

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD.

Jan, 29.

N.C. 519.

Lesson, Zech. 4: 1-10. Golden Text, Zech. 4: 6.
Memory vs. 5-7. Catechism, Q. 7.

This lesson is Zechariah's fifth vision for the encouragement of God's people.

1. The golden candlestick, vs. 1-3.
2. The effectual power, vs. 4-7.
3. The promised completion of the temple, vs. 8-10.

Waked me—The prophetic state was so different from his natural ordinary condition, that he likens it to waking out of sleep. *Candle stick*—A seven branched candelabra, or lamp, with a fountain at the top, supplying, through pipes, the lamp with oil. The lamp represents the church; God's light-bearer in a dark world.

If we wish to follow out the figure we might say that the material, pure gold, represents the preciousness of the church to Christ, and the seven lamps its completeness. *Olive trees*—The source of the olive oil that was burned in the lamps. The lamps could not fail so long as there were living trees, one on either hand, to supply the oil. The church cannot fail so long as she draws her life from the living Christ who is ever near her. I am the vine, etc., see John 15. *What are these*—He asks for explanations. *Knowest not?*—The angel does not answer directly but goes on to speak of Zerubbabel, the prince of Judah, and his work, thus explaining the figure of the candlestick and shewing that the church of God as it then was, though weak, could not be destroyed.

II. Vs. 4, 7. *Word of the Lord*—The angel speaks to Zechariah the message of cheer which the Lord has for the Jews. *Not by night*—The Jews were weak, but a mightier power was theirs. *My Spirit*—The almighty power. See 1 Thess. 1: 5; Rom. 1: 16; 1 Cor. 1: 18; 2 Cor. 3: 5. Then in view of such a power, the angel turns to the hindrances in the way of the Jews, and cries, 'Who art thou O great mountain.' Before *Zerubbabel*—the governor of Judah, thou shalt become a *Plain*—All the hindrances shall be as nothing.

III. Vs. 8-10. *Shall finish*—A very definite cheering promise. The man who had begun should complete. *Small things*—Their enemies said "What do these feeble Jews." But in God's hand, small beginnings produce great results. Thus was it with Christ and his little band of disciples. *Eyes of the Lord*—All seeing Providence of God.

1. The Church, the Christian, is God's light-bearer in the world; Ye are the light of the world.
2. The source of light is Christ. We must keep in living touch with Him or there will be no light.
3. No matter how weak we are, God's Spirit can make our work effectual.
4. Never be discouraged though strength be small and hindrances great.
5. Never despise the day of small things, nor the work of small means.
6. What a lesson of comfort for the Church of God in every age, for her beginnings in new lands are ever small, the hindrances great, but the same power is pledged to crown her work with success.

Feb. 5. DEDICATING THE TEMPLE. B.C. 515.

Lesson, Ezra 6: 14-22 Golden Text, Ps. 122: 1.
Memory vs. 21, 22. Catechism, Q. 8.

When the exiles first returned and got settled, they gathered at Jerusalem to take steps for the rebuilding of the temple. Nearly two years were spent in preparations. Timber was brought from Lebanon, as of old in Solomon's time. They gathered to build. The corner stone was laid amid great enthusiasm. The work was pushed. But other dwellers in the land who had come in, objected, hindered, and at length got a decree from the king stopping the work. For 15 years nothing was done. The people were weak and discouraged.

Then Haggai and Zechariah began to prophecy or preach to the people, urging them to go on. Haggai shamed them, Zechariah encouraged them. The work was resumed. Their enemies again made complaint to Darius. The Jews claimed that Cyrus had given permission to build. Search was made, and the old decree of Cyrus was found. Darius told them to go on, and gave them gifts. In four years the temple was finished, and in this lesson we have the dedication, B.C. 515, lacking 10 years of five centuries since Solomon had dedicated the first one, 1 Ki. 8.

1. The temple finished, vs. 14, 15
2. The temple dedicated, vs. 16-18.
3. The passover kept, vs. 19-22.

I. Vs. 14, 15. *Building*—The temple. *Prophecy*—or preaching. These preachers, Haggai and Zechariah, kept before them God's commands, and "they prospered" through this preaching. The old motto over the gate of Glasgow was "Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the word." Preaching has more to do with the prosperity of a country than most people are aware of. *According to commandment*—How wondrously God uses all kinds of instruments to do His work. Sixth year, B.C. 515, twenty years after the foundations were laid.

II. Vs 16-18. *Joy*—What joy 20 years before, with hope so bright! What joy now, with hope realized! *Offered*—1,200 animals in all. See what Solomon offered at the dedication of the first temple 1 Ki 8: 63. These offerings would for the most part be used to feed the multitude gathered at the ceremony. *Sin offering*—All they had suffered in loss of their country and temple, had been for their sin, and now they kept that sin before them. *Courses*—The old order of service was so far as possible restored.

III. Vs 19-22. *Passover*—The present dedication was the season of the passover, and it was a fitting time to renew this feast. On six great occasions is the Passover mentioned, and each time in connection with some great national event or revival. (1.) In Egypt, Ex. xii. (2.) In the wilderness, Num. ix. (3.) On their entry into Canaan, Josh. v. (4.) In the reign of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxx. (5.) In the reign of good Josiah, 2 Ki. xxiii 21, and (6.) At the present time. How this time would remind them of Egypt and deliverance from it. *Separated*—When the people were carried captives, some of the poorer were left in the land, and had fallen in with the heathenism around them. Many of these now returned to the true God and joined in the passover. *Turned*—Darius, King of Persia, which included Assyria.

1. The Church of God will triumph at last.
2. God uses all means to further His Kingdom.
3. God's service is a glad service.
4. Taking part in His service means to quit sin.