

2. *The work of pessimists*, v. 12. Who were the pessimists and who were the optimists? The one class saw only defects, the other could see what had been achieved. The wails of the pessimists helped to stop the work. They were the best allies of the enemies of the colony, ch. 4:1-5. Thus sixteen years were lost in completing the work and two prophets had to be raised up to hearten the people, Hag. 1:1, 2. What are the words of the modern pessimists in congregation or in church? What does a pessimist promote? What is the best cure for pessimism? Learn something from team-play.

3. *The completion of the temple*, ch. 6:14-18. In spite of delays, the work was brought to completion. When did Haggai and Zechariah live? What had been happening in the Persian empire since the time of Cyrus? The prophets believed that the religious life of no community could be sound if the symbols of religion were neglected. A community which prefers material comfort to the proper maintenance of the institutions which foster religious life is in serious danger, Hag. 1:2-11. Can an indifferent attitude to the Sabbath, to religious exercises, etc., even if excused by the plea of liberty, effect good, spiritual living?

### For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

Refer to Professor Drummond's booklet, *The City without a Church*, and bring out that no city but the New Jerusalem can afford to be without a church. Remind the class that a city without a church is not a very safe place in which to live, and refer to James Russell Lowell's saying, that no place is a decent place in which to live and bring up a family, where God is not known and worshiped. We can never tell how much we are indebted to the church for many of the best blessings we enjoy. Our lesson contains an account of the rebuilding of the temple by the returned exiles.

1. *The Foundations Laid*, vs. 8-13. Why were the returned exiles a year in getting started with the temple? They first had to provide some sort of homes for themselves. They lost no time in making provision for the religious wants of the people. Question the scholars about the laying of the corner-stone.

Who were the great leaders in this work? What was the character of the anthem sung? What part had the people in these ceremonies? Why was the joy of this occasion marred by loud weeping on the part of some? Was there any excuse for this? A flood of tender thought, of sacred memories came over them as they relived the days that were gone. No new building could ever be to them what the old one had been. A man who had spent many years away from home returned to find the old church where he had worshiped in boyhood removed and a new building in its place. He said that there was something he missed out of the service in the new church. He felt that if he could have sat in the old family pew, with a heart full of sacred memories, he would have received a larger blessing.

2. *The Temple Completed*, ch. 6:14-15. Why were they so long in completing the work? What two prophets had a good deal to do in inspiring the people to work? By consulting their prophecies we learn how they succeeded in doing this. Show that a great deal depends upon wise, inspiring leadership in every great undertaking. Ask the scholars which they consider worthy of greater honor,—those who inspire others in a noble undertaking, or those who do the actual work.

3. *The Temple Dedicated*, vs. 16-18. Ask for a description of the dedication service. What do we miss out of this service which we find in the dedication of Solomon's temple? Was no one able to pray the dedicatory prayer? Remember that all we are and all we have should be dedicated to the Lord. The daily prayer of our hearts should be—

"Take my life, and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee."

### For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

To-day's lesson should be taught to the boys and girls as a "Come to Sunday School" lesson. The story as told by Ezra presents itself in a series of five scenes: (1) the returning Jews settling in their old, devastated homes; (2) the building of the altar and the immediate commencement of religious services; (3) the laying of the foundation of the temple, and of the corner-stone; (4) the