

God told Ezekiel to tell the children of Israel (the Jews) this. He wanted them to know that His Spirit and His love were like this river. Wherever His Spirit came it brought brightness and freshness, and gave new life to all who would drink of God's love and ask Him to send His spirit into their hearts. This river is called the *River of Salvation*. (Saving from death.)

God says (Golden Text) that His kingdom is like a river, spreading out broader and

broader, till some day it will spread all over the earth; and that all may drink of it.

Practical Thoughts—The way to take the water of life is to open our hearts to God, and to let Jesus and His love fill our hearts. There are millions of people who are dying without the water of life; millions of little children too. (A missionary story may be told.) Many around us need to be told of this great free gift. We can carry it to them. There is plenty for all.



LESSON IX.—August 27, 1899

RETURNING FROM CAPTIVITY, Ezra 1:1-11

PREVIEW THOUGHT: **The Lord blesses and helps.**

Golden Text—The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.—Psalm 126:3.

To-day's Lesson Thought—The Lord hath done great things for us.

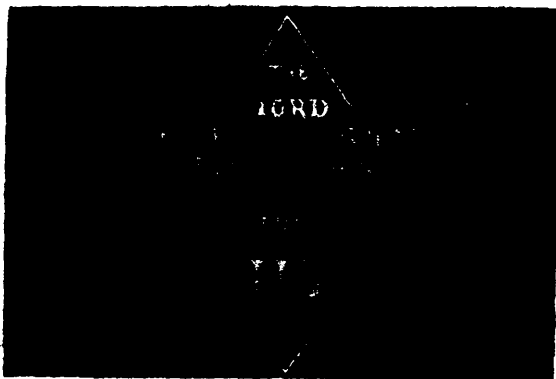
Connection—Recall briefly the story of the captivity. Impress the thought that God allowed all these things to befall His people for their real good, to make them serve their own true God better than ever before. Recall the promises God had made to them through the prophet Ezekiel.

The Lesson—Sometimes we hear people say, "Oh, yes, that person will promise to do a thing, but he does not keep his promises; we cannot trust him." (Give some illustrations familiar to the children.) God always keeps His promises.

We are going to hear to-day how God kept His promises to the children of Israel. The story is told us by a good man named Ezra, a scribe (or writer) who wrote all about the home-coming of the children of Israel to Jerusalem. Tell the story just as it is given in the lesson—using very simple language. Teach the Golden Text.

Practical Thoughts—(Get the children to learn some of God's beautiful promises, and repeat them next Sunday.) Troubles

are sent to help us to be better, to show us God's power to bless and help. We are all captives, captives of sin and Satan. God can make us free from sin, and fill our hearts with love to Himself. God did great things



for His people then, and He does great things for us now. Have ready a number of silver-paper stars. Let the children tell you some of the "great things" that God has done for us that should make us glad and thankful. As these are named pin a star on the board for each expression of God's goodness. His greatest and best gift—His own beloved Son Jesus. (A large star.) Through Jesus we are free to enter the beautiful New Jerusalem—our heavenly home. (Give each child a star with the Golden Text printed on it.)