

ing back the ripples of response, the infinite moved by the finite. But now it is time to plunge in ourselves. To feel the healing waters close around us; now floating quietly on the surface, and anon swimming with strong, bold stroke, ever out, and out, and out, to greater breadth and greater depth, even unto all the fullness of God.

Prophecy Partially Fulfilled.

Returning From Captivity.

(Lesson for August 27, 1899.)

All our lessons so far this month have pointed towards the coming day of national repatriation and regeneration. I have tried to emphasize the truth that these prophecies, so glowing, so vivid, so limitless in their promises, have never yet had in any measure adequate fulfillment. In so far as God's promises are limited by the weakness of human phraseology, God is always greater than His promises when the time comes for their realization. So there must be yet awaiting Israel a fulfillment of these prophecies that will far outshine the partial fulfillment reached at the time and subsequent to the return from the captivity with which much of our future study deals.

In our last historical study we stood by the den of lions with King Darius, the viceroy of Cyrus in Babylon, and saw Daniel come forth uninjured. Very soon after this incident the Persian monarch issued his proclamation recorded by Ezra in the opening verses of the present lesson. Ezra was a Levite, descendant of Aaron and the High Priest Hilkiah who found the Book of the Law in the temple in the days of Josiah, and is credited with having produced the books of 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Nearly eighty years after the partial return under Zerubbabel described in this lesson, he brought to Jerusalem another company of Jewish exiles. At a ripe old age, tradition says, he died in the sacred city.

THE DAY DAWN IN BABYLON.

How thrilling must have been the morn which gave voice to the proclamation of Cyrus, and brought the message of hope to the ears of the desponding exiles. At last the hopes of seventy years were to be fulfilled; there was to be a rebuilt city and a new temple; the prospect was inspiring in the extreme. It was to be the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy (Jer. 25: 12, 29: 10) and a foretaste of the future glory in the time of God's final triumph in His people. The manner in which the return was accomplished contains a suggestion for present conditions and the possibilities of the immediate future. God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to make the proclamation. No doubt the Holy Spirit prepared the heart of the Persian ruler for the suggestion that in all probability was made by Daniel, still high in authority and privileged to enjoy the royal confidence. The Hebrew prince, knowing the prophecy of the seventy years and realizing that they were drawing to a close, might well use his God-given influence to make the mind of the king favorable to Israel's return. So to-day, as the revived national spirit of Judaism yearns for the home land and the days of their dispersion seem drawing to a close, need we be surprised if God stirs up the spirit of the Sultan of Turkey to make similar proclamation to that of Cyrus? The heart of the modern monarch is no harder for God to move than that of the ancient autocrat; and even as Daniel held place in the Persian Court, so there are

Jews not a few who have the ear of the Sultan and will use it to further their national ambition. Some such development as this will soon startle the world if all the indications are to be depended upon.

The return was to be a voluntary one. Many whose lives had become, through matrimonial or business alliances, entangled with the life of Babylon, chose to remain behind. Some of them no doubt derided the movement as quixotic and unpractical, as do some the Zionist movement of to-day. But preparations went on apace, until at last a troop of 50,000 joyous exiles set out on the homeward pilgrimage. It is calculated that this number is not more than one-seventh of all the Jews in Babylon, and it does not equal the number of Jews who within the last quarter century have taken up their dwelling in Jerusalem alone, not to speak of the multitudes who are colonizing other portions of the Holy Land. Truly the greater restoration has begun. May God hasten its completion.

The Lessons Applied.

LESSON 6.—AUGUST 6, 1899.

The New Heart.

(Lesson Text Ezek. 36: 25-36. Commit to Memory Verses 25-27.)
(Read Ezek. 11: 14-25 and Jer. 31: 31-34.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"A new heart also will I give you"—Ezek. 36: 26.

DAILY READINGS Monday: Ezek. 36: 22-30. Tuesday: Ezek. 36: 31-38. Wednesday: Ezek. 11: 14-21. Thursday: Jer. 31: 31-34. Friday: Jer. 32: 36-44. Saturday: Jer. 24: 1-7. Sunday: Titus 3: 1-8.

These points and questions are intended to open up the lesson for the teacher, rather than for use in the class.

CENTRAL TRUTH—Cleansing. (1) *Its need*, Gen. 6: 5, 8: 21, Psa. 95: 10, Isa. 44: 20, Jer. 17: 9, Eccl. 9: 3. (2) *How accomplished*, Psa. 26: 6, 51: 7, Isa. 1: 18, 1 John 1: 7.

SUGGESTIVE POINTS.—Nothing can be right until the heart is right.—The Spirit of God can dwell only in a clean heart.—The loathing of self is a first step to the life of holiness.—Fruitfulness is the natural outcome of the new life.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.—What teaching of Jesus corresponds to that about the new heart? Are men naturally children of God? Can they be educated or cultured into being God's children? What is the promise of the New Testament concerning the Holy Spirit? To whom is He given?

LESSON 7.—AUGUST 13, 1899.

Ezekiel's Great Vision.

(Lesson Text Ezek. 37: 1-14. Commit to Memory Verses 5, 6.)
(Read John 3: 1-18.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I will put my spirit within you."—Ezek. 37: 27.

DAILY READINGS—Monday: Ezek. 37: 1-14. Tuesday: Ezek. 37: 20-28. Wednesday: Ezek. 22: 27-31. Thursday: Isa. 1: 1-9. Friday: Deut. 8: 11-20. Saturday: Rom. 8: 1-11. Sunday: Eph. 2: 1-10.

CENTRAL TRUTH—Life through the Spirit of God. (1) *Spiritual death*, Isa. 9: 2, Rom. 6: 13, 8: 6, Eph. 2: 1, 5, 4: 18. (2) *Spiritual life*, Jno. 5: 21, 25, Rom. 8: 9-13, 2 Cor. 3: 6, Gal. 2: 19, 5: 25, Col. 3: 3.

SUGGESTIVE POINTS.—Addison says, "Every worthless man is a dead man." God says, "Every natural man is a dead man."—Every conversion is a resurrection.—The saved man lives only by the breath of God.—The blood of Christ is the basis of the new life, and the Spirit of God is the source of it.