

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

SECOND QUARTER—STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

B. C. 519. LESSON XI. THE NEED OF GOD'S SPIRIT; or, Power by the Spirit. Zech. 4: 1-14. June 15.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL. Verses 1, 2. The angel. The revelations to Zechariah were given not directly from God, but through the ministrations of an angel. Waked me. After the previous vision of the high-priest and the adversary standing before the angel, Zechariah had fallen into a sleep, from which he was now aroused, and lifted into the prophetic state. A candlestick. Though the temple was still unfinished, and its sacred furniture was as yet unused, the prophet saw in vision the golden candlestick in the holy place. This was a lampstand, consisting of a central shaft, from which branched three arms on each side, thus presenting places for seven lamps, which were arranged in a row, all at the same height. The candlestick was of pure gold, cast in ornamental forms, and stood five feet high and three and a half feet wide at the summit of its branches. It may be taken as a type of the church (Rev. 1, 20) in the following particulars: 1. Its purpose was to give light (Matt. 5, 15). 2. Its material was precious and costly, indicating how dear is the church to God, and how lowly it should be in the sight of men. 3. Its seven lamps in a line point to the diversity, the equality and the unity of the church. 4. Like the church, it often needed to be filled, replenished, and trimmed afresh. 5. Like the church, it was not the light in itself, but the bearer of the light, which represented Christ, who is the light of the world. John 9, 5. A bowl upon the top. This, though not a part of the candlestick, was seen in the vision as surmounting it, and supplying its seven lamps with oil, an emblem of the invisible stores of grace which God supplies to his church. 1. "So God's people can see what others cannot, the fountain whence flow our blessings." Seven lamps. The lamps were separate from the candlestick or lampstand, being simply oil vessels in which the wax floated. Seven pipes. There is some obscurity in the text here. It is literally, "seven and seven pipes," or, "seven several pipes," and would seem to indicate that in the vision there were seven pipes leading from the reservoir to each lamp, making forty-nine in all. 3, 4, 5. Two olive trees. The candlestick of the prophet's vision was supported on each side by an olive tree, from whose branches (verse 12) a golden pipe appeared to connect directly with the oil reservoir surmounting the candlestick, supplying it with oil which flowed from the trees. 2. "The supply of divine power does not come through human ministrations, but directly from on high." What are these? 3. "The divine teachings are not always understood, even by inspired men." No, my Lord. 4. "We should never be ashamed to acknowledge our ignorance of the divine mysteries, if we would receive instruction concerning them." 6. This is the word of the Lord. That is, this vision was sent as a message to encourage the heart of Zerubbabel and his fellow workers, by its picture of the divine supply which should meet every need. Zerubbabel. The hereditary prince of Judah, who was, as his name indicates, "born in Babylon," during the captivity. He had led the exiles back to their own land, and began the rebuilding of the temple, about fifteen years before the period of this lesson. Not by might. As the golden candlestick was fed by invisible supplies, so God's purposes did not depend for their accomplishment upon human might or power, but were sure of success through divinely-furnished instrumentalities. 5. "God can accomplish more through the weakest things than man can through the strongest." 6. "God's cause is independent of human agents." He can raise up workers wherever he requires them. My spirit. The oil of the golden candlestick symbolized the Holy Spirit, which the Almighty could pour out as will upon his people. 7. O great mountain. The difficulties which arose around Zerubbabel in his endeavor to restore the temple from the oppositions abroad and lack of zeal at home were like a mountain. 7. "Whoever undertakes a noble work for God must expect to find obstacles in his way." A plain. 8. "Obstacles are easily overcome or are swept out of sight if God be on our side." The "mountain" of Samaritan opposition proved after all "a plain" when the decree of Darius authorized the completion of the temple, and compelled even its enemies to give their assistance to it. Ezra 5, 6. The headstone. That is, the keystone or crowning piece, being the last placed on the summit of the completed building. Shoutings. As shouts had accompanied the foundation (Ezra 3, 11), so they were destined to accompany

the completion of the work. Grace, grace. A supplication for divine grace to rest upon the building. 9. "Even when our work is done, we need to ask for grace upon it."

8, 9, 10. His hands shall also finish it. An encouraging assurance to the prince of Judah, who had now waited fifteen years, and was destined to wait seven years longer for its fulfillment. 10. "God rewards with success those who work for him." 11. "Those who do not witness the success of their endeavors here may yet behold it hereafter." Who hath despised. Some among the Jews, but more among the surrounding nations, had ever surveyed with contempt the effort to rebuild the temple. Small things. 12. "The greatest results often arise from the least beginnings." There was a day when the whole Christian Church counted only one hundred and twenty members. They shall rejoice. An obscure passage, of which the best rendering seems to be, "They, those seven, shall rejoice, and see the plummet," etc. That is, not the despisers, but "the seven eyes of the Lord" shall rejoice as the work of rebuilding advances. 13. "We may disregard the frowns of men if we possess the smiles of God upon our work." The plummet. That is, the plumbline in the hands of Zerubbabel, an evidence of work in progress received notice and favor from the eyes of the Lord. 14. "God observes and honors his people's labors. Those seven. "Those seven, the eyes of the Lord." Seven is used often in Scripture as the complete number. Hence, seven eyes would indicate omniscience.

11, 12. Olive branches. The branches of the olive trees seemed to connect with the bowl surmounting the candlestick by pipes, which carried the oil. Golden oil. The oil is called "gold," from its purity, preciousness and color. Of themselves. The supply of oil seemed to come directly from the trees, without human aid or preparation.

12, 14. Two anointed ones. That is, the pipe which carried the oil represented the two anointed ones, or "sons of oil." These have been variously interpreted to refer to Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel the prince, or to the two offices of the priesthood and the royalty in Christ, the coming Messiah.

GOLDEN TEXT: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Zech. 4, 6.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION: The triumph of the church.

The next lesson is Mal. 3, 8-18.

DIPHTHERIA has for a long time been very prevalent, and very fatal. Its fatality seems to be greatly owing to neglecting what is supposed to be an ordinary cold or sore throat until it has progressed to its stages, and then when medical aid is procured it has too often been found to be too late. From the fatality attending this disease every family should keep a remedy on hand and use it on first appearance of sore throat. A preparation called DIPHTHERINE has been placed before the public. It is the discovery of an English physician, and has been regarded widely as the best remedy for that disease. It is placed within the reach of all, put up in bottles with full directions, and sold by Druggists and dealers in medicines at the low price of 25 cents a bottle.

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