

RULERS.—Cyrus, king of Persia. Servius Tullius at Rome.

CONNECTING LINK.—Darius, who governed Babylon, has died. Cyrus is alone king. Daniel has been brought out from his retirement, and made one of the king's chief counselors. It was possibly he who brought to the notice of Cyrus the prophecies made one hundred years before his birth. At all events he issues the edict which fulfills the prophecy. Forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty Jews returned to Jerusalem.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The call of the Gospel.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. A Charge to Cyrus, v. 1, 2, chap. 1.**
What prophet had foretold the call of Cyrus to a work for God?
What was Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the captivity?
Who was there in the court of Cyrus that was very familiar with these prophecies?
What position did he occupy in the kingdom?
Knowing the prophecies, how would he naturally use his power?
If Daniel did influence Cyrus to this act, does the fact contradict the statement of ver. 1?
2. A Call to Israel, v. 3, 4, chap. 1.
How general a permission did Cyrus give to Israel?
What were those who went to do?
What were those who remained to do?
How many answered to this call, and went back to Jerusalem? Ezra 2, 64.
What beautiful story—that makes a book of the Bible—would have never been told if every one had gone back to Jerusalem?
3. A Thanksgiving to God, v. 8-13, chap. 3.
Of what was this thanksgiving a celebration?
Of what did the public service of thanksgiving consist?
Why did they praise the Lord? (See Golden Text.)
Why should so many have wept on this joyful occasion?
In what respects was this an occasion for sorrow?
What other service of thanksgiving had occurred in the history of this people?

Practical Teachings.

How does this lesson teach that men and nations are only God's servants working his will.
On every one God lays his special duty, either to go, to do, or to give. What has he laid on you?
The lasting effect of sin? It brings tears into the midst of rejoicing.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- 1. A Charge to Cyrus, v. 1, 2, chap. 1.**
Who was king of Persia?
Whose downfall had Jeremiah prophesied? Jer. 25, 2.
Whose deliverance had he promised? Jer. 29, 10.
How did the Lord bring about its fulfillment?
What acknowledgment did Cyrus make?
What charge had he received?
2. A Call to Israel, v. 3, 4, chap. 1.
What question did Cyrus ask?
Where did he wish the people to go?
For what purpose?
To whom were they to look for help?
What command did he lay upon their neighbors?
For what purpose were the offering to be made?
3. A Thanksgiving to God, v. 8-13, chap. 3.
When did the rebuilding of the temple commence?
Who directed the work?
Who assisted him?
What preparation was made after the foundation was laid?
What song of thanksgiving was sung?
Who joined in the thanksgiving?
What building had many of the old men seen?
How were they affected?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That God moves men's hearts to do his will?
2. That God remembers his people in their trouble?
3. That the prosperity of God's house is a joy to his people?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

- What came from the Lord to King Cyrus? **Word to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem.**
What notice did the king give throughout the kingdom? **That all the Jews were free.**
What did he charge them to do? **To go up to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.**
What was his command to his own people? **That they help the poor Jews to go with the rest.**
How were they to help them? **With money, cattle, and goods.**
What was given the Jews for the temple? **A free will offering from the king.**
What was that offering? **The gold and silver vessels that Nebuchadnezzar carried away from the temple.**
Who led the Jews back to their own land? **Zerubbabel, chief ruler, and Joshua, high-priest.**
What was first rebuilt? **The altar of sacrifice.**
What was offered unto the Lord? **Sacrifices and burnt offerings.**
When were the foundations of the temple laid? **In the second year of their freedom.**
Who were gathered together at that time? **The priests, the Levites, and the people.**
How did they praise God for his goodness? **With songs and music.**
What did the people do? **They shouted with joy.**
[Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.]
Who wept and mourned? **Many of the priests and the old men.**
For what did they weep? **For the lost glory of the temple and of Israel.**

Words with Little People.

God was watching those lowly, sorry captives *all the time*, and as soon as he knew it was *best*, he heard their prayer for forgiveness and set them free. They were so glad to get home and *begin again*, that they sang songs and fairly shouted for joy. When they commenced to build their temple again, how did they feel?
See GOLDEN TEXT.
No temple was ever built that God so loved to come and *stay* in as in a little clean heart.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who permitted the Jews to return from captivity? **Cyrus, the king of Persia.**
2. Who led the Jews back to their own land? **Zerubbabel.**
3. What did they first build after their return to Jerusalem? **The altar of the Lord.**
4. What foundation did they lay in the second year? **The second temple.**
5. What is said of them in the Golden Text? **They praised, etc.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....
Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Spirit of the Temple Builder.

- I. THE BELIEVING SPIRIT.
That the word... might be fulfilled. v. 1.
"We also believe, and therefore speak." 2 Cor. 4, 13.
- II. THE OBEDIENT SPIRIT.
He hath charged me to build. v. 2.
"Not disobedient unto the... vision." Acts 20, 19.
- III. THE WORKING SPIRIT.
Let him go up... v. 3.
"Do it with thy might." Eccl. 9, 10.
- IV. THE GIVING SPIRIT.
Help... with silver and with gold. v. 4.
"God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9, 7.
- V. THE WORSHIPING SPIRIT.
They set the priests in their apparel. v. 10.
"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." 1 Chron. 16, 29.