



LESSON XI—SEPTEMBER 10.

Encouraging the Builders.

Haggai II., 1-9. Memory verses 4, 5. Read the Book of Haggai and Isaiah ix.

Golden Text.

"Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you."—Hag. II., 4.

Home Readings.

M. Haggai 1. God's call to build.
 T. Haggai 2: 1-9. Encouraging the Builders.
 W. Ezra 5: 1-5. The call obeyed.
 Th. Ezra 5: 6-17. Opposition.
 F. Ezra 6: 1-12. Enemies defeated.
 S. Ezra 6: 13-22. The Temple completed.
 Su. 2 Chron. 5: 11-14. God's glory.

Lesson Story.

Supt.—1. In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Hag'ga-i, saying,

School.—2. Speak now to Ze-rub'ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, governor of Ju'dah, and to Josh'u-a the son of Jos'e-dech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,

3. Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

4. Yet now be strong, O Ze-rub'ba-bel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Josh'u-a, son of Jos'e-dech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts:

5. According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

6. For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

7. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

8. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.

9. 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.

Suggestions.

Fifteen years after the setting up of the altar and the laying of the foundations of the Temple, two messengers from God appeared on the scene, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah.

When the enemies of the Jews worried them into leaving off building the Temple, they began to beautify and improve their own houses, and settled down to labor for their own prosperity. Too easily discouraged from the work of the Lord, the returned exiles would almost have forgotten that they needed a Temple and a complete service of worship of Jehovah, had they not been sent messengers from Jehovah to encourage them to build. They were living in sight of the ruins of the Temple but had grown so accustomed to the depressing sight of its desolations that it had lost its first pathos for them. Their crops were not doing well nor their business prospering but they understood not that this was God's judgment on their neglect of him.

The Lord Jehovah sent his servant Haggai, B. C. 520, to his people with a message to begin again immediately to build the Temple. Haggai, probably an old man, having seen the magnificent temple of Solomon's building, and having mourned for years over the desolations of the destruction of that Temple, suddenly appeared before the governor and the chief priest asking why the people said it was not time to build the Lord's house, and yet were beautifying and dwelling in their own houses. (Hag. I., 1-8). He encouraged them by telling that the Lord of Hosts was with them. Then Jehovah himself stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest, and all the rest of the people to begin to build again the Temple of the Lord.

The seventh month was called Tisri, and corresponded to our October. In this month the feast of Tabernacles was held, the great national Thanksgiving week. 'This house,' the Temple, is spoken of always as though it were one house, though destroyed and rebuilt several times.

Haggai admits that the present condition of the temple is in no way glorious. He asks who among the people remembered the glorious beauty of the Temple before its destruction, B. C. 586. Those who remembered the former glories could not but mourn over the present state of affairs, but Haggai brought to them a glorious message of divine comfort. 'The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former,' the promise of Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts.

'Be strong, for I am with you' was the Lord's promise, his covenant had not failed, his Spirit still abode with his people, they had nothing to fear.

God shakes the nations and the whole firmament when it is necessary for the fulfillment of his purposes. The wars among different people open the way for the furtherance of the spread of the gospel. Every nation has in it, however hidden, deep soul-stirring yearnings for the Messiah, every human heart is formed for God, and can never rest until it finds him. Nations are in seas of unrest and commotion because they know nothing of resting in God. Those who rest in God are safe no matter how their surroundings may be shaken.

The Bible Class.

Go Forward.—Ex. xiv., 13-16, 29-31: I. Chron. xxii., 11-13: II. Chron. xx., 20-22: Isa. lv., 12, 13: Josh. I., 7-9: Rom. xiv., 19: Phil. III., 12-14. Encouragement—I. Sam. xxx., 6: Deut. III., 28: Acts xxviii., 15: Psa. xxvii., 14; xxxi., 24.

C. E. Topic.

Sept. 10. An early Christian Endeavorer. 2 Tim. 3: 10-17. (A union meeting with the Junior society.)

Junior C. E.

Sept. 10. An early, Christian Endeavorer. 2 Tim. 3: 10-17. (A union meeting with the Young People's Society.)

A Gentle Call.

Sometimes the Christian life begins very simply, especially with the young. Among those who have been under good influences in the home, the church, the Sunday-school, and have been living sweet and gentle lives, free from grosser forms of evil, it is unreasonable to expect any violent 'experience' or marked change in the manner of living. Failing to recognize this fact, many parents continue to wrestle with God, in prayer for the conversion of their children long after that change has really taken place, while the children and young people themselves, on account of the same mistaken impression, continue long in deep, unsatisfied longings to become Christians after God has indeed accepted them and they are actually living devotedly in His service. It is well for us all to recognize how simply and quietly the Christian life sometimes begins.

A thoughtful girl of sixteen years, living in the country at a distance from the church which made attendance irregular, read, on a Sunday, the memoir of a Christian woman. On closing the volume, she said to herself, 'That was a beautiful life.' After a little thought, she added, 'and I should like to live such a life.' A few minutes later she knelt down and said, 'Lord, I will try from this time.' The decision was made. She went on steadily, and is still a useful and influential Christian woman, honored and beloved and widely known for her beautiful and devout character.—Rev. G. B. F. Hallock, D.D.

On gaining and holding attention, the 'Bible Student' says: 'Attention should be gained and held by making the lesson more attractive than anything else. The younger pupils best comprehend it in the form of a connected story or familiar illustration, and the teacher should take advantage of this trait. Christ always adapted His teaching to the capacity of those whom He taught. He did this largely by use of the parable or allegory. The facts of nature and observation are always at hand to furnish a never failing fund from which the wiled-awake teacher may draw at will. Thus he may make nature what it should be—a handmaid of inspiration.'

**Tobacco Catechism.**

(By Dr. R. H. McDonald, of San Francisco.)
 CHAPTER XIV.—COST OF THE TOBACCO HABIT.

1. Q.—Is the habit of using tobacco very costly?

A.—At first it is not; but the appetite increases more and more; until its gratification sometimes costs a man hundreds of dollars a year.

2. Q.—How much money is spent in the United States for tobacco each year?

A.—It has been estimated at about six hundred millions of dollars.

3. Q.—How much money would each child have every year, if this amount should be divided among the children of the United States?

A.—About fifteen dollars for each boy and girl every year.

4. Q.—What is the expense of smoking three five-cent cigars a day, for ten years?

A.—The cost, including principal and interest, would be \$745.74.

5. Q.—What is the expense for twenty-five years?

A.—Including principal and interest, \$3,110.74.

6. Q.—How many acres of land at \$1.25 an acre will this buy?

A.—2,488 acres, or nearly four sections of government land.

7. Q.—Give another example of the expense of this habit of smoking?

A.—By an estimate it is found that the habitual smoker who spends fifteen cents a day on cigars will, from the age of eighteen to sixty-eight, expend a sum that, compounding the interest at seven percent, would amount to \$20,000 (twenty thousand dollars).

8. Q.—Was tobacco at any time legal currency in this country?

A.—Yes, it was the standard value by which all contracts, salaries, and prices were paid. It is a recorded fact that in 1602 one hundred and sixty young women were bought as wives and paid for in tobacco.

9. Q.—How much tobacco was paid for each of these young women?

A.—For each of the first hundred, 120 pounds were paid, worth about ninety dollars.

For each of the remaining sixty, 150 pounds were paid, worth about one hundred and twelve dollars and a half.

10. How else was tobacco used as money?

A.—The salary of ministers was payable according to the wealth of the parish.

11. Q.—Why is tobacco a dear luxury?

A.—It burns a hole in the pocket, and a man never knows how much leaks out of it, though he is pretty sure of not having much left.

9. Q.—What did the noted President Wayland say?

A.—'The American Board, an institution of world wide benevolence, does not receive, annually, as much as it expended for cigars in the single City of New York.'

10. Q.—If the whole world left off the use of rum and tobacco what would be the effect?

A.—To every house some lost one would be restored, and comfort and happiness reign instead of want and misery. The country would be like a land flowing with milk and honey, and the millenium would seem near.

11. Q.—Is it possible for this to happen?

A.—Yes, if all the children in the country will join in bringing it about. They have only to abstain from using rum and tobacco. When the old drunkards, and feeble, nervous users of tobacco die off, the land will be peopled with a clean, wholesome race of men and women.

12. Q.—What is said of the waste of money spent for tobacco?

A.—'Millions of money have been turned to smoke, and capital that might have been invested in noble industries has been used to weaken and demoralize men, unfitting them for the highest activities, and preparing them often for the most ruinous excesses.'

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?—Isa. lv., 2