



LESSON V.—OCTOBER 29, 1905.

Power Through the Spirit.

Zech. iv, 1-10.

Golden Text.

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord.—Zech. iv, 6.

Home Readings.

Monday, October 23.—Zech. iv, 1-14.
 Tuesday, October 24.—Zech. i, 1-11.
 Wednesday, October 25.—Zech. i, 12-21.
 Thursday, October 26.—Zech. ii, 1-13.
 Friday, October 27.—Zech. iii, 1-10.
 Saturday, October 28.—Zech. vii, 1-14.
 Sunday, October 29.—Zech. viii, 1-15.

(By Davis W. Clark.)

In the Middle Ages the Arch of Titus was called the Arch of the Golden Candlestick. No Jew ever passed under that imperial trophy lest his eye should fall upon that bas-relief, which so faithfully pictured the articles of temple furniture carried by heathen hands in triumphal procession.

Next to the ark the candlestick was the most costly, beautiful, and significant object in the temple. It was six feet tall, all of gold, symmetrical in proportion, and its estimated value very great. Imagine this singularly graceful ornament, with the mystic veil for a background and its seven tapers all aflame. It was to look at a goodly sight like this that the angel aroused the prophet, who was stupefied by the splendid visions which had preceded it.

The next day Zechariah cried, 'I have seen the golden candlestick restored, set up in its place, and all aflame!' What could that mean but that the work of rebuilding the temple, in spite of all hindrances, should ultimately succeed? We only light a lamp indoors; never in the open. The temple was therefore the logical inference from the candlestick.

The first incidental lesson of the vision is found in the injunction against despising the day of small things. That insignificant remnant amid the blackened walls of Zion was the most important company in the world; the work they were engaged in was the most important work of that age. The next lesson was that of trust: There was a mountain of difficulty in the way. Yes! But before their appointed leader that mountain would become a plain. Again they were vividly reminded of God's omniscience. Those seven eyes (that perfect vision of God) run to and fro through the whole earth. God sees the plummet-line in Zerubbabel's hand. Omniscience is pledge of security and success. Thus God mercifully illuminated the darkest night of His people's history with the golden candlestick, which, like the bush in Horeb, burned without consuming.

The vision bears a spiritual significance upon its face. The Church is the candlestick set forth in the moral darkness of the world. Above the candlestick of the vision was a reservoir; from the reservoir there were seven pipes to each lamp—seven, the number of perfection, indicating the abundant supply. On either side of the candlestick stood an olive-tree that poured its oil into the reservoir. The trees represent the kingship and priesthood of Jesus, who supplies the reservoir with the Holy Spirit. It is not the lamp that burns. The lamp is only the vehicle of the oil. It is not the Church that illuminates, but the Holy Spirit through the Church. The Church is all gold. It is very precious, purchased with a great price. The Church has many branches, but it is one candlestick.

KEY AND ANALYSIS.

I. The vision of the candlestick.

The appearance of the candlestick described.

II. Significance of the vision.

(1) Completion of the temple inferred from the appearance of the candlestick.

(2) Incidental lessons.

(a) Against despising the day of small things.

(b) Trust; mountain—plain.

(c) Omniscience; seven eyes.

III. Spiritual significance.

The Church the Lord's candlestick today.

Its value. Its unity.

Its reservoir.

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

It is significantly said in the Book of Ezra that the Hebrews of that period 'prospered through the prophesying.' The prophets were not pitted against each other as preachers of to-day popularly are. They were not competing with each other as public entertainers.

They were men of like passions, like temptations, suffered like seasons of depression with their fellows. They worked out a deliverance for themselves in meditation and communion with the Divine, which they afterwards made public property in their discourses.

This is pre-eminently true of Zechariah. There was nothing mechanical in his visions. They did not pass before him on creaming rollers like the painted canvas of a panorama. They were kindled subjectively as the prophet thought and felt and grieved.

The visions first blessed the prophet and then made him a blessing as he related them.

Power does not inhere in things or conditions. Power is in men. God is still incarnate. Discovering the Divine within, evolving it, utilizing it, applying it—that is how the world is to be renovated.

It is only in an accommodated sense that the processes of human evolution and betterment can be said to be finished. There is a cap-stone to be put on, which the people salute with joy, but it is only one of many. Taller structures of personal and civic righteousness are ever rising and calling for new cap-stones. It is surprising what a number of proverbs have Scriptural origin. More of those pithy sentences, which influence human character and conduct can be traced to the Bible than to any other source. Zechariah abounds in them.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, October 29.—Topic—The foreign mission work of our denomination. Dan. ii, 31-45.

THE FOREIGN MISSION WORK OF OUR DENOMINATION.

Daniel's composite Colossus as certainly erects itself in our day as in his. His vision was not exhausted by the specific events to which it referred. It has an evolution which parallels human history in each age. Great civilizations, containing, though they do, elements of intrinsic value, yet if they rest upon principles that are not suitable and humane, must be overthrown. Christianity is still the small stone, which, hurled at the clay feet of the towering image, brings it to the dust. Entirely aside from religion, on humanitarian grounds alone, if need be, the cause of foreign missions could find justification.

Junior C. E. Topic.**STORY OF GIDEON.**

Monday, Oct. 23.—Israelites in trouble again. Judg. vi, 1-6.

Tuesday, Oct. 24.—God sends a helper. Judg. vi, 7-16.

Wednesday, Oct. 25.—God's altar and Baal's altar. Judg. vi, 17-32.

Thursday, October 26.—Gideon's sign. Judg. vi, 33-40.

Friday, October 27.—Gideon's army. Judg. vii, 1-8.

Saturday, October 28.—Gideon's victory. Judg. vii, 9-23.

Sunday, October 29.—Topic—What Gideon did for his country. Judg. vi, 11-16; viii, 22-23.

'As Lights in the World.'

A shining Christian! Can I be
 A light for Him who died for me?
 In darkness dense a strong searchlight
 Before which flee the shades of night?
 Oh, that I might
 Be such a light!

Can I a blessed lighthouse be,
 Whose beacon shines across the sea
 Upon the shipwrecked mariner
 On breakers wild and sandy bar
 And from the wave
 Rescue the brave?

Can I be like a stray sunbeam,
 Whose warm, reviving, golden gleam
 Creeps into hearts dying with pain,
 And brings them into life again?
 Can I so shine,
 Like One Divine?

Yes, yes, 'tis true. It is His will
 That, 'like a city on a hill,'
 Towers and turrets all alight,
 I guide the homeless soul aright.
 Then may my light
 Be always bright.

—Susan M. Griffith.

What are You Thankful For?

A very good plan for interesting the Sunday school in Thanksgiving is that of distributing to all members above the primary age copies of printed cards about the size of a postal, on which is printed the question: 'What are you thankful for?' The superintendent should request that every scholar answer the question in writing on the card, and that it be as brief as possible. The cards are to be returned to the superintendent on the following Sunday, and some of the most characteristic replies read before the school. A Virginia Sunday school did this with good results, and many impressive messages came from young and old. —'S.S. Messenger.'

Looking After Absent Pupils

The short interval between Sunday school and 'church' services is a good time to look up absent scholars. A busy teacher adopted the sensible plan of waiting in the vestibule to see if parents or members of the family will attend church, and from them she learns the cause of the absence. By careful, persistent effort she has trained the little ones to report to her if they must be absent at any time, so she is reasonably certain that sickness or some sudden emergency is responsible if a child is missing and no notice has been sent. Often in five minutes she has checked every name on her list, and perhaps sent papers and cards to the little ones who are sick.

Two classes of absent scholars should always be visited without delay. These are the sick and the wilfully absent. It is easy to go with a picture, a flower, or bit of fruit, and say a few cheering words to the little invalid; but the boys and girls who 'don't care' are not so easily managed. There are always girls who feel that the better dressed scholars laugh at their clothes, and boys who tell doleful tales of how the others 'pick on them,' and children with every sort of reason for staying away, as well as no reason at all. Very often the weary teacher is tempted to cross the names off her book and let them go, but, to her credit be it said, she seldom does.

With patience and kind words these small black sheep may be coaxed into the fold, and it is the exceptional teacher who neglects them. Wherever complaint is made, it should be thoroughly investigated, and the little sinners promptly reported to their parents. If a well-dressed girl makes fun of a poor child's clothes, she should be made to feel that she is doing positive harm, and the matter reported at once.

As the old hymn says, it is hard not to 'sometimes lose heart' in the Christian warfare, but you cannot teach the children unless they come to the Sunday school, and they will not come unless effort is made to draw them. So spread every available net for the absent ones, and it may be possible that by your persistent efforts they will become as regular as the proverbial clock.—Hilda Richmond, in 'Sunday School Times.'