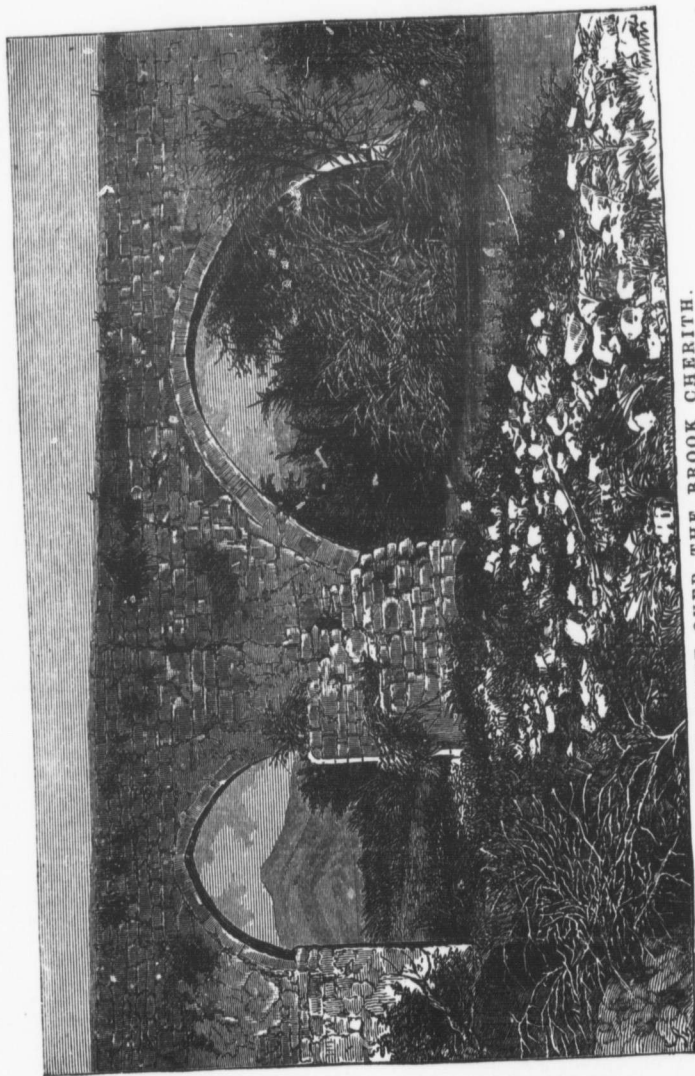


PAGES

MISSING



AQUEDUCT OVER THE BROOK CHERITH.

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. XX.]

FEBRUARY, 1886.

[No. 2.

Coming.

I KNOW it is coming, coming,
I think of it more and more,
Of the lights that gleam in the harbor,
Of the waves that wash the shore!
Surer than huntsman's arrow,
Surer than eagle's flight,
Swifter than weaver's shuttle,
Swifter than watch of night,
I know it is coming, coming,
I think of it more and more,
Of the lights that gleam in the harbor,
Of the waves that wash the shore.

The shore of that silent river,
Silent and dark and deep,
Whose waves forever and ever
Their awful secrets keep;
Where 'mid eternal shadows,
O'er that unknown sea,
Comes swift and sure the boatman
Who waits to carry me.
I know it is coming, coming,
I think of it more and more,
Of the lights that gleam in the harbor,
Of the waves that wash the shore.

Shall I see those lights in the harbor,
Close by the border land?
Or feel in the swelling waters,
The clasp of a helpful hand?
Will there be surcease of sorrow?
Will there be redress of wrong?
Will my heavy load be lightened—
My fainting heart made strong?

I cannot tell—I only know
It is coming swift and sure!
I cannot tell—I only know
"They are blest who endure."
I cannot tell—I only know
I think of it more and more,
Of the lights that gleam in the harbor,
Of the waves that wash the shore.

The Brook Cherith.

WE have recently had our attention directed to the Brook Cherith, where Elijah the Tishbite was directed by God to hide himself. (1 Kings xvii. 3-7.) Robinson has identified it as the modern Wady Kelt, shown in the engraving. The picture of this lonely stream with its hallowed associations, will be of interest to our readers. Like most brooks in Palestine, it dries up in summer. In some part of the valley Elijah could easily hide himself. "And it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain." This account, given with a conciseness and simplicity which are never found in fabricated narratives, stands in strict agreement with the physical features of the country, affording one among a thousand evidences of the reality of the scenes recorded in the Bible. The bridge shown in our picture is of much later construction, dating probably from the times of the Romans, those great bridge builders, who, in casting up the highways along which thundered the legions which conquered the world, knew not that they were also preparing the way of the Lord, and a highway for the conquests of Christianity.

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Sunday School Banner.

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1886.

\$250,000 FOR MISSIONS

The Missionary Crisis.

So important do we deem the present crisis in the history of our missions, that we gladly make room in both BANNER and *Pleasant Hours* for the stirring appeal of the Rev. Dr. Douglas, that we print on page 37. We wish that every Methodist in the Dominion could read it and be aroused by its eloquence and power. We therefore bring it in these two periodicals before the eyes of nearly 200,000 persons. On every side God is opening doors of opportunity. On every side the fields wave white unto the harvest of souls. God is calling the united Methodists of Canada—as the largest Church in this Dominion—to thrust in the sickle and reap. For years we have had our missionaries among the Indians of the great North-west; and, as a striking result, not a single Methodist Indian took part in the revolt. If a tithe of the money

were spent in evangelizing the Indians and half-breeds that has been spent in suppressing that revolt, the probability is that there would have been no revolt at all—that all their grievances would have been so intelligently set forth as to have led to satisfactory adjustment long ago.

God has given our missionaries in Japan wonderful favour in the eyes of the people, and wonderful success in preaching the Gospel. It would be criminal to draw back from such a glorious opportunity as our missionaries there enjoy.

But not less heroic than the labours of either Indian or Japanese missionaries are those of the brethren labouring on many of the domestic missions of our own country. They must not be allowed to suffer for the bread that perisheth, while breaking the bread of life to those around them.

Our schools, while they do a good deal for the cause of the missions, do not yet accomplish as much as they might. In England the missionary offerings of the Sunday-schools are about one-third of the whole amount raised by the Church. In Canada, the Sunday-school offerings are only about one-sixth the amount raised by the whole Church. Our English friends accomplish the wonderful result they have achieved by their superior organization and methodical way of gathering up the small amounts. When we think that two cents a week from each scholar would raise as much as the whole Church now raises, we cannot think that it is impossible, or even difficult to extricate the Missionary Society from its indebtedness, and to give the missionary cause such an impetus as it has never received before. Even a cent a week for each scholar would be \$90,000; enough to pay off the debt, and bring the income for 1886 up to the quarter of a million needed, even though the rest of the Church should do more than before. Let superintendents, teachers, parents, all combine in giving our schools the honour and the blessed reward of coming up to the help of the Lord in this crisis. The blessing will a hundredfold repay all the effort. The boys and girls will be baptized with a missionary spirit. They will realize the joy of doing something for the dear Lord who did so much for them. They will be brought into active sympathy with the missionary operations of the Church, the great work which the Church has before it in the conversion of the world. Many of them, doubtless, will become

missionaries of the cross, to carry the Gospel to the perishing millions who are dying in darkness and idolatry. The time is short before the Conferences meet. Let there be speedily organized such an effort as will show what can be done when all work with a will, and give a long pull and a short pull and a pull altogether.

Our New Sunday-school Paper.

THE orders for our new paper, *Happy Days*, have been coming in with wonderful rapidity. We have already had to print two large additions, and it looks as if we would have to print another. Send along your orders promptly, and give the little folk a paper for every Sunday. The more we have to print, the better paper we can publish.

Lesson Helps for 1886.

WE received, too late for notice in the January BANNER, the Lesson Commentary for 1886, by Dr. John Vincent and Rev. J. H. Hurlbut, M.A. A handsome 8vo. of 309 pages, with copious illustrations. New York: Phillips & Hunt, and Methodist Book Rooms, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax. Price \$1.25. In buying this book, one buys the substance of many commentaries, so far as these lessons are concerned, no less than 178 commentators and writers on the subjects under discussion being quoted. The book is prepared with the thorough adaptation which has characterized the previous volumes of the series, and is one of the best available lesson helps.

The Berean Senior, Intermediate, and Beginner's Lesson Books, for 1886, by the same publishers, price 20 cents each, will be found as useful as ever. We can give no higher praise.

MESSRS. FUNK & WAGNALL issue *Pocket Lesson Notes on the International Sabbath-school Lessons for 1886*, for pastors, parents, and teachers of all grades. By Rev. and Mrs. Wilbur F. Crafts. It is issued quarterly, neatly bound in paper. Teacher's edition, \$1 per year; scholar's edition, 25 cents per year. This is a very helpful series of lesson notes.

FROM S. R. Briggs we have received two packages of floral tracts, by Rev. E. P. Hammond. Beautifully illuminated, price 15 cents each.

Dr. Douglas on the Missionary Crisis.

If ever the thunder of the Methodist press, the electric voice of her pulpit, and the awakened enthusiasm of her laity were demanded to redress a wrong inflicted on the families of our domestic missionaries, the hour has come. Assuredly the Church must have overlooked the fact brought to light by the published report of the Missionary Committee of the Niagara Conference, that the entire income (slightly affected by children's funds in some Conferences) of our domestic missionaries will be the sum of \$450 for the current year; in other words, that only \$1.26 per diem is the compensation which our Church gives to provide fuel, food, raiment, and education, horse keep with attendant expenditure, to say nothing of literature and the many claims to which a minister's income is ever subjected. There is not a skilled mechanic in our workshops, not an untutored stevedore on our wharves, not a cab-driver in our streets, but would scorn the allowance which the Methodist Church of Canada tenders to the honored men who are to-day toiling in fields impoverished, isolated, and compassed with discouragements. When the Central Board was confronted with a deficiency of over \$20,000, we can testify to the deep feeling which affected the members of that Board; but what must be the blank dismay, the humiliation and anguish of honorable men, when, after the most economic domestic adjustments, theirs is the degradation of being coerced into unavoidable expenditures, which it is doubtful they can meet.

It is impossible to estimate the damage which this financial embarrassment entails—damage to the reputation of the Church and her funds; damage to the prestige of the ministry; damage which will project its effects along the years. It is conceded that the Church of the immediate future demands gifts, culture and the elements of power in its coming ministry. Can we hope that a higher class of men will be attracted to the Church which thus disregards its obligations to the honored and consecrated men who have absolutely surrendered themselves and the interests of their families to its service and care. Nothing but an immediate and united effort to wipe off the escutcheons of the Church this dark dishonor will avert its permanent disadvantage.

Who is to blame? No individual is responsible. A crisis came to the Church. Unfortunately, financial provision was not made to meet the exigencies of the crisis and avert the unhappy consequences. With gratitude, we record signs manifold of revived interest in our mission work, as portents of promise for the adequate support of our missionaries in the future. But we must not overlook our present responsibility to aid our suffering brethren. We hesitate to suggest any method of action. Indeed, the more informal the method the more conservative will it be on the other financial interests of the Church.

Let the ministers, and especially the chairmen, detail the case to affluent and generous members, soliciting their aid; let the officary give the offerings of a Sabbath for this good work; let the amount collected within the Conferences be transmitted to the several presidents for their wise distribution.

A slight effort on the part of each, and the work of justice and benevolence is accomplished; and to the homes of our distressed brethren there will come that cheer which will make the hearts of the household to gladness, like some old Christmas chime.

Incisive and potent are the words of the beloved disciple, never sacred, as enshrined in our encharistic ritual: "Whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brethren have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

May we as a Church authenticate our love.

GEO. DOUGLAS.

Wesleyan Theo. Col., Montreal.

Good Sunday-school Books.

Sacred and Historic Lands, being a record of travels in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Greece, Constantinople, etc. By the Rev. James Cuthbertson. London: Wesleyan Conference Office.

This is a 12mo. volume of 251 pages, good paper and bold, clear type. The style of the author is perspicuous and clear. He tells what he saw during the three months' tour in the East. The majority of readers will read with the deepest interest the author's description of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jacob's Well, Cana of Galilee, Tiberias, and many other sacred scenes. The volume is very suitable for a place in Sunday-school libraries, and may be read with great advantage by scholars in Bible-classes, who desire to know the most recent intelligence respecting Bible lands.

The Pride of the Family. By Anne E. Keeling. Same publisher.

Miss Keeling, the authoress of this beautiful volume, is the daughter of a Wesleyan minister whom the present writer has sometimes heard preach in his native village in good old England. Miss Keeling is a frequent contributor to Wesleyan magazines and other periodicals. She excels as a writer of narrative pieces. The

book before us was previously published in the *Wesleyan Miscellany*, and afterwards issued in this elegant volume for Sunday-school libraries, for which it is well adapted. Ruth Lucas, the prominent actor of the story, was a young girl who was taken into a respectable family as a nurse, and remained there until she was enfeebled with age. She was a member of the Methodist Church from her youth, and was always allowed time to attend class-meeting and other Methodist services. The family passed through many reverses, but Ruth's consistent piety and Christian devotedness won most, if not all, the members of the family to Christ. The only daughter whom Ruth nursed when a baby was "the pride of the family," cared for her old nurse and provided her a comfortable home.

Bernard the Little Guide, and other Stories. Same publisher.

This is one of a series of reward books, all of which are written in a pleasant style, calculated to captivate young readers. The little volume, now mentioned, contains three stories, *Bernard the Little Guide*, *The Flower Angel*, and *The War of the Fairies*, with four illustrations.

Preparing in Time.

SABBATH-SCHOOL teachers regret the fact that their scholars so often come into class with little or no preparation on the lesson. The trouble is, this duty is often postponed until Sabbath morning, when there is no time for the needed study. The solution of the difficulty can be found in making the necessary preparation the preceding Sabbath afternoon, or Saturday evening. The children will then rise Sabbath morning with comfort and a sense of satisfaction, such as comes from duty done. It tends to give relief, also, from the hurry and bustle too often seen in Christian homes on Sabbath morning.

As far as our observation goes, the people who make suitable and possible preparation Saturday evening, rise as early Sabbath as any other day, are the best rested people on Monday morning, and all the better qualified for the duties of the week. In the matter, habit has much to do, and we believe it a false idea that late sleeping and irregular habits on Sabbath morning promote our physical and intellectual comfort. And as to our spiritual welfare, it is decidedly best to strictly obey the teaching of the Catechism: "The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is taken up in the works of necessity and mercy." Considering the commandment, considering its influence upon our children and others and its direct result in our own experience we do not think late sleeping on Sabbath morning can be shown to be a work of necessity or mercy.—*Herald and Presbyter.*

The New Jerusalem.

BY ARTHUR M. MANLEY.

Behold! behold!
The city of gold,
With its jewel gates appears;
And voices are heard
From the heaven third,
Where life has outrun the years.

At last! at last
All peril is past,
And the pilgrim is safe at home:
His feet now stand
In the far off land,
Where the King in his beauty is known.

long, and supposed by many to have been laid there by Solomon. These are the "Stones of Wailing;" and to them resort the devout Jews, especially on Friday afternoons, to weep for the departed glory of their city and Temple.

A late traveller gives a graphic picture of the scene as presented to his gaze after he had threaded his way through narrow, crooked lanes, and reached the "Wailing Place." He found the alley running along the wall, full of mourning people—Jews of all nations, in every variety of costume. Old men with snowy beards, young men full of vigorous strength, women in loose robes of white, rosy, bright-eyed girls and boys, all leaned their heads against the stones, so furrowed and worn by Time's fingers, and either read from Hebrew books or prayed, as they



WAILING PLACE OF THE JEWS.

Wailing Place of the Jews.

Laura DAYTON EAKIN.

THE Jews have, at several different times in their history, been denied access to their revered Temple. After Adrian captured Jerusalem, they were entirely excluded; and not until the days of Constantine were they allowed even to behold it from the neighboring hills. Afterwards, they were permitted to come in on the anniversary of its overthrow of Titus, and weep and wail for their fallen greatness. Even now, no Jew can come within the Temple area; but near the south-west corner of the wall are several courses of large stones, eight or ten feet

raised their united voices in bitter weeping. One, who looked like an ancient patriarch, affirmed that the sacred ark, with its mercy-seat and cherubim of solid gold, lay concealed in some hidden recess beneath the Temple area, and that it would, one day, be restored to Israel.

It is a sad sight, truly; and the tears would doubtless come to our eyes if we beheld it, as we sorrowfully wondered how their fathers rejected Him of whom this Temple was a type.

God allows men to reject Him if they so purpose in their hearts, but He pleads and remonstrates with them, and often waits before punishing them.

Literary Reviews.

The Student's Ecclesiastical History. Part II. The History of the Christian Church during the Middle Ages, with a Summary of the Reformation. Centuries XI. to XVI. By PHILIP SMITH, B.A. Pp. 699, with 65 illustrations. New York: Harper Brothers. Toronto: William Briggs. Price, \$1.25.

Harpers' Student's Series comprises the finest condensed apparatus for historical study in the language. We have the great histories of Hume, Gibbon, Hallam, Merivale, Miss Strickland and others brought within the compass of a single volume and sold for the small sum of \$1.25 each. In our student-days the same series, or what was then published of it, cost \$2 a volume. The present work fills a gap in ecclesiastical history, for which Milman's expensive "Latin Christianity," in nine volumes, was the chief accessible authority. That great work, and the other great English and German works on this interesting period, have been made the basis of the present volume. So far as we can judge, the author has succeeded in being strictly impartial and honest in discussing the exciting controversies of the period under review. The great themes are the struggle of the Empire and the Papacy for the supremacy; the Babylonian captivity and renaissance of the Papacy; the constitution, worship and doctrines of the Mediaeval Church; the monastic orders; the university and scholastic theology; seeds and heresies of the Middle Ages; and the Reformation and its precursors. We cordially recommend this admirable volume to young ministers and thoughtful teachers who would understand how through the ages God unfolds Himself in many ways.

Boy Travellers in Arabia: A Story of travel from Boston to the famous city of "good Haroun Alraschid." By the Rev. DANIEL WISE, D.D. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Toronto: William Briggs. Price, 90 cents.

This is a book of somewhat younger character to the last, but adapted for younger scholars. Through the medium of a slightly fictitious element, represented by the narrative of the two boys and their instructors, the author conveys much useful information in regard to the history of Arabia, the life, customs and manners of the people. We far prefer books of this sort for schools to the ordinary story books. From the former a large amount of useful information can be gained; from the latter very little.

Phil Vermon and His School Masters. By BYRON A. BROOKS. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Toronto: William Briggs. Price, \$1.

If boys must have story books, this is about as harmless, and perhaps as useful a one as they can have. It is a wholesome, breezy sort of book; but we would like to have seen greater prominence given to direct religious teaching. The author says in his preface: "I have endeavoured in this story to trace the life of a real, live, average boy, placed amid natural and

healthful surroundings, under various influences good and bad, through experiences in school and out, in the fields and in the town, in his sports and more serious occupations, with his companions and teachers, which combine to form his character and develop his innate being."

Abide in Christ. Thoughts on the Blessed Life of Fellows'hip with the Son of God. By the Rev. ANDREW MURRAY, Wellington, Cape of Good Hope. Pp. 222. Toronto: S. R. Briggs. Price, 90 cents.

It says much for any religious book, especially for a colonial book, that it should reach, as this book has reached, its thirty-third thousand. It has also been translated into Dutch, we presume for the use of the Boers. Africa is already repaying the missionary expenditure bestowed upon it, by sending forth such valuable works. The book is a series of devout meditations—one for each day of the month—which cannot but prove helpful in the cultivation of piety.

The Wonderful Book.

BY REV. W. HARRISON, DORCHESTER, N. B.

It spreads before us, as in some far-reaching panoramic form, the various manifestations and characteristics of the heart and life of the old oriental world. The atmosphere, habits, customs, religions, laws, natural images, earth and skies of that Eastern clime pass before us in those pages, which all the attritions of the centuries are unable to wear away or destroy. And amid all this drapery of scene and circumstance, the moral conditions of humanity are here photographed in the clearest manner, and no effort of man or lapse of years can break or dim the picture, so truly and divinely drawn.

The generations of the earlier times seem to pass before us, and under the brief but realistic representations of this one great Book, appear as if they had only passed from this earthly scene but a short time ago. With a matchless ease, it reaches back through the dim, dark mazes of unmeasured years, and with sublime, prophetic vision peers into the future, far beyond the loftiest thoughts of unaided men. Its revelations respecting our planet's origin, mission and ultimate end, have flung a welcome light on mysteries, once painful and profound; and the speculations of materialistic schools as to the eternity of matter, and of a mindless evolution, are scattered by the winds by its august, convincing words. In view of the divine revelations of the sacred and age-crowned Book, our world-home is no longer an insignificant and worthless speck in the palace of the universe, no longer a mere playground, sleeping-room or brilliant saloon for the poor irresponsible, unpitied creatures of a day, but a theatre where the great and solemn drama of human existence and history is being enacted, and the place where the grandest operations of a beneficent God are being carried on before the gaze of

intelligences belonging to other worlds than this

Human life, in the light of its teachings, is invested with a significance and value forever unknown to all hypotheses and philosophies of a materialistic and godless kind. Not in some far-off Zoological Gardens does man find the place of his nativity, a nobler and diviner origin is his, and all the gorilla theories of the past and present are but idle and baseless dreams. Into this century-crowned Book we look again; and along through its wondrous readings, we seem to hear the tramp and voice and din of one hundred and thirty-five generations of men as they come and go. Scattered fragments, thrilling chronicles, bruised monuments, old scarred relics of long vanished ages are here preserved; and through the treasures, records, and memories which these imperishable documents contain, we can feel the moral and intellectual pulsations of that older Eastern world. The short, convulsive sobs of expiring dispensations and dynasties are heard, but all through the bewildering sights and sounds of forty centuries, the moral night, the clash and clang which marked those long and dolorous years, there walks a movement of divinst form, full of sublime predictions and of glorious hope. Down from the soundless sea of the past there comes to us a wave of blessing, which shall never rest until its circle of benediction is as wide as the circumference of the world's misery and the world's woe.

In this victorious Book, the historic march of eternal principles passes before our view, and through light and darkness, in summer sunshine and terrific, desolating storm, in the life career and end of earth's once populous nations, and amid all the countless changes and evolutions of the swift and solemn years, demonstrate their divine paternity and undecaying power.

For awhile, many of the old and mighty peoples of antiquity rise before us like so many gloomy, barbaric and giant forms, then pass out of sight into darkness, desolation and dishonoured graves. The sepulchres of these mighty dead linger in our world to-day. What strange and huge skeletons of long-buried nations and cities have been disintombed! The glory of oriental monarchs, with all their gorgeous surroundings, their pomp and unstable magnificence, went down into a night upon which no morning sunlight will ever shine. Their iniquities carried them away as a flood, and many of their colossal wrecks lie stranded on the coasts of time, as signals and warnings to the nations of to-day.

As we glance again through the sacred page, we see a line of God's true noblemen, stretching all through the almost unbroken night of four thousand years. What a gallery of heroic and fearless men they make, and how their lives, characters, words and deeds relieve the otherwise immeasurable gloom! Nor is this procession which moves before us on the canvas of inspired history, all made up of beings of a human kind; personalities of celestial character, of unearthly build are here seen, and something of their mission among the crowded ranks of

men is here made known. Through these Bible pages we can feel the pulse-beats of earth's older ages, and of worlds and beings invisible to mortal men. In that touch there is inspiration of the noblest kind, and warning too.

This "dim spot which men call earth" has been in the universe like some great Waterloo, where forces of hellish and of divinst kind have met in deadliest conflict, and where the largest victories have been lost and won. The battle rages still, but the final triumph will be God's. The sad, sad story of man's fall and loss, his misery, sin and woe, is forever told; but over all the piteous desolation which man's wrong has wrought, there spreads the radiant light of heaven's redeeming theme. This message crowns the Book. This gilds and floods the living and healing page. It is redemption's story which fills this Book with joy, and makes its leaves drop balm for wounded, sin bruised hearts. Over earth's melancholy map it inaugurates a welcome dawn, which shall brighten yet more and more, until the loveliness of a summer's day shall mantle this sad and sinful world of ours. For the coming of that day the weary and sin-laden centuries are ever looking with unflinching expectancy and brightest hope.

Beneath the outer parable or figure of those holy writings, the touching story or the plainer word, we find God's answer to the world's long, deep cry; the richest outpourings of the eternal heart are here; and for a famishing race bread enough and to spare.

Eighteen hundred years have come and gone since the last words in this marvellous Book were penned, and yet how vital and world-arousing are its teachings in this later and progressive age! Not in the rear but away in the front of all books does this volume hold on its way; and its leadership in all that is ennobling, manly and consolatory, will be maintained to the very last hour of time. Nor is this an idle dream or empty guess. Its triumphant march across the storm-swept period of nearly two millenniums, and the rich harvests of far-reaching and beneficent results already gathered, are sufficient apology for the existence, place and power which this Book holds in the world to-day, and abiding guarantee for its conquests in the years to come. And such achievements, won in spite of all the fierce maledictions of wicked men, and all the malignant forces with which it has had to contend!

But who can tell the influences, ideas, and streams of holy, upward tendencies its teachings have started and maintained in the great arena where men live and labour, think and grieve, sin and suffer and die? Who can describe the intensity and magnitude of that living human gaze, which has fastened itself upon the revelations of this Book during the long periods of the past? A gaze now representing in its splendid aggregation nearly all races of men, and producing the profoundest feeling, the loftiest thought, and most heroic and beautiful specimens of moral manhood that the world has ever seen. Thank God that the

human look and attention upon those triumphant records were never so wide, so full, and deep as at present. In over three hundred languages their soul-stirring truths are read, and with a celestial imperialism those truths will yet press their way through the thronging multitudes of men, and the antagonistic forces which fill the air, until the earth is filled with their enlightening power, and the darkness of ignorance, superstition and sin is swept away forever.

Wonderful it is that the great documents which make up the Christian's Bible should have passed through long ages deluged with world-wide paganisms, and through an atmosphere impregnated with errors, superstitions, and abominations, backed by the thrones and royalties of earth, and yet remain untouched with a single taint of those destructive elements and influences which, like some restless sea, surrounded them on every side!

And is it not a consolatory and undeniable fact, that right across the ever-changing skies of man's mortal pilgrimage, this immortal Book has flung one grand arch of holiest inspiration and of undying hope? At the helm of the universe it places not a blind and iron necessity, not a soulless, pitiless fate or chance, but an almighty and merciful God, who ruleth all things well.

Into the presence of life's sorest calamities, and human desolations of saddest kind, it has brought a light and promise, without which there must have been the darkness of a starless night and a great despair. That volume, therefore, which has poured its influences and teachings into the life-blood of sixty generations of men, in all the multitudinous conditions of their earthly lot, and has always produced health and noblest life, cannot be dismissed at the bidding of a few, nor dislodged from the deep place it holds in the intellect and most cherished and lasting affections of the purest of the race.

WHAT depravity there is in types! The most careful proof-reading is not a perfect guaranty against the most ridiculous errors. The increasing care in the reading of proof in our periodicals has been a source of gratification to us, and therefore we were entirely unprepared for so prodigious a blunder as that in the Senior Quarterly for June 7, in the "Lesson Notes." Just think of such a rendering of Heb. 1:5 (which is a quotation from Ps. 2:7) as this: "Thou art my Son, this day have I FORGOTTEN thee!" But there it is, and in the very blackest of type!—*Pilgrim Teacher*.

THE *National Baptist* thus forcibly and wittily shows why liberality is relative and not absolute: "Our Lord commended the widow. But suppose that the next day the widow had struck oil; suppose that she had married a millionaire; suppose that she had found among the papers of her husband a whole sheaf of bonds of the Jerusalem and Jericho Railroad, would her gift of two mites at the next collection have been commended?"

Opening and Closing Services for the First Quarter.

OPENING SERVICE.

- I. Silence.
- II. The Doxology.
- III. Responsive Sentences.

Supt. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

School. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

Supt. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber.

School. Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

Supt. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

School. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

Supt. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul.

School. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.
- IV. Singing.
- V. Prayer.

LESSON SERVICE.

- I. Class Study of the Lesson.
- II. Singing Lesson Hymn.
- III. Recitation of the Title, Golden Text, Outline, and Doctrinal Suggestion, by the school in concert.
- IV. Review and Application of the Lesson, by Pastor or Superintendent.
- V. The Supplemental Lesson.
- VI. Announcements (especially of the Church service and week-evening prayer-meeting).

CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. Singing.
- II. Responsive Sentences.

Supt. My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

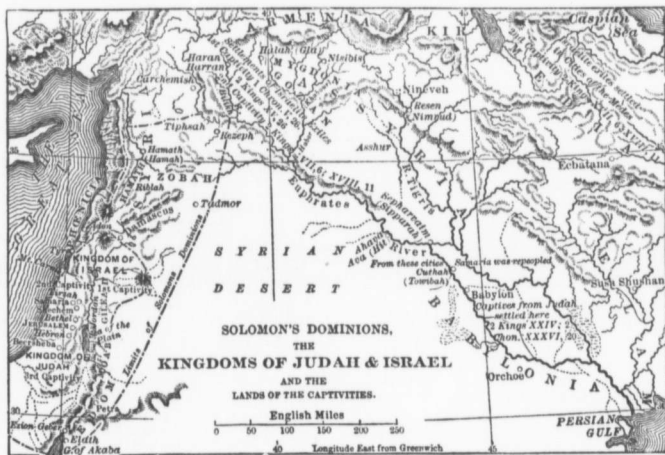
School. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.
- III. Dismission.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate: was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.
FIRST QUARTER: THREE MONTHS' STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.



B. C. 580.]

LESSON VI. THE FIERY FURNACE.

[Feb. 7.

Dan. 3. 16-28.

[Commit to memory verses 16-18.]
16 Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, answered and said to the king, O Neb'u-chad-nez-zar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

19 Then was Neb'u-chad-nez-zar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go; therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go.

23 And these three men, Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then Neb'u-chad-nez-zar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

26 Then Neb'u-chad-nez-zar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, came forth of the midst of the fire.

27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

28 Then Neb'u-chad-nez-zar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

General Statements.

At the close of his campaigns, when Nebuchadnezzar was at peace in his palace, he resolved to commemorate his conquest of the East by a great religious festival. He erected upon a plain near his capital a gigantic image of gold, perhaps in honor of the sun-god Bel, and summoned all the rulers and nobles of his empire, from the Tigris to the Nile, to bow before it. But while a thousand knees were bent in adoration, there were three young men who stood erect, and refused to sanction the worship of an image. They were the three Hebrew youths who had been companions with Daniel. Their leader was not with them, perhaps because the magi to which he now belonged were recognized as a separate order, and were not present among the secular

officers of the realm. The conduct of the three Jews made them conspicuous in the prostrate throng, and was duly reported to the king. They were summoned into the royal presence, and commanded to bow before the image, or to endure the agony of being thrown into a furnace of fire. But the courage which dared to stand alone against the current of custom, which could resist the idolatrous and licentious associations of a court, did not blanch under the anger of a king, and the threat of death. Promptly they chose the furnace rather than the crime of disloyalty to God. The fire was kindled, and piled higher than its wont, and it they were thrown into its blazing depths. But a divine form walked beside them, and they stood unharmed amid the flames.



Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 16. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These were three young Hebrews, who were with Daniel, and like him promoted to important positions in the state. Their Jewish names, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, had been changed by King Nebuchadnezzar. **Answered and said.** The king inquired of them whether the charge was true, that they had fallen to bow down before the great golden image. **Nebuchadnezzar.** He was the son of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Babylonian Empire, and reigned from 604 to 588 B. C. He raised Babylon to the height of its power, built its gigantic walls, and reared its hanging gardens. He was a mighty conqueror, a wise and statesmanlike ruler, but in character a thoroughly Oriental despot. **We are not careful.** Rev. Ver., "We have no need." That is, "there is no use in discussing the question. Your mind is settled, and so is ours." Notice how openly and squarely these young men met temptation. They did not offer to compromise or try to avoid conclusions, but spoke out decidedly. (1) *All honor to the young men who dare to say "No."*

17. If it be so. If it be that those who will not worship must be thrown into the furnace. **Our God is able to deliver us.** The only question in their minds was not whether God was able, but whether they were worthy of his power. **The burning fiery furnace.** Such cruelties were not uncommon in the East. A picture at Nineveh shows two men being burned alive, their tongues being cut before they die. **He will deliver us.** This was the utterance of strong faith, for there is no hint of any divine revelation. (2) *Learn to trust God in the deepest trials.*

18. But if not. They believed that God would deliver them; but even though he should not, their purpose was the same. They were not of the class who serve God only while it seems to be for their interest. **We will not serve thy gods.** It was apparently a small matter to bow the knee; but that meant a profession of service which these conscientious young men would not make. **The golden image.** It stood on the plain of Dura, near Babylon, and, with its pedestal, was nearly a hundred feet high. Herodotus says that he saw in Babylon, about a century after this, a statue of solid gold eighteen feet high; and King Xerxes took from one temple in the same city gold to the amount of eighty-six million dollars; so that the statements concerning this image are not incredible. (3) *Let us not only avoid evil, but, like these youths, avoid the appearance of evil.* (4) *We should not be ashamed to let men see that we are on the Lord's side.*

19. Full of fury. An absolute monarch, he had never before been addressed in this manner, nor met such determined resistance to his will. **The form of his visage.** The face is often the index of the soul, and he reveals the thought within. **Heat the furnace one seven times.** The number seven signifies completeness, and this means no more than that the furnace was to be made as hot as possible; but this only made the deliverance all the more signal. (5) *The schemes of wicked men only result in the greater glory to God's name.*

20, 21. The most mighty men. The task of throwing these victims into the fire was a dangerous one, as the result proved; hence the selection of the strongest soldiers. **Bound in their coats, their hose, and their mantles.** Rev. Ver., "their hose, their tunics, and their mantles." There is a difference among expositors as to the precise articles of dress referred to. The first may indicate the flowing trousers, the second the under garment reaching to the knee, and the third the outer robe. Just as they were standing in their garments of state they were seized and bound. **Cast into the midst.** It was probably in the form of a pit, into whose opening they were thrown. (6) *There is a fire which is hotter and burns longer; may we escape its burning!*

22. The king's commandment was urgent. Compelling the executioners to hasten, even to the risk of their own lives. **Slew those men.** They were perhaps smothered by the smoke as they approached too near the edge of the pit. If both these men and the

Hebrews had perished, this event would have seemed accidental; if both had escaped, some critics would have claimed that there was only a pretense of obeying the command; but when the young men escape unharmed in the fiery depths, on whose border the mighty men are slain, the hand of God is clearly revealed.

23. Fell down bound. We cannot, even in thought, place ourselves in the condition of these heroes. They were ready to give up their lives for conscience' sake. (7) *What self-denial are we willing to offer for right and duty?* **Into the midst.** The Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament, inserts at this place a hymn said to have been sung by these young men in the furnace; but it contains no evidences of inspiration. It may be read in the English Apocrypha.

24. Then Nebuchadnezzar. As soon as the fire had abated sufficiently for him to approach the furnace and look within it. **Was astonished.** An old word for *astonished* is *said unto his counselors*. The nobles who were at all times in attendance upon the king. **Did not we...** They answered. Thus the testimony of the king receives confirmation from his council, who joined in the command and witnessed the event.

25. Lo, I see four men loose. It may be asked why the laws of nature were superseded (or these men, and not for Ridley, Latimer, and many more martyrs who have died at the stake. In some ages God's cause needs evidences, in other ages exemplars. In one case God gives supernatural proofs; in the other, sublime characters. **Walking in the midst.** They trod the burning coals at ease, content to remain there until summoned forth. **The form of the fourth.** Rev. Ver., "the aspect of the fourth." The miracle was not in the presence of the heavenly being, for that is always given to God's people when they need it, but in the manifestation of it to the king's senses. Spiritual things are seen only by men in a high spiritual state, but occasionally, as here, and to Elisha's servant (2 Kings 6, 17), a revelation is granted to people of lower nature. **The son of the Rev. Ver.** See note on page 17, which is more correct, since Nebuchadnezzar could not know of "the Son of God" as we understand him. He meant a divine being or an angel. See ver. 28. Perhaps it was the Angel of the Covenant, the pre-incarnate manifestation of Jesus Christ. (8) *Those who suffer for Christ's sake shall have his presence with them.*

26. Came near. When the heat had sufficiently subsided to allow a nearer approach. **Ye servants.** He now speaks respectfully to those whom a while before he had abused. (9) *God shall yet make all his faithful ones honorable before the world.* **Most high God.** Perhaps he had felt a contempt for Jehovah as the God of the Jews, unable to protect his city against the Chaldeans. See verse 15. Now he honors that God, as most high, above even his own Bel, the god of Babylon.

27. Princes, governors, and captains. These titles in the Rev. Ver. are given as "satraps, deputies, and governors." They were the officers of the realm, gathered from the various provinces. By them the news of this event was carried throughout the empire, and thus the very means employed to honor the idol only resulted in the greater glory to Jehovah. **Saw these men.** The divine companion had now disappeared; indeed it is not stated that either the three Hebrews or the Chaldean nobles saw him. **Nor was a hair.** The fire had not even scorched their hair nor their garments; an emblem of the greater fact that their characters had remained unspotted from the wickedness which surrounded them in the palace.

28. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake. These words of the king are not to be understood as meaning that he became a worshiper of the God of Israel. He merely recognized him among the objects of worship in his dominions, and forbade the persecution of his servants. **Changed the king's word.** Have set aside his command and compelled its alteration, a very unusual event in an Oriental monarchy.

S. Worship due to God. Deut. 10, 12-22.

S. Trust, and the joy it brings. Psa. 34, 1-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace. Dan. 3, 17.

HOME READINGS.

M. The fiery furnace. Dan. 3, 16-28.

Tu. Consigned to the fiery furnace. Dan. 3, 1-27.

W. The Spirit, the speaker. Matt. 10, 16-27.

Th. The strong deliverer. Gal. 1, 1-30.

F. The Comforter and present Help. Isa. 43, 1-7.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 138, Dominion Hymnal.

O worship the King all glorious above!
O gratefully sing his power and his love!

No. 104, Dominion Hymnal.

We're marching to Canaan with banner and song,
We're soldiers enlisted to fight against the wrong.

No. 105, Dominion Hymnal.

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
Looking unto Jesus, going on before.

TIME.—Perhaps 580 B. C. In Greece, the 50th Olympiad. Year of Rome, 174.

PLACE.—Same as in Lesson V, also plain of Dura. **RULERS.**—Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and all the lands from the Tigris to the Mediterranean. Apries, or Pharaoh-hophra, king of Egypt. Astyages, king of Media and Persia. Solon, legislator at Athens. Servius Tullius, sixth king at Rome.

CONNECTING LINK.—The four young Jews have been elevated to posts of power. Nebuchadnezzar is absolute monarch of the Oriental world. Elated at his own greatness, he has set up an image in Babylon to which all must bow on pain of death. God chose three of these faithful young Jews to teach the great king that Jehovah alone was God.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The Son of God.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Faithful Three, v. 16-18.

What caused the answer with which the lesson begins?

What did they mean by saying, "We are not careful to answer thee?"

In what two ways did they show their faith?
What is faith as defined by the Epistle to the Hebrews? Heb. 11. 1.

How was the truth of that definition exemplified by the faithful three?

2. The Fiery Furnace, v. 19-23.

With what expectation were the three young men cast into the fiery furnace? 1. On their own part? ver. 17. 2. On the part of the king?

What reason had he for his expectation? ver. 22.
What reason had they for their expectation? 1 Sam. 17. 37.

What was the effect of the fire on them? ver. 25.

3. The Form of the Fourth, v. 24, 25.

What appeared unto the spectators of this scene?
What was the effect upon the king?
Did the king mean what we would mean if we said, "The Son of God?"

What was the probable appearance of this fourth form in the furnace?

How did he appear to John on Patmos? Rev. 1.

4. The Triumph of Faith, v. 26-28.

What was the end of this wonderful scene? ver. 26.
Who saw the "coming forth?"
What testimony did the king give to their fidelity?
Can you recall any other scenes of imminent peril from which God's servants have issued triumphant?

Practical Teachings.

It is better to suffer with Christ than to be in favor in the world.

Here is an example of simple trust; of foolish anger; of the presence of God with his people. We do not read that the faithful three saw the form of the fourth, but he was there. Is he at our side? Matt. 28. 30.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Faithful Three, v. 16-18.

Who were "the faithful three?"
To whom did they make reply?
What did Jesus advise his disciples to do in such a case? Matt. 10. 19.

Of what did the three assure the king?
In whom did they trust for deliverance?
What is their final determination?

2. The Fiery Furnace, v. 19-23.

What effect had their reply on Nebuchadnezzar?
How did he show his anger?
Whom did he summon as executioners?

What command was given them?
What was done with the three friends?
What befell their executioners?

3. The Form of the Fourth, v. 24, 25.

What question did the king ask?
Whom did he see in the furnace?
What was their condition?
Whom did he suppose the fourth person to be?
What does David say of the righteous? Psa. 34. 7.

4. The Triumph of Faith, v. 26-28.

What did the king command?
What harm had befallen the friends?
What was the king's testimony?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson do we find—

1. Faith in God's power to save?
2. Fidelity to duty at whatever cost?
3. Divine help in trouble?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What did Nebuchadnezzar make? An image of gold.
What did he command? That every one bow down and worship it.

Who refused to do this? Daniel's three companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

What heathen names had been given them? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Why did they stand, when all the people fell down before the image? They only bowed down to Jehovah the living God.

What did the king threaten to do? To cast them into the fiery furnace.

What was their reply? (Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.)

What did they tell the king? "We will not serve your gods."

What order did the king give? To heat the furnace seven times hotter than ever before.

Who bound and cast them into the furnace? The strong soldiers of the army.

What happened? The fire killed the soldiers.

What did Nebuchadnezzar see in the flames? Four men walking about.

What was one like? The Son of God.

Whom did the king call to come out? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

What did the king and his chief men see? That they were unharmed by the fire.

Of what was he sure? That their God was greater than the golden image.

Words with Little People.

Would you be willing to be blamed or hated or punished or laughed at if you knew you were doing right? Are you willing to bear trouble for Jesus' sake? The path of duty sometimes leads God's children into fiery trials in these days, but nothing can harm them with such a blessed GOLDEN TEXT to trust in.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What command was given by King Nebuchadnezzar? That all should worship a golden image.

2. What was the penalty for refusing to worship the idol? To be thrown into a burning fiery furnace.

3. Who were the only ones that did not worship the image? Three young Hebrew captives.

4. What did they say to the king, as given in the Golden Text? Our God, etc.

5. What became of them when they were thrown into the furnace? They walked safely in the fire.

6. Whom did Nebuchadnezzar see standing with them? One like the Son of God.

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Deliverance.

I. THE THREE.

1. *We are not careful to answer.* v. 16.

"Take no thought how...ye shall speak," Matt. 10. 19.

2. *Our God... is able to deliver.* v. 17.
 "The Lord stood with me." 1 Tim. 4. 17.
 3. *We will not serve thy gods.* v. 18.
 "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."
 1 John 5. 21.
- II. THE TRIAL.
1. *Bound in their coats.* v. 21.
 "Being persecuted, we suffer it." 1 Cor. 4. 12.
 2. *Cast into the midst of... furnace.* v. 21.
 "Ready, not to be bound only... die." Acts 21. 13.
 3. *Loose, walking in the fire.* v. 24.
 "Not strange concerning the fiery trial." 1 Pet. 4. 12.
- III. THE FOURTH.
1. *Lo, I see four men.* v. 25.
 "Persecuted, but not forsaken." 2 Cor. 4. 9.
 2. *Like the Son of God.* v. 25.
 "I am with you always." Matt. 28. 19.
- IV. THE WITNESSES.
1. *Nebuchadnezzar the king.* v. 24.
 "We wrestle... against the rulers." Eph. 6. 12.
 2. *His counselors.* v. 24.
 "The wicked plotteth against the just." Psu. 37. 12.
 3. *Princes, governors, and captains.* v. 27.
 "They glorified God in me." Gal. 1. 24.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Service of God.

1. We notice that these who served God under such trying circumstances were *young men*. Hence they form a noble example for youth. If they could be faithful, any young man can be.

2. They were without many advantages which young people now enjoy in God's service. They had no church to attend; perhaps no Bible to read, certainly none of the clear light which streams from the New Testament; no companionship of believers to strengthen them. They were alone, yet they served God. Cannot we be faithful to him with all the helps to religion which we enjoy?

3. They were brought into opposition with the strongest forces in their service of God: with popular opinion, with the royal authority, with the danger of death. Yet they were true to their convictions. May not their example encourage us?

4. In the service of God they showed the noblest traits of character, courage, principle, obedience to God, and faith. See how these traits were manifested, and resolve to imitate them.

5. In the service of God they enjoyed God's care, God's presence, and God's protection. We, too, may enjoy these rewards in living for God's cause.

6. Notice, too, the results to others that came from their service of God. Their influence brought honor to God, and led others to worship him. From every follower of Christ goes forth an unconscious influence in favor of his cause.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

The Golden Text sufficiently indicates the line to be adopted in this lesson. It gives the reply of three young Jewish captives to a scornful question put to them: "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" The question is in the form of a challenge, and this challenge is taken and

accepted without hesitation. The subject falls into four divisions.

1. The challenge itself.

A challenge is often a friendly invitation to a trial of strength. This one is of a very different character. It is the haughty utterance of a claim to universal superiority. The man who utters it is the greatest sovereign of the ancient world, Daniel himself, by divine inspiration, accorded this place to King Nebuchadnezzar. Chap. 2. 38. Victorious over the nations around him, and despotic in his own kingdom, he thought no power or dignity could compare with his own. And to this he gave expression in erecting the colossal image on the plain of Dura. The idea may have been suggested to him by the words of Daniel: "Thou art this head of gold;" for it was probably intended as a representation of himself, like the images erected in later times by the Roman emperors, or the hat of Gessler in the story of William Tell. Whoever refused to accord to this figure the desired homage was to be cast into a "burning fiery furnace."

Three did so refuse. But the king, instead of condemning them unheard, questions them on the matter and gives them the chance of escape if they will conform to the royal edict, and concludes with the words quoted above. In these words he challenges the three men to find any Power that can successfully oppose his will, or hinder the accomplishment of his commands.

2. The men who received the challenge.

They were great officers of the king, high up in his service, and probably in his favor. But they were captives. They belonged to an alien and a subject race. They were objects of envy and dislike to the king's own countrymen, the heathen Chaldeans, possibly on account of their upright administration of the charge committed to them. Chap. 2. 49. They had not an earthly friend to look to; for David was probably absent at the time, or he would have been involved in the same peril as themselves, and their other countrymen and co-religionists were powerless to help. The very esteem and favor in which they stood with the king would now be turned into greater wrath that they had ventured to defy his authority. These men were challenged to find a God that should deliver them from the hands of the king. There they stood, prisoners before him—the furnace near at hand all ready to receive them. And their God had not yet interposed. We must bear in mind also that we have no record of their receiving divine revelations, such as were made to Daniel. They were not prophets—only three young Jews who worshipped the God of their fathers.

3. How the challenge was taken up.

When Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal they began to call loudly on their God. They worked themselves into a frenzy in their desire to gain what they wanted. How different the conduct of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! Their answer is quiet, calm, unflinching. They accept the challenge, and will abide by the issue. "He will de-

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liver us." Of this they are sure, though they do not know how. Whether their lives are to be preserved they cannot tell, but they do know that the king can touch their bodies only, and that but for a time.

The king proceeds to work his will. The prisoners are bound and carried to the seven times heated furnace. Does this look like deliverance? The flames have slain even the executioners—what then of the victims who have fallen into them? Perhaps curiosity, perhaps a feeling of uneasiness, leads Nebuchadnezzar to gaze through an aperture to see if his victory is complete. But what a sight! Ver. 25. It is the full answer to the challenge. Here is the God who delivers.

4. The issue of the challenge.

The king goes forward himself to prove if the thing is really true, or if it is a vision. And at his call the captives come forth out of the furnace. What have the flames done to them? Loosed their bands; that is all. And Nebuchadnezzar himself declares that the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego has delivered his servants who trusted in him.

Let us see in the challenge made by Nebuchadnezzar the type of another challenge offered, day by day, in the midst of us.

Who offers it? The world, or, we may say, the "god of this world." The world extols its pleasures as the keenest, its honors as the highest, its wealth as the most real, its approval as the thing most to be coveted, its power and its authority as the thing to be recognized. Its language is, in fact, this: What has religion (that is, God) to offer in comparison with my gifts? and how can religion (that is, God) hinder my will? Let us translate this into ordinary familiar speech: "You'll never get on if you can't do as others do." "What is the good of being so strict? you'll only make yourself disliked." "You can't carry out those ideas; they won't do here." This is what the world says. That is its challenge.

Who is to take it up? It is to those who live in the world, those who are seemingly bound by its circumstances, its limits, its possibilities, that the challenge comes. It comes to the rich and poor, learned and unlearned; it comes to the young, the inexperienced, the simple, the friendless, saying to them: "Who is to help you if you go contrary to me?" Which of us has taken, will take it up?

How will it be decided? Not always as we think. In the old fairy tale the good boy quickly gets his reward. It is not so here. It is in the enduring, in the suffering of his servants that God shows he is able to deliver. It was when Paul was "troubled on every side, yet not distressed," etc., that the "life of Jesus was made manifest" in him. 2 Cor. 4. 5-11. Whoever will take up the challenge for God must be willing to endure hardness. But none ever went into a furnace, even the mildest, for Christ's sake, without finding his presence there. And the full answer of manifested deliverance will be given in God's good time.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Review the previous lesson, and show in it the conduct of these three young men.... A series of word-pictures might be given: 1. The great image on the plain, with the multitudes around it—king, nobles, band of music, rulers, etc. 2. The music sounds, and all the throng falls prostrate. All? No, we see three standing erect. What a contrast! 3. The furious king, and the three standing before him. 4. The fiery furnace, flames leaping up, soldiers seizing the three, casting them in, etc. 5. The "form of the fourth," and the king looking on. 6. The three brought forth, wonder of beholders, proclamation, etc.... The Thoughts for Young People will also furnish a line of teaching... Do not fail to show the elements of character manifested by these young men.... This is a familiar story, and therefore let the teacher bring it forth from the class in preference to telling it to them.... From what is our God able to deliver his children now? From sin, from temptation, from suffering, from death.

References. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Verse 20: "Mighty Men," 592. Ver. 21: Various garments, 594.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

8. And what was the last and greatest proof? His rising from the dead, as he himself foretold. This Jesus did God raise up again, whereof we all raise up.—Acts ii. 32. [John ii. 18, 19, 21; Matt. xvi. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 14, 20.]

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. The Mighty God.

THE KING AND HIS POWER.

Tell that Babylon was the capital of Chaldea, and one of the finest cities that was ever known. A little talk about the city with its famous hanging gardens, its beautiful streets and squares, etc., may interest the children. Tell of the great king who lived there, his wealth, power, etc. Ask if he had real power. Make a great heart on the board. Print inside it, "I, the Great King!" Teach that when we see ourselves great, or good, or wise, there is no place left in the heart for God. He only is great, good, and wise, and he wants all the room in the heart. Tell of the setting up of the image of gold, more than a hundred feet in height, and the command that all the people should worship it, or be burned to death in a furnace of fire. Show that this was the king's way of getting himself worshipped. He wanted every one to obey him—not the Lord.

THE KING'S SERVANTS.

Make another large heart, and print inside it, "God, the Great King." Give the names of the three Jews who believed this, and let children tell what they have heard about them. Ask who was their King, and if it was right for them to disobey the king of Babylon. Teach that we must obey God first, and ask what he has said about worshiping false gods. Tell the story of the refusal of the Jews to worship the image, the king's anger, and the casting into the fiery furnace.

THE KING OVER ALL.

Show that Nebuchadnezzar thought that he had all power. God only is powerful, and he is on the side of those who obey him. Tell how he, the great God, was with his servants in the fire, and did not let it hurt them, and how the king of Babylon had to see that the

King of heaven was greater than he. Tell how the king, his princes, and nobles, and captains, all saw that the fire could not hurt those who obeyed God, and notice the result of the obedience of the three.



hold fast to him. What we must do is to let God have his place in our hearts.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

A wide, level plain, a great, golden image, and a vast crowd! That all? No; a band of music, and a flaming, dazzling furnace to receive those not worshipping the idol. But hark! The band is playing and the people are falling before the golden image. But see! One, two, three, stand upright, stiff as the old oaks that refuse to acknowledge the power of the wind humbling pine and birch. And the three are Jews, those despised Jews! O what a bluster when they are discovered! They are seized, hustled before the king, who frowns and fumes and asks for an explanation and demands obedience! Hush! The three Jews are to give their answer. What will they say? Such stillness everywhere! No sound but the crackling of the flames in the fiery furnace craving some hotter work to do. And now comes the calm, firm reply of that Jewish conscience knowing how to dare and maintain: "We will not serve thy gods." O how angry is the king! Is the king the furnace, so red is his face with wrath? Furnace now shall be king, of the three Jews at least. Heat it up! More wood, more! Hotter, hotter, hotter! Now give the flames some of that tough fuel, a Hebrew conscience, and see what they will do with that. In with them, in with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! What a raging fire! Its outstretching tongues lick up and devour the men who brought the Jews to the furnace, as if stubble of the field, and they perish. But the Jews who fell into the flames, their poor hands helplessly bound—what has happened to them? Why does the king look so astonished? Why does he rise in haste? What wonder does he witness? A wonder it is. Their fetters burnt away, those flames resting upon them as if only some careless, unfelt drapery of gold, they rise and walk about, exultant, free, like crowned kings. Are they not in kingly company? Lo, vision of the furnace-hour, that vision of the Fourth One, the Son of God! "Come forth!" cries the king. Like conquerors, they come forth, and how the people crowd about them—kings, nobles, every body! See! They are feeling eagerly the clothes of the Jews, touching their hands, looking into their very faces for some trace of the fire.

B. C. 538.]

Dan. 5. 1-12, 25-28.



his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein.

LESSON VII. THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

[Commit to memory verses 3-6.]
1 Bel-shaz'zar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

2 Bel-shaz'zar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father, Neb'u-chad-nez'zar had taken out of the temple which was in Je-ru-sa-lem; that the king and

blesed be God, the fire had gone over them harmless as the light that streams upon us out of the West!

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



SUGGESTION. If you have colored chalk, draw the straight line across the board with white, the down line with red, the crooked line with brown. Do this, and write the words after the figure 3 before the school assembles.

EXPLANATION. The white line is the straight path of Christian duty. It turns neither to one side nor the other. It leads to suffering in this instance, as it has done many times since. The red line is a short one, going straight down to idolatry. The brown and crooked line is the winding, deceitful way that leads at last to the golden image.

QUESTIONS. How many men refused to worship? [Three.] What was their condition? [Under trial.] What had they to decide? [A question of right or wrong.] What had they to do? [Bow down.] How many ways out of the difficulty? [Three.] What are they? [Name them.] What was the shortest way? [Idolatry.] Not taking that way, what might they have done? [Appeared to comply.] That would have been—? [The deceitful way.] What did they do? [Took the way of duty.] Where did that lead? [Straight to the fiery furnace.]

APPLICATION. Every day we are called upon to decide the question of right or wrong. Which way do you take out of it?

THE ALTERNATIVE.

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YOU DO?

[Feb. 14.]

3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Je-ru-sa-lem; and the king, and his princes, his wives and his concubines, drank in them.

4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

5 In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

6 Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote against another.

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7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Bab'ylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

8 Then came in all the king's wise men; but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.

9 Then was king Bel-shaz'zar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

10 Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house; and the queen spake, and said, O king, live forever; let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed:

11 There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father

light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Neb'uchad-nez'zar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers:

12 Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Dan'iel, whom the king named Bel'te-shaz'zar; now let Dan'iel be called, and he will show the interpretation.

25 And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26 This is the interpretation of the thing; MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Per'sians.

General Statement.

The Babylonian Empire stood in power for nearly a century, but its hour of doom came, as that of Nineveh had come before. A new conqueror arose, greater than even Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus the Persian. He united under one crown Persia, Media, Lydia, and then led his victorious army against Babylon, the queen-city of the East. He was resisted for a time by Nabonadius, the king of Babylon, who in the later years of his reign associated with himself his son Belshazzar. One by one the provinces fell into the hands of the conqueror, and at last Babylon itself was entered by the treachery of its defenders. On the very night of the attack, Belshazzar, relying upon his strong walls, was reveling with his court in a great banquet. As if to show contempt for the God of the captive Jews, the sacred vessels from the temple were standing upon the tables, and

were employed in drinking to the gods of Babylon. Suddenly a great hand was seen opposite the king's seat, and an inscription was written upon the wall. There was something in the manifestation so supernatural that the king's heart sank with terror, and his knees trembled. The magicians were summoned, but they failed to read the mysterious letters, either from fear, or from ignorance, or because their eyes were blinded. At last a summons was sent to Daniel, who was now in old age, and neglected by the court. He came, and declared to the king and his company both the inscription and its meaning. His prophecy was verified in that same night, when the Persians penetrated to the royal palace, and slew the king. The empire of Babylon passed away, and that of Persia arose in its stead.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. Belshazzar the king. He was the son of Nabonadius, the last king of Babylon, and three years before the fall of the city was associated with his father in the government. His age at the time of the lesson could not have been more than eighteen years. **Made a great feast.** Perhaps from blind security, perhaps from bravado, the young king held his revel in a beleaguered palace. (1) *They are young men now who are pleasuring on the brink of ruin. To a thousand of his lords.* Such large companies could be easily assembled in one of those palaces, whose extent is yet a world's wonder. We read of a feast of Alexander the Great where ten thousand guests were gathered. **Drank wine.** As may be seen depicted on the walls of Nineveh, the Oriental banquets were often scenes of drunkenness and debauchery. (2) *How closely wine is associated with every thing evil!*

2. While he tasted the wine. Perhaps in a sober hour he would not have ventured thus to affront the God whom a part of his subjects worshiped. **The golden and silver vessels.** The cups and dishes used in the sacrifices, and perhaps the golden censer and the candlestick. **His father Nebuchadnezzar.** It is uncertain whether Belshazzar was a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar; but if not literally, he would receive the title, as Jehu is called "son of Omri" on the Ninevite monuments, though belonging to a different dynasty. **Out of the temple.** They had been taken from the temple about fifty years before, but were destined to be soon restored by the conqueror of Babylon. **His wives and his concubines.** One word refers to the queens of the highest rank, who were few in number; the other to the wives of inferior order, who were very numerous in the court of an Oriental king. It was not usual for women to be present at banquets, and only when the feasting degenerated into revelry were they introduced. (3) *How swiftly do sins lead to lower and viler sins!*

3, 4. Then they brought the golden vessels. The design was to cast contempt upon Jehovah, the God of the Jews, as being unable to protect his people and his treasures from Merodach and Bel, the gods of Babylon. Yet their very act became the means of bringing glory to God and shame to the idols! **Gods of gold, etc.** In all ages and among all ignorant peoples there has been a craving for a visible object of devotion. Even now, the Romanist must have his crucifix, and the

ritualist his altar. (4) *Let us seek a knowledge of God as a Spirit, who is real though invisible.*

5. In the same hour. Contrast the wild scenes below, the marching hosts without the wall, the solemn picture above. **Came forth the fingers.** Fingers of a hand, with no arm and no body in sight, moved by unseen power along the palace wall. No wonder the heart of the young king was frozen with fear! "That divine hand that had written the two tables for a law to his people now writes the doom of Babel upon the wall."—*Lightfoot.* **Against the candlestick.** Some expositors consider this a reference to the golden candlestick from the temple, but it is not certain. **The plaster.** The wall was not sculptured or draped, but smooth, like many of the walls seen in the ruins of Nineveh. **The king saw.** Probably the nobles also saw the inscription, though it is not so stated.

6. Countenance was changed. Paleness succeeded the flush of wine upon his face. **His thoughts troubled him.** (5) *So there will come a time when every sinner's guilty conscience shall be his accuser. Kneecap smote.* By a remarkable action of the nerves, the knees seem to tremble in moments of extreme terror.

7. The astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. These were the "wise men," or *magi*, who are often referred to in Oriental history. The first name refers to those who used incantations and charms; the second points to the priestly class, to which the term Chaldeans was applied because they originally sprung from that race; the third means particularly the astrologers, who drew conclusions from the stars. **Clothed with scarlet.** Rev. Ver., "purple;" the royal color, worn only by kings. **Chain of gold.** Not only as an ornament, but as a badge of office. **Third ruler.** Why not the second? Simply because Belshazzar himself was the second ruler, being joint king with his father Nabonadius. Thus out of the buried monuments of the past arise testimonies to the truth of Scripture.

8. They could not read the writing. Reasons have been given as follows: 1. The letters may have been in an older or Hebraic form, differing from the Chaldaic, as Anglo-Saxon differs from English. 2. They may have been written in some mysterious hieroglyphic, which Daniel only was enlightened to translate. 3. Perhaps the magicians could read the letters, but

could not interpret their meaning, which was expressed in such concise form. 4. They may have been so paralyzed by terror at the supernatural sight as to be unable to think or to speak at all.

9. 10. Greatly troubled. More than ever alarmed, when he found his wisest men in as deep darkness as himself. **His lords were astonished.** Rev. Ver., "perplexed." Vague alarm filled every mind, and perhaps the sound of the approaching enemies may have been heard. **The queen.** This was the mother of Belshazzar, who and she probably a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. Nabonadius, the father of Belshazzar, was a usurper, who married into the royal family in order to strengthen his title. **By reason of the words.** The knowledge of the events in the banquetting room reached the queen in her own apartments, and led her to come to the king.

11. There is a man in thy kingdom. Daniel was now more than eighty years of age, and had probably withdrawn from public affairs for some years. There are a few hints that perhaps Daniel within the city had been aiding the Persians without, and therefore had kept aloof from the court of Nabonadius and Belshazzar. **In the days of thy father.** Belshazzar, through his mother, was either the grandson or great-grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. **Light and understanding.** In her earlier days, the queen-mother may have heard of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and their interpretation by Daniel. See chaps. 2 and 4.

12. An excellent spirit. That is, the endowment of genius and wisdom which God had bestowed upon Daniel. They came, however, as the result of study and thought, though God's gift. **Whom the king named Belshazzar.** See chap. 1. 7. The name means "Whom the god Bel favors." **Now let Daniel be called.** We see in this the authority of a queen-mother, which in all Oriental lands is very great. (6) **The young Vest may wisely follow the hoary East in reverence for parents.** The succeeding verses, which should be read both by the teacher at home and in the class, relate Daniel's appearance and his bold address to the young king.

25. This is the writing. Only four words, yet each has in it a page of meaning. **Mene, Mene.** "Numbered, numbered." The first word was doubled for

HOME READINGS.

- M.* Handwriting on the wall. Dan. 5. 1-12; 35-28.
Tu. Dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Dan. 4. 1-8.
W. The dream interpreted. Dan. 4. 19-27.
Th. The interpretation fulfilled. Dan. 4. 28-37.
F. One found wanting. Matt. 19. 16-26.
S. The handwriting read. Dan. 5. 13-24.
S. A strite for the mastery. Luke 13. 24-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Dan. 5. 27.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 4, Dominion Hymnal.
Come, Christian children, come, and raise
Your voice with one accord.
No. 169, Dominion Hymnal.
Oh, sometimes the shadows are deep,
And rough seems the path to the goal.
No. 128, Dominion Hymnal.
A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify.

TIME.—538 B. C. In Greece, the 60th Olympiad. Year of Rome, 215.

PLACE.—Same as in Lesson V.

RIELES.—Belshazzar, last king of Babylon, 555-538 B. C. Cyrus, king of the Medes and Persians. Servius Tullius at Rome. Plistratrus, tyrant of Athens. Amasis, king of Egypt.

CONNECTING LINK.—Nebuchadnezzar has been dead many years. The last of the race is upon the throne. Cyrus invests Babylon, Darius being in com-

emphasis, because the fulfillment was immediately at hand. **Tekel.** "Weighed." This (correctly *thekel*) is the Chaldee form for the Hebrew word *shekel*, "a weight," for all ancient money was weighed. **Upharsin.** "And divided." The *u* is "and"; *pharsin* means "breakings," "dividings." There are *peres* in the word, as play on the name of the Persians, who were at that moment accomplishing the divine sentence.

26. This is the interpretation. Even when the words are read and translated they require an explanation. **God hath numbered.** The work of the Babylonian Empire had been wrought. It had been God's unconscious agent to discipline his people, and now being itself unworthy, it was no more needed in the discipline had been completed. (7) *There is a King who reigns above the empires of the earth.*

27. Thou art weighed. Not only Belshazzar, but also his kingdom and his people, were held to a strict account for their privileges. The empire, honored with the task of executing God's purposes, chastising unworthy nations, and consolidating the lands for future time, had failed to recognize its vocation and obligation, and its destiny had turned to doom. **In the balances.** The standards by which men are judged are not their own opinions of themselves, nor the world's estimate of them, but the calm, impartial judgment of the Lord, expressed in the enlightened conscience. In God's word, in the decisions of the judgment day. (8) *Let us keep ever in view God's standard of character, and not the world's.* (9) *Nations, no less than individuals, are held to an account.*

28. Peres. This is the same word in meaning with *upharsin*, in verse 25, the *w* meaning "and," and *pharsin* being the plural form of *peres*, "division." **Divided.** Not meaning that the kingdom of Babylon was to be divided between the two conquering nations, but that it was to be destroyed, broken up, and become their prey. **Medes and Persians.** Two races having close affinity, living on the plains east of the Zagros Mountains, the Medes on the north, and the Persians on the south. They were united under Cyrus the Persian, and conquered all the countries from the Indus to the Nile, forming the greatest empire of the ancient world. It lasted from 558 to 330 B. C. when it was conquered by Alexander the Great.

mand of the army. Daniel is still living, an old man. There is a scene of revelry in Babylon. The city is believed to be impregnable. The lesson story follows.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The omnipresent God.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. A King's Feast, v. 1-4.**
On what night did the king's feast take place?
What was going on outside of Babylon while the city was feasting?
In what way was the past history of the Jews suggested by this feast?
What must have been particularly offensive in the sight of God in using these sacred vessels thus?
What light does this scene shed on the character of Belshazzar?
- 2. A King's Fear, v. 5-9.**
What changed the feast of mirth to a feast of fear?
Who saw the handwriting? Be sure to find all.
Why could not the king's wise men read it?
How did the king display his anxiety to know the portent of this?
What shows that the conscience may be awakened at times even in a wicked man?
- 3. A Queen's Counsel, v. 10-12.**
What does the queen's speech show concerning Daniel?
What other instance in Bible history of a prime minister of one king being entirely forgotten by later monarchs?
What testimony does the queen bear to Daniel's character and requirements?
What does the queen's knowledge of Daniel's past show concerning her own present relation to the kingdom?
- 4. A prophet's Warning, v. 25-28.**
What was the prophet's warning?
What was the effect on the king?
What influence did it have on Daniel's future?
Where was this prophecy fulfilled?

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Practical Teachings.

Sin will be surely punished. Belshazzar desecrated golden and silver vessels only. We desecrate, what? God's name? God's law? God's day? Fearless Daniel! He spoke the truth no matter what the consequence. Do we?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. **A King's Feast**, v. 1-4.
 What king made a feast?
 To whom was it given?
 What did Belshazzar do openly at this feast?
 What did he order to be brought before him?
 What use did he propose to make of them?
 In whose service had these vessels been used?
 How were these vessels now defiled?
2. **A King's Fear**, v. 5-9.
 What sign of warning did the king see?
 What signs of fear did he show?
 Upon whom did he call for help?
 What did he desire of them?
 What reward did he promise them?
 What was their success?
 What effect had their failure on the king?
3. **A Queen's Counsel**, v. 10-12.
 What brought the queen to the banquet?
 What words of cheer did she give the king?
 Whom did she counsel him to consult?
4. **A Prophet's Warning**, v. 25-28.
 What did Daniel declare the words to be?
 What was the meaning of each word?
 What brought this penalty upon Belshazzar?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson do we find—

1. That debauchery makes men bold in sin?
2. That wicked boldness makes guilty fear?
3. That defiance of God brings ruin?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What king made a great feast for his lords? **Belshazzar.**
 For what did he send to hold the wine? **The gold and silver vessels of the temple of God.**
 To whom did they all offer praise? **To their gods.**
 What was seen the same hour? **A hand, writing on the wall.**

How was the king affected? **He trembled with fear.**
 For whom did he send? **For all the wise men of the land.**
 What did he want them to do? **To read and explain the strange words.**

Who was then sent for? **Daniel.**
 What were the words he read? **"Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin."**
 What did he tell Belshazzar? **That he had dishonored God.**

Whose hand did he say had written these words? **The hand of the living God.**
 What did they mean? **That God had taken his kingdom from him.**

For what reason? **Because he has lived in sin and idolatry.** (Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.)
 What is sure to lead people into trouble? **Sin, because it leads them away from God.**

Words with Little People.

Found wanting.	Found <i>not</i> wanting.
A king who was proud.	A little child who is humble.
Willful.	Obedient.
Forgetful of God.	True to God.
Careless.	Careful.
Profane.	Holy.
Intemperate.	Temperate.
Slain.	Saved.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who was Belshazzar? **The last king of Babylon.** 2. What appeared while he was feasting? **A hand which wrote on the wall.** 3. Who alone could read the writing and its meaning? **Daniel.** 4. What did the writing mean as stated in the Golden Text? **Thou art, etc.** 5. What took place on that night? **King Belshazzar was slain.** 6. By whom was his kingdom taken? **By the Persian.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

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

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

"Weighed and Rejected."

- I. THE SINS.
 1. **Pride.** "Made a great feast." v. 1.
 "Hast not humbled thine heart." v. 22.
 "Proud in heart... abomination." Prov. 16. 5.
 2. **Drunkennes.** "Drank wine." v. 1.
 "Be not drunk with wine." Eph. 5. 18.
 3. **Sacrilege.** "Vessels... out of the temple" v. 2.
 "No fear of God before his eyes." Ps. 56. 1.
 4. **Idolatry.** "Praised the gods." v. 4.
 "Stretched out... to a strange god." Ps. 44. 20.
- II. THE JUDGMENT.
 1. **Came forth the fingers.** v. 5.
 "The triumphing of the wicked is short." Job 20. 4.
 2. **His thoughts troubled him.** v. 6.
 "Fear, and the pit... are upon thee." Isa. 24. 17.
 3. **Cried aloud to bring in the astrologers.** v. 7.
 "Stand now with thine enchantments." Isa. 47. 12.
 4. **They could not read the writing.** v. 8.
 "That turneth wise men backward." Isa. 44. 25.
- III. THE SENTENCE.
 1. **Mene: God hath numbered.** v. 26.
 "I remember all their wickedness." Hosea 7. 2.
 2. **Tekel: Thou art weighed.** v. 27.
 "According to their deserts will I judge." Ezek. 7. 27.
 3. **Peres: Thy kingdom is divided.** v. 28.
 "I will execute judgment." Ezek. 25. 11.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Judgments of God.

1. The judgments of God come upon those who live in pleasure without thought of eternal interests and dangers. Belshazzar was feasting, when he ought to have been watching, and like him are many.
2. The judgments of God come upon the drunkard and the licentious. Both the Bible and ancient history relate that drunkenness and lust were the crimes which led to Babylon's overthrow. If our land perishes it will be from the same cause. Let us avert the doom by destroying the curse of intemperance.
3. The judgments of God come upon those who scoff at God and his word. Belshazzar's sin is committed by every one who blasphemes God and rails against God's truth. Let the swearer and the scoffer beware!
4. The judgments of God always come suddenly. An hour, and the feast became a scene of death. So the sinner in a moment may pass out of hope into despair.
5. The judgments of God come forewarned, though men will not always hear the warning. God's messengers, his word, his Spirit, are ever endeavoring to awaken men to their danger, but they refuse to listen.

English Teacher's Notes.

In our last lesson we saw how a daring challenge was thrown out by a monarch, confident in his own power; and how this challenge was accepted and answered, and the challenger forced to confess his error. To day we are to consider an act yet

more daring and impious, and the summary vengeance of Jehovah upon it.

The Book of Daniel passes over the immediate successors of Nebuchadnezzar, and goes on to his grandson Belshazzar, the son of Nabonnedus, who was associated with his father in the empire. The glory of the Chaldean monarchy had culminated in Nebuchadnezzar, to whom Jehovah had given the principal countries and kingdoms into subjection, for the fulfillment of the divine purposes. Jer. 27. 5-7. He and his son and his son's son were to reign supreme until the "time of his land" came. Meantime a new power began to rise up in the East, the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, which was to take the place of the Chaldean. At the time to which the commencement of our passage refers, the Persian general, Cyrus, was actually besieging Babylon, and the elder king, Nabonnedus, was absent. Confident, however, in the strength of his city and its fortifications, Belshazzar the king instituted a great festival, probably in honor of the chief god whom he worshipped, on a scale unusually large and magnificent.

But the distinguishing feature of this festival was not its splendor, nor the number of the guests. It was an act of deliberate insult and blasphemy offered on the occasion to Jehovah, God of Israel. Belshazzar could not have been ignorant of the dealings of Jehovah with his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, nor of the distinct recognition by the latter of the divine supremacy. Yet he carried his arrogant defiance of Israel's God to lengths his father had never reached. The palace of the king of Babylon could not be poor in any thing that was wanted to grace a festival. Yet Belshazzar must needs have the gold and silver vessels, which had been taken from the temple at Jerusalem, brought out for the use of himself and his guests. The sacrilege was committed wantonly and purposely, and out of these sacred vessels the wine at that banquet was drunk to the honor, moreover, of the "gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." Such a thing had never taken place before. The pride and the assumption of Babylon had reached its culminating point.

But at this point the sentence which long ago had gone out against the city (Isa. 14. 4, etc., 47; Jer. 50. 51) was brought forth into the light. "In the same hour," while the sacrilegious banquet was in full swing, there "came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote." The seeming triumph which Belshazzar was celebrating over the worship of Israel's God could only touch the outward signs of that worship. The very power and authority of Jehovah were manifested in the awful appearance which startled the revelers. On the wall where were usually recorded the titles and exploits of the king, an unknown Power was inscribing strange and threatening characters.

For threatening he felt the words to be, although from their being written (as is supposed) in the Hebrew character, neither Belshazzar nor his wise men

were able to decipher them. And so the blasphemer had to turn to the prophet of Jehovah (who had been forgotten by all but the queen—probably the queen-mother) to interpret the inscription. It contained but three words, one being twice repeated. And these declared—

The end of the kingdom. The "time" spoken of by Jeremiah was come. The city of Babylon was still wealthy, still magnificent, still given up to pleasure, still seeming impregnable. Yet God had "numbered the kingdom and finished it."

The failure of the kingdom. It was the belief of the ancients that the actions of the dead were weighed in a balance, and their doom pronounced accordingly. The power and supremacy of Babylon had been the gift of Jehovah, and this gift had been terribly abused. "Weighed" in the divine balances it was "found wanting."

The fate of the kingdom. The word *Upharsin*, *dividers*, is explained by the word used by Daniel, *Peres*, *divided*, both being derived from the same root. The great empire was to be dissolved, and become the prey of the enemy then before the gates, who were even now preparing to enter the city through the empty channel of the river, which they had diverted from its course. In a few hours the doom had been fulfilled! Babylon had fallen.

This striking and terrible story gives the teacher an opportunity for speaking of the future which is rapidly drawing near. In the story of Belshazzar we see

The pride of this world.

There is so much in the world to attract young people that they need a plain and simple warning about it. Its wealth, pleasure, distinction, power, look very inviting to them. Tell them plainly that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God." Jas. 4. 4. Those who are not with Christ are against him. Matt. 12. 30. The world first neglects, then defies, then blasphemes God. In this it will grow worse and worse. But notice

The sentence upon this world.

It is already written. While men are boasting of their discoveries, their learning, their intellect, and throwing scorn on the word and the ways of God, they do at times catch glimpses of the Hand that writes, in strange and threatening characters. Sickness, loss of friends, sudden danger, all bring them such a glimpse. And they tremble, like Belshazzar. And the sentence is this: "Numbered and finished." 1 John 2. 17. "Weighed, and found wanting." Matt. 18. 23, 24. "Dissolved." 2 Peter 3. 10, 11.

The end of this world.

It will come as surely as the fall of Babylon when men are least prepared. But the word of God warns, and invites, and pleads with men to come out from it. Christ still receives those who are "found wanting." And the day which brings destruction to his enemies will bring joy to his redeemed.

Hints

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Berean Method.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Explain who Belshazzar was, and his position in the kingdom. Call attention to the discoveries at Babylon revealing his name and his relation to the last king, Nabonadius....The scene within the walls of Babylon, the feast, the company, the sacred vessels....Show the sins of Belshazzar, and by whom the same sins are committed now....A word-picture of the hand-writing on the wall, the king's fear, the magician's ignorance, and the queen's counsel....Read with the class the connecting verses, and point out the traits of character which they show in Daniel....The inscription and the interpretation; how it applied to Babylon: how it applies to us....What was going on outside of the walls; Cyrus the Persian; his conquest of Babylon....The fate of the king and the fall of the city....Against what sins does this lesson warn us?...What traits in God's character does it show?

References. FREEMAN. Ver. 9: Feasts for the women, 390. Ver. 4: The use of metal, 594. Ver. 10: Neck chains, 476. Ver. 11: The Magi, 630; astrologers, 530.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

9. Have believers an internal evidence that Christ came from God?

They have, according to their faith, the witness and the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

[John xiv. 23; 1 John iv. 13; Gal. v. 22, 23.]

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God's Eye Upon Us.*

REVIEW. Recall the teaching about Babylon, the idry of the people, the pride and luxury of its kings and princes, etc. Tell that Nebuchadnezzar repented and turned to God before his death, and that now another king, Belshazzar, was ruling in Babylon, who was a proud, wicked, idolatrous king. Tell that armies from Media and Persia were just outside the gates of the city, watching their chance to get in, but that Belshazzar was not afraid, because he thought his city was strong. Teach that there is no place of safety for any one who is disobeying God.

THE GREAT FEAST.

Describe the great feast the king made for his nobles and great men. Tell how the holy vessels that had been taken from the temple at Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar were taken out, and these wicked men drank wine out of them. Tell how they praised their gods of gold and silver and brass, and made themselves very merry in denying the true God, who was all the time looking upon them in sorrow and in anger.

THE STRANGE MESSAGE.

Tell how the king began to grow pale and troubled. What did he see? Just the fingers of a hand writing on the wall! All the people saw some words there which they could not understand. Tell how the wine-drinking and the mirth ceased, and all were eager to know what it meant. Tell the story simply, but graphically. It was God speaking to these people. They had been looking at their own power, their own pleasure; now they had to turn and look at God! We never want to look at God when we are not obeying him.

THE MESSAGE MADE PLAIN.

Tell how Daniel came to be sent for, and how he interpreted the message to the king. Even

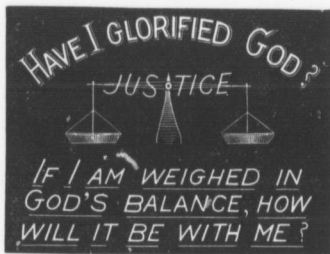
after the king heard it, he went on with his feast, thinking, perhaps, it might not be true. Tell how it came true that very night, and Babylon fell into the hands of the enemy, and Belshazzar was slain.



LESSON FOR US. Teach that God sends messages to us. They are not written on the wall, but they are written in the Bible, and spoken by our friends and teachers. Do we listen? Do we obey? God's eye is upon us when we work, and when we play. We are always safe when we are obeying him.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



EXPLANATION. One of the charges brought against Belshazzar was that he had not glorified God. This charge might truthfully be brought against many of us. If I am weighed in God's balances, how will it be with me? During the past week have I glorified him by even one act? Has my life glorified him?

BELSHAZZAR

CHARGED. SENTENCED.

PROUD-HEARTED;	WEIGHED!
GOD-DEFYING.	WANTING!
IDOL-PRAISING.	DOOMED!
INTEMPERATE.	

Lesson Word-Pictures.

What a feast in the great banquet-room of the royal palace! What a glitter of costly vessels, of yellow gold, of snowy silver, and what answering flashes from the sparkling wine! What an array of banqueters in rich and shining robes! What a host, even a thousand lords, does the king entertain! The king is drinking, when suddenly, does he set down his goblet? He is thinking—not very much of which is done while people are drinking. From a quarrelsome people in a stubborn fortress down in little Judea, did not his father take a quantity of gold and silver vessels, choice ware used in a certain temple of an uncertain god? How would it do to try those vessels? "Ho!" some one may have said, "Those Jew-vessels! What do the Jews amount to? What's the good of a Jew? Bring in the vessels, O king!" They are brought in, the holy vessels consecrated by use in the temple. In what solemn services to Jehovah's praise they may have taken part! By what honored, anointed hands they may have been lifted. They are brought into this atmosphere of riot. They are filled with wine, over which an idolatrous incantation may have been pronounced. They are greedily

lifted and emptied by the bacchanals. O what a riot in the great banquet-room! They shout, they sing—that mob of king, princes, wives, concubines—they pour aloft the cups of maddening wine, then eagerly toss them off. They praise the gods of gold, of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, of stone. Where is the God of the Jews? What did he do for his temple when Chaldean's proud armies surrounded Jerusalem? Down with the Jews! As for their boasted God—but look! What is the matter with the king? Has he been transfixed by some javelin hurled by an assassin? On the king's face, why that look of horror, a look directed toward the wall of the king's palace—on the wall high up—yes, just there, over against the great, flaming candlestick! Others are looking. The rioters rest their goblets on the table. All over the banquet-room there are faces turned up in surprise, wonder, fear, toward the wall upon which an awful hand is writing! The king could

see the hand going up, going down, going on! His knees tremble. His thoughts seem to forsake him. He can only look in dumb terror. Silence all over the hall save as some maudlin cry is raised, or as a person shrieks, "Look there! See! See!" The king has found his voice now. He is shouting for the wise men. Ho-ho! A robe of scarlet, a chain of gold, the third office in the kingdom, to the man who reads that awful inscription! The wise men come, look, shake their heads, and retire baffled. Ah, the queen thinks of a wise man, great in Nebuchadnezzar's days! Some astute old Chaldean probably. Bring him in! He comes and there he stands, not a Chaldean, but a forgotten Jew! Against that background of idolatrous riot, the prophet stands out in all the grandeur of his character and office, and looking up, Daniel, the Jew, reads what the despised God of the Jews had written on the wall.

H.C. 536.]

LESSON VIII. THE SECOND TEMPLE.

[Feb. 21.

Ezra 1. 1-4, and 3. 8-13. [Commit to memory vs. 2-4.]



1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

3 Who is there among you of all his people? he which be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel: he is the God, which is in Jerusalem.

4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the free-will offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

5 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of She-al'ti-el, and Jeshu'a the son of Joz'a-dak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come

out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD.

9 Then stood Jeshu'a with his sons and his brethren, Kad'mi-el and his sons, the sons of Jud'ah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Hen'a-dad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites.

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel.

11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth forever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundations of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy.

13 So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of the joy, from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

General Statement.

The period of captivity for Judah was seventy years from the time when, in the reign of Jehoiakin, the land fell under the Chaldean yoke and his nobles were taken to Babylon, and fifty years from the destruction of the temple and the city by Nebuchadnezzar. Severe as was the trial to lose their land, to dwell as exiles in a strange country, the results of the captivity proved that it was perhaps the greatest benefit to Israel of any event in its history. Over the events of those fifty years beside the rivers of Babylon a blank has fallen, and scarcely a fact can be stated. But it made an impress upon the people which has not left them unto this day. They went into exile a weak, feeble people, ever prone to wander from their God, ever falling into idolatry. They came back from their exile thoroughly changed, with such an intense devotion to their religion and national traits that all the power of the world during the centuries since has not caused them to waver. From this time we read no longer of Baal, or the groves, or the high places, but instead, of an intensity of service for Jehovah which at

times became narrow and bitter toward other nations. In former times they had neglected their written law to such a degree that for centuries it was lost, but henceforth they were to concentrate all their intellectual energies upon the Scriptures. They had formerly left the house of God to ruin, and built shrines to idols on every hill; but now the temple became the center of their thought, and to strengthen their devotion, the synagogue—an outgrowth of the exile—stood in every village, and was diligently attended by every family. What was still more remarkable, this great change not only affected the section of the Jews who returned to their own land, but also that portion, ten times as great, which remained by choice in foreign lands as the Jews of the Dispersion. All we know is that consequently a great revival was wrought, and a new Israel arose out of the ashes of the old. Our lesson opens just at the time when the captives returned to rebuild their ruined city and their destroyed temple.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. In the first year. Not the first year of Cyrus's reign over the Persians, of whom he was the hereditary king; nor the first year after the capture of Babylon, for he allowed Darius the Mede to be the nominal king for a time before taking the sovereignty into his own hands. Cyrus king of Persia. He was the king of the Persians, who at that time were subject to their neighbors, the Medes. Cyrus reversed the relations of the two tribes, but for a time permitted the Median king to be joint ruler with himself. He conquered all the lands from India to the Mediterranean, in-

cluding all Asia Minor, and founded the largest empire of the ancient world. He was slain on an expedition against India, and his tomb is still shown at Pasargadae, a new Murg-anb. It was his mission to consolidate the kingdoms of the East, to break up the old Asiatic forms of idolatry, and by substituting the purer monotheism (or worship of one God) of the Persians, to open the path for the true faith. Though ambitious, he was generous to his captives and just in his government; the best type of an Oriental despot. That the word of the Lord. Though unconscious of his destiny,

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Cyrus was the hammer of God, breaking the chains of his people and the idols of the Gentile world. **By the mouth of Jeremiah.** The prophecy of the "seventy years of captivity" was given in a letter (Jer. 29) to the captives in Babylon, before the final destruction of the city of Jerusalem. **The Lord stirred up.** Probably the agent of God in this matter was the aged Daniel, who had perhaps aided Cyrus in his conquest, and was treated by the conqueror with great respects. It is said by Josephus that Daniel urged this act of mercy and justice, and pointed out to Cyrus the prophecies concerning himself. (1) *How noble is the work of leading the thoughts of men to God's work! Made a proclamation.* This proclamation of Cyrus has left results in history larger than all his conquests. (2) *Deeds for self die, but those for God abide forever.*

2. The Lord God of heaven. This is the Jewish translation of the proclamation, which in the Persian original may have been, "Ormazd the God of heaven." **Given me all the kingdoms of the earth.** This was surely an exaggeration, for nearly all the civilized world of that era was comprised in the Persian Empire. Rome was an inconsiderable city, Athens was just beginning its history, and England was an unknown wilderness; while the empire of Persia embraced all the territory from the Indus to the Nile and the *Ægean*, and from the Black Sea to the Great Desert. **He hath charged me.** The reverential tone of this proclamation is in full accord with all the ancient inscriptions of Cyrus. (3) *Let us not sink below the intelligence of this heathen by forgetting him who gives us all things. To build him a house.* That is, to rebuild the temple which had been destroyed fifty years before. (4) *What dwelling-place for God can we build to-day?*

3. Who is there among you. The proclamation was addressed to the Jews and Israelites, who were dispersed in little communities all through the Persian Empire. **His God be with him.** God's blessing is invoked upon all who enter upon the work. **Let him go up to Jerusalem.** As the carrying away of the captives had taken place at intervals of from seventy to fifty years before, there were but few of the original exiles remaining, and it is somewhat remarkable that so many of their descendants, fifty thousand in all, should be willing to go to a country which they had never seen. **Build the house.** This was their great errand, not to build their own houses, but the house of God. (5) *Let us have the noble purpose to share in some work for God which shall endure when we have passed away. He is the God.* We can understand this great truth far more clearly than could Cyrus. (6) *Let us see that we live out the knowledge which we possess.*

4. Whosoever remaineth. That is, all the exiles who were still living, not those who chose to remain in their homes. **Let the men of his place.** This refers especially to the Jews who did not return to Palestine, who were ten times the number of those who returned. **Help him.** Those who cannot work for God's house should give all the more toward it, but the working is better than the giving. **Besides the free-will offering.** This was probably the gift of Cyrus himself from the royal treasury.

5. The lesson omits the account of the journey and the list of the families. On their arrival at Jerusalem their first act was to rebuild the altar on the old site, and begin the daily sacrifice. **In the second year.** They delayed for a year to begin the building of the temple, perhaps because homes for themselves were needed, and some defenses against enemies. It may be that it was requisite also to wait for building materials from Lebanon. Still a comparison of this record with the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah shows that there

was some dereliction of duty on the part of the people and their rulers. **Zerubbabel.** His name means "born in Babylon." He was the descendant of David through the double line of Solomon and of Nathan, and hence was the lineal head of the nation, as well as their governor appointed by the Persian king. **Jeshua the son of Jozadak.** Called also "Joshua the son of Joseph." He was the high-priest, and representative of the line of Aaron. **The remnant of their brethren.** Rev. Ver., "the rest of their brethren;" referring to the priests and the Levites, or descendants of Levi. **Appointed the Levites.** Those of the Levites who had returned from captivity were placed in charge of the building of the temple, as they were the priestly tribe. **From twenty years old.** This was in accordance with the rule established by David. I Chron. 23. 24. **To set forward the work.** By taking charge of the contributions and directing the builders.

9. Then stood Jeshua with his sons. From Chap. 2. 40, we see that this was not the high-priest, but a Levite of the same name. **Kadmiel and his sons.** We know only the names of the men, but it is to be noticed that we should not even know their names if they had not given their hearts to God's work. **The sons of Judah.** Elsewhere called Hodaviah. Chap. 2. 40. **To set forward the workmen.** Rev. Ver., "to have the oversight of the workmen."

10. When the builders laid the foundation. This was the official service at beginning the work, like our corner-stone laying. **The temple of the Lord.** We know very little of this second temple, but it probably resembled the first: with a large open court in which rose the house, which had a lofty tower on the front, two principal rooms, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies; and apartments for the priests around the building. **The priests in their apparel.** The priests wore a linen tunic, fastened around the waist with a girdle. **The sons of Asaph.** Asaph was a leader of music and writer of psalms in David's time, and his descendants formed the choral bands of the temple. **After the ordinance of David.** One characteristic of this new period upon which the Jews entered with the restoration was the desire to fashion all their religious customs after ancient precedents and patterns.

11. They sang together by course. That is, in antiphonal choruses, one section singing the first part and the other the second of a stanza. Thus one would sing, "Give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good," and the other would respond "For his mercy endureth forever." (7) *We can always see God's goodness if we will look for it. Because the foundation.* For in the foundation they recognized God's past mercies in bringing them back to their own land, and the promise of his continued grace.

12. Ancient men, that had seen the first house. The first temple was destroyed about fifty-one years before the date of these events, so that some who had witnessed it might be present. **Wept with a loud voice.** Their weeping was in mingled sorrow and joy; sorrow over the memories of the past, and joy with hopes for the future. Probably, too, they contrasted the former temple in its splendor with the lack of adornment in the plans of the new one. (8) *We live in a world where joy and sorrow are ever mingled.*

13. The people could not discern. The praesenters and the weepers were both loud in their manifestations, and their sounds were blended. Even while we rejoice over the divine renewal of the fleshy temple, we may not forget the ruin into which it had fallen.

HOME READINGS.

- M. The second temple. Ezra 1. 1-4; 3. 8-11.
 Tu. The preparations made. Ezra 1. 5-11; 3. 1-7.
 W. The first temple. 1 Kings 6. 1-30.
 Th. The building suspended. Ezra 4. 11-24.
 F. The work resumed. Ezra 6. 1-12.
 S. The temple dedicated. Ezra 6. 13-22.
 S. The goodness of God. Psa. 136. 1-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.

They praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. Ezra 3. 11.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 288, Dominion Hymnal.
 Wake the song of joy and gladness.
 No. 224, Dominion Hymnal.
 Jerusalem the golden.
 No. 2. 2, Dominion Hymnal.
 When he cometh, when he cometh.

TIME.—536 B. C. The first year of Cyrus alone. 70 years since 606. Captivity ended. 61st Olympiad. Year of Rome, 217.

PLACES.—Jerusalem, Babylon, possibly Susa.

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 Teaching.

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 26. 19.

III. THE WORKING SPIRIT.

Let him go up... and build. 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.

VI. THE GRATEFUL SPIRIT.

They sang together. . . giving thanks. v. 11.
 "A good thing to give thanks." Psa. 92. 1.

VII. THE JOYFUL SPIRIT.

Many shouted aloud for joy. v. 12.
 "Your joy no man taketh from you." John 16. 22.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Work of the Church.

1. The work of God's Church requires first of all that somebody's spirit be stirred up. v. 1. Every revival begins in some one heart; every plan for the up-building of the kingdom comes from some one who has been quickened in his spiritual nature.

2. The work of God's Church requires self-denial. v. 2-4. Some must give, and some must work; and all must make sacrifices for God's cause. You may not be able to work, then give. You may not be able to give, then work; and show your interest in the cause.

3. The claim of God's Church is among the very highest. We should not wait until our own houses are paid for, before we begin work on God's house. Let us arise and build at once. v. 8.

4. Those who labor in God's cause need encouragement, and should feel that the Church is by them, with its moral support. v. 9, 10. When a fireman was climbing a house to save a child all the crowd stood breathless, until one shouted, "If you want him to succeed, cheer him on!"

5. God's work is a glad, joyful work. Let us enter upon it, and carry it through with a holy joy; happy that we have the privilege of working with our great Helper. v. 11-13.

English Teacher's Notes.

THE scene of our last three lessons has been laid in Babylon. To-day we turn our eyes again to Jerusalem, and find there a remnant of Jews who have returned from Chaldea, to settle in their own country. Yet our subject is not this remnant and their return from the seventy years' captivity; it is the "second temple." For the purpose of Cyrus in sending out the decree for the restoration of the Jews was simply this, to "build the house of the Lord God of Israel" (chap. 1. 2) at Jerusalem. This was the charge which he believed Jehovah had laid upon him, and this was what the prophet Isaiah had foretold of him, that he should rebuild the city and the temple of God—the city for the sake of the temple, while the Jewish remnant was restored for the sake of the worship of their God.

And accordingly we find that the first work undertaken by Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and those who came with them was the building of the temple. The returned exiles went each man, as it appears, to his old home and inheritance, and dwelt "in their cities," gathering together, however, at Jerusalem to worship God, to offer sacrifices on the brazen altar, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. But no steps were taken to build up the walls or restore the old splendor of Jerusalem. The money that had been given by Cyrus, and the offerings of the Jews themselves, was handed over to "carpenters and masons," and, as once before in Solomon's time, the products of the land were exchanged for timber

from Lebanon to be floated down from Sidon to Joppa, for the building of the house of God. Ver. 7.

Then, when the material had been prepared, the great work was begun, and the foundations of the second temple were laid. And on this occasion three voices were heard, three different sounds rose up. The Golden Text directs our attention to one of these, and we shall find the two others equally emphasized in the passage.

1. *The voice of praise.*

This, being part of the solemn worship of God, was specially arranged for beforehand. The priests were there in their sacred apparel with the silver trumpets, ordained for use "in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, . . . over your burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings." Num. 10. 10. The Levites "the sons of Asaph," a hundred and twenty-eight of them, were there with their cymbals, as in the days of David, when they were set apart for this service. 1 Chron. 16. 4, 5, 7, 87; 25. 1, 2. And as the foundations of the house were being laid they sang together "in courses," the cymbals clashing, and the trumpets sounding, to the praise of Him whose "mercy endureth forever," perhaps in the words of one of those psalms "for Asaph," such as the 75th or the 81st.

2. *The voice of joy.*

But there was not only the set form of praise. There was the spontaneous shout of exultation and gladness. If the Jews existed as a nation at all, they existed as the nation of Jehovah. The temple of God was to them the first and chief thing. To be without a temple was to be without their one distinguishing feature, their glory and their pride. The young people who stood by as the foundations were laid had doubtless heard of the old splendor of their city and the magnificence of the former temple. A glowing future now rose up before them, and with the ardor and enthusiasm of youth they shouted for joy—a fitting accompaniment to the song of praise. But with these two voices was mingled a third:

3. *The voice of mourning.*

The company assembled on the hill of Moriah stood amid a scene of desolation, a ruined city. How different from past days such as the old men among them could remember—when Jerusalem was "builded as a city that is compact together," flourishing, populous, magnificent, with strong walls and noble gates! And they themselves were but a small proportion of the nation, a little band of pioneers, looked down upon by the surrounding peoples. Of the "singers" appointed originally to the service of praise, there was but one family present, as we learn from chap. 2. 41; the families of Heman and Jeduthan (1 Chron. 25. 1-8) being unrepresented. And to those who had seen the first temple in all its glory, the image of the past was more vivid than any vision they might conjure up for the future, and they could not restrain their weeping for what had been lost.

We cannot wonder at their sorrow. Yet the thought

which formed the key-note to the song of praise should have dried their tears and enabled them to look forward instead of backward: "His mercy endureth forever toward Israel." What Jehovah had been in the past, that he would be in the future.

The "I am" could not change. And although the promise was not yet given that the glory of the latter house should be greater than that of the former (Hag. 2. 9), yet those who had seen the wondrous ways of God during their seventy long years of exile had every thing to hope from that "mercy" which was "forever." We know how, by the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, all the splendor of the former was immeasurably eclipsed; and although the ark was gone, and the Shekinah was gone, yet in the fullness of time God indeed tabernacled among men, and filled that house with his glory.

These three voices, mingled together when the foundation of the second temple was laid, are still continually mingling in the world round about us. There is the voice of joy—heard, perhaps, most commonly from the young, from those who have life before them, and are full of hope and energy. Will this be lasting? Only if it is based on the knowledge of God and the promises of God. Where Christ is, there only is joy true and right. Then the voice of sorrow—the lament over that which is past and gone. What can still it? Only the knowledge of God and faith in him. It is Christ who gives "joy for mourning" (Isa. 61. 3), and offers a brighter future than the very brightest past. And the voice of praise—heard too little, but never wholly silent. What inspires this? Again, the knowledge of God, that "his mercy endureth forever toward Israel." And let us bear in mind that where this goes on continually, the voice of mourning will eventually have to yield to the voice of joy.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

It might be well to draw or to show two maps with this lesson: first the map representing the lands of the captivity, and the journeys of the captives, and on it trace the route of the returning exiles from Babylon, up the Euphrates to Syria, thence southward to Palestine. ... Then a map of Jerusalem, showing its mountains. Locate the temple on Mount Moriah. ... Describe the general plan of the temple in its departments. ... Show how we may be builders of God's house, and what spirit the work requires. (Analytical and Biblical Outline.) ... For young scholars, the application of the lesson may follow the line of the "Thoughts for Young People." ... Our temple is the Church of Christ. Show how much we owe to it, and how we can show our love to it.

References. FREEMAN. Verse 11: Responsive singing, 259.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

10. What does our Lord say of those who reject him? He declares that they ought to believe in him; and that they would believe in him if they humbly and patiently listened to his words.

[John viii. 46, 47; John x. 25-27; 1 John iii. 19.]

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

A NEW TEMPLE, A NEW LIFE,
→ DEDICATED TO GOD ←



REJOICE, IF IT IS LAID!
WEEP, IF IT IS NOT.

EXPLANATION. In making a review-talk on the lesson, in connection with the blackboard, first review the facts of the lesson in regard to the new temple. As an application of the teachings of the lesson, speak of the necessity of a sinner commencing a new life. He is in captivity, bound by fetters of sin. He has an opportunity of commencing a new life, dedicated to God. A new building must have a foundation-stone: it must be true, for on it the fate of the whole building depends. What foundation must the sinner lay when he starts to build a new life? Read 1 Cor. 3. 11: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Rejoice if it is laid. Weep if it is not.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Ride hard, ride hard, O couriers of the king. Take out the joyful proclamation that the house of the Lord at Jerusalem is to be built again. Shout it to the winds and let them carry out the glad announcement that God's house shall stand again on Zion. There they go, the fleet couriers. People in the city streets and in lonely country ways hear the hurrying hoof-beats of the couriers' horses. The sound reaches the scholar bending over his parchment, the farmer in the open fields, the artisan at his bench, and the merchant amid his wares. Soon, scholar, farmer, artisan, and merchant rise up and say, "Let us go up to Jerusalem and build the Lord's house." Those who stay behind bring out gold and silver, goods and beasts of burden, and some free-will offering for God's house. What streams of exultant travelers are pouring forth from city and village, with songs, with shouts, beginning the home-march for Jerusalem! The noise reaches the ear of some dying Hebrew and cheers him on his way to the heavenly Jerusalem! Home at last! Once more the exiles are at Jerusalem. They clear away the unsightly rubbish-heaps, again lay the foundation of the temple, and with solemn services celebrate the act. There are the priests in holy apparel, blowing their trumpets. There are the Levites smiting cymbal against cymbal. And the song of thanksgiving, loud and jubilant, how it rolls up above the ruined city! The old men who had seen the glory of the first house, how they weep and sob, while shouts of joy rise up, soaring high and echoing far! O happy day at Jerusalem!

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT: Building the Lord's House. To be taught: 1.) That God calls his people to come home.

2.) That he wants them to build him a house. 3.) That he will live in the house that is built and kept for him.

1. Talk about the captivity in Babylon, seventy years,

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and tell that this captivity was caused by sin. Sin leads us away from God, and binds our hands and hearts to keep us away from him. Now there was a new king in the country to which the Jews had been taken. Tell about Cyrus, his wisdom and kindness, and the good laws he made for his people. Tell that it was God who put it into his heart to let the Jews go back to their own land. Teach that every good, kind thought comes from God, and when we do not do as it bids us we are turning away from God. Tell that Cyrus heard God's voice and obeyed. Read the proclamation, and help children to imagine the joy of the captives. They knew that God was calling them to come home!

2. Teach that when God calls his children he always gives them something to do for him. Recall the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, and the command to build a new one. Tell how all the gold and silver vessels belonging to the old temple were given back to the Jews by Cyrus, and how much gold and silver to help in building a new one were given them. Teach

that God wants each child to build a heart temple in which he may live. He will give all the help needed. His Book is full of the gold and silver of wisdom and truth. Will we take it? He gives his Spirit to teach us how to build. We do not know how, but he will teach us. When shall we begin?



3. Tell how the altar was first raised for worship. If we are to build for the Lord, we must begin at the place of prayer. Describe the joy of the people when the day came upon which the foundation was laid. Tell why they were so glad. They knew that God would live in his own house. Teach that this same great God will live in the little temples we build for him. Tell the child's reply when asked, "How great is God?" "So great that he fills the universe, and so small that he lives in my heart."

B. C. 445.]

LESSON IX. NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER.

[Feb. 28.]

Neh. 1. 1-11. [Commit to memory verses 8, 9.]



1 The words of Ne'he-mi'ah the son of Hach'a-liah. And it came to pass in the month Chis'leu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shu'shan the palace,

2 That Han'a-ni, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Ju'dah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Je-ru'sa-lem.

3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Je-ru'sa-lem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire.

4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which

I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Is-ra-el thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Is-ra-el, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Mo'ses.

8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Mo'ses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

9 But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.

11 O LORD, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cup-bearer.

General Statement.

This lesson belongs to a period almost a century later than the last. It represents a state of affairs in Judea very different from the early hope and joy of the returned exiles. The generation of which Zerubbabel and Jeshua were the leaders and Haggai and Zechariah were the prophets had passed away, and no great men had risen in their places. The temple had been rebuilt, though with none of its ancient splendor, and the daily sacrifice was maintained. But the Jews of Palestine were in a humiliated condition. Jerusalem was a mere unvalued village, open to attack from its enemies, and almost abandoned by its inhabitants. The Jews of Palestine were in deep poverty; and were without ambition to rise out of their wretchedness. They were neglecting the precepts and institutions of their law, were freely mingling in marriage with the Gentile and idol-worshipping peoples around, and were raising up children who could not speak their own sacred language. The Sabbath was neglected, and becoming a day of trade in the market. There was imminent danger

lest the holy seed would become extinct and the glorious hope of Israel would pass away. In that hour of need two leaders were raised up, one to bring the people back to their law, the other to inspire them with self-respect and restore their fortunes. These two men were Ezra and Nehemiah; both of whom belonged to the Jews of the dispersion, and voluntarily left their homes in the far East to aid their needy brethren. Ezra was a religious teacher, who came to reform the people in Judea and restore the law of Moses to more than its ancient authority. Nehemiah was a nobleman in high position at the court of Persia, in "Shushan the palace," who left his office to dwell among his lowly people. He journeyed twelve hundred miles to Jerusalem, undertook the control of Judea, aided the inhabitants of Jerusalem to rebuild their walls, and thus made Jerusalem again the leading city of the land. To these two earnest men the renewed prosperity of the Jewish people was due, and from these two men, the last heroes of Old Testament history, a new epoch began.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. He was a Jew who occupied the important position of "cup-bearer" in the court of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia. He voluntarily left the palace in order to help his people in their own land. "Patriotism, piety, prudence, perseverance, probity, and courage," says Dr. Crosby, "equally marked his administration of affairs." Read his story as written by himself, and see how noble is the character shining through it. The month Chisleu. The ninth month of the Jewish sacred year, corresponding nearly with our December.

The twentieth year. Of the reign of Artaxerxes. This fixes the date at B. C. 445, or ninety-one years after the return from captivity. Shushan the palace. The capital of the Persian Empire, called by the Greeks Susa, situated east of the Tigris and north of the Persian Gulf, in the Zagros Mountains. The ruins of the palace referred to here, and in Lesson XI, have recently been discovered.

2. Hanani, one of my brethren. He was afterward appointed by Nehemiah the ruler over a part of Jerusa-

No. 135. Dominion Hymnal.

Dear Saviour, from thy throne above,
Where countless children bow.

No. 138. Dominion Hymnal.

O worship the King all glorious above!
O gratefully sing his power and his love!

TIME.—445 B. C. Almost a century since last lesson. 83d Olympiad. Year of Rome, 308.

PLACE.—Shushan, or Susa. (See Descriptive Index.)

RULERS.—Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia. Rome under consuls. Judea under a provisional government.

CONNECTING LINK.—Almost a century has gone. The Jews who returned under Zerubbabel are suffering from oppression at the hands of their enemies; the city walls are broken down, the gates burned. In great distress, and in a more pitiable condition than when captives at Babylon, their wretchedness is reported by messengers to Nehemiah at Susa. In sorrow of heart he goes to God with the prayer recorded in our lesson.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The nature of prayer.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. A People's Need, v. 1-3.**
What people does our lesson describe as in need?
In what respects were they in need?
What had brought them to this condition?
To whom was the story of their need brought?
What fact is proved concerning the feeling of the Jews in Persia for their friends in Palestine?
What had been the effect of the captivity on their relation to God?
- 2. A Patriot's Prayer, v. 4-11.**
How did Nehemiah prepare himself for this prayer?
What elements of true prayer appear in these words of Nehemiah?
What shows his patriotism?
What one thing does he plead as his hope?
How is the purpose in his heart foreshadowed?
What was his purpose?

Practical Teachings.

Nehemiah sought to know the need of others, though far away from him. Do you?
Nehemiah sought how he might relieve that need. Do you?
Nehemiah prayed all for his loved ones, none for himself. Do you?
Nehemiah committed his plans for others to God. Do you?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- 1. A People's Need, v. 1-3.**
Who speaks in this lesson?
Where was he living?
Who was his king? Neh. 2. 1.
What was Nehemiah's office? v. 11.
Who came to him in the palace?
What inquiries did he make of his visitors?
About whom did he receive news?
What was the condition of the people?
What was the condition of Jerusalem?
By whose order had it been destroyed? 2 Kings 25. 8-10.

- 2. A Patriot's Prayer, v. 4-11.**
How did Nehemiah receive the news?
To whom did he go for help?
What confession did he make?
What had been the offense of the people?
What threatening of the Lord does Nehemiah call to mind?
On what condition had help been promised? Deut. 4. 29-31.
How may every sinner be restored to God's favor? Isa. 59. 7.
On what ground does Nehemiah plead for God's favor to Israel?
What special favor did he ask of the Lord?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where, in this lesson, are we taught—1. Sympathy with God's people in trouble? 2. Sorrow for sin? 3. Confidence in God's promises?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who lived in the palace of the king of Persia? Nehemiah, a wise and pious Jew.
Who came to the palace? Some Jews from Jerusalem.

What news did they bring of the Jews there? That they were poor and despaired.

What was the state of Jerusalem? It was without wall or gates.

Why was this a disgrace? In those days a city without wall or gates was not considered a city.

How was Nehemiah affected when he heard these things? He sat down and wept.

To whom did he go in his trouble? To the God of Israel. [Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.]

What did he confess? His sins and those of his people.

For what did he ask? For mercy and forgiveness. What did he pray God to remember? His promise to Moses.

What was that promise? That he would bless the Israelites when they obeyed and worshiped him.

What brought all their trouble upon them? Forsaking God.

What had brought them prosperity? Obedience to God.

How is it with us to-day? The same—"The word of the Lord standeth forever."

Words with Little People.

The dearest mother, father, or friend in all the world cannot help us as Jesus can. Kind and willing as they are they cannot always and every-where be near to help us. But we can never be where God cannot and will not help.

"Praying is but telling Jesus
All our want and all our woe;
None but Jesus can relieve us,
None but Jesus loves us so.
And to Jesus
Every one is free to go."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who was Nehemiah? A nobleman at the court of Persia.
2. When did he live? After the return of the Jews from captivity.
3. In what condition was Jerusalem at that time? It was without gates or wall.
4. What did Nehemiah undertake to do? To rebuild the wall.
5. How did he begin? By seeking God's help.
6. How is his prayer expressed in the GOLDEN TEXT? Give us, etc.
7. How did he succeed in building the wall? By leading the people in the work.

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

Prayer to God.

I. NEHEMIAH'S GOD.

1. O Lord God of heaven. v. 5.
"Created the heavens and the earth." Gen. 1. 1.
2. The great and terrible God. v. 5.
"The Lord most high is terrible." Ps. 47. 2.
3. That keepeth covenant and mercy. v. 5.
"He is God, the faithful God." Deut. 7. 9.
4. For them that love him. v. 5.
"Thou shalt love the Lord." Deut. 6. 5.
5. And observe his commandments. v. 5.
"These words... shall be in thine heart." Deut. 6. 6.

II. NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER.

1. **Earnest.** "Sat down and wept" v. 4.
"Effectual fervent prayer... righteous man." Jas. 5. 16.
2. **Humble.** "Fasted and prayed." v. 4.
"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord." James 4. 10.
3. **Persevering.** "Day and night." v. 6.
"Continuing instant in prayer." Rom. 12. 12.
4. **Confessing sin.** "We have sinned." v. 6, 7.
"I will confess my transgressions." Psa. 32. 5.
5. **Recalling covenant.** "Remember... the word." v. 8, 9.
"Remember the word unto thy servant." Psa. 119. 49.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Example of Nehemiah.

1. See Nehemiah's fidelity to his father's God while in a strange land, in the temptations of the palace, and the cares of public life. Let the young man away from home follow his example.
2. See his devotedness to the interests of the Church. His first inquiry was concerning it; his prayers were in its behalf; for it he was ready to make every sacrifice.
3. See his industrious, practical spirit. Read the story of his inspecting the condition of the city, his endeavor to arouse the people to action, and his labor in rebuilding the wall. What are you doing to build up Christ's Church?
4. See his self-denying liberality. He gave up much of position and wealth for the sake of God's people.
5. See his persevering spirit, not yielding to obstacles, but overcoming them. See in the note on the last verse of the lesson "seven hinderances" over which he triumphed.
6. See also his intense zeal for a pure Church. He led the people back to an obedience to God's law, to a solemn covenant with God, to keeping the Sabbath.

English Teacher's Notes.

I HAVE just been reading how the touch of a little girl on an electric battery has resulted in the explosion and shattering of nine acres of rock in New York harbor. A stranger to the wonderful powers of nature which man has learned to utilize might have wondered what possible connection there could be between the child on the shore and the massive rock which had so long blocked up the water-way; or how that small hand could make the slightest impression upon such an invincible barrier. But the spectators who looked upon the striking scene knew that there was a hidden power, mighty enough to do the stupendous work, and yet responsive to the gentle touch of a finger. To bring about this strange combination and its marvelous result had, however, involved a large expenditure of labor and skill. In the spiritual world the matter is far simpler. We shall see in our passage for to-day what a mighty power was set in motion by a secret touch, which produced wonderful results, visible to all. Guided by the passage, let us look at three pictures.

The first verse brings before us the capital and royal residence of the monarch of the great Per-

sian Empire, "Shushan the palace," or Susa. Here dwells Artaxerxes, "king of kings," as the Persian monarchs styled themselves. Ezra 12. 7. All the nations round about are subject to him. He reigns over many climes and many tongues. His wealth is enormous, his power undisputed, his will absolute. To him will apply the words of Solomon: "Where the word of a king is there is power, and who may say unto him, What doest thou?" Eccl. 8. 4. It would seem hopeless to attempt to influence such a sovereign outside the current of his own desires and pleasures.

Our next picture is found in vers. 2, 3. Far away from the magnificent capital of king Artaxerxes lies the conquered and vassal city of Jerusalem. For long, long years it has lain prostrate. The temple, indeed, has been rebuilt, and there are some families of Jews dwelling on the site of the old city of David. But the walls are in ruins and the whole place desolate in the extreme, while the returned exiles are scorned and persecuted by the Samaritans and other tribes round about them. Who shall build again these walls, and raise this city from the dust? Who shall obtain the great king's permission to do such a thing? And who shall carry it out in the teeth of determined hostility and opposition?

Now for our third picture. We go back to "Shushan the palace." Here is one of the great king's servants, a Jewish exile, shut up in his own room. Taking advantage, probably, of the temporary absence of Artaxerxes, he has withdrawn himself from the sight and speech of others, to spend certain days in fasting, mourning, and prayer. The weeping and fasting are expressions of his grief and his self-abasement. But the prayer is something more. It is the hand raised to touch the secret spring of power.

When the little girl was to give the impulse which should shatter the huge "Flood Rock" to fragments, she might not stand just where she chose. She had to take up such a position as should enable her to lay her finger on the spring. And she had to touch that one particular spring. She might have curiously fingered much that was round about her with no particular effect. The touch might be simple and gentle, but it must be direct.

And so, if that Jewish exile, in his lonely room, wished to bring about a great and wonderful effect, such as would seem hopeless to mere human calculations, he must get into the proper position and lay his hand on the right spring.

Now look at Nehemiah's position. We have already seen him weeping and fasting. These are the outward signs; but what is the language of his soul? "We have sinned... both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly," etc. He takes the sinner's place. And what does Scripture say of this? "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." Isa. 66. 2. But further observe what he styles himself and those for whom he pleads, "These are thy servants and thy people,

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whom thou hast redeemed." "Let thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant." He takes the servant's place. And what does Scripture say of this? "The Lord . . . will repent himself concerning his servants." Deut. 32. 36; Psa. 135. 14.

Now see where he lays his hand. First, on the character (or, more correctly speaking, the attributes) of God, ver. 5. And secondly, on the word of God, ver. 8, 9. There was his word to restore Israel, and there was his character—"that keepeth covenant," etc. And so the right spring was touched, and the hidden power was roused which issued in the turning of the heart of the great Artaxerxes, and the building of the walls of Jerusalem, as related in the Book of Nehemiah.

The hand of a child may touch the same secret spring. There have been mightier things done by infants than the breaking up of the Flood Rock. But if the children in our classes would have within their reach the power which produces such mighty effects, they must follow the example of Nehemiah.

1. *They must take the sinner's place.* This is the first step of all. The proud, self-righteous boy or girl cannot touch the spring of power. There must be the coming of Christ for pardon, and the constant recognition and confession of unworthiness and helplessness.

2. *They take the servant's place.* God will not place his power at our disposal to use at our own pleasure. Supplies are given to a general that he may fight for his sovereign or his government, not that he may aggrandize himself. It was to his servants, who were going about his work, that Christ promised "power . . . over all the power of the enemy." Luke 10. 19.

3. *They must ask according to God's word.* That is, according to what he has revealed of himself, and according to his promises. With the hand on this spring, temptation may be resisted, danger escaped, the needy helped, the sorrowful comforted, and the "good fight" fought and won.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

In the study of this lesson do not fail to read the entire Book of Nehemiah; urge the scholars on the Sunday before the lesson to read the book, and to bring to the class their estimate of Nehemiah's character, its traits, etc. . . . Show on the map the location of Shushan, Judea, etc., and Nehemiah's journey. . . . The "Thoughts for Young People" will suggest a line of treatment, presenting Nehemiah as an example in character. An interesting story could be told of his work, and the characteristics which he showed in it. . . . Another plan might be made on the basis of the "seven hinderances" (see notes, last verse of lesson) and how Nehemiah overcame them. Show how God's workers encounter the same hinderances now. . . . Still another plan is to take up the text of the lesson and show from it "how to pray." I. The circumstances under which Nehemiah prayed. II. The God to whom he prayed, and his character as shown in this lesson. III. How he prayed. See in this line the Analytical and Biblical Outline.

References. FREEMAN. Verse 1: Chisleu, 377 Ver. 11: The royal butler, 378.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

11. What is his warning to them?
That his word shall condemn them at the last day.
He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I speak, the same shall judge him in the last day.—John xii. 48.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER TEACHES					
DRAW NEAR WITH	HO: AWE	CON:	HUM:	REV:	EA:
SIN:		CON:	PROM:		CL:
A:		IM:	HELP:	G: MER:	

DIRECTIONS. Before the session of the school draw the lines that divide the board, as represented in the diagram. Write the sentence, "Nehemiah's Prayer Teaches," but leave every thing else to be written in answer to questions.

QUESTIONS. This prayer teaches, first, that I must [write] *Draw Near*. How? With *Holy Awe*. [Write, *Ho, Awe*.] With what else? *Confidence, Humility, Reverence, Earnestness*. [Write these words as abbreviated, and have some one scholar or teacher show from Nehemiah's prayer these teachings.] This prayer teaches another thing: who can tell what it is? [Ans, *We must pray confessing sin*.] And yet something else? [Ans, *Claiming the promises*.] But that is not all; what else? [Ans, *Asking immediate help*.] Lastly, the lesson teaches *God's Mercy*.

NOTE.—When all the answers have been written as abbreviated on the board, then rapidly review them.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. God, Our Only Help.

(A good preparation for teaching this lesson is a thorough study of the character of Nehemiah, the simple, devout, just, God-fearing man, who so fully trusted his own power to do any thing wise and right that he was obliged to depend upon God.) To be taught, 1.) That there was trouble in Jerusalem. 2.) That God laid this trouble upon the heart of a good man. 3.) That he taught this man where to look for help.

1. Tell that not all the Jewish captives returned to their own land; some still remained in Persia. Among these was a man named Nehemiah. He was cup-bearer to the king. But he prayed to the true God, and his heart was with his people in their work of building the temple. Tell that the Jews were not allowed to build it in peace. Enemies rose up to prevent them, so that they were a long time in building it. When it was done, they were not allowed to build the walls around Jerusalem, to keep their enemies out. This made a great deal of trouble for the Jews.

2. Tell about the visit which some of the Jews made to Nehemiah, and the sad story they told about the broken-down walls of their beloved city, and its gates burned with fire. Show that Nehemiah had a true love for God, and so any wrong done to God's house troubled him. Teach from this example that real love for God will make us sensitive to any slight put upon him. To disobey God is to slight him; to choose our way before his is to slight him. Let us be careful how we treat God.



3. Tell what Nehemiah did as soon as he heard about this trouble. Read verse 4. Ask if this was the best thing to do? Tell that Nehemiah did not know how he could help, and yet he wanted to help. Nobody could tell him what to do but God. Call for Golden Text, and tell what the last clause means. Tell some simple story illustrative of the way in which God enlightens the mind in answer to prayer, and teach that he will do it for a child as soon as for a wise man. Let this lesson strongly impress the wisdom of going straight to God in any time of trouble and waiting to see what he tells us to do, and then obeying his voice!

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Who are these approaching Nehemiah, "in Shyshan the palace" of the king? They are Jews, and among them is Hanani. What a sad story they tell! It is about a ruin-heap far away, Jerusalem, the beloved. How humbled are her once goodly walls! How black and fire-ravaged her once strong gates! What a feeble remnant straying over those walls and stealing through the blackened gate-ways! One word from the great Persian king would lift prostrate Zion out of her ash-heaps; and Nehemiah is the king's cup-bearer. Will Nehemiah speak to him? Not yet. To a higher King he must go first. In some isolated room, there he weeps and fasts. There in thought he goes over the ruins of Jerusalem, from street to street choked with rubbish, from gate-way to gate-way subdued by the fire, with bowed head and clasped hands confessing Israel's sin and begging forgiveness. Will not God give him power to plead with Artaxerxes? From the presence of God he goes to the presence of the king, and there holds out the golden goblet that Artaxerxes loves.

LESSONS FOR MARCH, 1886.

- MARCH 7. Reading the Law. Neh. 8. 1-12.
 MARCH 14. Esther's Petition. Esther 4. 10-17, and 5, 1-3.
 MARCH 21. Messiah's Messenger. Mal. 3. 1-6, and 4. 1-6.
 MARCH 28. First Quarterly Review.

At Home.

... The Sunday-school of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, of Cincinnati, Ohio, prints a full programme for every session, introducing a variety of exercises. Thus, in the "Order of Service" for one Sunday—which is a sample of several before us—we find an essay by one of the older scholars, a vocal solo, a recitation by a boy, the lesson-story told by a little girl, an address by one of the teachers, with songs by the different departments. Yet the study of the lesson is not neglected, for it occupies a prominent place in the center of the programme.

New Scottish Books.

From the enterprising Edinburgh House of Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier we have received the following new books:—

Katie, An Edinburgh Lassie. By ROBINA F. HARDY.

Many of our readers will remember that capital boy's book, *Jock Halliday*. This is a companion story by the same author and in the same vein of blended pathos and humour. The transformation of wee Katie from a wild, young "hempie," to a self-reliant, sensible girl, through some pretty rough discipline, is well told. The awful results of intemperance are strikingly set forth. The picturesque and, in its way, poetic lowland dialect adds much to the interest of the story. The book is elegantly printed and bound.

Archie, and Other Stories. By the same author. Exhibits equal literary and dramatic ability. Archie's self-abnegation in giving up a cherished profession at the call of duty, is well rewarded, even in this life. Very tender and touching is the story, "Only a Lassie," illustrating the Scripture, "a little child shall lead them." These are books for both young and old.

Bible Promises. By the Rev. RICHARD NEWTON. Pp. 188. Same publishers.

This is a series of Sermons to children, by the American divine, who has such a special ability for making religious truth interesting and instructive to young people. The book abounds largely in anecdotes illustrating Scripture truth. These are attractive to readers of all ages.

True Nobles and Heroes, and Other Stories. By DAVID HARRIS, F.S.S. Same publishers.

This is a series of true stories illustrating moral heroism, among both lofty and lowly. A good book for libraries. The above are all beautifully illustrated, and are suitable for birthday and Christmas presents.

Across Her Path. By ANNIE S. SWAN. Flexible cover. Pp. 192. Same house.

We have before reviewed with high commendation "*Aldersyde*," "*Carlowrie*," "*Ursula Vivian*," and other stories by this author. The first of these, it will be remembered, so pleased the veteran statesman, Mr. Gladstone, that he wrote the author a letter of congratulation—an honour of which the greatest writer might be proud. That letter is here given in *fac simile*. The present volume exhibits the same acute perception, the same graphic delineation, the same high moral purpose, and the same skilful use of the Scottish vernacular, though the lowland dialect is less used than in the other books.