

## Lesson II.

## RETURNING FROM CAPTIVITY

October 14, 1917

**BETWEEN THE LESSONS**—We now study a new epoch in the history of God's people. Cyrus became the deliverer of the Jews. He captured Babylon and reversed its policy of transporting conquered peoples from their lands. Thus the Captivity was ended.

**GOLDEN TEXT**—The Lord hath done great things for us ; whereof we are glad.—Psalm 126 : 3.

\*Memorize Rom. 12 : 3.

**THE LESSON PASSAGE**—Ezra 1 : 1-11.

1 Now in the first year of Cy'rus king of Per'sia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremi'ah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cy'rus king of Per'sia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

2 Thus saith Cy'rus king of Per'sia, "The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth ; and he hath charged me to build him an house " at Jeru'salem, which is in Ju'dah.

3 "Who is there among you of all his people ? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jeru'salem, which is in Ju'dah, and build the house of the Lord " God of Is'rael, (he is " the God,) which is in Jeru'salem.

4 And whosoever "remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God " that is in Jeru'salem.

5 Then rose up the "chief of the fathers of Ju'dah and Ben'jamin, and the priests, and the Le'vites, " with all them whose spirit God had " raised, to go

**Revised Version**—accomplished ; " All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord, the God of heaven, given me ; " in ; " Whosoever there is among ; " the God ; " Omitt the ; " is left ; " which ; " heads of fathers' houses of Judah ; " even all whose ; " stirred ; " round about ; " bowls ; " when they of the captivity were brought.

up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jeru'salem

6 And all they that were " about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered.

7 Also Cy'rus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadne'zar had brought forth out of Jeru'salem, and had put them in the house of his gods ;

8 Even these did Cy'rus king of Per'sia bring forth by the hand of Mith'redath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbar'zar, the prince of Ju'dah.

9 And this is the number of them : thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives,

10 Thirty " basons of gold, silver " basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand.

11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbar'zar bring up " with them of the captivity that were brought up from Bab'ylon unto Jeru'salem.

## † HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Returning from captivity, Ezra, ch. 1.

T.—A stranger's aid required, 1 Kgs. 5 : 1-6.

W.—A stranger's aid given, 1 Kgs. 5 : 7-12.

S.—Cause of the captivity, Ezek. 39 : 22-28.

Th.—Cyrus, God's instrument, Isa. 45 : 1-8.

F.—Ruin and restoration, 2 Chron. 36 : 14-23.

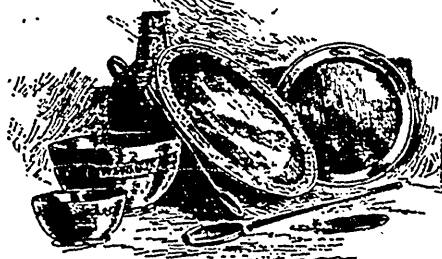
S.—God's promise to the captives, Jer. 29 : 8-14.

## THE LESSON EXPLAINED

I. THE DECREE OF CYRUS.—1. First year ; of his reign in Babylon. Babylon was captured B.C. 538. For two years Darius was king of Babylon under Cyrus. In B.C. 536, Cyrus became direct sovereign. This was the date of the decree. King of Persia. Cyrus was of Persian descent and Persia was the chief part of his empire. Word of the Lord ; God's will revealed to a human soul. By the mouth of Jeremi'ah. See the words of Jeremiah in Jer. 29 : 10. Jeremiah was one of God's prophets. A prophet speaks for God to man. Fulfilled ; realized in fact. Stirred up the spirit ; moved to action. Made a proclamation ; literally, "made a voice," by heralds. Also in writing ; sent probably to the chief officials of the kingdom.

2. Lord God of heaven ; the usual title of the supreme being among the Persians. Hath given me ; a common acknowledgment on the part of Persian kings. His recognition of the God of the Jews was a policy of conciliation. In an inscription he says that Martuk, the chief god of Babylon, gave him Babylon. All the kingdoms ; an exaggeration characteristic of Oriental monarchs. Hath charged me. See Isa. 44 : 28, where Cyrus is spoken of as God's shepherd, as the performer of God's pleasure, a builder of the temple and of Jerusalem.

3, 4. Who is there ; whoever of the Jews. Let him go up ; Jerusalem on higher level. The decree gives permission rather than commands. It is a voluntary return. Whosoever remaineth. The decree



GOLD AND SILVER VESSELS

now provides for funds for the journey. Those who remain are to help. Many, because of intermarriage, business, or fear of hardship were unwilling to go. Men of his place. Babylonian neighbors were to help those who remain in raising funds.

## II. GIFTS FOR THE TEMPLE.—5-11. Then

\* For the recitation of the Scripture Memory Passages in either Part of List IV., a Red Seal is added to the Diploma in Colors given for List III., and a Gold Seal for the verses of the other Part. For Form of Application apply to Rev. J. C. Robertson, our General Secretary for Sabbath Schools, Confederation Life Building, Toronto.

† Courtesy of I. B. R. Association, Mr. S. C. Bailey, Hon. Secretary, 56 Old Bailey, London, England.