,—"Amen and Amen." "Blessed be the Lord forever." As the old familiar hymn-book was named *Psalm and Select*, so the Psalms may be called *David and Select*. Watts also was divided into several books.

THE DATE OF PSALM 1 IS UNCERTAIN. It is a preface to the whole first book, which was probably collected by Solomon, and therefore must have been written as early as B. C. 1000. The author is unknown, but very probably was Solomon himself, as Perowne argues. But there is nothing in it that would prevent David's being the author.

EXPLANATORY.

1. *Blessed is the man.* The Book of Psalms, like the Sermon on the Mount, opens with a benediction. "The word translated 'blessed' is a very expressive one. The original word is plural. We might read it, 'Oh, the blessedness!' The plural form expresses the manifold nature of the blessedness of the righteous man. He is blessed in every way, at all times, from all sources, in all departments of his life, in all circumstances.

FIRST. NEGATIVELY. There are some things which the righteous man does not do. This negative side is given first, not because it is the source of righteousness, but rather, it is the preparation for it, the condition of it. It is the clearing of the ground from weeds and briars, to prepare the ground for the good seed. It has no power of life, but makes the life possible. *That walketh not, etc.* The verb is in the perfect tense. "The negative side of the righteous man's character, his decided aversion from evil, is regarded as an already accomplished fact, and therefore put in the perfect."

SECOND. THE SOURCE OF HIS GOODNESS. 2. *But his delight is in the law of the Lord.* Bad men may sometimes obey the law, but only the good man delights in it. This delight does not look at what the law promises, nor what it threatens, but at this only, that "the law is holy, just, and good." In the law. The law (Torah) may here include the prophets, including the prophetic-historical books as well as the Pentateuch. It was the written Word of God, so far as then known, and hence, to us, the whole Bible; for while the commandments are the law stated in words, the rest of the Bible gives that law as illustrated and enforced in the history of nations and individuals. God's law is the expression of God's character; he who loves God loves His law. *Of the Lord.* The capitals in the printed text show here, as elsewhere, that the original word is "Jehovah," i. e., the self-existent, living, eternal God. *And in His law doth he meditate.* The quiet soliloquy of one who is searching and thinking. As the meditation is, such is the joy (Prov. 23:7). Meditation is the touch-stone of the Christian; it is a spiritual index. As the index shows what is in the book, so meditation shows what is in the heart. *Day and night.* Whenever opportunity offers. The reverse of the night turn to the things that most interest us.

THIRD. HE IS LIKE A TREE BY THE BROOKSIDE. 3. *And He shall be like a tree.* The points of resemblance are many and striking. The tree is an organic whole, with the properties of life, growth, and fruitfulness; it has, moreover, the elements of grandeur, beauty, and perpetuity. "The figure possessed, for an Eastern mind, a vividness of which we can form but a faint conception. When all else was parched and sterile, the brooks of water and the torrent beds had their bright strip of verdure (1 Kings 18: 5). There the grass was freshest and greenest, and there the trees flourished luxuriantly. See the same figure used of outward prosperity (Job 8: 16, 17; Ps. 52: 8; 92: 12; Isa. 44: 4; Jer. 17: 8)." *By the streams of water.* The original word denotes "every flowing stream, especially the brook that issues from a spring, and every channel which one leads from a spring over the surface of the ground," winter torrents and great rivers, such as the Nile and the Euphrates, being excepted.

FOURTH. THE VARIETY OF TREES. It is often supposed that, by becoming a servant of God, a man loses all his distinctiveness, sacrifices many of his peculiar modes of power, and shuts himself up to a comparatively narrow range of activity; whereas the truth is that no man ever finds out the variety of uses to which human talent and power can be put until he begins to work under God's direction.

FIFTH. THE PLANTED TREE. *Like a tree planted.* The righteous man is not a wild tree, but a tree chosen, planted, cultured by God, suggesting God's unceasing care and providence. He is planted in that place which will best promote his faithfulness.

SIXTH. FRUITFULNESS. *That bringeth forth its fruit in its season.* Fruitfulness, bearing the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, etc. (Gal. 5: 22, 23), and "every good word and work" is a constant characteristic of the righteous man. Fruit is the infallible test. If there is no fruit, or if the fruit is not good, he is not righteous. There may be some poor fruit, there may be fruit which grows on branches beneath the new divine graft, but if there is good fruit in the soul it will produce good fruit.

SEVENTH. CONTINUANCE. *Whose leaf also doth not wither.* The trees are ever-green, like the orange or palm, or the leaf does not fade before its time, before its work is done to give place to new leaves. Leaves are not merely professions of fruit; they are the means by

which the fruit grows; they are the lungs of the tree. The tree will die if the leaves are stripped off and kept off. Without leaves there can be no fruit. EIGHTH. SUCCESS. *And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.* Here is a transition from the figure of a tree to a person. Both the verbs in the original are such as are applied both to trees and to persons. "Holiness is happiness, security, stability, fruitfulness; and holiness is based solely on the law of God." The righteous man here described will have true prosperity. A world of such people would be the happiest and most prosperous world imaginable. Nearly all the outward failures arise from failing in righteousness on the part of somebody.

II. THE CHARACTER AND THE REWARD OF THE WICKED. FIRST. A CONTRAST. 4. *The wicked are not so.* They differ from the righteous in character, in the sources of their life, in fruitfulness, in destiny. In every respect they are the reverse. "That not contains the germs of all moral disaster." They are not compared even to a dry, withering, or fallen tree. There is a greater contrast than that would represent.

SECOND. WORTHLESSNESS. *But are like the chaff.* Light, shifting, worthless, useless, dead, easily carried away. "The threshing-floors were usually on high exposed spots, where the wind would sweep over them the more freely." THIRD. SEPARATION. 5. *Therefore.* Because they are hopelessly worthless. The end will be the natural result of the life. *Shall not stand in the judgment.* They shall not stand as acquitted, not stand the trial safely, in God's righteous judgments, "at all times and in all places where God's estimates of men's character are manifested." His providential judgments, but chiefly the great day of judgment (Matt. 25). *In the congregation of the righteous.* They shall not be reckoned or regarded as belonging to the righteous; that is, in all places where the righteous, as such, are assembled, they will have no place, especially in the last day when they shall be gathered together to receive their reward, and when they shall be assembled together in heaven.

FOURTH. THE END. 6. *For.* There is much in this little "for." There is always a reason for what God says and does. *The Lord knoweth, i. e., regards with watchful care and love.* Knows from the beginning to the end. *The way of the righteous, i. e., the tendency and issue of their character and conduct.* He knows their struggles to overcome; He knows their prayers for help; He knows how bitterly they repent of their failures; He knows where to lead them, the doors of usefulness, the secret ways into better life and larger usefulness. *The way of the wicked.* Their life, their whole course of action. *Shall perish.* It contains in itself the elements of ruin. *The way itself is ruinous.* The path leads to final and complete destruction. There is no escape from the end of the ungodly except by ceasing to be ungodly.

The Little Girl Who Wanted to be a Little Boy.

BY L. J. DENNIS.

There were so many girls already in the Brown family that everybody said when Emily was born that it was a great pity she wasn't a little boy, and as time went on they were strengthened in this opinion. Emily herself regarded the fact of her being a girl as nothing short of an affliction. She wasn't a bit like other little girls. Instead of being a neat, kissable little body, fond of her dolls and her kittens, as all little girls in story books are, and all little girls in real life ought to be, Emily was always racing over the fields, hunting bird's nests, or chasing the calf or the chickens, her sunbonnet dangling down her back, and her apronstrings trailing in the dust. Mamma sighed and shook her head over the rent and dilapidated garments brought to her to be mended, and Mary Anne, the maid of all work, declared that "the child wouldn't be a thing but skin and bones, if she didn't quit a racin' and tearin' about like a wild child."

But this prophecy had no terrors for Emily. The height of her ambition was to be like a boy, and who ever heard of a boy who couldn't run and jump? She even persuaded Uncle Dick to take her to the barber's and have her hair cut so short that her head looked like a little brown cocoon, and when mamma consented to buy her a round sailor hat, with a simple band of ribbon as the only trimming, she did indeed look like a little boy.

Now all this was very harmless and very healthful amusement, but this wasn't the whole. A dozen times a day would this silly little girl sigh dolefully, and wish she "only wasn't a girl." Mamma called her to wipe the dishes, or to mend a torn frock, or to set the table, Emily was sure to scowl angrily, and mutter something about boys never having to do such things; until mamma began to wish that she really was a boy, or at least a more amiable little girl.

One Sunday morning Emily was unusually disagreeable. She went moping over the house, her old discontented refrain always on her lips, and fidgeting so over her tasks that the rest of the family were all ready before she commenced to dress for church, so she was left to walk the short distance by herself.

"I really don't know what to do with the child," said mamma, coming down stairs after she had collected Emily's Sunday-school books, and done every thing possible to help her dress. "I have been hoping that she would get over her silly notions as she grew older; but she don't seem to get a bit less discontented and unreasonable."

Emily finished dressing, and trudged off to church, looking very gloomy, in spite of her "boy hat." The congregation was assembled, and the minister just mounting the pulpit steps, as she pushed open the church door.

Just then Deacon Thomas bethought himself that the glass of water, which it was his custom to provide, was missing from the reading desk, and started full tilt for the door to get it; for, in his opinion, the minister could as well conduct the service without a hymn book as without a glass of water.

Deacon Thomas was a tall, severe-looking man. Emily's papa said that he was a regular old Puritan, and so he was. About half way down the aisle he

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saw the little girl, and stopped in horrified amazement. "You bad and wicked little boy!" he said, glaring at her over his spectacles. "Aren't you ashamed to come into the sanctuary with your hat on?" Everybody turned around, and some light and tiding young persons in the back of the church giggled. "If you please, sir, I—I am a little girl," stammered Emily, and then she fairly flew up the aisle, and into mamma's pew, her face as red as a peony, and the tears just ready to come. "Mamma," said a very meek little girl that night, after she had said her prayers, and mamma was tucking her into bed, "I never am going to wish to be a boy again, as long as I live. Wasn't it awful for Deacon Thomas to tell me to take off my hat right before all these people? Oh, mamma, won't you put a bow or something on it, so that people will know that I really am a little girl?"—*Presbyterian.*

Attacked by a Deer in the Zoo.

"I have had a good many hard fights with wild animals and savage beasts," said Keeper Birchburn of the National Zoo the other day, "but about as close a call as I ever had was the other day when I walked into the deer pen. The wild buck came bounding at me, as I thought in play, for, you know, I am such a good friend to all the animals that they delight to have about with me now and then. But, sir, the old buck was mad, what about I don't know, and seeing that he meant mischief, just as he lowered his broad horns with which to give me a toss in the air, I leaped aside. I did not have time to jump, and one prong of the horns struck me on the arm. I saw then I had to fight, but I had nothing but my naked hands. He came with such force that he passed several lengths before he could turn to follow up the attack. Fortunately I was not many yards from a small tree, and facing the deer I backed towards it, knowing it would never do to turn my back on him, for I could not outrun him to the tree, and if ever he got me on the ground he would cut me to pieces with his sharp-pointed hoofs. In an instant almost he was upon me. I seized him by the horns, and he gave me such a question mark as to how I could get to the tree, but as he did so one sharp prong pierced my leg through just below the thigh, and then I was in a fix. I knew I could handle him for a time with the leverage of his horns, but the question was how long I could hold out exhausted with the loss of blood. The wound was not so bad as I thought for the moment, and in the jerks and turns, twists and pulls, I soon got the deer between myself and the sapling, and, retaining a firm hold on his long horns, I tried in every way to exhaust him, or wrench the horns off and then wound him. The contest lasted fully half-an-hour, when finally I wrenched off the right horn, and the ranch ran off in pain. Nothing hurts a deer or, for that matter, any horned animal, so much as the loss of a frontal piece. I am pretty stiff from the wound, and was fully as sore for a few days as the buck. If he had ever gotten me on the ground I would have been mangled beyond recognition. At the approach of spring the bucks become very imperious in their domain, but I never dreamed of being attacked, or I would have been prepared for him."—*Washington Post.*

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