

joyful as they did so? Impress upon the School the importance of learning helpful lessons from the past, while at the same time we look forward into the future with true hope and enthusiasm.

## Lesson IV.

## EZRA'S RETURN FROM BABYLON

October 28, 1917

Ezra 8 : 21-32. Study Ezra 8 : 15-36. Scripture Memory Verses.

**GOLDEN TEXT**—The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good.—Ezra 8 : 22 (Rev. Ver.).

21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river <sup>1</sup> of Aha'va, that we might <sup>2</sup> afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a <sup>3</sup> right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

22 For I was ashamed to <sup>4</sup> require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way : because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them <sup>5</sup> for good that seek him ; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.

23 So we fasted and besought our God for this : and he was intreated of us.

24 Then I separated twelve of the <sup>6</sup> chief of the priests, <sup>7</sup> Sherebi'ah, Hashabi'ah, and ten of their brethren with them,

25 And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, <sup>8</sup> even the offering <sup>9</sup> of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his <sup>10</sup> lords, and all Is'rael <sup>11</sup> there present, had offered :

26 I even weighed <sup>12</sup> unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, <sup>13</sup> and of gold an hundred talents ;

**Revised Version**—<sup>1</sup> Omit of ; <sup>2</sup> humble ; <sup>3</sup> straight way ; <sup>4</sup> ask ; <sup>5</sup> that seek him, for good ; <sup>6</sup> chiefs ; <sup>7</sup> even ; <sup>8</sup> for ; <sup>9</sup> princes ; <sup>10</sup> into ; <sup>11</sup> Omit and ; <sup>12</sup> and twenty bowls ; <sup>13</sup> darics ; <sup>14</sup> bright brass ; <sup>15</sup> and ; <sup>16</sup> Omit also ; <sup>17</sup> the ; <sup>18</sup> the princes of the fathers' houses of Israel ; <sup>19</sup> Omit took ; <sup>20</sup> received ; <sup>21</sup> the liar in wait.

**LESSON PLAN**

- I. Ezra's Fast and Prayer, 21-23.
- II. Ezra's Care, 24-30.
- III. Ezra's Arrival, 31, 32.

**DAILY READINGS**

(By courtesy of I. B. R. Association, Mr. S. C. Bailey, Hon. Secretary, 56 Old Bailey, London, England.)

M.—Ezra's return from Babylon, Ezra 8 : 15-23.  
T.—Ezra's return from Babylon, Ezra 8 : 24-30. W.—Ezra's return from Babylon, Ezra 8 : 31-36. Th.—Ezra's good resolve, Ezra 7 : 1, 6-10. F.—Ezra's reliance on God, Ezra 7 : 21-28. S.—Submission, James 4 : 8-17. S.—Gratitude, Ps. 66 : 8-20.

**Primary Catechism**—Ques. 53. Who is the Com-

27 <sup>14</sup> Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand <sup>15</sup> drams ; and two vessels of fine <sup>16</sup> copper, precious as gold.

28 And I said unto them, Ye are holy unto the Lord ; <sup>17</sup> the vessels are holy <sup>18</sup> also ; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering unto the Lord <sup>19</sup> God of your fathers.

29 Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the <sup>20</sup> chief of the priests and the Le'vites, and <sup>21</sup> chief of the fathers of Is'rael, at Jeru'salem, in the chambers of the house of the Lord.

30 So <sup>22</sup> took the priests and the Le'vites <sup>23</sup> the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jeru'salem unto the house of our God.

31 Then we departed from the river of Aha'va on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jeru'salem : and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and <sup>24</sup> of such as lay in wait by the way.

32 And we came to Jeru'salem, and abode there three days.

*forter or Helper whom Jesus promised to send to his disciples? The Holy Spirit is the Comforter whom Jesus promised to send.*

**Shorter Catechism**—Review Questions 101-103.

**Lesson Hymns**—Book of Praise : Memory Hymn—Primary, 17 ; Junior, 19, 111, 116, 16, 119 (Ps. Sel.).

**Special Scripture Reading**—Isaiah 55 : 1-13 ; given also in Departmental Graded Teacher's Quarterlies. (To be read responsively or in concert by the whole School.)

**Hymn for Opening Worship**—Hymn 560, Book of Praise ; given also in Departmental Graded Quarterlies.

**Lantern Slides**—For Lesson, B. 1386, Ezra's Return from Babylon. For Question on Missions, 15910, New Dispensary with Patients and Staff. (Slides are obtained from the Presbyterian Lantern Slide Department, 96 Queen St. East, Toronto.)

**THE LESSON EXPLAINED**

**Time and Place**—B.C. 458 ; Babylon and Jerusalem.

**Connecting Links**—Ezra was a diligent student of the Law, and he longed to go to Jerusalem in order to put the Law into effect there. Artaxerxes was not so favorable to foreign religions as Cyrus' had been, but Ezra won his good will, and secured a royal edict, giving him the authority he desired to carry out his purpose. This royal decree gave permission to any of the Jews who so desired to accompany Ezra. Ezra was also authorized to carry to Jerusalem offerings for the temple made by the king and by the Jews, to draw upon the treasurers of the western provinces for necessary expenses,

and to appoint judges to execute the Law. Ezra gathered those who were to accompany him at a place near Babylon. On discovering that there were no Levites among them, he had their places taken by certain servants of the Levites brought from their home in Casiphia, presumably near Babylon.

**I. Ezra's Fast and Prayer, 21-23.**

V. 21. *Proclaimed a fast* ; in view of their hazardous undertaking. It was a sign of humiliation, a confession of sin, and an admission of absolute dependence upon the mercy of God. *The river of Aha'va* ; probably named after some town by which it flowed. It was likely one of the numerous canals of the Euphrates in the neighborhood of Baby-