

mony, "The hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way." On the first day of the fifth month Jerusalem was reached, and after three days of resting the work of reform began. The Book of the Law was restored to its place of authority in the councils of the people; the temple ritual and the priestly order were reinforced, and the growing custom of mixed marriages was abolished. Ezra has been charged with narrow bigotry because of his severe and radical methods of reconstruction; but an honest and sober estimate of his work will rank him among the noblest patriots of history, fearlessly faithful, unflinchingly true, and prudently efficacious in all that he did. Our lessons for this month close with two short

Psalms of Deliverance.

(Psalms 85 and 126. Lesson for Oct. 29.)

These Psalms are significantly appropriate following the story of Ezra's safe journey homeward and successful reforms.

Great mercies were extended to Israel. God gave to His people a land "with every blessing blessed." He promised His presence to His people and His blessing in temporal and spiritual interests. The only condition was obedience. His hatred for sin made Him jealous for His people, lest they should in any way be separated from Him through the deceitfulness of sin. As long as they would remain under His watch-care and dwell in His love streams of blessing should flow unto them, and they should be His peculiar treasure and receive from Him their abundant supply of every good. We have learned of their downfall and captivity; of their suffering and repentance; of their return and prosperity. The history of the Jews has in many ways the same features as the history of the church in all ages. These Psalms, therefore, have served as testimonies to all people in all ages since they were written. Who has not reason to acknowledge to God His favorable dealings? Who has not had iniquity to be forgiven? Who has not learned the weakness of his own nature and felt the fear of falling away, and thus been made to cry unto God for strength? Though we may not fathom the depths of the mysteries of God's salvation, yet our faith may claim the blessings of peace and prosperity. How God could be just and merciful we can only understand in Christ. How He leads and guides us all the way our glad souls experience and our lips speak forth His praise, and our grateful hearts find expression in a godly life and loyal obedience to all the requirements of His righteousness.

Expressions of joy spring from the redeemed ones. So far beyond every expectation is the experience which God gives, that it seems too good to be true. So changed is the prospect that the full heart finds comfort in laughter and song. There is "beauty for ashes; the oil of joy for mourning; and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." The truthful acknowledgment spontaneously bursts forth: "The Lord hath turned again our captivity. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." Surroundings make no difference, for all must know what God hath wrought. Thus His people make His dealings known among men by their praises and thanksgiving. He not only takes away all their sin, but He removes His anger and gives peace and His approving smile. The good that God gives to us is beyond all other good. The least we may do to

prove our gratitude is to render Him our highest praise.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Love for souls springs up when we are brought into fellowship with God. The remnant of Israel yearned for the scattered of their nation who remained in the land of their captivity. Though they had been filled with joy unspeakable, they were the more affected for their brethren. They besought God to deal with those in the land of captivity as he had with them. They felt that unrest of soul which made them cry to God that all the family might be restored to their own land. The yearning for reunion was intense. Tears and pleadings increased as they entered upon the joys and comforts of home. The brethren in the stranger land must be brought home. They felt their ranks were broken. In comparison to the number who were still far from home, they were but as the small proportion of grain which the farmer sows and from which he expects many fold more in the harvest. God had brought them back, and this remnant should be the example, the few to draw the many. They were the first to return to their own land because they were the first to repent and accept the offer of God, under King Cyrus, to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. In many tears they would prevail with God for their brethren until they should see the answer to their pleadings, and with joy see their brethren return.

The Lessons, Applied.

LESSON 1.—OCT. 1, 1899.

Joy in God's House.

(Lesson Text: Ps. 122. Commit to memory verses 6-9)
(Read Ps. 84.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."—Ps. 122:1.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday: Psalm 122. Tuesday: 2 Chron. 29:25-31. Wednesday: Psalm 84. Thursday: Psalm 92. Friday: Isa. 2:1-5. Saturday: Luke 4:14-22. Sunday: Rev. 7:9-17.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Heart religion.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS.—You can judge a man's character by the things that please him.—If you don't stand within the gates down here, you won't stand within the gates up there.—Notwithstanding the wickedness of cities, God's ideal community is a city; but one where absolute prohibition of all that defiles will obtain.—Here is a scriptural recipe for prosperity, "Love the Jews."

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.—Who is the author of this Psalm? What was the occasion of its composition? How often did the tribes go up to Jerusalem? On what occasions? How may the blessing of prosperity promised in ver. 6 be gained to-day?

LESSON 2.—OCT. 8, 1899.

Haman's Plot Against the Jews.

(Lesson Text: Esth. 3:1-11. Commit to memory verses 5, 6)
(Read chaps. 1-3.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"If God be for us, who can be against us?"—Rom. 8:31.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday: Esther 2:15-23. Tuesday: Esther 3:1-11. Wednesday: Esther 3:12 to 4:3. Thursday: Esther 4:4-17. Friday: Esther 6:1-11. Saturday: Esther 7:1-10. Sunday: Prov. 16:5-19.