

The Lesson Hymns

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 30.

Oh, precious words that Jesus said!
The soul that comes to me,
I will in no wise cast him out,
Whoever he may be.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 33.

Seeking the lost, yes, kindly entreating
Wanderers on the mountain astray:
"Come unto me," his message repeating,
Words of the Master speaking to-day.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 32.

Oh, word of words, the sweetest,
Oh, word, in which there lie
All promise, all fulfillment,
And end of mystery!

Questions for Senior Scholars

Where did Ezra live? What was his character? What were his aspirations? How many companies of returned captives had preceded this one to Jerusalem? Under whose leadership? What had been attempted by those who had returned earlier? What had been accomplished?

What discouragements awaited these newcomers? What sources of encouragement were at their command? Why was the journey a dangerous one? How much treasure had the Jews with them? Why were these treasures called holy?

Questions for Younger Scholars

1. *A Brave and Trustful Leader* (v. 21-27).—Upon what journey was Ezra about to start? Who had offered him help and protection? Upon whom did he call for the help which he needed? What did the Jews do besides praying at the river of Ahava? What did they ask God for? Why had Ezra refused the king's kind offer? How did he express his faith in God?
2. *Holy unto the Lord* (v. 28-32).—Why

were the Jews carrying such immense treasures with them? Why were these treasures called holy? What charge did Ezra specially give these priests before they started? At what time of the year did they start for Jerusalem? How long were they on the journey? Whose hand did Ezra say was upon them all the way? What deliverance did God give them for which they were so thankful?

Questions for Younger Scholars

Who was Ezra? Why was he still in Persia? He did not return with the others to Jerusalem. Why did he want to go there now? He thought the people needed to be taught the law of the Lord. Who was the king of Persia? How did he help Ezra? He gave him gold and silver and vessels for the temple, and told him to take all

his friends with him. Through what kind of a country did Ezra have to pass? Why did he fear robbers? What might he have asked of the king? A guard of soldiers. Why did he not do this? Because he had a strong protector. What did he call the people to hold? For what did they pray? For a safe journey.

The Lesson Analysis

I. Faith in God (verses 21-23).

(a) More than half a century after the dedication of the second temple (by returned exiles) another caravan of exiles returns to Jerusalem. (b) Ezra the priest, their leader, is the speaker of our lesson passage. (c) These exiles return by authority of the great king Artaxerxes, (d) who has made Ezra ruler of the province of Judah and bestowed upon him and his people many privileges. (e) Several days of the journey have already passed when our lesson story begins. (f) Ezra and his people rest at the river Ahava, (g) where they are reinforced by Levites and others. (h) Their confidence is not in themselves nor in their leader nor in the friendly king, but in God, before whom they humble themselves by fasting and prayer. (i) From God they ask not only defense, but wisdom to direct. (j) Ezra's earlier

profession of faith in God helps now to increase his dependence upon God. (k) He obtains a comforting assurance that God will keep his promises.

II. Business Principles (verses 24-30).

(a) Ezra has charge of the entire party of returning exiles, with all of their wealth; (b) but he wisely intrusts the details of supervision to others. (c) The sacred treasure, dedicated to the temple service, he puts into the hands of twelve well-known priests and ten Levites. (d) There was an appropriateness in thus placing dedicated vessels in the charge of dedicated men. (e) These vessels were weighed and counted before witnesses when given into the hands of these priests and Levites, and were to be again weighed and counted before witnesses when they reached the temple. (f) Some of this treasure had come from the heathen king.

some from
God-fearing
when devote
III. Pros
(a) Earth
ness were b
of the peo

Nov

INTRODU
saem with Ze
the rebuilding
(comp. lesson
second and l
almost sixty y
to events of th
of Esther (com
this long perio
to the Intro

Verse 21
great compan
souls, prepar
Jerusalem.

I proclaim
the company,
events.

A fast—A
is to be tho
exercise, exp
absolute depen
Jehovah, and
and supplicat
propitiating C
suffering is er

At the riv
canal near B
canals commo
Psa. 137. 1,
Acts 16. 13 a
prayer "witho

A straigh
The intended
thought of a r
bers or enemy
obstacles or
"Make straight
God").

22. A band
A military esc
mish a little la
The enemy
hordes such as
part of the Or
the stragglers
company and o
of treasure and
The hand of
of Jehovah. T