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Presbyterian Church in Canada



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AND  
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UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

REV. R. DOUGLAS FRASER, M.A.

Editor and Business Manager

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# The Teachers Monthly

Vol. V.

AUGUST, 1899

No. 8

## Our Own

**T**HE very little ones are to have a paper every week and all their own. So said the General Assembly in June, and we are making ready. It is to begin with the New Year, but schools may look for samples earlier. We want them to wait and see ours before ordering any other. These four things we promise:

That it will be pretty;

That it will have abundance of pictures;

That the stories will be real children's stories;

That it will ever seek to make the children more like the child Jesus.

The child Jesus—  
fervently He loved His heavenly Father; He loved that Father's House and work; and He loved His own home in Nazareth. By and by, as He grew older, there appeared a passionate love for His own country and His own countrymen. It is in His steps we would lead the little ones—to love their Heavenly Father, to love their homes, and to love their country, that is, to be good Christians, good sons and daughters, and good patriots.

The SHORTER CATECHISM, with Proofs, is now ready. A severe critic of type, paper, and general accuracy, styles it "a gem." Extreme care has been taken to have it correct both as to the Questions and Answers

and as to the Scripture Proofs. It is extraordinary the number of errors, great and small, that had to be weeded out of what was said to be a very accurate edition. Possibly some have still escaped notice, for the tricks of type are mysteries past finding out. But we state the barest truth, when we say that it is more nearly perfect in the points named than any edition which is circulating among us.



REV. R. CAMPBELL, S.C.D.  
THE MODERATOR

## The Century Fund

It was a great moment when, rising to their feet as one man, the General Assembly resolved to go forward with the Century Fund—a million dollars to be laid on the altar of God as a thankoffering for the great things He has done for our Church and our homes and our country in the years past and a pledge of what we are ready to do for Him in the new century close at hand.

There was no wild excitement, but there was deep, burning enthusiasm. It was inspiring to see honored fathers and brethren in the ministry, merchant princes, and men foremost in public and professional life one after another declaring their confidence in the wisdom of the movement.

The climax was reached when the Moderator of the General Assembly, evidently deeply impressed with the weight of responsibility laid upon him, accepted the position of General Agent of the Century Fund.

Leadership counts, and with Rev. Dr. Warden as the Convener of the Committee and the Moderator giving his whole time to it for the next two years, humanly speaking the success of the Fund is assured.



REV. R. H. WARDEN, D.D.

The great features of the plan are these :

FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS, to be raised by congregations for their own Church debts ;

SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS, to be raised for the great Schemes of the Church, missionary, educational, benevolent. No Scheme has been left out and every one has kept his private preferences in the background. The allotment towards the individual objects which are to share in the Fund was absolutely unanimous.

To reach our distant subscribers in time the TEACHERS MONTHLY goes to press five weeks in advance. We cannot, therefore, give the plans of the Committee in full. Dr. Warden is at its head, and with him are men known throughout the Church and representing all branches of its work. The rich will certainly be expected to do generously. But it is not a mere rich man's fund. The poorest will rejoice to do his part, and the young people and the children are to be specially recognized. An opportunity to con-

tribute will be given to *everyone* connected with our Church, rich and poor, old and young, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and in all our widely scattered mission fields in three continents and the isles of the sea.

The raising of the Fund should be a great religious festival, a special season of worship, of prayer and praise and diligent labor for souls, extending throughout the whole two years; for, unless there be a revival of spiritual life and of enthusiasm in the Lord's work alongside the raising of the money, the Century Fund, even should the full amount and more be realized, will be only a half success, instead of the mighty uplift to our whole Church and national life which it is intended to be.

### An Offer

FOR OUR OWN illustrated paper for the very little ones, which is to begin with the New Year, we want ORIGINAL STORIES.

An offer is therefore made of

THREE DOLLARS in cash for the best story ;

TWO DOLLARS in cash for the second best story ;

ONE DOLLAR in cash for the third best story.

The following are the conditions :

1. The story must not exceed 325 words.
2. It must be original, the writer's own.
3. It must be a story such as a child of from three years of age to seven will relish.
4. It must serve to deepen the child's love of nature, God, home, country.
5. It must be signed by a brief motto, the writer's name to be enclosed in a separate sealed envelope with the motto written on the outside.
6. It must be addressed to REV. R. DOUGLAS FRASER, Editor TEACHERS MONTHLY, Confederation Life Building, Toronto, and reach him *not later than September 25th.*

The awards will be published in the November TEACHERS' MONTHLY and the prizes paid immediately thereafter.

The editor will be free to use any of the stories sent in, whether adjudged prizes or not. No manuscripts to be returned.

If you are fond of telling stories to the little ones, write your best one down, just as you would tell it, in the simplest, liveliest, homeliest style, and send it on.

### In the Assembly

The General Assembly received the report of the Committee on Sabbath School Publications in the heartiest possible manner, expressing satisfaction with the appointment of the Editor and Business Manager, and cordially commending the publications to the Sabbath Schools of the Church.

The large and steady increase in circulation and the sound financial position of the publications, all expenses met and a balance to the good for further extension, also elicited much commendation.

The prospects for the new Primary illustrated paper are excellent, and means are being devised to meet the demand for more advanced illustrated papers.

### A Fitting Recognition

The General Assembly acknowledged the long and valuable services of the retiring Convener of the Sabbath School Committee, Rev. T. F. Fotheringham, M.A., St. John, New Brunswick, whose labors in originating the Home Study Series of Lesson Helps deserve the lasting gratitude of the Church.

A resolution to this effect was adopted and was accompanied by a grant to Mr. Fotheringham of \$750, of which \$500 was from the Assembly Fund and the balance from the Sabbath School Publications.

Mr. Fotheringham now retires from the Convenership of the Sabbath School Committee. Rev. John Neil, B.A., Westminster Church, Toronto, is his successor.

### Committee on Sabbath School Publications for 1899-1900

*Appointed by the General Assembly*

Rev. R. H. Warden, D.D., Convener, Rev. Drs. D. H. Fletcher, J. Thompson, D. MacTavish; Messrs. E. Scott, M.A., L. H. Jordan, B.D. Messrs. Hamilton Caspells, James Bain, Jr., with Rev. John Neil, B.A., Convener of the Sabbath School Committee. Rev. J. A. Brown, B.A., and another to be named by that Committee.

### Know the Book

*By Rev. Alfred H. Moment, D.D.*

It is serious business in which the Sabbath School teacher is engaged. For half an hour each week he sits down with his class to discharge the tremendous responsibility of speaking for God. What if he speak for himself or of some popular fancy of what religion is or ought to be, and not for God? To be saved from such peril, the teacher, first and foremost, must seek to know THE BOOK—the one Book God has given to reveal Himself and true religion.

We only do with efficiency and zeal what we know. We only know that to which we give earnest thought and care. Ignorance always blunts the keen edge of energy and damages the quality of the thing done. But knowledge, positive, well-defined, correct, complete, does the business, sets things on fire and leads on to a glorious success. The fact holds good in every walk of life and nowhere more than in the work of the Sabbath School teacher. If he do not "search the Scriptures," he will be dull and stupid, or vain, speculative and blasphemous—misrepresenting God. And how dreadful a thing it is to misrepresent God! As one has well said: "To bear false witness against one's neighbor is a crime. To bear false witness against God is a sacrilege."

What, therefore, the Sabbath School teacher needs, that he may ever speak to his class "on God's behalf," is a new enthusiasm of Bible study. No gift or accomplishment can compensate for not knowing The Book, in which, alone, God has revealed salvation. To subordinate such knowledge to a larger knowledge of something else, is to have that "something else" determine the teacher's zeal and purpose. That is, if he has a larger knowledge of Systematic Theology than he has of the Bible, he will plunge his class into the religious controversies of the times. If it be of science, his zeal will run along lines of material progress; if of politics and social matters, he will be carried away with moral reforms. But if the

teacher cultivates a growing enthusiasm of Bible study, so as actually to know its facts, doctrines, spirit and purpose, then the Lord Jesus Christ will be his charm and power, and his loftiest and purest ambition will be to have his scholars hear, from his own fervent lips, the "wonderful words of life," which alone convince of sin and lead to salvation.

In his recent sermon before the graduating class of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, President Patton said: "We have now a new Christianity containing sentimentality and sociology in almost equal proportions." But why should anything else be expected but this legitimate offspring from men now preaching in our pulpits, now teaching in our Sabbath Schools, and now giving instruction in our institutions of sacred learning, who substitute for The Book some other book? The Christianity of God can only hold its place when The Book of God holds its place. Therefore, to know this Book is the first requisite of every one who, in speaking for God, would not misrepresent God.

In the next place, the Sabbath School teacher should know The Book in that special portion set apart for the weekly lesson. As its never-dying verses contain a message of eternal life for souls, the teacher should not spend the time on dates, authorship, geography, history, or things external, but in getting hold of the hidden things of the Gospel—the saving truth of God's Word, the life-giving food for the soul. As the message consists in this and nothing else, it is the teacher's great responsibility to possess himself of this message, the spiritual substance contained in the lesson. He must have this truth clear in his own mind; must have an experience of it in his heart; must hold it in deep conviction as a great spiritual reality; and must be able to give the message to his class, not with the eloquence and demonstration of a lecturer or a preacher, but quietly, earnestly, and clearly, as a teacher, always speaking in the spirit of a loving friend.

Allow me to accent this last thought, that the message of love and truth is for the class,

that the clear, definite knowledge of the lesson must be possessed as a means to an end: the salvation of souls. A man may have his gun loaded all right, yet, in shooting, aim at nothing. The glory of Admiral Sampson's gunners was that they struck every time, and drove the battle-ships of the foe to smash. The only "smash" some teachers and preachers make is that of precious time and opportunity. It is one thing to have shot in the gun, and another thing to aim at and hit the target. The teacher must make his class the objective point. He must unfold the lesson with power, simplicity, and adaptability to the young mind and heart. To teach religion to the young is the only purpose for which the Sabbath School exists. The teacher who cannot, or who does not, teach the religion of free grace to the hearts of his scholars has no right to be a teacher. God requires this one thing from him; so does the Church; and so do the immortal souls under his care. As a teacher his knowledge of The Book is for salvation purposes. Hence the work of a Sabbath School teacher is most difficult, taxing his ability to study, his spiritual discernment, his steadfast hope, and noblest ambition.

A word in conclusion. With his heart right toward God, and with an earnest desire to know God's Book, the Sabbath School teacher needs but one thing more to come up to the full measure of his glorious work. It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He who would be an exponent of religion to others must have two things: (1) a vision of truth, (2) ability to express the vision. The Holy Ghost is given to the Sabbath School teacher to accomplish in him these two things—to see the Gospel with clear eye, and express the Gospel in clear words.

These were the things that made Peter a rock; John, a son of thunder; Apollos, an eloquent man and "mighty in the Scriptures"; and Paul, the greatest of the apostles. They will also work something of the same graces in ourselves, who are honestly seeking to know The Book and to teach it to others.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

# Sabbath School Publications

Presbyterian Church in Canada

Published under authority of the General Assembly

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REV. R. DOUGLAS FRASER, M.A.

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SUPT. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.

SCHOOL. For His mercy endureth forever.

SUPT. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

SCHOOL. Whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.

III. SINGING.

IV. PRAYER; closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert.

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### Closing

I. SINGING.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

SCHOOL. And forget not all His benefits.

SUPT. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.

SCHOOL. Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.

SUPT. As the heaven is high above the earth.

SCHOOL. So great is His mercy toward them that fear Him.

SUPT. Glory ye in His holy name.

SCHOOL. Let the hearts of them rejoice that seek the Lord.

III. CLOSING HYMN OR DOXOLOGY.

IV. BENEDICTION OR CLOSING PRAYER.



Bible Dictionary for Third Quarter,  
1899.

**A'-bed'-ne-go.** The Chaldean name given to Daniel's friend Azariah; saved with his two companions from the fiery furnace.

**A'-saph.** A Levite appointed by David as leader of the praise of the first Temple.

**As'-sur, As'-shur.** Also (Assyria) An ancient kingdom lying in the valley of the Tigris, to the north of Babylonia. Its capital was Nineveh. Its kings overran western Asia and carried off Israel into captivity.

**As'-a-ri'-ah.** The Hebrew name of Abed-nego, which see.

**Bab'-y-lon.** The kingdom lying south of Assyria in the valley of the Euphrates. Its kings carried Judah captive.

**Bon'-ja-min.** The tribe founded by the youngest son of Jacob, whose territory lay between Judah and Ephraim.

**Chal'-de-ans.** Natives of Chaldea. In Daniel the name is applied specially to a priest class who were magicians and astronomers.

**Cy'-rus.** At first king of Elam to the east of Babylonia, and then successfully conqueror of Media, 549, of Persia, 540, of Lydia, 545 and of Babel, 539, B. C. A great soldier and ruler. Gave the Jews liberty to return and aided them in rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem.

**Daniel.** The fourth of the "greater prophets"; carried as a lad captive to Babylon; through the fear of God held places of high trust through several reigns.

**Da-ri'-us, the Me'di-an.** (Dan. 5: 31.) Not as yet fully identified with any historical personage mentioned outside the Scriptures.

**Da-ri'-us (Hystaspes).** Belonged to the Persian branch of the same royal house as Cyrus. Ruled over the united kingdom of Babylon from 525 to 485 B. C. Aided the Jews at Jerusalem to complete the temple.

**Da'-vid.** Son of Jesse, and after Saul called to be king of Israel and Judah.

**E'-den.** The garden in which our first parents were placed at their creation.

**E'-gypt.** The country of the Nile basin in Africa, in which the children of Israel were in bondage for four hundred years.

**En'-ge-di.** A spring of warm water which bursts forth from the cliffs overlooking the west shore of the Dead Sea, near its centre, and a town near by.

**En-eg-la'im.** A locality probably on the N. W. shore of the Dead Sea, near the mouth of the Jordan, named only by Ezekiel.

**E'-sar-had'-don.** Favorite son and successor to Sennacherib, King of Assyria. Repeopled parts of Sidon and Israel with people from Elam and Babylonia.

**Han-a-ni'-ah.** The Hebrew name of Shadrach, one of Daniel's three friends, who with his two companions was saved in the fiery furnace.

**Hag'-gai.** A prophet of the Restoration, who stirred up the people to rebuild the temple. Wrote one of the books of the Old Testament.

**Is'-ra-el.** Name given to Jacob because he prevailed in prayer. Later given to his descendants, the whole nation; and later still to the kingdom of the Ten Tribes.

**Jer-e-mi'-ah.** Born of a priestly family at Anathoth, and prophesied from 626 to 586, B. C., the period before and during the exile.

**Jer-u'-sa-lem.** The Holy City, capital of all Israel, and after the separation, of the kingdom of Judah.

**Josh'-u-a (or Jesh'-u-a).** The High Priest of the people in the time of the Restoration.

**Jos'-e-dech.** The father of Joshua, the High Priest of the Restoration.

**Ju'-dah.** The fourth son of Jacob and the tribe springing from him. After the division of the kingdom, the name was applied to the southern division, which included Judah and Benjamin, with a portion of Simeon and Dan, and had Jerusalem as its capital.

**Leb'-a-non.** A mountain range in the north of Palestine.

**Le'-vites.** Descendants of Levi, the third son of Jacob by Leah; set apart for the service of the Sanctuary. The family of Aaron, to whom the priesthood was appropriated, was of the tribe of Levi.

**Medes.** One of the most powerful nations of western Asia and forming one of the most important portions of the kingdom of Cyrus.

**Me'-shach, Mi'-sha-el.** The Chaldean name given to one of Daniel's three companions and who was miraculously preserved in the fiery furnace.

**Mith'-re-dath.** The treasurer of Cyrus, King of Babylonia, at the time of the Restoration.

**Neb'-u-chad-nez'-zar (Nebuchadrezzar).** The great King of Babylon who besieged Jerusalem and carried Judah captive, and who built up Babylon in glory and pride.

**Per'-sia.** A kingdom lying east of Babylon whose kings overcame Babylon and ruled over all the western part of Asia.

**Sha'-drach.** The Chaldean name for Hananiah, which see.

**She-al'-ti-el.** The father of Zerubbabel, the ruler of Judah in the Restoration.

**Shesh-baz'-zar.** The Persian name of Zerubbabel, the Prince of the Jews in the Restoration, who ruled over the state and supervised the building of the temple.

**Zer-ub'-ba-bel.** See Sheshbazzar.

# International Bible Lessons

## Studies in the Old Testament

### LESSON CALENDAR : THIRD QUARTER

- 1. July 2..... Gracious Invitations. Hosea 14 : 1-9.
- 2. July 9..... Daniel in Babylon. Daniel 1 : 8-21.
- 3. July 16..... The Hebrews in the Fiery Furnace. Daniel 3 : 14-28.
- 4. July 23..... The Handwriting on the Wall. Daniel 5 : 17-31.
- 5. July 30..... Daniel in the Den of Lions. Daniel 6 : 10-23.
- 6. August 6..... The New Heart. Ezekiel 36 : 25-36.
- 7. August 13..... Ezekiel's Great Vision. Ezekiel 37 : 1-14.
- 8. August 20..... The River of Salvation. Ezekiel 47 : 1-12.
- 9. August 27..... Returning from Captivity. Ezra 1 : 1-11.
- 10. September 3..... Rebuilding the Temple. Ezra 3 : 10-4 : 5.
- 11. September 10..... Encouraging the Builders. Haggai 2 : 1-9.
- 12. September 17..... Power Through the Spirit. Zechariah 4 : 1-14.
- 13. September 24..... REVIEW.



### LESSON VI.

## THE NEW HEART

August 6, 1899

Ezekiel 36 : 25-36. Commit to memory vs. 25-27. Read Ezekiel 11 : 14-25; Jer. 31 : 31-34

25 I Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

29 And I will also save you from all your uncleanness: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

30 And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.

31 Then shall ye remember your own evil ways,

and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.

32 Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.

33 Thus saith the Lord God; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.

34 And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.

35 And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited.

36 Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it.

**Revised Version**—1 And I will : 2 Multiply : 3 Nations : 4 Omit owns : 5 That I cleanse you : 6 Cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall : 7 Fenced and inhabited : 8 Have builded . . . and planted that which.

#### GOLDEN TEXT

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

#### DAILY READINGS

- M.—Ezek. 36 : 22-30 | The new heart.
- T.—Ezek. 36 : 31-38 | The new heart.
- W.—Ezek. 11 : 14-21. The gift of God.
- Th.—Jer. 31 : 31-34. The new covenant.
- F.—Jer. 32 : 36-44. A God-fearing heart.
- S.—Jer. 24 : 1-7. Whole-hearted return.
- S.—Titus 2 : 1-8. Regeneration.

#### TIME

After the destruction of Jerusalem, B.C. 586.

#### PLACE

Ezekiel dwelt at Tel-Abib, on the bank of the River Chebar, probably one of the great canals near Babylon.

#### CATECHISM

Q. 68. What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

#### LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise—43 (Ps.), 131, 160, 553, 200.

#### LESSON PLAN

I. A New Heart, 25, 26. Cleansed by God's Spirit.

11. A New Life, 27. Of obedience to God's law.

111. A New Land, 32-34. Their own land restored to them again, where God will be with them, to keep them holy, and to send prosperity.

IV. A New World, 35, 36. The heathen brought to the Lord through the Lord's power and grace towards His own people.

#### CONNECTING LINKS

The prophet Ezekiel was one of the captives taken to Babylon in the first captivity (See chs. 1 : 2 ; 93 : 21 ; 40 : 1.) His prophetic work began five years afterwards (1 : 1-3) and extended at least twenty-two years (29 : 17). The first twenty-four chapters of his prophecies are occupied with the ruin of the city and state; the remaining chapters, *in the first captivity*

*in the first captivity*  
*in the first captivity*  
*in the first captivity*

its future restoration and glory. It is from this portion that to-day's lesson is taken. The people of Judah had defiled themselves and their land with their idolatry and thus incurred the displeasure of Jehovah, who scattered them among the heathen. Jehovah's name was thus profaned among His enemies, who traced these calamities to His weakness. Therefore, for the sake of His holy Name, He will interfere, and by renewing, restoring, and blessing His people, He will be exalted among the heathen. (vs. 21-24.)

*He will raise up for Judah a new heart*

#### EXPOSITION

##### I. A New Heart, 25, 26.

V. 25. *Then will I sprinkle.* The external restoration must be accompanied by an internal change. The sprinkling of clean water symbolized cleansing. (Read the picturesque account in Num. 19: 9-18.) It was a symbol of a better cleansing. (See Heb. 9: 13, 14; 10: 22, and compare also John 3: 5.) *Ye shall be clean.* Idolatrous worship was and is indescribably vile. (Eph. 5: 12.) But very penetrating also is the grace of God, "Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow," is a Scriptural prayer. (Isa. 1: 18; Ps. 51: 10; 1 John 1: 7.) *From . . . filthiness and from . . . idols;* from the foulness that idolatry has wrought, from filthiness and from idols and from any leaning towards idolatry—a thorough cleansing.

V. 26. *A new heart also.* Not merely is the past forgiven and the old heart removed, but a new heart is bestowed. The "heart" is used here generally of the nature. Formerly their heart was stony, obdurate, unimpressionable and rebellious (2: 4; 3: 7); now they shall receive a heart of flesh, impressionable and soft, sensitive to the Divine admonitions and will. (*Camb. Bible.*) The stony heart is to be exchanged for the heart of flesh. *A new spirit.* "The spirit is the ruling principle in the mind, the force that gives direction to thought." This would be changed from idolatry to Jehovah. Both the passive and active sides of their nature would be changed.

##### II. A New Life, 27.

*I will put my spirit within.* God's method of renewal is from within outward; regenerative, and then reformatory, the heart first, then the conduct. This renewal He effects by the gift of His Holy Spirit. The promise of the Holy Spirit does not appear prominently till the Exile. Then it is oft repeated.

(Ezek. 37: 14; Joel 2: 28; Zech. 4: 6; 12: 10.) *And cause you to walk.* The Holy Spirit moves us inwardly to do God's will and gives us the power to do it. *Statutes are laws as passed by legislators or rulers; judgments, laws as set forth in the decisions of judges.* The words here embrace all the moral law of God and cover the whole range of human duty.

##### III. A New Land, 28-34.

V. 28. *The land that I gave to your fathers.* Canaan was the land promised to faithful Abraham (Gen. 12). It had been again given to Abraham's descendants when they came out of Egypt. It would now be restored to those who had forfeited it through idolatry, if they would keep God's statutes and judgments. (Ch. 28: 25; 37: 25.) Great temporal and spiritual blessings follow in the train of obedience (Isa. 1: 19; John 14: 15, 16). *Ye shall be my people.* They, as no other, would enjoy His favour and blessing. All the promises of Scripture are to the filial and obedient, and to them alone. *Will be your God.* Cleansed of idolatry, they will give Him and Him alone their trust and service and He will be free to do for them all that is in His heart.

V. 29. *Save you from, or "out of";* a most expressive phrase. Prevailing and abiding grace will be theirs. (Compare 37: 23.) *I will call for the corn;* highly picturesque. Both harvests and famine are at the call of God. The corn, driven far off by sin, will come, at His call, to the penitent. Side by side in the Lord's Prayer are the petitions "Give us this day our daily bread" and "Forgive us our trespasses."

V. 30. *I will multiply.* The curse of sin which had fallen on field and vineyard will be removed, and "the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted

for a forest" (Isa. 32 : 15). *No more reproach.* The heathen reproached them that either Jehovah was angry with them, or was unable to bless their labors. This reproach would be taken away.

Vs. 31-34. *Then shall ye remember. . . and shall loathe yourselves.* "The goodness of God leadeth to repentance" (Rom. 2 : 4). The goodness of God in restoring and blessing them will fill their minds with abhorrence of what they were, and of what they had done. (16 : 61, 63 ; 20 : 41-44.) *Not for your sakes.* "Not for your good deserving ; on the contrary, their own ways when thought upon could only cause them shame." (Lamb. Bible). *Thus saith the Lord God,* their own Jehovah, whose might and faithfulness and love they knew, "who saith and it is done." *In the day.* So closely connected are the word of the Lord, and its fulfilment, so closely, the inward renewal, and the outward rest and restoration. The Lord is ever swift to bless, if we will only permit Him.

*And the desolate land.* The land lying desolate through sin shall then be tilled, and thus the reproach be removed.

#### IV. A New World, 85, 86.

Vs. 35, 36. *And they shall say ;* the testimony of "all that passed by" (v. 34). *This land that was desolate . . . like the garden of Eden ;* prosperity following in the wake of true religion. Is it not ever so? It is irreligion that blights communities and nations. No truly godly nation disintegrates. The first places amongst the nations ever belong to the peoples who fear and serve the Lord. *The heathen . . . shall know.* Thus the worship of God extends. God's gracious dealings with His own people proclaim aloud to the world His power and goodness, and men are led to recognize and serve Him. So the love and fear of God are to become world-wide. *Have spoken . . . and will do.* God's word stands fast. His promises are "yea and amen," absolutely sure. (See also Heb. 6 : 17, 18.)

#### ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

*H. A. McBeth, 1899*

In this portion of his prophecy Ezekiel holds before the people the inspiring hope of return from captivity. In so doing he was performing a duty highly important to the exiles. That man is the true friend of his kind who cheers the despondent and swings out into the sky of their lives the star of hope. We should all aim at encouraging and strengthening one another. The world is full of discouraging experiences, and most people are fighting a hard battle. Blessed indeed, therefore, are those who cheer and hearten their fellowmen.

*Then will I sprinkle clean water,* v. 1. The promise of cleansing was a necessary accompaniment to the promise of return, because to return to their own land unchanged in heart and life would simply mean that the old page of their history would be written over again, and its record would be that of the old sins and the old consequences. Their real loss was not the loss of their country and of their homes, but the loss of clean hearts, a sad beggaring indeed.

"Weep not for broad lands lost ;  
Weep not for fair hopes crossed ;  
Weep not when limbs wax old ;  
Weep not when friends grow cold ;  
Weep not that death must part  
Thine and the best-loved heart ;  
Yet weep—weep all thou can—  
Weep, weep, because thou art  
A sin-defiled man."

*From . . . filthiness and . . . idols will I cleanse you,* v. 25. The Exile undoubtedly did marvels in the way of bringing the Jewish people to their senses in the matter of their relation to God. Like the lost son in the parable, they "came to themselves," and saw the folly of idol worship so that they never fell into that sin again. Sin is defiling to the soul, as any kind of filth is to the body, and we must be cleansed from sin before we are fit company for God or fit for any service in God's name. Idols must be put away. *Whatever takes the place of God in our hearts is an idol and must be utterly cast out.*

*A new heart,* v. 26. A radical change which God effects. The very springs of our natures are sanctified. "If any man be in

Christ he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5 : 17). Thoughts are new, desires are new, activities run in a new channel. Like Saul of Tarsus, the renewed man preaches the faith which once he destroyed (Gal. 1 : 23). This change must begin with the heart; for "out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4 : 23). Outward forces of compulsion or restraint never effect permanent reformation in character. The hard, unimpressionable, unfeeling heart must be changed to the heart of flesh, whose quivering life manifests true feeling and produces right action.

*And I will put my spirit within you*, v. 27. In order to live the true life we must have a motive power, and this God supplies by the gift of His Holy Spirit. The vivid words of the creation story tell us how the inert body of man became alive when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Gen. 2 : 7). So, into us who are dead in trespasses and sins, and thus incapable of right action, God sends the Holy Spirit as an impartation of Himself. Without this Spirit we can do nothing. It is this Spirit that enables us to walk in the statutes of God and keep His judgments. Our anxiety, therefore, should be to drive forth from our hearts all that can hinder the Spirit coming into our lives, for only a cleansed heart is a meet dwelling-place for Him (Eph. 4 : 30).

*Ye shall dwell in the land*, v. 28. There is a close connection between national righteousness and national stability. Holiness is better than armies or navies. Indeed, without the strength of heart and arm which holiness alone can produce, armies and navies are impossible. The history of our time is a startling commentary on this. The nations that are undergoing the humiliating process of partition and dismemberment are nations that have abandoned themselves to mere worldliness or to superstition and consequent godlessness. Strange, is it not? that even the brute force, which is the poor substitute among warring nations for sweet reason, dies out soon in those peoples who fail to fear God and work righteousness.

*Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God*. Can any promise be richer than this? Ye

shall be Mine, close to My heart, guarded by My loving eye, led by My gracious hand: Mine and oh, how precious to Me. And I will be yours, giving out all the fulness of My power and grace for your help and joy. So Paul says to the Philippians; "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (ch. 4 : 19).

*I will call for the corn*, v. 29. God's guarantee of prosperity is set forth in this verse and the verse following. He does nothing by halves. It is "the best robe," and "the ring on his hand," and "the shoes on his feet," and "the fatted calf," and the merry-making, when the prodigal returns.

*Then shall ye remember your own evil ways*, v. 31. One of the first things we realize, when some one whom we have tried to injure does us a good turn, is our own meanness and wickedness. So, when we are redeemed from death by God, we loathe ourselves for the enmity we once displayed against Him. His love manifested to us in Christ makes us ashamed of the way we have treated Him. We abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes.

*Not for your sakes*, v. 32. In this saying God takes away from us all possible idea that He saves us because we deserve it at His hands. To believe that we have merited salvation is to prevent its power coming into our lives. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3 : 5), is the testimony of the truly converted soul. The knowledge of this enhances our loathing of our own selves and leads us to appreciate all the more the undeserved grace and mercy of God.

*The desolate land shall be tilled*, v. 34. It is true of the godly man that "whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Ps. 1 : 3). It is a charge sometimes made against the Church in our day that it exists for the prosperous classes; but this is mistaking cause and effect, since it is much nearer the real truth to say that people are prosperous because they are in the Church. This is largely true even as to this world's affairs, and it is wholly true as to the only prosperity that endures. Therefore, says Paul, get hold of godliness. It is

the best of all investments ; for "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise

of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4: 8).

#### TEACHING HINTS

THE GOSPEL IN EZEKIEL, by Dr. Guthrie, of Edinburgh, was a book famous a generation ago. The great preacher entered deep into the spirit of the great prophet when he devoted twenty-two discourses to the exposition of a portion of the chapter from which the lesson for this Sabbath has been taken. Ezekiel, a prophet of the captivity, lived and suffered amongst the captives in Babylon. The shame of their sin and of its punishment was sore upon him. The burden of his message was God's wrath for sin, but, better still, God's grace for the sinner—the Gospel, the "good news" of God's grace. That Gospel he opens out fully here.

Begin by recalling Lesson I., Hosea's pleading with Israel to return to the Lord ere it should be too late. That was almost one hundred and fifty years back, before either Israel or Judah had been led away captive. They had refused to return, had plunged more deeply into sin, and were now suffering the consequences. They had dishonored God, but He had not forgotten them. His infinite love follows them, and it is the very throbbings of God's heart that one hears in the passage we are to study.

1. *A new heart*, 25, 26. Do not spend time in any nice partitioning off of "heart" and "spirit." Rather make haste to bring out these three truths: (a) That sin defiles, (b)

that it defiles every part of the nature, (c) that only God can cleanse; and this fourth truth, also, that He cleanses by renewal. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3).

2. *A new life*, 27. Show that the core of godliness is the doing of God's will (Eccl. 12: 13), that obedience to God's will is possible only through renewal of our corrupt hearts; and that the natural outcome of the renewed heart is such conformity to God's will.

3. *A new land*, 28-34. The details of the verses may be questioned out at length, but the emphasis should be placed where Ezekiel places it—national soundness and prosperity, the result of holiness of heart and life. "In a very real sense," say to the scholars, "our country's weal or woe depends on your loyalty to God and good, and fine."

4. *A new world*, 35, 36. These verses give a fine opportunity of illustrating one way by which the Gospel spreads, viz., through the evident blessing of God on those who obey the Gospel. Godly living, whether on the part of individuals or nations, has a marvelous potency in winning others to God.

Let the lesson end—there is no abruptness in the transition—with the **GOLDEN TEXT**, for the new heart is the secret of the holiness and the power to lead others in the right way.

#### TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous. Only one topic should be given to each scholar. Sometimes all may be asked to write on the same topic. The papers to be read out in the class.)

1. The new heart.
2. The richness of God's grace.
3. Godly men, a nation's strength.

#### BLACKBOARD REVIEW

## A CONTRAST

S  
IN  
SUFFERING  
SHAME

H  
OLINESS  
HAPPINESS  
HONOR

## LESSON VII.

## EZEKIEL'S GREAT VISION

August 13, 1899

Ezekiel 37: 1-14. Commit to memory vs. 5, 6. Read John 8: 1-18

1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones.

2 And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.

4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

5 Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause<sup>1</sup> breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a<sup>2</sup> noise, and behold<sup>3</sup> a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

9 Then said<sup>4</sup> he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O<sup>5</sup> breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are<sup>6</sup> cut off, for our parts.

12 Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

13 And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and<sup>7</sup> brought you up out of your graves.

14 And shall put my<sup>8</sup> spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

Revised Version—<sup>1</sup>Margin, Spirit; <sup>2</sup>Thundering; <sup>3</sup>An earthquake; <sup>4</sup>Margin, Breath; <sup>5</sup>Margin, Wind, or Spirit; <sup>6</sup>Clean out off; <sup>7</sup>Caused you to come up out.

## GOLDEN TEXT

"I will put my spirit within you." Ezek. 36: 27.

## DAILY READINGS

M.—Ezek. 37: 1-14. Ezekiel's vision.  
T.—Ezek. 37: 20-28. Promise of restoration.  
W.—Ezek. 22: 23-31. All have sinned.  
Th.—Isa. 1: 1-9. Dead in sin.  
F.—Deut. 8: 11-20. Warning.  
S.—Rom. 8: 1-11. Quickened by the Spirit.  
S.—Eph. 2: 1-10. From death to life.

## TIME

Early in the Exile, which Ezekiel foretells is to come to an end.

## PLACE

On the banks of the Chebar.

## CATECHISM

Q. 69. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.

## LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise—25, 105, 111, 518, 551.

## LESSON PLAN

## I. The Dry Bones, 1, 2.

Which Ezekiel saw in the open valley, "very many" and "very dry."

## II. The Living Army, 3-10.

The dead bones, changed by God's power and at the prophet's word into living men.

## III. What it all Meant, 11-14.

The hopeless captives in Babylon to be brought back a living nation into their own land.

## CONNECTING LINKS

Chapter 36 concludes with a promise that the captives should return in flocks to re-inhabit their own land. But how could such a promise be realized in a people who seemed utterly dead and insensible to any such hope? The situation was one of utmost discouragement. To remove the gloom and to give assurance of God's quickening power, the vision of the lesson was granted.

## EXPOSITION

## I. The Dry Bones, 1, 2.

V. 1. *The hand of the Lord*; the holy impulse of the Spirit of God, which moved the prophet as under the power and influence of divine strength. (1 Kings 18: 46; Ezek. 1: 3.) In old time, says the apostle Peter, holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Pet. 1: 21.) The condition of the prophet's mind under this impulse would be that of earnest thought, which would receive the divine communica-

tions unperturbed, the mind enlightened, the moral nature stimulated, and the will constrained by the highest motives. (*Professor R. Y. Thomson*.) *Carried me out in the Spirit*. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit he was carried out, not bodily, nor in day-dreaming, but on the flight of the most earnest moral and spiritual thought. *Set me down in the valley*. Ezekiel may have been accustomed to meditate in some such secluded place. (See ch. 3: 22.) "The valley repre-

gens Mesopotamia, the scene of Israel's sojourn in her state of national deadness."

V. 2. *Caused me to pass by them.* The prophet was led by the Spirit to give close attention to the bones in the valley, to view, as it were, the nation from all sides. *Very many in the open valley.* The bones were strewn over the valley in vast numbers, and they appeared bleached and dry. Their numbers were, no doubt, suggested by the actual fact, that vast multitudes of the people had been slain by the sword, or had otherwise perished; and their dryness expresses at least the utter deadness of the nation, and the apparent hopelessness of its revival, if not (v. 11) that it had been long dead. (*Camb. Bible.*)

## II. The Living Army, 8-10.

V. 3. *Son of man, i.e.,* Mortal, weak, helpless man (ch. 2 : 1, 3 ; 3 : 1, 3 ; 4 : 16 ; 8 : 5). *Shall these bones live?* The Holy Spirit raised the question, which pressed so heavily on the heart of the people and of the prophet (v. 11), and raised it to answer it. *O Lord God, thou knowest ;* looking at the bones, so dead and dry, the prophet could not answer Yes. Looking into the face of Him who spoke, and whose hand was upon him, he could not answer No. (Rom. 4 : 17-21 ; Heb. 11 : 19.) Humbly and reverently he answers, "O Lord God, thou knowest." Compare John's answer, Rev. 7 : 14.

V. 4. *Prophecy upon (over) these bones.* To prophecy is to speak in God's name and what God wishes said. Ezekiel would not have dared to speak any word of himself. The word of man would have been a mockery ; but when "the Lord hath spoken, who can but prophecy?" (Ch. 2 : 3, 4, 6.)

Vs. 5, 6. *Behold I ;* "the Lord Jehovah, the source of all power, the controller of all nations," *will cause breath.* "The act of putting breath within them, being the main and final step of giving them life, is mentioned first as if it embraced all." (*Camb. Bible.*) *Ye shall live.* A marvellous word, truly, to dry bones, but a word of rich promise. *And I will lay sinews upon you.* The detail of the process of the transformation of the dry bones into living men, with flesh and blood,

is given to assure the captives that the change promised will be real and complete. *Ye shall know.* God makes Himself known in nature and in grace by His life-giving and transforming power. None but Jehovah could do such a miracle as this.

Vs. 7, 8. *As I was commanded.* God delights in and rewards the prophet who is obedient to His word ; and only the word received from God is effectual to persuade men. *A noise.* The margin of the Rev. Ver. reads "a thundering." *A shaking ;* Rev. Ver. "an earthquake." *And the bones came together ;* nature in sympathy ; as at the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord. (Mat. 27 : 51-54 ; 28 : 2.)

*Bone to his bone.* What a picture this, of the coming together of the scattered and dead elements of the nation, the Church, and the whole race of men, under the power and influence of the Word of God. *Sinews . . . flesh . . . skin . . . but no breath.* The order described in the creation of man (Gen. 2) is observed here. First, the body was formed, and then the breath of life was breathed into it. (*Camb. Bible.*)

V. 9. *Prophecy unto the wind (breath).* In Hebrew the same word means breath and spirit. The sign of life, the breath, is seen to be identical with the wind or air, and by an intensification of meaning common to many languages becomes the principle of life, or the living principle itself, the spirit. The poet truly says (etymologically) the spirit does but mean the breath. But, though the words be identical, the ideas are different. (*Prof. A. B. Davidson.*) *Come from the four winds.* The wind from the four corners of heaven is a true symbol of the universal, life-giving Spirit of God. (v. 14.) *Breathe upon (into) these slain ;* as God did into Adam. (Gen. 2 : 7.)

V. 10. *So I prophesied.* The life-giving Spirit was at the command of the prophet, and responded to his word. The Spirit of power is given to those who keep in close touch with God. (John 20 : 22 ; Acts 2.) *An exceeding great army ;* signifying the strength and greatness to which the nation should grow.



## II. What it all meant, 11-14.

V. 11. *These bones are the whole house of Israel.* Ezekiel, though belonging to Judah, yearned for the quickening and re-union of the whole nation (v. 16). The ten tribes had gone first into captivity, then the two, and the whole nation was scattered and apparently dead. *Our bones are dried.* The prophet takes up the despairing words of the people, if perchance he may remove their gloom and bring them a message of hope. *Our hope is lost.* The destruction of the nation appeared final, and with it all their hopes. Their religious and national hopes were so intertwined that the loss of national life seemed to them the loss of God. *We are cut off for our parts.* Rev. Ver. "Clean cut off." "As for ourselves" they say, we are

*D. M. Conway, Ottawa*

### ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

*The hand of the Lord was upon me, v. 1.* The prophets never felt that they gave their messages of their own accord. The false prophets spake "out of their own hearts" (ch. 13: 2); but a divine compulsion rested upon the true prophets. "If," exclaims Jeremiah, "if I say I will not make mention of Him nor speak any more in His name, then there is in mine heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing and I cannot contain." (Jer. 20: 9, Rev. Ver.). The words of the prophets ought, therefore, to lay a similar constraint upon every hearer. Since God spake in time past by them, the way of their message ought to lie open to every heart. The neglect which they have suffered has been a great loss. Every sign of reviving interest in them should be welcomed.

*Behold there were very many . . . and they were very dry, vs. 2, 11.* When the people said, "Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost" (v. 11), of course they meant that their national life had ceased. It was the hope of a national revival which they had lost; they felt that they were cut off from the blessings which their nation had enjoyed and the ambitions it had cherished. So the life of the Church is constantly threatened. The atmosphere here is uncongenial to its vigorous life; it is an exotic which cannot be

cut off, separated, shut out from God's help and all our hopes. (Compare Isa. 53: 8.)

Vs. 12-14. *Thus saith the Lord God; the God, not of the dead, but of the living. I will open your graves.* The nation thinking of themselves as dead and buried, and their help and hopes gone, are assured by Jehovah that He will open the graves in which they are buried and bring them forth again to life and hope. The valley of bondage seemed to them a grave, the land of Canaan would be their hope. *Ye shall know.* Those who have experience of God's grace know Him best (2 Tim. 1: 12). *Shall put my spirit in you.* The symbol of the wind breathing upon the slain is here explained. It is the Spirit of Jehovah that gives life (Ps. 104: 30), and that Spirit is given freely to all who ask.

so naturalized that it shall grow of itself. You can never say that it is so established that there is no fear for its permanence. There are always Babylons ready to lead it into captivity. The world is always hostile to the very existence of the Church and to all its institutions. There is, indeed, a valuable element in Christianity which can be acclimated. It has already turned the Græco-Roman civilization upside down. But the birth of a citizen is not, and cannot, be the birth of a Christian. A member of a national Church is not necessarily a member of Christ.

*O Lord God, thou knowest, v. 3.* The prophet from day to day heard his fellow-exiles speak of the future of Israel in accents of despair. Hence, before this vision, he may well have been brooding with some anxiety over the situation. But he did not bring his prepossessions into the presence of God. When there was an opportunity to listen to divine wisdom, he held his peace. In fact, it was simply his ability to sit humbly at the Lord's feet which made him a prophet. And if in the perplexities of our lives, we do not clearly hear the divine voice, it may be because we are more eager to use our tongues than our ears. We wish to be "many masters" (Jas. 3: 1) and therefore there are few prophets.

*Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord . . . and*

ye shall live, vs. 4, 5. (Compare v. 13.) God might open up the way to their country by the armies of Cyrus, His servant (See 2 Chron 36 : 23), but a more truly divine work was required to rouse to life the dead souls of the long exile, to made the scattered and downcast captives of Babylon a great army of God. So completely had hope and spirit died out, that nothing less than a divine commotion could restore them. So the Christ of Church is truly restored to vigor only by divine power. The birth of a Christian is that second birth which is "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1 : 13.) And if all our life comes from on high, we must never cease renewing our contact with its source.

So I prophesied as I was commanded, v. 7. (See also v. 10.) The word of the prophet caused the noise and the earthquake. This was not the ineffective breath of man, but the mighty power of God. Of old God said, "Let there be life" and there was the life of the creature. And still the Word of God is quick and powerful and can quicken with divine fulness the paralyzed limbs of His people. Spoken with prophetic power it causes a sound and a shaking and bone rushes to bone and the sinews and the flesh come and the vital breath fills a man with spiritual energy. The hour now is when the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and live. (John 5 : 25.) That voice which called Lazarus out of his tomb still calls dead souls out of graves, closed with yet heavier stones. The time can never be when these greater miracles can no longer be wrought by that living Word of God. In this it is contrasted with the words of men, which "have their day and cease to be."

Ye shall know that I am the Lord, v. 6. (Compare v. 13.) By His name, Jehovah, God revealed Himself first to Israel under Moses. (Ex. 3:14, etc.) Thereby He

promised, in effect, to be faithful to His covenant with His people. From this blessed name there issued the redemption out of Egypt. By it God pledged Himself to Israel in every crisis of her history. The restoration of her lost nationality would fulfil that pledge; and in all later ages God has taught His people that he is Jehovah by His loyalty to His covenant. Of all the great revivals of the life and spirit of the Church, by far the most notable was that of the 16th century. Whatever may have occasioned this movement, whatever may have contributed to its success, the most cursory knowledge of the life of its greatest champion, Luther, shows that it was an effort to come into direct, personal communion with God. The priest-ridden Church of that time had closed every way of access to God save the narrow channel of its own rites and services. Luther displayed afresh the way which Christ had made by His own blood.

Prophecy unto the wind, v. 9. (Compare "I will put my spirit in you, v. 14.) Evidently here, just as elsewhere, the wind is a symbol of the Spirit of God (See John 3 : 8). God speaks by His prophet and yet there is no life apart from the inspiration of the Spirit. It is by His Spirit that God gives and renews the spiritual life. It is the Word of God which is employed, but it is the Spirit who alone can render that word effectual. It is usually His word in a human mouth which accomplishes His purposes, but to the Spirit who takes up His abode in the heart of the hearer belongs all the glory. It was the Spirit who fitted the prophets and the apostles for the discharge of their offices; the same Spirit was given without measure to the Son of God for the work of the ministry and it is His power that the Church especially needs in our day. "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." Let this be the cry of all who long for souls.

#### TEACHING HINTS

Have a little conversation with your scholars about disheartenment, whether in the nation, a business enterprise, or an individual life; and about the inspiration

which a man of heart and hope brings. Such men are true saviors of their fellows.

Recall, especially, the dark periods in the history of God's people in Old Testament

times, and ask for the names of those who brought God's message of cheer. Pursue the subject into the New Testament age, and on through later history.

Now bring the scholars back to Ezekiel's time. The condition of things is familiar through the previous lessons. Recall in detail the promises of that of last Sabbath.

How are these to be realized? The nation seems so utterly dead that there would appear to be no way.

But God is not dead, and by

#### A VISION

He shows His prophet, that the prophet may declare to the people, by what power the promises of the restoration to their own land, and the revival of national and religious life, are to be made good.

Utilize the picturesque, which goes almost to the boundaries of the grotesque here, to make the spiritual truths of the lesson impressive.

#### A SERIES OF SCENES

1. The hand of the Lord upon the prophet.
2. The wide valley piled with dry bones.
3. The tour of observation.
4. The strange question and the wise and reverent answer.
5. The command to prophesy—the proph-

et's astonishment and yet acquiescence.

6. The delivery of the message; what an audience for a preacher! heaps upon heaps of scattered bones.

7. The thundering, the earthquake, and the marshalling by some unseen and mysterious power of the dead bones; the sinews, flesh, and skin coming on them; a valley of corpses now.

8. The summoning of the breath from the four winds.

9. The dead alive, an exceeding great army.

Then follow with:

(a) *The explanation.* God will manifest Himself to the captive nation as the life-giver. He will restore them, a living nation, to their own land, renewed in heart and ready for God's service.

(b) *The application.* It is the Spirit of God alone who can make those live who are dead in trespasses and sins, and that Spirit is given through the Word of God preached and heard, taught and learned. Let the teacher impress upon himself the responsibility of his office in the handling of the Word, and let him impress upon the scholars the duty and privilege of yielding their whole nature to the life-giving Spirit of God.

#### TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous. Only one topic should be given to each scholar. Sometimes all may be asked to write on the same topic. The papers to be read out in the class.)

1. A brief sketch of the vision.
2. The Spirit of God as the life-giver.
3. Ezekiel's share in the miracle.

#### BLACKBOARD REVIEW

### LIFE FROM THE DEAD

# GOD'S

Purpose of Grace  
Call through the Gospel  
Gift by His Spirit

## LESSON VIII

## THE RIVER OF SALVATION

August 20, 1899

Ezekiel 47: 1-12. Commit to memory, v. 12. Compare Zech. 13: 1 and 14: 8, 9; Matt. 13: 31-33; Rev. 22: 1-5

1 Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward; for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

2 Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

3 And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ancles.

4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again, he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

5 Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

6 And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

7 Now which I had returned, behold, at the bank of

the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

8 Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

9 And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh.

10 And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Eng-ge'di even unto Eng-ai'im; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kind, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.

11 But the miry places thereof, and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.

12 And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

**Revised Version**—1 By; 2 Round by the way; 3 Of the gate that looketh toward the east; 4 Margin, or, trickled forth; 5 When the man went forth eastward with the line in his hand; 6 Upon; 7 Forth toward the eastern region; 8 Shall go down into the Arabah; and they shall go forth toward the sea; into the sea shall the waters go which were made to issue forth; and the; 9 Every living creature which swarmeth, in every place whither the rivers come; 10 For these waters are come thither, and the waters of the sea shall be healed; 11 By it: from Eng-ge'di even unto Eng-ai'im shall be a place for the spreading of nets; 12 Fall; 13 Every month; 14 The waters thereof issue.

## GOLDEN TEXT

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22: 17.

## DAILY READINGS

M—Ezek. 47: 1-12. The River of salvation.  
T—Isa. 35. Streams in the desert.  
W—2 Kings 3: 9-20. A miraculous supply.  
Th—Zech. 14: 4-11. Living waters.  
F—Psalm 65. The River of God.  
S—Rev. 21: 1-7. A free gift.  
S.—Rev. 22: 1-7. Water of life.

## TIME

Twenty-fifth year of Ezekiel's captivity (ch. 40: 1). B.C. 572.

## PLACE

As in previous lessons.

## CATECHISM

Q. 70. Which is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

## LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise—43 (Ps.), 144, 161, 148, 457.

## LESSON PLAN

## I. The Waters Springing, 1, 2.

From under the threshold of the temple and at the south side of the altar.

## II. The Waters Deepening, 9-5.

To the ancles, the knees, the loins, then a deep rushing river.

## III. The Waters Giving Life, 6-12.

Fish in abundance, and trees on their banks for food and healing.

## CONNECTING LINKS.

In the concluding chapters of his prophecy Ezekiel gives an ideal picture of the new home of the returned captives and their final condition of felicity. In chapters 40-43 it is the Temple, in chapters 44-46, its ordinances, and in ch. 47, the stream issuing forth. As Prof. A. B. Davidson says, "The natural fact on which the vision rests is this, that there was a fountain connected with the Temple Hill, the waters of which fell into the valley east of the city and made their way towards the sea." A small and, except when augmented by torrent floods, an insignificant, stream. (Isa. 8: 6.)

## EXPOSITION

I. The Waters Springing, 1, 2.  
V. 1. Afterward he brought me. The prophet's guide is described in ch. 40: 1-40. Ezekiel was led in vision from place to place. He describes what he saw, for the

hope and encouragement of Israel. He has made a long tour of the Temple, and is now brought, in spirit, from the outer court (46: 23) to the door of the house; the entrance from without, in the court of the priests, to the

Holy Place, which was part of the Temple proper. *Waters issued.* A living spring, rising in the hill on which the Temple was built issued out from under the threshold of the "door of the house," on the right, that is, the south side, and flowed east, passing the altar on the south side. It was symbolic of that river of life which has its springs in God's spiritual temple, and continually pours itself forth for the refreshing and blessing of men.

"A river is whose streams do glad  
The city of our God;  
The holy place, wherein the Lord  
Most High hath His abode.

Rev. 22: 1—represents the water of life as proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

V. 2. *Then brought he me... northward.* The eastern gate being shut, because by it the Lord had entered (44: 2), the prophet is led in vision out by the north gate of the Temple, and "round to the outer east gate, at which he beheld the stream emerge into the open at the south side of the gate." (*Camb. Bible*).

## II. The Waters Deepening, 3-5.

V. 3. *And when the man;* the guide, described in ch. 40: 1-4; who, by his measurements, seeks to enhance, for Ezekiel and the people, the glory of the city and kingdom. *A thousand cubits;* about 16,000 feet, a cubit being about 18 inches. (Compare Ezek. 40: 5.) There seems to be no special significance in the distances, except that the river rapidly broadened as it flowed onward. *He brought me through.* His guide caused him to wade through the waters, and he found them ankle deep.

Vs. 4, 5. *Again he measured.* Successive measurements, and successive wadings, showed an increasing depth—to the knees, to the loins, and, finally, an impassable river (Hebrew, "a river of swimming"); a life-giving and ever-increasing stream of heavenly influence, proceeding from the centre of the divine kingdom, and diffusing itself far and wide among men. (*Patrick Fairbairn*.) Compare the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven (Matt. 13) and Nebuchadnezzar's

dream as interpreted by Daniel. (Dan. 2: 34, 35, 44, 45.)

## III. The Waters Giving Life, 6-12.

Vs. 6, 7. *Hast thou seen this?* The prophet was so taken up with the mysteriously increasing depth of the waters that he had not noticed the beauty of the banks. *To the brink (bank) of the river;* out of the deep water to the bank, and, it may be, up the stream again. His guide will have him see, not merely its depths, but also its beneficent, life-giving effects. *Very many trees.* The prophet found both banks covered with beautiful fruit-bearing trees. (v. 12.)

V. 8. *Towards... the desert, and go into the sea.* The direction of the stream was eastward toward the desert and the Dead Sea. A striking symbol of the saving grace of God, which, like a living stream, flows through the wilderness of this world. The Son of man, who is that grace of God embodied, came "to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 18: 11.) The "east country" is the district of country round about the Dead Sea so much in need of sweet water. The desert (The Arabah) is now called the Ghor. It includes the depression of the Jordan valley, the Dead Sea, and as far south as the Gulf of Akaba. (Deut. 1: 1; 3: 17; Josh. 18: 18.) (*Camb. Bible*.)

*Brought forth into the sea.* For another reading of the verse see Rev. Ver. as given along with the lesson passage. *The waters shall be healed.* Even the bitter brine of the Dead Sea, in which no living thing can exist, shall be sweetened. The river of salvation reaches unto and descends to the lowest depths of human sin, and wherever it comes it heals and vivifies.

V. 9. *Everything that... moveth.* (Rev. Ver. "every living creature, which swarmeth" or creepeth.) All the small aquatic animals shall live and multiply in the healed waters. *The rivers shall come.* (Literally "the two rivers.") The peculiar method of speaking may be used to denote the amplitude and the widely distributed nature of the waters when they reach the sea. The hymn writer has well caught the spirit of the vision of the healing waters in the familiar lines:

" 'Tis thine to cleanse the heart,  
To sanctify the soul ;  
To pour fresh life in every part,  
And new create the whole."

V. 10. *The fishers shall stand.* All the banks of the Dead Sea, now so bare, would, because of the inflow of the waters of the river, become fishing grounds and a place to spread forth nets. (For the proper names, see Dictionary for Quarter). *As the fish of the great sea.* The Dead Sea would then be as plentiful in fish as the Mediterranean or Great Sea.

Vs. 11, 12. *The miry places and the marshes.* "The marshes around the sea

shall not be sweetened, but left as beds for digging salt." A vivid way of announcing the sad fact that some perish for thirst, even when the water of life is flowing close by. The Gospel and the life it bestows are only for those who will take them.

*All trees for meat.* The fruit of the trees would be used for food. *Whose leaf shall not fade;* because of the abundant supply of fresh water at the roots. *Neither the fruit be consumed;* or "fail." *New fruit according to his months;* that is, new each month. *For medicine.* The leaves would ever remain green and possess a healing virtue. (Ps. 1: 3; Rev. 22: 2.)

*A. Gaudier, Halifax* ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

*Waters issued out,* v. 1. In the east where rains fall only in the rainy season, where much of the country is desert for lack of moisture, where most of the year, instead of streams are to be found only dry water-ways, never failing springs, "living fountains of waters," are much more appreciated than in this land of lakes and streams and elaborate water systems. A perennial stream is there a source of all blessing to man and beast. Hence the fitness and frequency of this figure in Scripture to denote the satisfaction of the soul in God and the never-failing gifts of His grace. "My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." (Ps. 63: 1.) "As the hart panteth after the water brooks so panteth my soul after thee, O God." (Ps. 42: 1.) Thus cries the devout spirit, and the heavenly satisfaction is represented to us in Rev. 7, in a picture of the Lamb leading the redeemed unto living fountains of waters.

*From under the threshold of the house.* From chap. 40 to the end of the book, the prophet gives a picture of Israel and of their land when redemption and restoration are complete, and the personal presence of Jehovah in the new Temple is the source of all blessing to the people, material and religious. It is from under the house which is the tabernacle of God among men, that the life-giving waters flow. We have a similar picture in Rev. 22, "He showed me a pure

river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." "All my springs are in thee," cried the Psalmist. (Ps. 87: 7.) God is the fountain of life for he is the fountain of love. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3: 16), and "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with Him freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8: 32.) "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights." (James 1: 17.)

*Waters to the ancles . . . waters to the knees . . . waters to the loins . . . a river that I could not pass over,* vs. 3-5. The kingdom of heaven is not a stream that flows sweetly and cheerily for a few miles from its fountain head, and is then lost amid desert sands, swallowed up by the dry and thirsty land through which it runs, but a stream that becomes a river and gathers volume as it flows. How small the beginning of the Gospel in Jerusalem, when one hundred and twenty souls—none of them great or learned—awaited the outpouring of the Spirit. Suddenly, on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit is given. The waters of life begin to flow, and about three thousand souls are that very day drawn within the influence of the sacred stream. Soon all Jerusalem is filled with the apostles' doctrines, a great company of priests being obedient to the faith, and multitudes being added to the

Church daily of such as were being saved. The Christians scattered abroad by persecution go everywhere preaching the Word. The great cities of Antioch, Ephesus, Rome, become successively the centres of Christian influence. At the end of the first century the Christian population of the world was about half a million. At the end of the fifteenth century, just before the Reformation, it was about 100,000,000. At the end of the eighteenth century it was about 200,000,000, and now at the end of the nineteenth century it has doubled again and is about 400,000,000. There is to be no stay of this ever increasing flood, till all nations are submerged, all life transformed, and there appear the "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter 3:13.)

*These waters . . . into the desert and . . . into the (Dead) sea, v. 8.* Loch Katrine, embowered among the highlands of Scotland, a poem in water, immortalized in story and song till it seems almost transfigured with a glory beyond its natural beauty and charm, is yet the source of the water-supply of the city of Glasgow, flowing down among the homes of the poor, cleansing the filth from the streets, bringing refreshment, cheer, comfort, cleanliness, and health everywhere. So to every one who has the living water—and all the more if it is possessed amid wealth, culture, education, talent—is given the privilege of sending the living water in copious streams to the heathen, to the poor, to the sinful, to all who are in need. (*Pe'loubet.*)

*The waters shall be healed.* The waters of the Dead Sea are salt, bitter, destitute of life, the shores without fruit or foliage and devoid of beauty. But, when the stream which issues from beneath the Temple shall flow therein, the waters shall be sweetened

and swarp with life, while on the shores shall be trees with fadeless foliage and never-failing fruit, the leaves for healing, the fruit for food.' A beautiful picture of the quickening, healing, beautifying power of the Gospel. When Dr. Geddie, our first foreign missionary from Canada, landed on Aneiteum, he found the people savage, superstitious, vile, and loathsome beyond description. But after twelve years' teaching and preaching on that island, during which the language had been reduced to writing, the New Testament translated and sixty schools established, he could point to cannibalism abolished, a people clothed and in their right mind, the whole population outwardly transformed, the Sabbath as well observed as in Scotland, family worship general, two church buildings erected, in which one thousand people assembled every Sabbath, and over three hundred communicants.

*And everything shall live whither the river cometh, v. 9.* All relations of life are beautified and given new meaning where the Gospel comes. Under the quickening impulse of Christ's love human nature breaks forth into flower and fruitage. The wilderness rejoices and blossoms as the rose. The fruit is unto holiness and the end everlasting life.

*The fruit thereof . . . meat . . . the leaf . . . medicine, v. 12.* "Christians," says good old Matthew Henry, "are supposed to be these trees, ministers especially, 'trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord (Isa. 61:3),' " and, he adds, "good Christians with their good discourses, which are as their leaves, and with their charitable actions, which are as their fruits, do good to those about them; they strengthen the weak and bind up the broken-hearted."

#### TEACHING HINTS

This is a lesson in irrigation.

The teacher may begin in one of two ways:

(a) By connecting the lesson with the previous one, Ezekiel's great vision of the army of living men brought forth by the breath of the Almighty from the dry bones of the

valley. That host of God's renewed people are supposed now to be again in their own land. The national life is flowing strongly. There is loyalty and enthusiasm in worship. The visions of chapters 40-48 are given to show how blessed that new life is and how great a blessing it may prove to others. The

vision of the lesson illustrates this, the river springing from beneath the sanctuary and carrying healing and fruitfulness in its course.

(b) Or begin with some questions about the arid lands of our own West at the foothills of the Rockies, supposed till lately to be quite barren and useless, now beginning to "blossom as the rose" because water has been brought to them from the mountain streams. Irrigation means instant and abundant fruitfulness to vast regions in the West on both sides of the boundary that divides us from our neighbors to the south.

AS TO THE EXTERNALS, there is abundance to interest; the prophet in vision, set by the hand of the Lord "upon a very high mountain by which was the frame of a city on the south" (40:2); the man with the measuring line (vs. 3, 4); the measuring of the Temple, etc., Chs. 40-46 (Pass over these lightly, so as to have time for the lesson proper); the springing of the waters, as seen from the door of the Temple, v. 1; the journey round to the outer gate, v. 2; the measuring of the waters and their swift increase in depth and volume, vs. 3-5; the banks of the river, with the trees on either

side, vs. 6, 7; the rush of the waters towards and into the Dead Sea, and their wonderful effect in turning bitter, deadly waters into water sweet and life-giving, vs. 8, 9; the lively fishing shores, v. 10; the stagnant, salty marshes, v. 11; the trees with their constant fruit-bearing, the fruit for food and the leaves for medicine, v. 12.

AS TO THE INNER MEANING, it is never well to press imagery too far. Seek rather to discern and exhibit the leading truths intended to be set forth. These three things, amongst others, are conspicuous here:

(a) The waters proceed from the very dwelling place of Jehovah Himself. The Psalmist (Ps. 36:9) gives us the meaning, "With thee is the fountain of life."

(b) The waters carry life with them, trees on the banks and fish in the sea into which they flow. A wide field of illustration and application opens out—the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as a regenerating force in the hearts and lives of individuals, of communities and of nations.

(c) The waters are free to all, the deep-flowing river and the open sea. So, appropriately, the Golden Text is, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

#### TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous. Only one topic should be given to each scholar. Sometimes all may be asked to write on the same topic. The papers to be read out in the class.)

1. The source of the waters and what it illustrates.
2. The increase in the waters and the progress of the Gospel.
3. The blessings which salvation brings.

#### BLACKBOARD REVIEW

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>GOD'S</b> | <b>R</b> ISING—In the Hill of the Lord               |
|              | <b>I</b> NCREASING—As it flows onward                |
|              | <b>V</b> IVIFYING—Bringing life wheresoever it comes |
|              | <b>E</b> NRICHING—On its banks, fruit-bearing trees  |
|              | <b>R</b> EVIVING—Whose leaves are for medicine       |



## LESSON IX.

## RETURNING FROM CAPTIVITY

August 27, 1899

Ezra 1: 1-11. Commit to memory vs. 2-4. Read Ezra 2: 64-70

1 Now 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 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 an house at Jeru'salem, which is in Ju'dah.

3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jeru'salem, which is in Ju'dah, and build the house of the Lord God of Is'ra'el, (he is the God,) which is in Jeru'salem.

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, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jeru'salem.

5 Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Ju'dah and Ben'jamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jeru'salem.

6 And all they that were about them strengthened, their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered.

7 Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Neb'uchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jeru'salem, and had put them in the house of his gods:

8 Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Ju'dah.

9 And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives,

10 Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand.

11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, with them of the captivity that were brought up from Bab'ylon unto Jeru'salem.

**Revised Version**—1 Wherever there is among you of all his people; 2 Is left; 3 Heads of fathers' houses, 4 Even all whose; 5 Stirred; 6 Bowls; 7 When they of the captivity were brought.

## GOLDEN TEXT

"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Ps. 136: 3.

## DAILY READINGS

- M.—Ezra 1. Returning from captivity.  
 T.—Ezra 2: 1. and 64-70. Returning captives.  
 W.—Jer. 29: 10-11. The word of Jeremiah.  
 Th.—Isa. 44: 21-28. Prophecy of return.  
 F.—Isa. 61. Proclamation of liberty.  
 S.—Isa. 51: 9-16. Joy of redemption.  
 S.—Ps. 107: 1-15. Praise for deliverance.

## TIME

The first year of the rule of Cyrus in Babylon, B.C. 538-529.

## PLACE

Babylon, Cyrus, its conqueror, now ruling.

## CATECHISM

Q 71. What is required in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity, in heart, speech, and behaviour.

## LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise—101 (Ps. 1, 262, 387, 383, 304.)

## LESSON PLAN

## I. The King's Proclamation, 1-4.

Cyrus, King of Persia, stirred up by the Lord, calls upon the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple there, and commands his people to help.

## II. The Jews' Response, 5.

Rulers and people alike are eager to go.

## III. The Question of Supplies, 6.

Full provision is made according to the king's command.

## IV. The Holy Vessels, 7-11.

These are restored to them by Cyrus.

## CONNECTING LINKS

The lessons now pass from prophecy to fulfilment. Light arose in the east. A great conqueror, Cyrus, King of Elam, was subduing in his victorious career one after another of the neighbouring nations. The prophetic utterances regarding him had aroused great expectations (Isa. 41: 2, 25; 45: 1-4). Babylon at length fell into his hands (B.C. 539); and no sooner was he ruler there than he sought to fulfil for God's people the wish of God regarding them. Ezra, who gives the account of return from captivity, himself brought a company of the exiles to Jerusalem eighty years after this first return.

## EXPOSITION

## I. The King's Proclamation, 1-4.

V. 1. *In the first year of Cyrus*; the first year of his rule over Babylon, which he took in 539 B.C. For "Cyrus" and "Persia" see Bible Dictionary for the Quarter.

*The word of the Lord by . . . Jeremiah.* God had, through Jeremiah (25: 12; 29: 10) predicted judgment on Babylon and the restoration of His people to their own land, and He now fulfills His promise through Cyrus.

(Compare also Is. 41: 2, 25; 45: 1-4; Daniel 9: 2.)

*The Lord stirred up Cyrus.* Cyrus seems to have been actuated by generous impulses, and followed a conciliatory policy toward the religions of his conquered peoples. Probably the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah may have come into his hands, and by them the Lord may have stirred his soul to noble and generous action toward His people.

Daniel, too, was at the court in Babylon. Nor is it to be forgotten that "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Prov. 21 : 1).

*He made a proclamation.* Literally, "Caused a voice to pass through," that is, caused to be made known by heralds the decree of the king. *Put also in writing*; amongst the state papers. The proclamation would doubtless also be nailed up in public places so that all might see it for themselves.

V. 2. *Thus saith Cyrus.* - Compare 2 Chron. 36 : 23. Further details of this decree are given, Ezra 6. *The Lord God of heaven*; a remarkable acknowledgment from a heathen. Cyrus made a similar acknowledgment, however, in regard to Merodach, the Babylonian deity, styling him "the light of heaven and earth, whose promises fail not." Probably he came gradually to know Jehovah more truly (Isa. 45 : 1-3, 13; 44 : 28). It will be noticed that the Lord is in capital letters in the Scripture Text. Wherever the name is so found in the Bible it stands for Jehovah. In the Hebrew it was written "Jehovah," but pronounced "Lord," the Jew not allowing the sacred name to pass his lips. *He hath charged me.* The generous feeling of Cyrus towards the Jews may have been strengthened by his learning what God desired of him. (See passages just referred to.)

*His God be with him.* The language of a generous and diplomatic ruler. *Let him go up to Jerusalem*; as God had promised and the people desired. *And build the house*; the Temple, which had lain in ruins during the long captivity. *He is the God*; either explanatory of the previous phrase, "Lord God of Israel," defining who is meant, or a phrase of adoration, acknowledging the supremacy of Jehovah. (See v. 2; Dan. 6 : 26.)

V. 4. *And whosoever remaineth*; survive, or is left, of the captives carried to Babylon. *Let the men of his place.* His own countrymen who do not themselves choose to return, also the Babylonians or other people among whom the exiles sojourned, are instructed to assist him bountifully, literally, to "lift him up on his way." *Goods*; necessary supplies

of all sorts. *Vessels*; See ch. 2 : 66, 67. *Beside the freewill offering*; to assist in re-building the Temple at Jerusalem (8 : 25). Those who remained, as well as those who left, were expected to give for this purpose.

## II. The Jews' Response, 5.

V. 5. *The chief of the fathers*; the heads of families. The divisions were (1) Tribes, (2) Families or clans, and (3) Households. *Judah and Benjamin.* These were the two tribes which remained loyal to Rehoboam at the time of the division of the kingdom and who formed the kingdom of Judah. *The priests and the Levites.* See "Levites," Bible Dictionary for Quarter. *Whose spirit God had raised.* Many were content to remain in Babylon, unwilling to relinquish their property, or fallen in love, it may be, with the religion and the customs of the Babylonians; but a great multitude (nearly 50,000 in all, vs. 64, 65) God stirred with patriotic and religious sentiments to return. (Isa. 48 : 20.) Their old enthusiasm for the house of God was rekindled and the constraining impulse of a new hope inspired them.

## III. The Question of Supplies, 6.

V. 6. *And all... about them*; their own people and those amongst whom they dwelt in exile. The example of the king, and his exhortation (v. 4), would encourage his people thus to help the returning exiles. *Strengthened their hands*,—assisted them. *Vessels of silver, with gold, etc.* They appear to have met with favor at the hands of friends and neighbors, as did their forefathers when about to depart out of the bondage of Egypt (Ex. 3 : 22; 12 : 35, 36). Enthusiasm is catching. Even the heathen, who had little knowledge of Jehovah and His worship, were moved by the high hope and courage of His people, who were now laying aside all worldly advantages out of zeal for Him. *Willingly offered*; for the special purpose of rebuilding the Temple (v. 4).

## IV. The Holy Vessels, 7-11.

V. 7. *The vessels of the house of the Lord.* Cyrus took a deep personal interest in the exiles, and assisted and encouraged them by returning to them the sacred vessels which Nebuchad-

nezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem. (2 Chron. 36 : 7; Daniel 1 : 2). *Put them in the house of his gods.* Nebuchadnezzar had thought to please his gods by placing in their service the vessels of Jehovah. The dishonor of it was hot within the hearts of the exiles all along, just as, to this very day, no Jew will pass under the arch of Titus at Rome, because the carrying away by that ruthless despoiler of the vessels of Herod's temple is depicted on one of the panels of the arch.

V. 8. *Mithredath . . . Sheshbazzar.* (See Dictionary for Quarter; also chs. 2 : 2; 3 : 8; 4 : 3; 5 : 16.) *Numbered them;* an exactness in a public trust which does credit alike to Mithredath the Persian treasurer, and to Sheshbazzar, the Jewish prince and leader of the exiles.

V. 9. *This is the number.* All doubtless that had survived the rough usage of the exile (2 Kings 24 : 13) and the desecration of later times. The pains of Ezra to record the

T. D. McLaughlin, Secretary

#### ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

*That the word of the Lord . . . might be fulfilled,* v. 1. God has infinite respect for His word. Whether from His own mouth or the mouth of His prophets, or written down in His Book, it must be fulfilled. Our God cannot lie, and will not repent. His threats come to pass. His promises never fail (Josh. 21 : 45). We may "lippen" to God. His promises are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 1 : 20).

*Go up to Jerusalem . . . and build the house of the Lord,* v. 3. Money spent in stone and mortar, timber and shingles, is well spent. To have a "house" where to worship is to impart an element of stability and permanency to God's cause in any community. The Church and Manse Building Fund is as directly missionary as the fund that pays salaries, and has been one principal element in the hold that our Church has taken on the part of the Dominion. The 324 churches and 68 manses erected through the aid and encouragement of that fund since 1882, and worth in all \$517,060, are monuments to the statesmanlike policy—a truly Scriptural policy—of those who have

precise number casts an interesting sidelight on the minute providence of God for His people. God kept count, as well as the treasurer and the prince. *Chargers.* A charger was a basin used to catch the blood of the animals slain in the Temple sacrifices. *Nine and twenty knives;* probably slaughter-knives used in the Temple.

Vs. 10, 11. *Basons of gold,* Rev. Ver. "bowls"; covered vessels smaller in size than the chargers. (1 Chron. 28 : 17.) *Silver basons of a second sort;* of less worth than the golden basons, or a subordinate kind of cup to the golden basons. *Other vessels.* A great many kinds of vessels were used in the Temple service. (1 Chron. 28 : 14.) The service was very elaborate.

*Five thousand and four hundred.* The total number mentioned in vs. 9 and 10 is 2499. There has been some mistake in copying, or perhaps the author passed over many minor vessels in the detailed list, whilst taking all into consideration in the sum-total.

guided our missionary operations.

*Who is there among you.* A second sifting. The weaklings had been left behind seventy years before, when Nebuchadnezzar took the strong and valorous captive. Now again it is the courageous and willing-hearted that are picked out. The returning captives are a sort of Gideon's "three hundred" (Judges 7). All which shows that it is quality and not quantity that God depends upon in His work. There is always room for the heroic, and the heroic always tells.

*Let the men of his place help him,* v. 4. The heathen round about, as well as the Jews who remained behind, were to provide for the needs of those who went; and they did so most generously, "strengthening their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things" (v. 6). This was, in the first place, a fine tribute to the courage and patriotism of those who went. Noble action commands the admiration and respect even of those who are not themselves capable of high things. The incident suggests also the responsibilities of those who remain at home, in regard to

the aggressive work of the Gospel. They are not to be taxed, but they are to tax themselves, that those who go may go well equipped. All are not called to the front. Some must "abide by the stuff" (1 Sam. 25:13). But they are not on that account absolved from coming to the help of the Lord. Rather, they should rejoice the more in making sacrifice to sustain those to whom come the peril and toil of the battle.

*Cyrus . . . brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord*, v. 7. Strange had been the fortune of these same sacred vessels. They had been snatched away from the house of the Lord, carried to Babylon, set up in the temple of false gods. They had done duty in scenes of wild and idolatrous revelry (Dan. 5:1-4). Now they are to be sent back where they belong, and by the decree of an idol worshipper. It is a notable instance of how God keeps watch and ward. They were the vessels of God's house and the instruments of God's worship, and God's eye had been jealously upon them all the time. It is an encouragement, when the tide seems to run counter to the Gospel, when godlessness triumphs and the cause of God declines, to know that God is not asleep, has not forgotten. Men may rail against His Church, may dishonour His day, may deify His holy Book. But again and again has the history of His Kingdom shown that, when the storm of opposition has spent itself, the sacred things are safe. The Sabbath abides. The Bible remains. The ordinances of the Gospel retain their power. The very gates of hell itself cannot prevail against the Church of God. (Matt. 16:18.)

*Nine and twenty knives*, v. 9; accuracy to a

unit in the count; which suggests a valuable lesson in church finances. Statistics may become a means to foolish boasting. They may also become a solid vantage ground for larger and wiser effort. It is of the utmost importance that church, and society and school should know just where they are, in order that they may the better plan for greater things. Mithredath, the king's treasurer, and Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah (v. 8), did not think it beneath their dignity to count "chargers," basins, and knives. It may be a humble duty; but it is, nevertheless, God-honoring and of high service, to keep the church books, or the rolls of societies or Sabbath-school registers accurately.

*Them of the captivity*, v. 11. It was to these captives, who had to get from their neighbours the means of returning to their own land, that God entrusted the sacred vessels and of whom God was to remake the nation. But God is a master-hand. "Nothing shows power like the transformation of worthless material into beautiful and valuable products. Take the Stradivarius violin. Its maker went out into the forest around about him and selected more than forty different kinds of woods; he had trained himself by eye and touch so that he could detect the density of wood, its age and fibre, and estimate its resonant faculty: so that he knew just where to put each of those different kinds of wood in the violin; the belly and back, the sides, the bridge, the bottom, the neck and head, the keys, all made of different kinds of wood, so that the proper equilibrium might be maintained in all parts of the instrument, and the most perfect harmony and responsiveness."—(F. B. Meyer.)

#### TEACHING HINTS

The lessons, as noticed in the CONNECTING LINKS, now pass from prophecy to fulfilment. The period of exile is at an end. The return to their own land begins.

Repetition, if it be repetition with variety and freshness, is most important in teaching. Ask here, therefore, these four questions and make sure that the answers are fixed in the minds of the scholars:

1. What was the cause of the exile? How

long did it last? What effect had it on the captives as to idolatry? What effect as to their love of country? (Ps. 137:5-7.)

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah give the story of the return and of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and of the Temple and the re-establishment of the worship of Jehovah. Strive first to excite in the scholars expectation of peculiar interest. It was a romantic episode, the welcome proclamation

of Cyrus, the rending of old ties, the rallying of the volunteers for the expedition, the coming back, the ruined walls and waste temple site, the enthusiasm for rebuilding, the opposition, the delays, etc. A light touch on some or all of these points will arouse the dull scholars and arrest the careless.

Follow up your opportunity quickly, taking the narrative step by step. There is probably no more effective way than this for the lesson now in hand:

1. Cyrus, King of Persia—who he was and how he came to have the say in Babylon. 2. God's direction of Cyrus. 3. The consequent fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy. 4. The proclamation; with (a) Cyrus' recognition of Jehovah, (b) His declaration of God's choice of him as a deliverer, (c) His call to the people to return, (d) The instructions as to ways and means. 5. The response of the chief of the fathers, priests, Levites, and the people. 6. The generous outfit. 7.

The crowning joy, in receiving back the vessels of the sanctuary.

Intermingle with the outline as above such lessons as these: (a) God's interest in His people. "It is not too much for us to say that, while the triumphs of Cyrus shook the earth, the return of the little band of Hebrews to Zion shook not the earth only, but also the heavens." (*Professor McCurdy.*) (b) God uses whom He will and what He will to further His own cause. (c) Discipline purifies. (d) Trials give soul-hunger for God. (e) Men may respond to God's call or refuse to respond, as they will. (f) It is only when God stirs a man's spirit that he is fit for God's work. (g) Those who remain behind should provide for those who go to the front in the Lord's warfare. (h) Everything belonging to His worship is precious in the eyes of the Lord. (i) And every least possession of His people He carefully guards.

#### TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

(To be assigned the Sabbath previous. Only one topic should be given to each scholar. Sometimes all may be asked to write on the same topic. The papers to be read out in the class.)

1. Cyrus.
2. The preparations for the return.
3. God's watch over His own people.

#### BLACKBOARD REVIEW

# GREAT THINGS (SEE GOLDEN TEXT)

The Favor of the King  
 Enthusiasm Amongst the People  
 Provision for the Work  
 Restoration of the Vessels of Worship

"TRULY GOD IS GOOD TO ISRAEL." PE. 73:1.

# Primary Department

HELPS FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES, BY MISS JESSIE A. MUNRO, TORONTO

## THIRD QUARTER

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

### Preview

For the last two Quarters we have been studying our Lord Jesus as the LIGHT OF THE WORLD, and as our Redeemer, SAVING US BY HIS LIFE AND DEATH.

We turn now for this quarter and the next to God's dealings with His people in the olden time before Christ came into the world as the Man of Nazareth. We shall see that God has always been gracious, and that even before Christ came the Lord saved all those who were sorry for sin, and helped all those who trusted Him.

In the lessons of this quarter we have

twelve instances of how THE LORD BLESSES AND HELPS.

1. He gives grace to the penitent. 2. He prospered a brave boy. 3. He delivered three true men. 4. He honoured a faithful prophet. 5. He protected a loyal worshipper. 6. He bestows a new heart. 7. He raises to a new life. 8. He gives the water of life. He helped his people: 9. By giving them a king's favor; 10. By allowing them to build His house; 11. By promising to be with them; 12. By pouring out His Spirit upon them.

LESSON V.—July 30, 1899

DANIEL IN THE DEN OF LIONS—Dan. 6 : 10-23

PREVIEW THOUGHT: **The Lord blesses and helps**

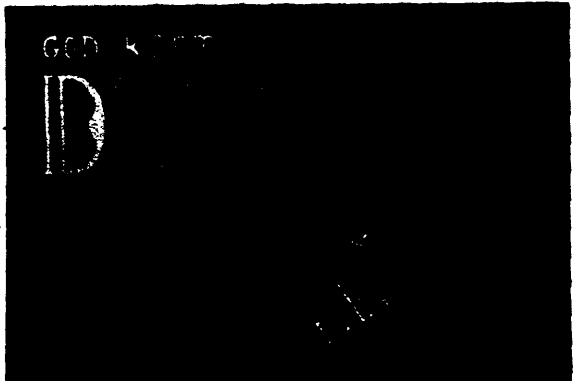
**Golden Text**—The Lord is thy keeper.—Psalm 121 : 5.

**To-day's Lesson Thought**—The Lord is our keeper.

**Connection**—Print DANIEL on the board. Who can tell me something about Daniel? (Recall as much as possible of Daniel's history.) Yes, he would not touch the king's wine. (Write "A Temperance Boy." Explain); knew more than all the wise men ("A Wise Boy"); wanted his friends to share his good fortune ("An Unselfish Boy"). Not afraid to tell Belshazzar the message from God ("A Brave Boy").

To-day we are to hear of him as "A Praying Boy." I hope all my little ones will be temperate, wise, unselfish, brave, praying boys and girls, then we are sure God will bless and help you; and how strong you will be!

**The Lesson**—Show a picture of a lion. Talk about its fierce nature. (If any of the children have seen a real lion let them tell you what it looked like, etc.)



One Saturday afternoon I made a call. When I went into the house, I heard a great roaring noise. The mother and I

opened the sitting-room door and there were the children with the chairs placed in a circle and the table cover thrown over them. Several boys were in this "den" walking around on their hands and knees and making a fearful roaring. One boy stood up in the midst of them perfectly still, with his arms folded. "What can they be playing," I asked. "Oh, this is Daniel in the lions' den," they shouted. "Hear the lions roaring, but they won't hurt Daniel, you know, and soon the king will come and let him out."

Have you all heard the story of Daniel in the lions' den? Perhaps you can help me tell the story. You remember how God helped Daniel in all his troubles in Babylon amongst strangers who worshipped idols

and did not know our true God. God put it into the king's heart to make Daniel a great man (like our Governor-General). The men of Babylon were angry that this stranger should be so much loved by the king. They made up their minds that they would get rid of him. Tell in an impressive way the facts in chapter 6: 1-23. Repeat "No manner of hurt was found upon him because he believed in his God."

**Practical Thoughts**—The Lord is my keeper. In the dark night, in storms, when the lightning is flashing and the thunder rolling, God is watching over us. We need never be afraid of anything, if we are true children of God, loving Him, praying to Him, and doing what pleases Him. With God beside us we are always safe.

LESSON VI.—August 6, 1899

THE NEW HEART, Ezekiel 36: 25-36

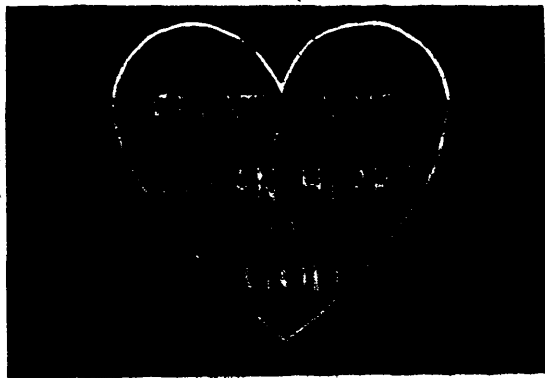
PREVIEW THOUGHT: **The Lord blesses and helps**

**Golden Text**—A new heart also will I give you.—Ezek. 36: 26.

**To-Day's Lesson Thought**—We each need a new heart—which God will give us.

kept from a terrible death? Recall lesson.

**The Lesson**—Show a beautiful apple. Cut it open. It is *bad at the heart*. See! a little worm had eaten its way into the heart. The apple is spoiled. For a while it may look as good and as beautiful as this other apple, which you see has a good heart. Nothing can make the apple or anything else good if the heart is not good. It will get worse and worse. Little sins will come creeping into our hearts. (Illustrations.) We never can be quite right till God makes our hearts new and clean from sin. We cannot do it ourselves. The illustration of the uselessness of painting a pump, if the well is in a bad state, may be used in place of the fruit illustration, for in



**Connection**—Write "The Lord is my keeper." (Repeat.)

Let us bow our heads and thank God for keeping us safely through the darkness and danger of the night and from all harm. Can you tell me the name of someone we heard about last Sunday whom God helped and

some places where **THE TEACHERS MONTHLY** goes, it is too hot, in others too cold, for apples to grow.

Here is a funny name (Write it) **E-Z-E-K-I-E-L**. He was one of God's prophets (Meaning?). He lived at the same time as Daniel.

The children of Israel had been very wicked, God had punished them and now sends Ezekiel to tell them that He will forgive them. God says—(Golden Text). Show a white paper heart and name some of the little sins that will make black spots in the heart. When our hands or faces or dresses get dirty, what do we do? God says he is willing to wash away all sin from our hearts. He will fill our hearts with His Spirit, so that all the bad thoughts will be crowded out and our hearts will be new.

Do you know the little "Snow Prayer"?

I learned it in the Bible—a tender little prayer.

And when the flakes are falling, so beautiful and fair,

I say to my dear Saviour that little prayer I know—

'Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.'

I want to be like Jesus, that His pure eyes may see

A heart made clean and spotless, to serve Him faithfully;

And so I'll ask Him daily, His mercy to bestow,—

'Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.'

Read God's promise in the lesson, "Ye shall be my people and I will be your God."

Beautiful promise; for us too. People will see that our God is able to give new hearts and make people happy and prosperous and good and true—and so may turn to God.

**Practical Thoughts**—I need a new heart—which God will give me if I ask Him. (Repeat Psalm 51: 10 and explain.)

### LESSON VII.—August 13, 1899

EZEKIEL'S GREAT VISION, Ezekiel 137: 1-14

#### PREVIEW THOUGHT: The Lord blesses and helps

**Golden Text**—I will put my spirit within you.—Ezek. 36: 27.

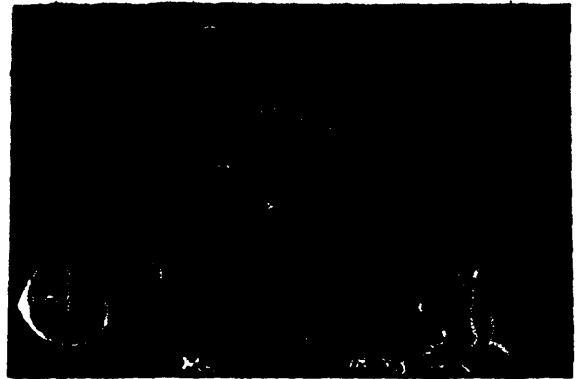
**To-day's Lesson Thought**—God will give me new life in my soul.

**Connection**—Have any of you ever had a dream? Do you remember the name of the prophet who was telling us that God will give us a new heart?

**The Lesson**—Ezekiel had a dream (vision); at least he was asleep and really heard God's voice talking to him and telling him some wonderful words to say to the children of Israel. They were nice, happy words, and when Ezekiel awoke he told the people that God was going to bring them back to their own home, Jerusalem. (Recall the captivity.)

Jerusalem was now a dead city; in ruins, no Temple, no worship going on. They would have to rebuild their homes and Temple. They had forgotten how God wanted them to worship. Show a real rose

and an artificial one. They look very much alike. We can hardly tell some artificial flowers from real ones. The Queen of Sheba once visited King Solomon and



brought two wreaths, one of real roses and one of artificial ones—exactly alike. She wanted to see if Solomon was as wise as people said he was. She asked him which were real ones and which were artificial. King Solomon did a very wise thing. He



ordered some bees to be brought in and they at once rested on the real roses. The real ones had all the sweetness and perfume. Suppose I drop some perfume on this artificial rose—what a sweet smell! Has that made it a real rose? What is the difference? Yes, one grew on the rose bush and the bush gave life to it, so that it has a sweet perfume and gives joy to everybody who comes near it. Can you see the life? No; but you see what the life does. It is God who gives life to everything. He says that without His spirit in us we have no real life in our souls.

Tell the lesson in simple words. (See PRIMARY QUARTERLY.) The people looked as they did before they were taken away from Jerusalem, but they did not feel nor act the

same. The soul inside them was not alive with love to God; but God made a beautiful promise. (Golden Text.)

**Practical Thoughts**—God will give me new life in my soul—so that I shall be a real little Christian, not a make-believe one. Going to church and Sunday School does not make us Christians. We must have the "New Spirit" before we can send out fragrance for God and draw others to Him by our own life. The real rose was once a little bud. Then it grew and grew until it became a full-blown rose. Little children can grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

LESSON VIII.—August 20, 1899

THE RIVER OF SALVATION, Ezekiel 47 : 1-12

PREVIEW THOUGHT: **The Lord blesses and helps**

**Golden Text**—Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.—Rev. 22 : 17.

**To-day's Lesson Thought**—God's love has no end.

Yes, the sunshine and the rain. The rain falls and waters the earth, and God makes the little streams and big rivers and great oceans; and wherever the water flows there

is life, and things grow and bear fruit. God takes the water up by the heat of the sun, and we say everything is dry; but He has gathered the water into the clouds, and then the sky begins to look dark, and we say, "Oh! see the clouds, it is going to rain," and down comes the rain that God has sent again to give a drink to the dry, thirsty ground.

Ezekiel dreamed again (see PRIMARY QUARTERLY), and in the dream God showed him a beautiful river, and told him about it.

**Connection**—Do you remember about Ezekiel's great dream, and what God told him to tell the children of Israel about the new life? We are going to hear about another of Ezekiel's dreams.

**The Lesson**—What makes the grass and trees and flowers grow?

The river sprang from underneath God's own House, and flowed through a very dry and dreary land, but as it flowed along everything began to change and grow beautiful and green. Trees spread out their leaves and grass grew, and everything began to get new life.



God told Ezekiel to tell the children of Israel (the Jews) this. He wanted them to know that His Spirit and His love were like this river. Wherever His Spirit came it brought brightness and freshness, and gave new life to all who would drink of God's love and ask Him to send His spirit into their hearts. This river is called the *River of Salvation*. (Saving from death.)

(God says (Golden Text) that His kingdom is like a river, spreading out broader and

broader, till some day it will spread all over the earth; and that all may drink of it.

**Practical Thoughts**—The way to take the water of life is to open our hearts to God, and to let Jesus and His love fill our hearts. There are millions of people who are dying without the water of life; millions of little children too. (A missionary story may be told.) Many around us need to be told of this great free gift. We can carry it to them. There is plenty for all.



### LESSON IX.—August 27, 1899

#### RETURNING FROM CAPTIVITY, Ezra 1: 1-11

#### PREVIEW THOUGHT: **The Lord blesses and helps.**

**Golden Text**—The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.—Psalm 126: 3.

**To-day's Lesson Thought**—The Lord hath done great things for us.

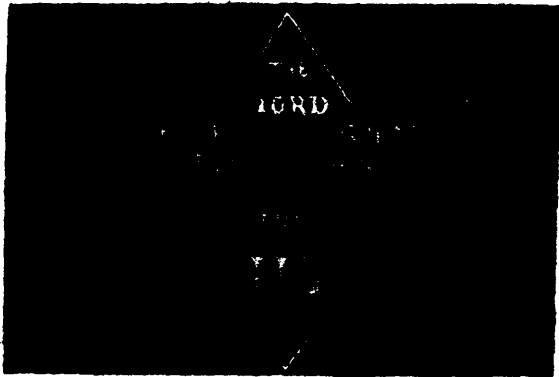
**Connection**—Recall briefly the story of the captivity. Impress the thought that God allowed all these things to befall His people for their real good, to make them serve their own true God better than ever before. Recall the promises God had made to them through the prophet Ezekiel.

**The Lesson**—Sometimes we hear people say, "Oh, yes, that person will promise to do a thing, but he does not keep his promises; we cannot trust him." (Give some illustrations familiar to the children.) God always keeps His promises.

We are going to hear to-day how God kept His promises to the children of Israel. The story is told us by a good man named Ezra, a scribe (or writer) who wrote all about the home-coming of the children of Israel to Jerusalem. Tell the story just as it is given in the lesson—using very simple language. Teach the Golden Text.

**Practical Thoughts**—(Get the children to learn some of God's beautiful promises, and repeat them next Sunday.) Troubles

are sent to help us to be better, to show us God's power to bless and help. We are all captives, captives of sin and Satan. God can make us free from sin, and fill our hearts with love to Himself. God did great things



for His people then, and He does great things for us now. Have ready a number of silver-paper stars. Let the children tell you some of the "great things" that God has done for us that should make us glad and thankful. As these are named pin a star on the board for each expression of God's goodness. His greatest and best gift—His own beloved Son Jesus. (A large star.) Through Jesus we are free to enter the beautiful New Jerusalem—our heavenly home. (Give each child a star with the Golden Text printed on it.)

### THE BOOK PAGE

"That is a good book which is opened with expectation and closed with profit."

THE MAKING AND THE UNMAKING OF THE PREACHER; The Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale University, 1898. By William Jewett Tucker, President of Dartmouth College; pp. 221; price, \$1.50; Houghton, Mifflin & Company, Boston and New York.

Dr. Tucker takes the *personality of the preacher* as his theme. He is "intent upon finding out and taking the measure of those forces which are steadily at work toward the making or the unmaking of the preacher, because they are actually determining at any given time the value of preaching." The theme is very carefully treated, and those who wish to be better preachers at sixty than they are at forty or thirty will find much in the book to point out the way.

From the same publishers, *IN THE BRAVE DAYS OF OLD*, by Ruth Hall; pp. 334; price, \$1.25, gives vivid pictures from a period "seldom approached in fiction, and yet rich in notable personages and romantic adventures," the ten years immediately following the death of Queen Elizabeth. It is a book for boys, written in the liveliest style. Giles, the boy hero of the tale, has sufficiently varied and thrilling experiences—present at the death of Queen Elizabeth, giving warning of the Gunpowder Plot, in sea battles in the war between the Netherlands and Spain, with Hudson when searching for the Northwest passage. The volume is thoroughly wholesome, a fine holiday book.

Mr. T. Fisher Unwin, London, sends us *THE LEGEND OF ST. MARK*; Sunday Morning Talks to the Children, by Rev. John Byles. pp. 188; price, \$1.25. It is the third volume of a similar sort by the same author, and an excellent sort it is. History, legend, science, travel, are all laid under tribute to illustrate spiritual truth. Each talk has a well-told story or incident and the lessons follow. It has the merit of being readable. Boys will go through it, and preachers who want to reach and hold the boys.

FROM FACT TO FAITH (James Nisbet & Co., London; pp. 151; price 75c.), from the pen of Rev. Dr. J. Monro Gibson, is an apologetic, but as far as possible from the dry-as-dust, both as to matter and style. Dr. Monro Gibson is a man intensely alive. He is in vital touch with the world about him. He knows the ways of men. He lives close to God and taking as his starting point the facts of daily life, he shows, and after a convincing fashion, that they "are as closely related to the truths of Holy Scripture as is the hard earth beneath us to the ethereal heavens above us."

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ITALIAN WILDBENDES. By Sophia V. Bompiani. A. S. Barnes & Company, New York; pages 175 (with excellent index), price \$1, is a fresh treatment of a people whose story has in it all the elements of the romantic. It is good in this soft age to be reminded of the heroism of the brave mountaineers who, in spite of incredible oppressions and persecutions because of their faith, still survive. The numerous full-page illustrations are unusually well done, and the terse and lively style of the author carries the reader along briskly.

From the same publishers, *FAMILIAR TALKS TO BOYS*. By Rev. John Hall, D.D.; pp. 98; price 75c.; not a new book, but rich with the ripe experience of a lifetime. Dr. Hall was one who had been verily "baptized into a sense of all conditions," and the reader recognizes in what close touch the venerable pastor kept with boy life.

The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Va., is doing a good work for the Southern Presbyterian Church. Four volumes lately issued by the committee are on our table. *AN EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER*, pp. 298, price \$1.25, is, as its title imports, an exposition, and it is full and luminous, of the "Book of Forms" of that Church. Some of the methods are, of course, foreign to us; but there is much that covers common ground and it is wholesome reading for all who wish to be thoroughly versed—as every minister and elder certainly should be—in questions of Church government and discipline.

*TATONG, The little Slave*, by Annie Maria Barnes, pp. 252, price \$1, is a well-told story of Korean life, to which our newly-established mission in Korea should lend increased interest. *GUESSING AT HEROES AND THE GRANGERS*, by Miss Dickson, are slighter stories (about 100 pages, 50c. each) with a good deal of local colour.

*BIBLE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS*. By Rev. G. M. Mackie, M.A. (Fleming H. Revell Co.; pp. 165; price, \$1.), is the most recent book of its kind. There always seems room for one more book on Bible times and ways. This volume comes with a strong claim. Mr. Mackie has been for twenty-five years a missionary of the Church of Scotland at Beyrout, Syria. He has had the opportunity for original observation, and has a special eye to local color in his description of the common objects and occupations referred to in Scripture. The thirty-one illustrations really illustrate, besides being well done as works of art. The arrangement of the materials is systematic, and an index of subjects and Scripture texts adds value to the book,

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