

1. *The laying of the temple foundations*, vs. 8-12. Bring out the details of this old-time ceremony. Direct attention to the co-operation of Zerubbabel, the ruler of the state, and Jeshua, the religious head of the nation. Question about the part assigned to the priests and Levites, showing why it was natural for them to take a leading part in the restoration of the temple. Ask about the musical service and those who took part in it, and the way in which the people expressed their joy because the foundation of the Lord's house was laid.

Make very vivid the contrasted scenes described in vs. 12, 13,—the old men weeping aloud (Discuss the reasons for their grief and the Oriental manner of giving expression to it) and the joyful shouts of the younger people, as they looked forward, with bright hopes, to the future.

2. *The hindrances*, ch. 4 : 1-5. Bring out the origin of the "Samaritans". Discuss their motives in seeking a part in the rebuilding of the temple, and their claim to be counted as worshipers of the true God. Question as to Zerubbabel's treatment of the request of the Samaritans and the reasons of the Jews for refusing the offered help.

Have the scholars tell of the opposition offered by the Samaritans,—its methods and the length of time during which it continued.

Emphasize in closing two main points : (1) The fundamental place of religion in national life. The Jews began the new era in their history by laying the foundations of a building for the worship of God. Refer to our own country, still at the beginning of its history, and impress the importance of establishing religion on a firm basis. (2) The place of joy in true religion. Lay stress on the teaching of the Golden Text and other scriptures as to the duty of joyfulness. Urge upon each scholar the duty and privilege of taking some part in building up a religion that is glad and pure and strong.

For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

The sacred historian tells us nothing about the long wearisome pilgrimage of the returning captives. He merely gives us a glimpse of them as they reach the home land, ch. 2 :

68-70. It is a beautiful glimpse. They seek out the old homesteads, and settle down to begin a new period in the history of their race.

Question the class about the ideals of life which these people cherished. What place did religion have in their life? (Ch. 2 : 68, 69 ; 3 : 1-7.) The Exile had converted them. Religion has a first place in their lives now. They tried to get back to David, to Moses, back to God.

1. *The Foundation of the Second Temple Laid*, vs. 8-13. Get some one to tell about the gathering of the materials for the second temple, v. 7. At last the day came for the laying of the foundation stone. Let some one describe what usually takes place at a ceremony of this kind to-day. Who laid the foundation stone of the second temple? (See Zech. 4 : 9.) There is no reference to any speeches, but we have no doubt the governor made a speech and Jeshua led in prayer. What did the musical part of the service consist of? (Vs. 10, 11.) Have a talk with the class about the large place music had in the worship of the Hebrews, and the large place it should always have. It has power to drive out evil spirits to-day, as well as in the days of King Saul. Draw attention to the unrestrained joy of the people that day. They were not afraid to let their voices be heard. They were not afraid of offending the choir. There is something the matter with our religion if we never feel like shouting.

What is that discordant wailing note we hear? (V. 12.) Why did these old men weep? They thought that the former days were better than these. Were they right or wrong? Are people who talk in this way to-day usually right or wrong? The best is yet to be.

II. *Opposition Encountered*, ch. 4 : 1-5. Ask some one to tell who these people were who weakened the hands of those who were rebuilding the temple. What request did they first make? (Vs. 1, 2.) Were the Jews wise in declining their request? This may lead to an interesting discussion in the class.

This is a time of foundation laying in our national history. Emphasize the importance of giving religion its true place in our land, and, therefore, of helping, with earnest-