

going back to Jehovah. For illustrations of v. 4, see Judg. 10 : 15, 16, etc.

Vs. 5-7. *No peace*, etc.; a vivid picture of the lawlessness and discord which prevail where the true God and His law are disregarded. (See Judg. 5 : 6.) *Countries*; different districts of Israel. *Nation. nation*. See Judg. 20 : 33-48. *City. city*. See Judg. 9 : 45. *Vex them*; punish them for their sin and rebellion. *Be ye strong. not. slack* (Rev. Ver.); strong to keep the law, which insured prosperity. "Therefore" points back to Asa's great victory. Because God had delivered the nation, its people were to serve Him with zealous devotion. *Rewarded*; by the protection and prosperity and happiness which are always the lot of God-fearing people.

II. The Congregation, 8-10.

V. 8. *Prophecy of Oded*. Before "Oded" insert the words "Azariah the son of." *Took courage*; and with good reason, seeing that God was at his back in all that he did. *Put away the abominations* (Rev. Ver.); a general name for idolatrous worship, the use of images of any sort. *Cities. taken from the hill country of Ephraim* (Rev. Ver.); cities amongst the mountains of the Central Range, such as those captured by Abijah, the father of Asa (see ch. 13 : 19). *Renewed the altar*; repaired and purified the altar of burnt offering in the court of the temple, dedicated by Solomon, but regarded as defiled by his successors. *Porch of the Lord*; that is, of the Lord's house.

Vs. 9, 10. *Strangers. of Ephraim. Manasse. Simeon. in abundance*. These were people from the Northern kingdom of the ten tribes known as Israel. At various times people withdrew from Israel to Judah the Southern kingdom. *Third month*; our May-June, the time of the Feast of Pentecost or Weeks.

III. The Covenant, 11-15.

Vs. 11-13. *Sacrificed* (Rev. Ver.). *spoil*; the booty taken in the victory over Zerah, ch. 14 : 15. *Entered into a covenant*; made

vows of loyalty to their God (compare Ex. 24 : 3-8). It was like the public profession of faith made in joining the church in our day. *Seek. with all their heart and. soul*; put all their energy into the service of God (compare Mark 12 : 30). *Whosoever would not. put to death*. This was one side of the stern, uncompromising temper of the old Israelite.

Vs. 14, 15. *They sware unto the Lord*; put themselves under the most sacred obligations. *Trumpets*; long, straight silver trumpets with a bell mouth, used only for religious purposes. *Correts*; rams' horns turned up at the end, the rational trumpet for rallying the people. *All Judah rejoiced*; confident of the divine favor. *The Lord gave them rest*; a period of peace.

Light from the East

"TEACHING PRIEST . . LAW," v. 3—In religion generally a priest is a person who stands between worshipers and their god. He may be needed because the ritual acts of the religion are too complicated for the ordinary man, or he may claim (and have his claim admitted) to stand nearer to the god than other men, he may be of a superior race or of special ascetic habits. And there has generally grown up a superstition about the magical efficacy of certain priestly acts. This was very noticeable in the public offices of religion of ancient Egypt, of Babylonia and of Rome.

The religion of the desert is very simple; in the desert men have no complicated relations with the gods. And the Jews were men of the desert. A god was appealed to only when needed. If men could not agree on a policy, after free discussion, for example, they resorted to the deity for a decision. This decision was communicated by omens which the skilled could read, by rhymes of soothsayers or by the oracle which men secured through casting the lot at a sanctuary.

We can understand, therefore, how the priesthood in Israel had a double duty. On the one hand they had the care of the sanctuary and the ritual; on the other it was theirs to declare the will of the deity.

THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON

[SEE SKETCH MAP, LESSON V.]

We will stand to-day at the spot which our Jerusalem map (page 369) marks with the

number 30 and look westward over the space between those two long lines which spread