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Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

Fourth Quarter.

Lesson III. October 20. 2 Sam. 1: 18-29. DAVID'S THANKSGIVING PRAYER.

GOLDEN TEXT.

In everything giving thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.—1 Thess. 5: 18.

EXPLANATORY.

I. DAVID'S GREAT DESIRE. David, in his magnificent palace of cedar, could not enjoy it with a peaceful conscience, and happy heart so long as the house of God was but a tent (7: 2). It argues ill for a people when the private dwellings are rich and the house of God poor. It was a noble desire, the perfecting the religious work he had already begun.

II. THE PROMISE. The prophet Nathan struck the prophet Nathan very favorably, but the next night he had a revelation from God forbidding David to carry out his design. The reasons were probably (1) the temple was to be a type of the church of God, a kingdom of peace, while David was a man of war (1 Chron. 22: 3, 28: 3).

(2) The kingdom was not yet sufficiently established to allow David to take so much time and thought from its organization and conquests as would be required to build such a temple. (3) The temple could be built much more magnificently by David's son in the peaceful times which David, as warrior and statesman, would bring to the kingdom. (4) It would require all the time, and skill, and wealth of David's reign merely to prepare the materials for the temple.

III. THANKSGIVING. What a person most heartily thanks God for tests his character as with Ithuriel's spear. 18. Then went King David in to the tent where the ark was. And sat before the Lord. So Moses said, Ex. 17: 16. It does not necessarily follow that the prayer was uttered sitting. David may have sat down to meditate, and then rose up to pray.

(1) BECAUSE THE BLESSINGS WERE GIVEN TO ONE UNWORTHY OF THEM. Who am I? Only he who believes in the true God knows what genuine humility is. To him the contrast between the almighty and holy God and a weak, sinful atom of humanity, is too overwhelming. O Lord God. The divine name is here printed with the word God in small capitals. This is always done in the authorized version wherever it stands for Jehovah in the original. And what is my house? descendants.

(II) FOR PROVIDENTIAL GUIDANCE IN THE PAST. That thou hast brought me hither. All he is and all he has he owes to God.

(III) FOR FUTURE HOPES. 19. And thou hast yet a small thing in thy sight. Not in David's sight but in God's, and in comparison with the still greater things promised. But thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. even forever, and with a glory far beyond David's highest thoughts. The kingdom for 40 years was a small matter compared with the everlasting kingdom of "David's greater son." His life sent a benediction down the eternal ages. What greater blessing than to have an influence for good that is without end? And is this the manner of man. Rev. Ver. reads, and this too after the manner of men: as man speaks to man, or would confer a favor on another man.

(IV) FOR GOD'S UNFAKABLE GOODNESS. 20. And what can David say more, etc. Words are utterly insufficient to express the feelings of his heart. But God knew what was in his heart. 21. For Thy word's sake. Because God had given His promise. And according to thine own heart. The gift in its largeness and blessing, partook of God's own infinite nature. It was far-reaching beyond not merely the gift, but even the conception of man.

To make thy servant know. Not only to do them, but also to reveal them. 22. Wherefore thou art great. This wonderful gift, and the vision of a manifested greatness of God. No miracle of power, not even the measureless creation with its infinite number of worlds shows the greatness of God so much as does His goodness and love in the redemption of man, and the everlasting kingdom of His saints.

(V) FOR GOD'S REDEEMED PEOPLE. 23. And what one nation in the earth is like Thy people. God's people were a peculiar people. (1) They were God's people, serving and worshipping Him, guided and blessed by Him. (2) They were a redeemed people, whose God had redeemed them from the bondage of Egypt at great cost, as He now redeems His people from the bondage of sin. (3) They manifested to the rest of the world God's goodness. And to make Him a name. Not that "He might for himself enjoy the praises of men," but that He might express His goodness and make known His love, so that all the world might see it and be drawn to Him, to love Him and to become His people. (4) To do for you (rather, them) great things and terrible. Such as the plague upon Egypt, the path through the sea, the law from Sinai, the crossing of Jordan, the possession of the Land of Promise.

(VI) FOR THEIR EVERLASTING KNOWLEDGE. 24. For Thou hast affirmed to thy people. Renewed the promise, as given in Nathan's message to David (vers 12: 16). A people unto Thee forever. True of the natural Israel in a measure "for they still exist, though scattered and peeled; and there are many glorious promises yet to be accomplished in them and for them." But completely fulfilled only in the kingdom of Christ whose people are children of Abraham by faith. And thou, Lord, art become their God. It may be asked, Was not He a God to all nations? Yes, as to His power and providence. But only to Israel was the fulness of His Godhead. His love, mercy, justice, long-suffering, faithfulness displayed.

IV. PRAYER. 25. And now: in view of all God had promised and done. Establish it for ever. Carry out the promise. Not that David doubted, but he expressed his desires and hopes. 26. Let Thy name be magnified for ever. So we are taught to pray in the first part of the Lord's prayer. The honor of God was dear to David's heart. And the more God's name (i. e., his real nature expressed in action and word) is magnified, the more the world is blessed. 27. Hast revealed. True prayer is founded on the promises. I will build thee a house: a family, a dynasty, culminating in His-Son Jesus, the eternal King.

28. Thy words be true. David believed God and rested upon the promises. Note in this prayer: (1) David's humility; (2) his gratitude, his thankful spirit; (3) his faith in God's promise; (4) his wide reach; (5) its earnestness. The ANSWER. Vastly beyond what David asked or could even imagine. The posterity of David could only last forever by running out in a person who lives forever; i. e., by culminating in the Messiah who lives forever and of whose kingdom there is no end. Soon after Christ's death, the authority and almost existence as a separate nation was taken away from the Jews, at the destruction of Jerusalem; but before this Christ set up His kingdom, which was David's kingdom. The Jews were never a kingdom as at that time the visible kingdom of God, in the world. And thus David's kingdom, through his descendant and heir, still continues, and will abide forever, bringing all nations and peoples under its sway, and more than realizing all the visions of glory which filled the Jewish heart.

Geraldine's Venture.

BY MARGARET E. SARGENT.

Geraldine Beach sat in her favorite nook, watching the passers-by. Many of these, looking up, thought what a pretty picture the child made among the flowers and birds in the bay window, the deep red rose curtains just beyond showing in relief against her golden hair. Nobly sat the ivory crutches, with their silver tips, and a ragged girl, going slowly by, carrying a covered basket, glanced wistfully up to the window, wishing that she might see the room in which that other forlorn girl, about her own age, was warm and happy.

"Oh, but she's the daisy!—isn't she, now?" said Maggie to herself, shifting her basket from one tired arm to the other. "An' it's meself would like to go intil that foine house, and maybe sell the pretty little lady some of the mother's cakes. But how's it to be done?" The ladies left never so hard-hearted as the servants. Sure an' if I were to ring the bell now, the maid would drive me away. Oh! I wish—and Maggie stopped, gazing pleadingly toward the girl in the window.—"I wish she would come down here to me herself!"

The wish, in some mysterious way, must have flown through the air, and penetrated the thick plate-glass of the window; for, though Geraldine could not go out on the sleet pavement, she summoned Maggie to come in. A quick "tap, tap" on the pane bade Maggie wait a few minutes, and presently one of those very maids of whom Maggie had considerable disagreeable knowledge, appeared, white cap and all, and very pleasantly asked the child to follow her.

"What have you in your basket?" was the first inquiry, spoken in tones so animated that the child herself would have guessed how weary Geraldine was of having nothing to do except sit in the window this chilly day.

"Cookies and gingerbread," was Maggie's reply. "Mother makes them, and she was cooking before she was married. They are really good, miss. Won't you buy some, please? Try a cookie, and see whether you don't like it."

And coming closer, Maggie for the first time caught a glimpse of the crutches, and saw that the rich girl with the pretty hair and the dainty dress was lame. "Well, well! Maggie wouldn't have changed places. She enjoyed life, notwithstanding its hardships, and liked to run about on her own sturdy feet."

The two girls were presently chatting gaily, when the door opened and a young lady came in.

"Whom have you here?" she asked. "But before Geraldine had time to answer, she exclaimed: "Why, Maggie McCarthy! It's not you; is it dear? Dina, this is one of my little mission girls. I've had the class only a week or two, and am hardly acquainted with the girls as yet; but this is one of the dearest of them. I am glad to see you Maggie; and I'm coming to visit your mother."

A little later, her basket visibly lightened, and several bits of silver were seen. Maggie ran merrily homeward. She fairly flew through the alley and up the stairway of the rear tenement in which she had her home, calling with all her might:

"Mamma! mamma!"

"What, Maggie?" said a neighbor, putting out a white-capped and filled head from her door. "Yer mother's not at home the night, and ye needn't be stirring up the house at this rate."

"Mamma not home yet!" said Maggie, amazed. "Then she's kept late at the place where she's at work to-day, an' it's meself that'll go after her this instant. Poor mamma! She'll be glad to hear what a good day I've had."

And Maggie ran off as fast as her feet could carry her. But when she arrived at the house where her mother was employed as a laundress, her heart fell with a thump; for Mrs. McCarthy had been gone two hours or more, and nobody knew anything about her. Poor Maggie was wild with anxiety. She did not know where to look nor what to do, and the kind people in the house were as anxious as she was herself. Finally, an hour after bedtime, the big policeman whose beat was near the head of the court, came along, rapped at the main door, and said:

"Tell Mrs. McCarthy's little girl that her mother's in the hospital, an' she's right, only she fell down and broke her hip as she was coming home to-day. I've just had word."

Now I am coming to Geraldine's venture. Two days after the evening of Mrs. McCarthy's fall on the slippery sidewalk, it was a very sorrowful and anxious little face which confronted Miss Beach, Geraldine's sister-teacher, in the mission class. She would hardly have known Maggie McCarthy with that new expression on the rosy care-free face. In a talk after school, the child's trouble was all told. It would be weeks before Mrs. McCarthy could come home, months before she could work again. In the meantime Maggie wanted to keep the little home till mamma was able to come back.

She had a plan. It was a wise one for such a little heart. If she could go on selling her cookies and gingerbread on the square as usual after school, and could supply her mother's regular customers, she was sure she could pay the rent. Then, for odd jobs of scrubbing, carrying the baby, and doing what she could to help them, the neighbors between them would give her enough to eat.

It came to my mind that story the superintendent told about Elijah, fed by the ravens, and I thought the Lord could feed me, teacher," she said, very simply.

The weak part of the plan was in its most important part. The cookies and gingerbread, Miss Beach suggested to come from? Maggie shook her head. "My customers won't look at baker's stuff," she said.

"We will think what can be done," the young teacher replied. Meanwhile she took Maggie home to tea.

What a treat to the forlorn child that Sunday evening hour in Geraldine's room,—the quiet talk, the song, the little prayer before she was allowed to go home! But she had opened her eyes very widely indeed when the crippled girl, a new light in her face, said:

"Bring your basket to-morrow, dear, at half-past four. The cooking-class girls and I together will see that you have cakes enough to fill your orders. It doesn't matter if flour has gone up, as you say; I've got some money that is all my own, to do as I like with, and I'll set you up in business till your mother is well, and keep you stocked with goods."

Such cookies and gingerbread, brown, toothsome, and crisp, as went into Maggie's basket that day, would have tempted any epicure. The cooking-class girls were fitted with zeal, and entered into the work as if it were play, counting Maggie's gains with great solicitude till they were sure the needful six dollars for the rent had been secured. The poor mother, lying helpless in the hospital, had a great load lifted from her heart, and, notwithstanding her hurt, which healed slowly, she took a good rest,—such a rest as she had not had for many a long year.

One good effect of Geraldine's venture had not been anticipated. When foolish men, trying to stir up strife between one social rank and another, came to Goodie's Court, they met a cool reception there. The hard-working men and women who knew how the widow McCarthy's roof had been kept over her head that long winter, when she could do a "hand's turn," were not willing to hear abuse of the rich.

"Sure," said one sensible man, "thim rich men's daughters worked like bees to help Maggy pay the rent. It was an unanswerable argument on the side of good feeling."

And Geraldine's venture brought a blossom-tint to her pale cheeks, and the tap of the ivory crutches was like music in her father's house.—Sunday School Times.

Monosyllables.

The question was raised in a circle of friends whether one could write or speak a connected sentence of any length using only monosyllables, when a lady presented the following lines:

WHAT THOU WILT. Not what to me seems good, Not what my choice would be; I dare not ask for these, Lord, when I plead with thee, But give what to thy mind seems best, And let thy love not grant the rest.

Not heaps of gold in store, Not health or friends or fame; I dare not ask for these, Though sought for in Thy name, Save as 'tis sure such gifts would be laid at Thy feet in love to Thee.

My heart is full of needs, My wants reach out to Thee; I only plead Thy will, Thy word of grace to me. Take from my heart its load of guilt, Then give me, Lord, what else thou wilt!

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