

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1877, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.

JANUARY 5.]

LESSON I.

THE SECOND TEMPLE. [About 536-535 B. C.]

READ Ezra 3: 1-13. COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 10-13.

1. And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Is'ra-el were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Je-ru-sa-lem.

2. Then stood up Jesh'ua the son of Joz'a-dak, and his brethren the priests, and Ze-ru-ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Is'ra-el, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Mo'ses the man of God.

3. And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord, even burnt offerings morning and evening.

4. They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required: 5. And afterwards offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the Lord that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the Lord.

6. From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord. But the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid.

7. They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zi'don, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Leb'a-non to the sea of Jop'pa, according to the grant that they had of Cy'rus king of Per'sia.

8. Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Je-ru-sa-lem, in the second month, began Ze-ru-ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, and Jesh'ua the son of Joz'a-dak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Le'-vites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Je-ru-sa-lem: and appointed the Le'-vites, from twenty years old and upward to set forward the work of the house of the Lord.

9. Then stood Jesh'ua with his sons and his brethren, Kad'mi-el and his sons, the sons of Ju'dah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God; the sons of Hen'a-dad, with their sons and their brethren the Le'-vites.

10. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Le'-vites the sons of A'saph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of Da'vid king of Is'ra-el.

11. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth forever toward Is'ra-el. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

12. But many of the priests and Le'-vites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy.

13. So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.—Ezra 3: 11.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Revival is from God.

DAILY READINGS.—M.—Deut. 12: 1-14. T.—Numb. 28: 1-10. W.—1 Chron. 29: 1-9. Th.—2 Chron. 2: 1-18. F.—1 Cor. 3: 11-23. Sa.—1 Chron. 16: 7-36. S.—Ps. 137: 1-9.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—Our former studies in the Old Testament ended with the decree of Cyrus, 536 B. C., authorizing the Jews, in captivity, to return to Jerusalem. This decree is recorded in the last chapter of Second Chronicles, and also in the first chapter of Ezra. Cyrus restored the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried off from Jerusalem, and instructed the governors (or pashas) of the provinces to aid the Jews. Many of the chosen people remained in Babylon; but 42,360 of them, attended by 7,337 servants, returned to their native land. Zerubbabel was at their head. He was accompanied by the high-priest, Jeshua, and possibly by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. In the seventh month after their return the great Altar of Burnt-Offering was rebuilt on its ancient site, and the priests and Levites offered burnt-offerings and sacrifices. With this our lessons begin.

NOTES ON PERSONS AND PLACES.—Jesh'ua—Jehovah the Salvation, the high-priest who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel, and co-operated with him in restoring the sacred services, and rebuilding the temple. He was the son of Jehozadak, Jozadak, or Josedech, who was carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. Ze-ru-ba-bel—born in Babylon. He was the governor of the province under the Persian rule, Neh. 12. Zi'don, called in the New Testament Sidon, a city of Phenicia, on the Mediterranean Coast, 120 miles north of Jerusalem; called the first born of Canaan, Gen. 10: 15; mentioned 32 times in Scripture: now has 10,000 inhabitants. Tyre, a city of Phenicia, 21 miles south of Zidon; famous for its Tyrian dyes and commerce; now a place of 5,000 inhabitants. Leb'a-non, a mountain range in Northern Palestine. Jop'pa, a city 120 miles S.S.W. of Tyre; the seaport of Jerusalem, which is 30 miles to the south-east; first mentioned as Japho, Josh. 19: 46; now Yafa, hav-

ing a population of 8,000. Jesh'ua, not the high-priest who bore the same name, but the head of one of the two Levitical houses which had returned. Ezra 2: 40. Kad'mi-el, the head of the other Levitical house, Ezra 2: 40. A'saph, a Levite musician in the time of David, 1 Chron. 6: 39. His name appears in the title of Psalms 50, and 73 to 83.

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I) THE ALTAR REBUILT. (II) THE SACRIFICE RENEWED. (III) THE TEMPLE BEGUN.

I. THE ALTAR REBUILT. (1.) SEVENTH MONTH, the Hebrew month Tishri, corresponding to the latter part of September and the early part of October; the Hebrew year began about the time of the vernal equinox. (2.) THE ALTAR, the great altar of burnt offering, which stood in front of the temple porch; MOSES, THE MAN OF GOD, this honorable title is given five times to Moses, Deut. 33: 1; Josh. 14: 6; 1 Chron. 23: 14; 2 Chron. 30: 16; Ezra 3: 2; it is also applied three times to David, 2 Chron. 8: 14; Neh. 12: 24, 36, and once to the prophet Shemiah, 1 Kings 12: 22. (3.) HIS BASES, the old foundation of the altar; BURNED OFFERINGS, animals slain, and burnt upon the altar. The rules for such offerings are given in Lev. 1.

I. QUESTIONS.—With what did our former studies in the Old Testament end? (See Connected History.) How long had God's people been in captivity? Where? Give an account of the decree for their restoration. How many went up to Jerusalem? Under whose leadership? In what month did they assemble at Jerusalem? State what you know of Jeshua. Of Zerubbabel. Describe the altar of burnt-offering. The sacrifices offered. State the directions given by Moses concerning the altar (Daily Readings for Monday). The Daily Sacrifices offered (Tuesday's Reading).

II. THE SACRIFICE RENEWED. (4.) FEAST OF TABERNACLES, the third of the great festivals of the Hebrews (the others being the Passover and Pentecost), held on the 15th day of the seventh month, and lasting seven days. It was a harvest festival, called also the "feast of ingathering." (5.) NEW MOONS, the month began with the new moon, and the occasion was celebrated with religious rites. (6.) FROM THE FIRST DAY, not waiting until the feast of tabernacles, on the 15th.

II. QUESTIONS.—Describe the feast of tabernacles. The other two great national festivals. The various kinds of burnt-offerings. An example of cheerful giving (Wednesday's Reading.) The building of the temple by Solomon.

III. THE TEMPLE BEGUN. (7.) MEAT, food; OIL, olive oil, which is used for many purposes. (8.) LEVITES, there were 74 of them, Ezra 2: 40; TWENTY YEARS OLD, before David's time the age for service was 30 years, 1 Chron. 23: 3, 24. (8.) TOGETHER, as one man; HENADAD, probably the head of another Levite family. (10.) THEIR APPAREL, official robes, Ex. 31: 10; 39: 27. (11.) BY COURSE, alternately, or responsively, perhaps using the 118th Psalm. (12.) ANCIENT MEN, old people. The temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar 586 B.C. only 52 years before this, and hence some could remember how it looked. Comp. Hagg. 2: 3; Zech. 4: 10. (13.) COULD NOT DISCERN, etc. Eastern people are very demonstrative in expressing feelings, both of joy and sorrow.

III. QUESTIONS.—What persons assisted preparing material for the temple? From what place was it brought, and how? Who superintended the work? Describe the musical service. The feelings of the old men. How was the second house inferior? In what respect would it be superior? What facts in this lesson teach us—

- (1.) That God's special blessings should be specially recognized?
(2.) That all may have a part in building up the house of God?
(3.) That it is fitting to rejoice in God's work?
(4.) That the better times for the Church are in the future, not in the past?

LESSON II.

JANUARY 12.]

THE DEDICATION. [About 515 B.C.]

READ Ezra 6: 14-22. COMMIT TO MEMORY v. 19-22.

14. And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Hag'ga-i the prophet and Zeel-a-r'i-ah the son of I'do. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Is'ra-el, and according to the commandment of Cy'rus, and Da-ri-us, and Ar-tax-er-x'es King of Persia.

15. And this house was finished on the third day of the month A'dar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Da-ri-us the king.

16. And the children of Is'ra-el, the priests, and the Le'-vites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy.

17. And offered at the dedication of this house of God a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Is'ra-el, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Is'ra-el.

18. And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Le'-vites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Je-ru-sa-lem; as it is written in the book of Mo'ses.

19. And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month.

20. For the priests and the Le'-vites were purified together, all of them were pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.

21. And the children of Is'ra-el, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Is'ra-el, did eat.

22. And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy; for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of As-sy-ri-a unto them, to

strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Is'ra-el.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.—Hag. 2: 9.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Holy joy comes through hearty consecration.

DAILY READINGS.—M.—1 Kings 6: 2-14. T.—2 Chron. 7: 4-11. W.—2 Chron. 5: 1-14. Th.—Exod. 12: 1-28. F.—Num. 8: 5-22. Sa.—2 Chron. 30: 21-27. S.—1 Kings 5: 1-18.

CONNECTED HISTORY.—The Samaritans (a mixed race partly Israelite and more largely Assyrian, 2 Kings 16: 6) asked the privilege of co-operating in rebuilding the Temple. Being refused, they attempted to stop the work, misrepresented it at the court of Persia, and prevented any further progress during the latter part of the reign of Cyrus, and that of Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes. In the second year of the reign of Darius Hystaspes, B. C. 520, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, Ezra 5: 1; Hagg. 1: 1-8; Zech. 1: 1-6, roused Zerubbabel and Jeshua to complete the work. The Persian satraps, after inspecting the work, sent a letter to King Darius asking for instructions. At their suggestion Darius caused a search to be made; and the original decree of Cyrus, Ezra 1: 1-5, was discovered and Darius ordered that the work proceed. The temple was completed 515 B.C., nearly 21 years after it was begun, 536 B.C. Our lesson gives an account of the dedication.

NOTES.—Hag'ga-i, or Hag'gal—festive, the first prophet after the captivity. He began prophesying about 520 B.C. Zeel-a-r'i-ah—whom Jehovah remembers, probably born in Babylon. Began prophesying 520 B.C., in concert with Haggai. Cy'rus—the sun, founder of the great Persian empire; son of Cambyses and grandson of Astyages, king of Media; led the Persians in a revolt against the Medes, and overthrew the Median sovereignty; took Babylon, 538 B.C., and reigned over an empire which included Persia, Media, Babylonia, Assyria, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, etc.; it extended from the Indus to the Bosphorus and from the Indian Ocean to the Caspian and Black Seas. Herodotus says Cyrus ruled "over all Asia." He was killed in battle with the Scythians, 529 B.C. Isai'ah foretold his name and work many years before he came to the kingdom. Is. 44: 28; 46: 1. Da-ri-us, son of Hystaspes; King of Persia 521-486 B.C.; favored the Jews in rebuilding the temple; was defeated by the Greeks in the famous battle of Marathon, 490 B.C. Ar-tax-er-x'es—mighty warrior, identified by many with the Pseudo Smerdis, a usurper, who, after a reign of seven months, was put to death; others identify him with Artaxerxes Longimanus. As-sy-ri-a, from Asshur, Gen. 2: 14; 25: 18; one of the great monarchies of the ancient world, extending from Armenia to Babylon. It was 400 miles long, 150 miles wide, and contained an area of 75,000 square miles. This name is used in Ezra 6: 22, instead of Persia, probably as the more ancient and comprehensive designation of the territory. (The Psalms supposed to refer to the dedication of the second temple, are: Psalms 48, 61 and 146 to 150.)

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I) THE TEMPLE COMPLETED. (II) THE TEMPLE DEDICATED. (III) THE PASSOVER CELEBRATED.

I. THE TEMPLE COMPLETED. (14.) ELDERS, i.e., the chiefs or leaders—especially Zerubbabel and Jeshua, Ezra 5: 2, 5, 9; PROPHECYING, the promise and prediction of success given by the prophets; HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, see Notes, and Connected History; COMMANDMENT, decree; CYRUS, DARIUS, see Notes; ARTAXERXES, not the one mentioned in Ezra 4: 7, who opposed the work, but Artaxerxes Longimanus, who, more than 50 years later, assisted it, Ezra 7: 13-20. He is mentioned here in order to group together the principal parties co-operating. Note these four parties, (1) the elders, (2) the prophets, (3) the God of Israel, (4) the three kings. (15.) THE MONTH OF ADAR, this was the twelfth, or last, month of the Jewish year, corresponding nearly with our March and early April.

I. QUESTIONS.—State the request of the Samaritans, (Ezra 4: 1-2). The answer returned. Describe their endeavors to hinder the work of rebuilding the temple. (See Connected History.) State the substance of the letter sent to Artaxerxes, Ezra 4: 11-16. The letter to Darius, Ezra 5: 7-17. State how Darius reiterated the decree of Cyrus, Ezra 6: 1-12. Give an account of the finishing of the first temple. (Daily Reading for Monday.) What prophets are mentioned? (Ezra 6: 14.) State the substance of their prophecies concerning the work. What three kings are mentioned? State what you know about each. When was this second temple finished?

II. THE TEMPLE DEDICATED. (16.) DEDICATION, the setting apart, or consecrating to God and his worship. (17.) AN HUNDRED BULLOCKS, etc., contrast these with the 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep at Solomon's dedication, 1 Kings 8: 63; ALL ISRAEL, most of those who returned were of Judah and Benjamin, but there were some representatives of all the twelve tribes, 1 Chron. 9: 3; Neh. 7: 7. (18.) DIVISIONS \* \* \* COURSES, The Levites were set apart for the tabernacle service, Num. 3: 6; 8: 9; and David arranged them in orders or courses, 1 Chron. 23: 6-24; 24: 1-19; BOOK OF MOSES, the writings of Moses, and here, especially, the book of Numbers.

II. QUESTIONS.—The meaning of "dedication"? Who united in this dedication? With what spirit? Why joyful? State the number of their offerings. The number at the dedication of Solomon's temple. Why was there such a difference? What were the Levites and priests? The duties of each? Give an account of the dedication of the first temple. (Daily Reading Thursday.) Why do we now dedicate churches?

III. THE PASSOVER CELEBRATED. (19.) PASSOVER, the first of the great festivals of the Hebrews; so called because the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, Ex. 12: 13, 23-27. With this was connected a "feast of unleavened bread," continuing for seven days, Ex. 13: 6, 7; 23: 15, etc. It was celebrated in the first month of the year, corresponding nearly to our April. (20.) KILLED \* \* \* FOR ALL, etc., as at the great passovers of Hezekiah and Josiah, 2 Chron. 30: 17; 35: 11-14. In later times each head of a family slew the victim for his family. (21.) SEPARATED THEMSELVES, etc., had forsaken idolatry and immorality, and become Jewish proselytes, through the rite of circumcision.

III. QUESTIONS.—What do you know of the passover? Who participated in it? By whom were the animals killed? What did the passover signify? By what people is it now celebrated? Why do not Christians now observe it? (Comp. 1 Cor. 5: 7.) How did Christ fulfil, and abolish, it?

What does this lesson teach concerning—

- (1.) The duty of building houses of worship?
(2.) The joy of celebrating religious ordinances? ("Serve the Lord with gladness.")
(3.) The promise and hope to those building the spiritual temple?
(4.) The need of holiness for Christian services?

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