

3. *The Restoration of the Sacred Vessels*, vs. 7-11. Bring out the details, and use as illustration of God's overruling providence. Nebuchadnezzar had dedicated the holy vessels of the temple to his god or gods, only to preserve them to be used again in the new temple to be erected.

The lesson to emphasize is that of the Golden Text,—how God delights in mercy and punishes only that He may purify.

### For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

The teaching of the Lesson may be centred about a few of the outstanding statements contained in it. Let each of these be read in concert by the class, to serve as a starting-point for questioning and discussion:

1. *"The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus"*, v. 1. Who Cyrus was, how he had become the ruler of God's people in their captivity, the date of his proclamation in his reign, the influence under which it was put forth and the prophecy fulfilled by it (see Jer. 29 : 10), are the points to be elicited.

2. *"Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia"*, v. 2. Suggestive questions are: Who did Cyrus say had given him his kingdom? What had the Lord charged him to do? What prophecy of Isaiah may Cyrus have seen? What did he call upon the people of Judah to do? In what ways were their heathen neighbors to help them? (Bring out the details of v. 4.)

3. *"Then rose up the chief of the fathers"*,

etc., v. 5. Who were these? (The leaders of the Jewish people.) Who joined them? How were these moved to do so? What task did they unitedly undertake?

4. *"All . . . about them strengthened their hands"*, v. 6. Bring out the force of the expression "strengthened their hands" (aided them like one assisting a convalescent to walk), and call attention to the fulfilment of the king's command in v. 4.

5. *"Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels"*, etc., v. 7. Question somewhat as follows: What were these vessels? Whence had they been brought? Where had they been placed? Into whose care were they now given? (For Sheshbazzar or Zerubabel, see chs. 3 : 8 ; 5 : 16.) What was his position amongst his people? Have the scholars describe the vessels in detail.

6. *"All these did Sheshbazzar bring up . . . unto Jerusalem"*, v. 11. Bring out here the name of the Jewish leader, the length of the journey and the time occupied by it, and the settlement of the Jews in Jerusalem and the towns round about.

Apply the Lesson in some such way as the following: By whom were the people of Judah brought back from captivity? It will be easy to get the scholars to see God's hand in this restoration. Why did He thus restore them? The answer is in the Golden Text. Emphasize the eagerness of God to forgive even the greatest sinners and restore them to His favor.

### THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON

[SEE SKETCH MAP, LESSON 1.]

Suppose the returning exiles went by way of Damascus; the number 37 in the north-east corner of the special map indicates a spot where travelers who now halt at Damascus tie their camels when staying over night. The place is an open, level space; the ground is bare and beaten down hard by the repeated tramping of many feet. Directly before you a dozen or more camels are kneeling, tied to long, tight-stretched ropes that confine them in orderly rows. Fodder is thrown in heaps on the ground between the ropes. Other camels are tethered a few rods ahead and off at your right. A few are standing with saddle cloths strapped in place; here and

there a camel owner or a servant is looking after the beasts. Beyond this open-air inn for the four-legged, you see flat-roofed buildings and dome-roofed buildings all of stone, a pleasant mass of green tree foliage, and the slender twin minarets (prayer towers) of one of the modern city's Moslem mosques.

To see for yourself just such a scene as may have been included in the returning exiles' experience, use a stereograph entitled, *A Caravan Camp at Old Damascus*. [See also HOME STUDY and INTERMEDIATE QUARTERLIES and LEAFLETS.]