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# SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. XXXIII

NOVEMBER, 1899.

No. 11.

## Autumn Morning Thought.

A day of fire on earth and fire in heaven,  
Once more the veil of sombre night is  
    riven,  
To show the sanctuary of this day.

A sanctuary fair with shrine on shrine,  
Hidden in misty light that gleams divine,  
Illumining with gold the old year's way.

Deep in the yellow woods an influence  
    lies,  
That woos us to accord with destinies,  
And in the sunlight banishes our cares.

For nature, too, must pass away from  
    earth,  
Her journey still from springtime's tender  
    birth,  
Through all the fulness of the billowing  
    year.

Then may the gold about us bear the  
    touch,  
The imprint of a thought that makes it  
    much,  
'Tis glorious so to shine and fade from  
    earth.

## Important Books on an Important Subject.

The Methodist Publishing House, Toronto, issues a series of very valuable books for young people, and older ones too, on the physical constitution of "the house in which we live," a knowledge of which may save their readers from much evil, sorrow, and sin. These books are prepared by Rev. Sylvanus Stall, D.D.,

and Mrs. Mary Wood-Allen, M.D. The latter is National Superintendent of the Purity Department of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and author of the excellent book in our Epworth League Reading Course, on "The Marvels of our Bodily Dwelling." These books are written with delicacy and refinement.

One is for girls under sixteen, of which the late Frances E. Willard says: "I do earnestly hope that this book, founded on a strictly scientific, but not forgetting a strong ethical basis, may be well known and widely read by the dear girls in their teens and the young women in their homes." Another book is for boys under sixteen. Of this the venerable Rev. Dr. Cuyler says: "'What a Young Boy Ought to Know,' ought to be in every home where there is a boy." Bishop Vincent says of it: "You have handled with great delicacy and wisdom an exceedingly difficult subject." Of another book for young men, Dr. F. E. Clark, founder of the Christian Endeavour Society, says: "It is written reverently but very plainly, and I believe will save a multitude of young men from evils unspeakable." The book for young women, in the same series, by Mrs. Wood-Allen, is dedicated to her own daughter, and contains the wise counsels which a loving mother of large knowledge and experience can give upon the important subjects of love and marriage. These books are as widely removed as possible from the sensational and unwisely suggestive. Parents can perform an incalculable service by obtaining these books for the use of their young people. The price is \$1 net for each, except a pamphlet book for young boys, which is fifteen cents.

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## Sunday School Banner.

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, NOVEMBER, 1899.

### "It is a Good Thing to Give Thanks Unto the Lord."

The month of November, one of the darkest and dreariest in the year, is gladdened and glorified by Thanksgiving Day. The fruits of the earth are gathered in, the barns are filled with plenty, the labour of the fields is well-nigh accomplished, the season of comparative rest and leisure has come. If ever a nation had cause for gratitude to the Giver of every good and every perfect gift it is our beloved Canada. While wars have devastated the earth and rumors of war have filled the air, we have dwelt in peace and quietude. The labour of the husbandman has been abundantly blessed. Never did our country produce such bountiful harvest. Never were the products of the field, the forest, the fisheries, and the mines so greatly in demand, and so generous in

their supply. The busy hives of industry have been humming with activity. Our railways and steamships have been burdened with freight. The factories have been working overtime, prices for everything we have to sell have been good, and the surplus products of the country have brought from abroad many millions of wealth. The tide of immigration has been greater than ever. Many of the sons and daughters of Canada, who in other years have sought labour in the neighbouring republic, have found that our own country offers opportunities surpassed by none, are being repatriated in their own land. Well may we, therefore, give thanks to the bountiful Giver of every thing that we possess.

WE SHOULD SHOW OUR GRATITUDE,

first, by giving him our hearts, the homage of our souls, the service of our lives. Without these no gifts or offerings that we can render will be acceptable before him. With these the humblest gift will be well pleasing in his sight. As God has thus opened the windows of heaven and poured down blessings, and made the earth to smile with a bountiful harvest, should we not render to the Giver a generous share of what he has so lavishly bestowed upon us. In the Twentieth Century Thanksgiving Movement, which is before the country, is a grand opportunity to prove our fidelity, our thankfulness, our loyal love to our heavenly Father. Above and beyond all creature comforts are we indebted for the unspeakable gift of salvation through his Son, the comfort and consolation of the Holy Ghost shed abroad in our hearts.

We are confident that our loving and loyal Sunday-school scholars and teachers and officers will not be wanting in this great movement. No class does more for the Church of God in this land than the great army of faithful Sunday-school workers, who, for no earthly reward, the love of Christ constraining them, give themselves, their time, their toil, their study, and their means to the teaching of the young people in our schools. Yet such are the divine compensations of service to the best of Masters that in the very joy of this service, in the very intellectual stimulus and moral benefit received therefrom they have an exceeding great reward. These will be among the most earnest in promoting the organized co-operation of every scholar, even the little tots in the infant class, in this great work.

LET EVERY NAME BE INSCRIBED ON THE  
HISTORIC ROLL.

Some may possibly be unable to contribute the dollar which this requires. But the teachers will have good ground for asking the well-to-do parents of their scholars to contribute, not only for the enrolment of their own households, but also for those who are too poor in this world's goods to do this unaided.

But every one should do something for himself. No child is so small or so poor that he or she cannot by a special effort earn a few pence, or save a few pence by self-denial, to have a share in this great closing enterprise of the century. It will be something to remember in the far future that their names are written in this great scroll, that their love and faith and devotion had a part in this great movement. May their names also be written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and not one be found missing "when the roll is called up yonder."

Since the above was written and put in type the Dominion Government has appointed the 19th of October as Thanksgiving Day. This is a month earlier than the day celebrated heretofore. We think the change a decided improvement. It brings the thanksgiving into our beautiful October weather and our ideal Indian summer. It, however, destroys the pertinency of the introductory sentence of this editorial; but we forgive the Government this private wrong in consideration of the greater good of the greater number.

### The Campaign Opens.

The Million Dollar Fund Campaign opened grandly at Halifax, London, Hamilton, Toronto, and elsewhere. Public meetings were held even in advance of the grand rally of October 8. The meeting in Toronto was a great historic occasion worthy to have a place among the many grand rallies which have taken place in the historic Metropolitan church. The most sanguine promoters of the movement anticipated that they would be doing very well indeed if they could pledge \$100,000 at that meeting. Instead of that they were ready to announce pledges of a quarter of a million, or one-fourth of the whole, while Sherbourne Street church alone pledged \$100,000.

This key note has already rung from end to end of the Dominion, and awakened hearty responses. Our friend, Rev. J. E. Lancelley, secretary of the Twentieth Century Fund Committee, who so eloquently urged an appeal for \$2,000,000 at the General Conference, is confident now that that sum could have been reached had that high standard been set up. Well, there is nothing to prevent our friends giving the round two millions. The great missionary, educational, and superannuated interests of the church, and the payment of its debts, could employ with great advantage an even greater sum than that.

### The Review Service.

In all successful teaching reviewing forms a most important part. It refreshes the memory and clinches in the mind the lessons that have been learned. This is especially important in the Sunday-school. We are glad to know that increased attention has been given to this subject, and endeavour in The Banner to present a full and comprehensive review, and an attractive and useful review service. We are glad to know that the importance of reviewing is being more and more fully recognized, and that most successful Sunday-school superintendents employ it with great success. That veteran Sunday-school worker, H. P. Moore, Esq., editor of the Acton Free Press, writes thus of the review service in The Banner:

"At our review service last Sunday we used your Quarterly (responsive) Review Service, and it proved to be one of the most intensely interesting services we have ever had on a review day. It was impressive and helpful in every respect. For years we have been paying special attention to our quarterly review services, and to say your review arrangement aided us in having one of the best is saying a good deal. I thank you sincerely for the help thus afforded, and will commend The Banner reviews cordially."

The Acton Sunday-school makes a specialty of the September review as a Rally Day after the summer vacation. An attractive programme is neatly printed in blue and fawnine, letters from former pastors, teachers, scholars, and friends are read, a picture of the church is

printed on the programme, with the motto, "Our church home, where a cordial welcome always awaits you." The red cross flag, charged with the arms of Canada, adorns the first page. An ingenious acrostic is given, together with the following rally day song :

"Rest ye not, but gladly rally,  
As the Lord has called each one ;  
Let our school come in full numbers ;  
Let new hearts for Christ be won,  
You who oft have with us gathered,

Do not cease the call to extend,  
As you now come out to worship,  
You can bring with you a friend."

RALLY DAY SONG.

Tune—National Anthem.

"To thee, Almighty King,  
We grateful tribute bring,  
Thy praise we sing;  
We come with purpose true;  
We seek thy will to do,  
Our vows to thee renew,  
And own thee King.

"Thy goodness crowns the years,  
Thy hand has saved from fears,  
Through all our days,  
For all thy mercies past;  
For love so great and vast;  
For truth which e'er shall last,  
Loud be our praise.

"Grant us thy presence still,  
Help us to do thy will,  
Thy name to love,  
And when our work is done,  
Life's battles fought and won,  
May we with thee be one,  
In heaven above."

We heartily commend these methods. Make much of your school and your church. Let it be a centre of social and intellectual as well as religious life. Make it a true rallying place and religious home, a type of the Father's house on high.

Sunday-school Growth.

The Rev. Dr. Cornish, the faithful and indefatigable General Conference Statistician of our Church, accomplishes a vast amount of painstaking labour in securing as accurate returns as possible of its status. In this he is much ham-

pered by the defective manner in which the statistical tables are often filled up. We present in this number the general and Sunday-school statistics furnished by Dr. Cornish. In addition to this, Dr. Cornish furnishes a detailed report, from which we glean the following items :

The total number of preaching appointments reported at the June Conferences was 4,548, an increase of 58. The total number of schools was 3,334, a decrease of 11. There is room for great improvement here. It is apparent that we have 1,214 preaching appointments where we have no Sunday-school. It is true that many of these appointments in sparsely settled parts of the country have union schools, sustained by members of the different denominations, many of which use our Sunday-school literature. But there are still many appointments where there is no school at all. Superintendents and earnest-souled Sunday-school workers can surely find a field for missionary effort in our own land in this direction. Let the motto of the closing year of the century be, "A Sunday-school at every preaching appointment." The increase of these appointments by 58 is very encouraging, but it should at least be accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of schools, instead of by a decrease of 11.

The great army of Sunday-school teachers and officers who give their unpaid services to this great cause is 33,036, an increase of 18. The number of those who are members of the Methodist Church is 29,894, an increase of 166. God grant that the remaining 3,141, who are engaged in this noble work and who have not yet enrolled themselves as members of Christ's Church, may yield large numbers of recruits during the year to his professed disciples. The entire number of scholars is 270,140. This, however, is a decrease of 189. We trust that every effort will be made not only to increase the number of new schools, but to increase also the number of scholars in the old ones.

One of the most encouraging features is an increase of nearly one-half in the Home Department, namely, from 7,151 to 10,453, an increase of 3,302.

Another feature of supreme importance is that, during the year, 8,847 of the scholars have united with the church. Yet in the previous year the number so uniting was 782 more. It is gratifying, however, to know that the number of

scholars returned as members of the church in 1898-9 is 65,970, an increase of 2,325 over the previous year. What we need more than anything else is a sweeping revival throughout our church and throughout our schools. Let us hope and pray that the closing year of the century shall be accompanied by a rising tide of religious influence which shall sweep thousands of our scholars into the ark of Christ's Church.

Another cause for devout gratitude is that no less than 64,363 scholars are pledged abstainers from all that can intoxicate, an increase of 11,164 on the previous year. With such a rate of increase maintained, soon the great mass of our scholars will be pledged abstainers, and in the near future most of them will be able to fight with vote or social influence against the greatest enemy of our country.

It is interesting to know that the greatest collection of books for circulation among the people is in our Sunday-school libraries—no less than 310,847. Writings may sneer at Sunday-school libraries, yet most of those are of sound moral and religious instruction. Many of the old books, however, have been worn out and discarded, for the totals are 6,092 less than the previous year. With the returning tide of prosperity our schools will be able to order more largely, and we hope will purchase and put into circulation a large amount of good books. Perhaps the purchase of ten thousand copies of the Epworth League Reading Course may have had something to do with the decrease in the amount of purchases for libraries.

The Sunday-school Banner reports a circulation of 16,824, an increase of 1,091. The number of our Sunday-school periodicals reported reaches the grand total of 299,161. The schools contributed for missions \$19,835, but this is \$801 less than the previous year. The Leagues, however, most of whose members are also in the schools, report an increase in missionary givings of \$3,295, and a total of \$16,955.

There are two funds for which collections have only been recently made, the Educational Fund and the Superannuation Fund. For these \$877 have been contributed, an increase of \$61. For the Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund was contributed \$2,499, a decrease of \$116 from the previous year. This is a

distinctly missionary fund for establishing new schools and helping those in poorer parts of the country. The falling off in this fund may, in part, explain the decrease in the number of schools. No fund of our church is doing more important missionary work. It acts upon the principle of those that are strong, bearing the infirmities of the weak. Even the poorer schools, however, are expected to help themselves. We trust that this fund will exhibit a marked increase this year.

It is gratifying to know that the very large sum of \$125,000.19 was expended for school purposes, an increase of \$1,082. We venture to say that no greater results are obtained for the expenditure of even so large an amount of money in any other way.

Nearly 270,000 scholars receiving weekly instruction in the Word of God from 33,036 teachers and officers is a splendid record. Seventy-nine of the schools report normal classes, which is 28 less than last year. Only 247 of these schools, however, have regular teachers' meetings for the regular study of the lesson, a decrease of 49. Nothing in our schools is more needed than training the teachers in the comprehension of the lessons and best method of instruction. The use of The Banner and other helps can only partially meet this need.

The number of schools opened throughout the whole year is 2,439, an increase of 265. This is very encouraging. We hope that these ever-green schools, which flourish with unfading leaf all the year round, will be still further increased. There is great room for such increase, for even yet there are 895 schools which are closed during the winter season. Such schools can never attain the highest degree of success. Coming out of their winter hibernation they have scarcely recovered full animation before they begin to prepare for winter quarters again. Our day-schools, even in the remotest regions and most inclement weather, are kept open all through the winter. Keep the schools open, or, where this is impossible, which will be but rarely the case, let Home Departments be organized for the home study of the lessons, and let the Sunday-school literature be continued and regularly distributed. In the long, dark, winter evenings the brightening influence of these papers is more needed than during the bright and sunny days of summer. There is more leisure, too, for the study of the Word of

God, that book which alone is able to make wise unto salvation.

Taken as a whole, these statistics, so laboriously gathered by Dr. Cornish, are full of cheer and encouragement, though not without sufficient ground for searching of heart and earnest resolve to remove any defects and causes of failure in our school, and to stimulate our efforts for fuller and more earnest consecration in this grandest of all work.

### Methodist Statistics for 1899.

My statistical report for the past Conference year has been delayed longer than usual, because of the lack of the necessary schedules from some of the Conferences, and the correspondence rendered necessary in order to secure corrections.

We had hoped that with the new legislation of the last General Conference, and the appointment of district and Conference statistical secretaries, almost absolute correctness would have been secured, but, alas! the complications have been, in some cases, as bad as before, and to go over the numerous schedules and attempt to correct and harmonize them has been an immense and unsatisfactory labour. However, I send you, for publication, the following results:

MEMBERS.				
Conference	1898	1899	Inc.	Dec.
Toronto	44,109	44,258	150	
London	47,783	48,289	506	
Hamilton	46,078	46,307	229	
Bay of Quinte	40,630	40,369		261
Montreal	30,050	35,838		212
Nova Scotia	16,107	16,079		28
N. B. and P. E. I.	13,562	13,668	106	
Newfoundland	11,246	11,279	33	
Man. and N. W.	17,692	18,741	1,049	
British Columbia	4,879	5,060	181	
Japan	2,370	2,339		31
*China Mission	31	31		

280,537 282,259

\*No report for 1899. Net increase, 1,722

The numbers received into church membership during the year are as follows:

By change of boundaries	1,798
On trial	18,802
By letter	11,076

Total	31,676
Removed by change of boundaries	1,873
By letter	14,286
By withdrawal	1,536
By expulsion	99
By death	3,840
Ceased to be members	8,322

Total	29,954
Net increase as above	1,722
The number of catechumens	8,474
The number of baptisms	17,286
The number of marriages	7,788
The number of burials	11,304

GEO. H. CORNISH,  
General Conference Statistician.

### Sunday-school Statistics.

I send you herewith a copy of the Sunday-school schedule for the Conferences of 1899, thinking that perhaps you would like to publish it in The Sunday-school Banner or Onward.

The Toronto Conference, because of the addition of two districts from the Montreal Conference, shows an increase, and Montreal Conference, because of the loss of said districts, shows a decrease.

The figures stand as follows:

Conference.	Schools.		Scholars.	
	Inc.	Dec.	Inc.	Dec.
Toronto	21		1,231	
London		1		631
Hamilton		1		837
Bay of Quinte		11		893
Montreal		20		719
Nova Scotia		8		192
N. B. and P. E. I.		5		29
Newfoundland		6		623
Man. and N. W.		9		732
British Columbia		1		84
	36	47	2,891	3,080
		36		2,891
		11		189

Yours cordially,

GEO. H. CORNISH.

There is no better place for us to serve God in than the one in which he has put us.



### If the Lord Should Come.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

If the Lord should come in the morning,

As I went about my work,  
The little things and the quiet things,

That a servant cannot shirk,  
Though nobody ever sees them,  
And only the dear Lord cares,  
That they are always done in the light  
of the sun,

Would he take me unawares ?

If my Lord should come at noonday,

The time of the dust and heat,  
When the glare is white, and the air is  
still,

And the hoof-beats sound in the street;  
If my dear Lord came at noonday,  
And smiled in my tired eyes,  
Would it not be sweet his look to meet ?  
Would it take me by surprise ?

If my Lord came hither at evening,

In the fragrant dew and dusk,  
When the world drops off its mantle,  
Of daylight like a husk,  
And flowers in wonderful beauty,  
And we fold our hands and rest,  
Would his touch of my hand, his low com-  
mand,

Bring me unhopèd-for zest ?

Why do I ask the question ?

He is ever coming to me,  
Morning and noon and evening.

If I have but eyes to see,  
And the daily load grows lighter,  
The daily cares grow sweet,  
For the Master is near, the Master is  
here,

I have only to sit at his feet.

—Pittsburg Christian Advocate.

### How to Help Our Sunday-school Periodicals.

An Open Letter to our Readers :

As a friend of the Sunday-school pub-  
lications of the Methodist Church, you  
are, of course, interested in their future  
success. To improve their literature,  
illustrations, and mechanical appearance  
is our constant study. Do you realize  
how much you can help us give to you  
still better periodicals ? Here are two  
ways :

1. Tell us what most pleases you in

these periodicals, and what you don't  
like. Make suggestions. We cannot  
always follow them, but they will be  
helpful.

2. Recommend them to your best  
neighbour, and to your friend,—better  
still, send us the names and addresses  
of several,—on a postal card, if you  
like,—and when we have a few spare  
copies we'll send them one without cost,  
with your compliments. They'll appre-  
ciate your thoughtfulness.

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### Methodist Magazine and Review for October.

The October number of this magazine contains seven illustrated articles. The Editor gives a graphic sketch of a trip "Over the Alleghanies," with ten fine illustrations. The third jubilee of

Goethe's birth is commemorated by a critical study of his life and work, with portrait. Two well-written articles, "The Cabot Quadracentennial," and "Vasco da Gama," describe the achievements of those early discoverers, with illustrations of Old Bristol and one of Da Gama's flag-ship. The missionary article, "The Apostle of the North—the Rev. James Evans," "A Shut-in Saint," and our continued story, "Denis Patterson, Field Preacher," are also illustrated. An especially timely article on "The Twentieth Century Fund" is contributed by the Rev. William Caven, D.D., Principal of Knox College, Toronto. "Hymns We Sing," by Rev. O. R. Lambly, D.D., "Women and the Temperance Reform," "Invisible Light," with many other brief sketches, complete a most interesting number.

Toronto: William Briggs. Montreal: C. W. Coates. Halifax: S. F. Huestis. \$2.00 a year; \$1.00 for six months.

### The Comrade Teacher.

It was a hot Sunday in midsummer when Miss Gray made her first appearance before class number nine in the Elmwood Sunday-school. The good man who had conscientiously, and often despairingly, preached to the uneasy, wriggling little fellows for three years had removed to another town, and bright-eyed Miss Gray had readily consented to take his place.

It took the new teacher about two minutes to find out that the lesson for the day had not been studied at all. Then she tried the class on the lesson of the previous week. That was also a blank to them. Next, she tried to recall to their minds some of the more striking lessons of the quarter. All was vague, uncertain, confused. It seemed impossible to awaken any degree of interest in the work before them.

"I must wake them up," thought the new teacher. Closing her Bible, and speaking in a natural, cordial tone, she said:

"Do you know, boys, that the circus is coming here next week?"

The boys stared at her! Was she going to tell them to stay away from the circus?

Not a bit of it. Instead, she asked questions, gave information, with wisely

worked-in warnings against the evils of the circus, told bits of experience, and before the boys knew it they were deep in conversation, every trace of weariness gone. They were thoroughly waked up!

Then, when every eye was bright, and every pulse throbbing with interest, this wise teacher suddenly turned to the lesson. She had come out of her shell as a Sunday-school teacher long enough to prove herself a comrade, interested in the boys' own world, and they were bound to listen to her now. They instinctively reasoned that a woman who could talk so well about the circus could

make a Bible lesson interesting, and she did.

It is good sense and it is good religion to come into the world in which our pupils live. "To the weak became I as weak," said Paul, "that I might gain the weak," so great was the eagerness of this soul-winner that he might "by all means save some."

The teacher who will win must stand by the side of the pupil, take his hand in loving grasp, and say in the spirit of cordial, hearty comradeship, "Come with us, and we will do thee good."—Sunday-school Journal.

## Lessons and Golden Texts.—Studies in the Old Testament.

### LESSON

- I. October 1.—JOY IN GOD'S HOUSE. Psalm 122. *Commit vs.* 6-9. (Read Psalm 84.) GOLDEN TEXT: I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Psalm 122. 1.
- II. October 8.—HAMAN'S PLOT AGAINST THE JEWS. Esth. 3. 1-11. *Commit vs.* 5, 6. (Read chaps. 1-3.) GOLDEN TEXT: If God be for us, who can be against us? Rom. 8. 31.
- III. October 15.—ESTHER PLEADING FOR HER PEOPLE. Esth. 8. 3-8 and 15-17. *Commit vs.* 15-17. (Read chaps. 8-10.) GOLDEN TEXT: Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37. 5.
- IV. October 22.—EZRA'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM. Ezra 8. 21-32. *Commit vs.* 21-23. (Read chap. 7, and 8. 15-36.) GOLDEN TEXT: The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him. Ezra 8. 22.
- V. October 29.—PSALMS OF DELIVERANCE. Psalms 85 and 126. *Commit* Psalm 126. (Read Jer. 31.) GOLDEN TEXT: They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Psalm 126. 6.
- VI. November 5.—NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER. Neh. 1. 1-11. *Commit vs.* 5-10. (Read chap. 2.) GOLDEN TEXT: Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day. Neh. 1. 11.
- VII. November 12.—REBUILDING THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM. Neh. 3. 7-18. *Commit vs.* 15-18. (Read the chapters.) GOLDEN TEXT: Watch and pray. Matt. 26. 41c.

### LESSON.

- VIII. November 19.—PUBLIC READING OF THE SCRIPTURES. Neh. 8. 1-12. *Commit vs.* 1-3. (Read the chapter; also Luke 4. 16-22.) GOLDEN TEXT: The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. Neh. 8. 3.
- IX. November 26.—VOICES OF ISTEMPERANCE. Prov. 23. 29-35. (Temperance Sunday.) *Commit vs.* 29-32. GOLDEN TEXT: Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. Prov. 20. 1.
- X. December 3.—KEEPING THE SABBATH. Neh. 13. 15-22. *Commit vs.* 15-17. (Read the chapter. Compare Isa. 56. 2-8; Jer. 17. 19-27.) GOLDEN TEXT: Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Exod. 20. 8.
- XI. December 10.—LESSONS IN GIVING. Mal. 1. 6-11 and 3. 8-12. *Commit* chap. 3. 10. (Read chap. 1; also 2 Cor. chaps. 8 and 9.) GOLDEN TEXT: God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. 9. 7.
- XII. December 17.—FRUITS OF RIGHT AND WRONG DOING. Mal. 3. 13 to 4. 6. *Commit vs.* 16-18. (Compare Mal. 3. 1-6; also Matt. 11. 7-15.) GOLDEN TEXT: Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Gal. 6. 7.
- XIII. December 24.—CHRIST'S COMING FORETOLD. Isa. 9. 2-7. *Commit vs.* 8, 7. (Read Isa. 11. 1-10.) GOLDEN TEXT: Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2. 11.
- XIV. December 31.—REVIEW. GOLDEN TEXT: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Psalm 103. 2.

## Order of Services.—Fourth Quarter.

### OPENING SERVICE.

- I. SILENCE.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. [Psalm 121.]
- SUPT. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
- SCHOOL. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.
- SUPT. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.
- SCHOOL. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
- SUPT. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.
- SCHOOL. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul.
- ALL. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thine coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.
- III. SINGING.
- IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.
- V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.
- VI. SINGING.

### LESSON SERVICE.

- I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.
- II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.
- III. RECITATION OF THE TABLE, GOLDEN TEXT, AND OUTLINE by the school in concert.
- IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON by Pastor or Superintendent.
- V. SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON. [Special lesson in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.]
- VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS (especially of the Church service and the Epworth League and week-evening prayer-meetings).

### CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. SINGING.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.
- SUPT. My son, forget not my law: but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace shall they add to thee.
- SCHOOL. The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

## FOURTH QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

## LESSON VI. NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER.

[Nov. 5.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day. Neh. 1. 11.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Read chapter 2.]

Neh. 1. 1-11. [Commit to memory verses 8-10.]

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

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

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

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

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

6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Is-ra-el thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Is-ra-el, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

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

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

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

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

11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be

## REVISED VERSION.

1 The words of Ne-he-mi'ah the son of Hach-a-li'ah.

Now it came to pass in the month Chis'lev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shu'shan the palace, that Ha'na-ni, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men out of Ju'dah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Je-ru-sa-lem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Je-ru-sa-lem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days; and I fasted and prayed before the God of heaven, and said, I beseech thee, O LORD, the God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments: let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee at this time, day and night, for the children of Is-ra-el thy servants, while I confess the sins of the children of Is-ra-el, which we have sinned against thee: yea, I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Mo'ses. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Mo'ses, saying, If ye trespass, I will scatter you abroad among the peoples: but if ye return unto me, and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts were in the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to cause my name to dwell there. Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants,

attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

who delight to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. (Now I was cupbearer to the king.)

**Time.**—About B. C. 444. **Place.**—Susa. **Introductory Note.**—Nehemiah followed Ezra in the government of Judah, specially of Jerusalem. He was a deeply religious man, and wise in his efforts to rebuild the city. He was an ardent patriot. Though a noble in the Persian court and raised to wealth and honor, he forgot not his own land, desolate and afflicted. He prayed for its welfare; he worked as he prayed. He was governor of Jerusalem for twelve years, and then returned to the Persian court, whence, after five years, he again came back to his own land and corrected evils which had crept in.

#### Home Readings.

- M.* Nehemiah's Prayer. Neh. 1.  
*Tu.* The request granted. Neh. 2. 1-11.  
*W.* A good resolve. Neh. 2. 12-20.  
*Th.* Confession and forgiveness. Lev. 26. 40-46.  
*F.* Precious promises. Deut. 30. 1-10.  
*S.* Solomon's prayer. 1 Kings 8. 46-53.  
**S.** Turn us, O, Lord. Psa. 80.

#### Lesson Hymns.

##### No. 217, New Canadian Hymnal.

What a Friend we have in Jesus,  
 All our sins and griefs to bear!

##### No. 218, New Canadian Hymnal.

Come, thou Fount of every blessing,  
 Tune my heart to sing thy grace.

##### No. 224, New Canadian Hymnal.

My faith looks up to thee,  
 Thou Lamb of Calvary.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

- 1. A People's Need, v. 1-3.**  
 Who was Nehemiah?  
 How came this Jew to be in a Persian palace?  
 What question did he ask of the men of Judah?  
 What was the "captivity" spoken of in verse 2?  
 What report did the Jews bring to Nehemiah?  
 What points of comparison are there between Jerusalem and the Church of Christ?

How is Nehemiah an example to us?

What can we do to promote Christ's kingdom?

#### 2. A Patriot's Prayer, v. 4-11.

What effect had the sad news upon Nehemiah?

What was his view of the divine Being?

What did he regard as the true cause of the desolation of his nation?

Why should the sinning make confession?

Should we ever confess to men?

When should we confess to God only?

What did God say to Israel through Moses?

What was the promise to Israel if penitent?

For what did Nehemiah pray? GOLDEN TEXT.

Why did Nehemiah wish God to prosper him? Verse 11.

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

1. Avoid the sin of selfishness. Think of others, and especially of those who are in sorrow. Join yourself in sympathy with others, and thus be prompted to work for their welfare.

2. Pray, but let your prayer widen like an ever-widening circle until it includes the world. "Thy kingdom come."

3. Pray in faith for yourself and for others. Let the prayer rest on the divine promises. Let it be sincere, as shown by repentance. Let it be "without fainting." We should not despair of receiving a blessing when we are asking for it.

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

##### 1. A People's Need, v. 1-3.

Whose words have we in this lesson?

Who came to visit Nehemiah?

Where was Nehemiah?

In what month and year did the visit occur?

Concerning whom did Nehemiah ask?

What was the report about the people?

What about the holy city?

Who had caused this ruin? 2 Kings 25. 10.

##### 2. A Patriot's Prayer, v. 4-11.

What three things did Nehemiah do?

To whom did he pray?

How did he address the Lord?

For whom did Nehemiah pray?

What confession did he make?

What promise of the Lord did he plead?

Through whom was this promise given?

What did Nehemiah say of the people?

Whose favor did he desire to secure?  
 What office did he hold?  
 What king was this? Neh. 2. 1.

#### Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. A lesson of patriotism?
2. A lesson of piety?
3. The value of prayer?

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Did all the captive Jews go back to Jerusalem? **No, some stayed in Persia.**

Who was one of these? **Nehemiah.**

Why did he live in the king's palace? **He waited on the king.**

Who was the king at this time? **Artaxerxes.**

Why did Nehemiah love to hear from his old home? **It was dear to him.**

Who brought him news one day? **Hanani.**

What did he say when broken down? **The wall of the city.**

Why was this a sad thing? **It left the city open to its enemies.**

What did Nehemiah want to do?

Why was he willing to do it?

What did he fear might hinder his going? **The will of the king.**

To whom did he go first? **To God, the great King.**

What did he ask? **That God would lead the king to let him go.**

#### THE LESSON CATECHISM.

(For the entire school.)

1. About whom did Nehemiah ask? **Concerning the Jews in their own land and Jerusalem.**

2. What effect had the sad news upon him? **He fasted and prayed.**

3. What was his prayer? **GOLDEN TEXT: "Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day."**

4. What was Nehemiah's position in Persia? **He was the king's cupbearer.**

#### NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.

8. Name the attributes of God.

The tributes of God are omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence; wisdom, goodness, freedom; truth, holiness, love.

Jeremiah xxiii. 24. Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.

Psalms cxxxix. 12. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

Matthew xix. 26. But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them: With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Romans i. 33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

#### THE LESSON OUTLINE.

BY J. L. HURLBUT, D.D.

#### Nehemiah and His Prayer.

##### I. NEHEMIAH.

1. **Noble.** *In....the palace.* v. 1.

The king's cupbearer. v. 11.  
 Not many noble. 1 Cor. 1. 26.

2. **Patriotic.** *Asked.* v. 2.

If I forget thee. Psa. 137. 5.  
 Prosper that love thee. Psa. 122. 6.

3. **Praying.** *Prayed before God.* v. 4.

Men pray everywhere. 1 Tim. 2. 8.  
 I bow my knees. Eph. 3. 14.

##### II. HIS PRAYER.

1. **Earnest.** *Wept.* v. 4.

Fervent prayer. James 5. 16.

I fell down. Deut. 9. 18, 19.

2. **Humble.** *Fasted.* v. 4.

Humble yourselves. James 4. 9, 10.  
 By prayer and fasting. Mark 9. 29.

3. **Persevering.** *Day and night.* v. 6.

Instant in prayer. Rom. 12. 12.  
 Will not let thee go. Gen. 32. 26.

4. **Confessing.** *Have sinned.* vs. 6, 7.

I will confess. Psa. 32. 5.  
 If we confess. 1 John 1. 9.

5. **Pleading promise.** *Remember.* vs. 8, 9.

Remember the word. Psa. 119. 49.  
 My words....not pass away. Luke 21. 33.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Our present lesson is taken from the Book of Nehemiah, which is believed to have been written about B. C. 431. It is largely a personal narrative, and is a direct sequel to the Book of Ezra. The two men thus named as authors were far more truly representative of the restored Judaism than were Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and their colleagues, whose piety and patriotism, while

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genuine, were sadly unenergetic and slow; heirs respectively of the ancient royalty and hierarchy, the springs of all their goodness were in the past. But neither Ezra nor Nehemiah had "hereditary rights;" at least they did not base their authority on their great-grandfathers. They saw with clear vision the needs of the hour; they heard God's command; and with sublime faith and inexorable purpose they set themselves to the task of rebuilding their nation. Nehemiah was unmistakably "a born king," though his father, for all we know, may have been a plebeian. As a Hebrew captive he was trained for the life of a Persian courtier. He became "cupbearer to the king," Artaxerxes, and so won the royal respect and sympathy that when the news of the desolation of Jerusalem saddened him the king appointed him to be governor of that city, with orders to rebuild and defend it, and with liberal assistance to make possible the fulfillment of these commands. For at least thirteen years Nehemiah ruled over Judea with vigor and justice. He made Jerusalem the leading city of the land. But his greatest work was that of turning a little group of poverty-stricken and dejected Jews into a prosperous and well-organized nation of patriots, and exchanging their half-heathenish customs for unrivaled loyalty to the God of their fathers. Our lesson shows the very beginning of this great work.

**Verse 1. Nehemiah.** The cupbearer, as we have seen, of King Artaxerxes. Modern European and American usage might class cupbearers among menials, but in the East the most valued friend of a king, the man who has highest reputation as statesman and largest local influence, regards as his chief honor appointment to such a post. Nehemiah was a man of ability, and had become wealthy. **The month Chislem.** The ninth month of the Jewish year, corresponding to the end of November and the beginning of December. **In the twentieth year.** The twentieth year of Artaxerxes's reign. This fixes the date near to the close of B. C. 445, ninety years after the first return from Babylonian captivity. **Shushan the palace.** "The palatial city." One of the royal residences of the Persian empire; it stood east of the Tigris and north of the Euphrates; known to the ancient Greeks as Susa, to the modern Bedouins as Shush. The ruins of its palaces were discovered in 1852.

**2. Hanani, one of my brethren.** Not a brother Jew merely, but his own brother. He was afterward made a civic officer (Neh. 7. 2). He is to be distinguished from the priest of the same name (Neh. 12. 36). **Came.** From Jerusalem to Susa. **Certain men of Judah.** "Men out of Judah;" that is, men who had just returned from the ancient province. **I asked them concerning the Jews.** From Josephus we learn that Nehemiah, doubtless attended by a gorgeous retinue, walked one afternoon outside Susa's walls. Certain men with foreign accent and travel-worn were drawing near to the city's gate. Listening, he discovered that their speech was old Hebrew, the language his mother had used. On joining them he discovered that they had just arrived from Judah, and (more astonishing yet) that one of them was his own brother. Naturally his first question was about the Jews

in Jerusalem. **Had escaped.** Had been made free from direct Babylonian control by the earlier return. Though ninety years had elapsed since that return, the Jews of Palestine were still known as "those who had escaped." **Left of the captivity.** This phrase points to the terrible hardships which Jerusalem had survived from the time of Cyrus until now. **Concerning Jerusalem.** This city was precious to godly Jews, not merely as London must always have peculiar interest to Britons or Paris for Frenchmen, but as the chosen earthly abode of the true God; the headquarters of the true religion. (1) *We should constantly have in our heart love for God's people and interest in God's cause.*

**3. The province.** Judea, now a province of the Persian empire. **The remnant . . . are in great affliction and reproach.** They had never really prospered, though the population had been increased, many houses had been built, and foreign traders had flourished. Phœnician fishermen had stalls in Jerusalem; traders from Tyre had booths for their ware; and Nehemiah has proceeded only a little way with his story before we hear of guilds (or as we might call them, trades unions) of goldsmiths and of apothecaries, while carpenters and locksmiths and other craftsmen are also mentioned. But this shows organization and effort, not prosperity. Untiring enemies, poor crops, lack of public conscience, and a pitiable lack of leadership had brought on the hardest of hard times. The nobles had made alliances with some of the worst enemies of the nation, and the poorer classes were neglectful of the law of God. Burdensome taxes were levied by the imperial Persian government, but Artaxerxes himself was unable to protect this walled city from raids of robbers, who stole men and women as well as gold and cattle; and the sun often arose over the dead bodies of Jews

who had dared overnight to defend their own. **The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.** This meant to Nehemiah that the walls destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar had not been rebuilt nor the gates replaced. The ruin wrought one hundred and thirty-seven years before was unmitigated. The feeble attempts of the governors of Jerusalem to rebuild the walls had been foiled by vigorous attacks of rival chiefs. One fact was clear—the wall of Jerusalem must be promptly rebuilt if the city was ever again to be the capital of the Lord's people. (2) *So Christ's Church, the earthly Jerusalem, needs to be so protected that foes shall be kept out and friends kept safe.*

**4. These words** came with a terrible shock to Nehemiah. Pursuing his duties at the Persian court, honored, and with wealth easily in grasp, he had often comfortably thought of the colony at Jerusalem. But now its deplorable condition is suddenly revealed. Better even than the Jews of Jerusalem this practiced statesman knew the imminent danger in which they were so long as the city remained unwall'd. **Mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed.** These days were extended into about five months, as we learn by comparing Neh 1. 1. with 2. 1. All three of these pious occupations—mourning, fasting, and prayer—were doubtless formal as well as sincere, for the oriental always tends to formal expression of deep feelings. **The God of heaven.** This large conception of God became more and more prominent among God's people when for the first time they were widely scattered. (3) *Our prayers should take in the general interest of God's cause.*

**5. O Lord God of heaven.** "LORD" means Jehovah. Notwithstanding that God's home is the all-including heavens, he is still the personal God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **The great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments.** It would be difficult in one sentence to compress more of reverent theology than Nehemiah has here given us. The burned temple of Jerusalem, the demolished walls, the dispersed nation, the destruction of Babylon, which as God's agent had wrought this destruction on Jerusalem—all of these showed God's greatness and terribleness. But he "keepeth covenant" also. His greatness will be used in fulfillment of his promises. Better still, he is a merciful God. He had promised restoration and mercy and prosperity to the Jews if they would turn to him, and surely the God who kept his terrible promises will keep his tender promises. There is a comfortable touch

of confidence throughout. Faulty as Nehemiah and his compatriots may have been, they loved God and sought to observe his commandments. Therefore they had claim on God's covenant. (4) *The mightier God is the safer are his children, even though they be full of human infirmities.* (5) *God's love is freely given to all men, however wicked they may be; but only those who give their love in return are in condition to accept the blessings of his covenant.* (6) *Those who love God will delight to do his will, for he asks nothing beyond what a rightly constituted nature freely gives.*

**6. Thine ear . . . thine eyes.** The belief that man was made in the image of God has always helped human devotions. When saints of old reached out after God they were comforted by thoughts of his feet hastening to their relief, his hands outstretched in blessing, his eyes that never slumbered nor slept watching them, his ears attentive to their prayer. And when, in the fullness of time, God really came to earth it was in the person of a man, whose feet and hands and eyes and ears were all used to bring suffering men and women close to their heavenly Father. **Hear the prayer of thy servant.** Which prayer, however, is not for himself. **I pray before thee now, day and night.** How closely Nehemiah meets the conditions of successful prayer afterward laid down by our Lord! **The children of Israel thy servants.** God's servants by right, even when unfaithful to God; the chosen people. **The sins . . . which we have sinned against thee.** The favored courtier of Artaxerxes shrinks not from identification with the sinful nation from which he sprang. **Both I and my father's house have sinned.** He recognizes his personal failure to please God in all particulars. (7) *Whoever comes before God should come humbly.*

**7. We have dealt very corruptly.** The national character had been so depraved that Nehemiah can hardly use too strong language in describing it. **Have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments.** General terms, these, expressing the law given to Moses and the spiritual teachings of the prophets.

**8. The word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses.** What follows is not a direct quotation from any "book of Moses" as we now have it, but it is in close harmony with Lev. 26. 27-30; Deut. 28. 45-52, and other passages.

**9. But if ye turn, etc.** A continuation of the quotation from Moses. Nehemiah finds in the fulfillment of the threats a ground of hope for the fulfillment of the promises.

**10. Now these are thy servants.** The quotation is ended, and Nehemiah resumes his



prayer. **Redeemed by thy great power.** The history of Israel is a history of successive "redemptions" from distresses resulting from unfaithfulness to God.

**11. To the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants.** Here Nehemiah strengthens his faith by recalling other earnest souls who offered the same prayer.

"Though sundered far, by faith we meet  
Around one common mercy seat."

**Who desire to fear thy name.** *Delight to fear it.* **Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.** In God's presence the mighty king himself was simply "this man," whose will could as easily be curbed by God as the will of his courtier. This was certainly not a petition for the Judean governorship; nevertheless Nehemiah's appointment to be governor of Judea was a direct answer to this prayer, exceedingly abundant above all he asked or thought.

### CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

**Verse 1. The words of Nehemiah.** Nehemiah was a high official in great favor at the court of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who reigned from B. C. 465-425. As we have four lessons this quarter in the Book of Nehemiah, no teacher or intelligent scholar should fail to read it (omitting, of course, chapters 3, 7, 10, and 12), for most everything known of Nehemiah will be found in this book. There were two other persons known as Nehemiah. (See Ezra 2. 2 and Neh. 3. 16.) He was governor of Judea twice. The first time from B. C. 445-433. The duration or exact date of his second term is not known. **Chislew.** This was the ninth month of the Jewish year, corresponding to our November-December, according to the moon. **Twentieth year.** B. C. 445. There seems to be a slight discrepancy between this verse and chap. 2. 1, probably a clerical error. **Shushan.** One of the royal residences of the Persian kings. It was on the river Ulai in Elam, about one hundred and fifty miles east of Babylon, and one hundred miles directly north of the Persian Gulf. Many and important discoveries have been made by Loftus and Dieulafoy among the ruins of this ancient city. **The palace.** Or, rather, fortified place. That part of the city where the royal residence, the citadel, and government buildings were located.

**2. Hanani.** This was Nehemiah's own brother (chap. 7. 2), or at least a near relative, and not simply a fellow-countryman. He is not to be confounded with a priest of the same name mentioned in chap. 12. 36. **Certain men out of Judah.** Not merely Jews, but messengers direct from Jerusalem in Judah. **The Jews that had escaped.** This phrase is expressed by one word in Hebrew—that is, "the ones having been rescued" from captivity. Though ninety years had elapsed since Cyrus in 538 or 536 had allowed the Jews to return to the land of their fathers, the national life had not proven a great success.

**3. The remnant.** Only a small number of the Jews ever returned to Palestine, and of these

zealous ones many had died, and many more had become unfaithful; to that the loyal few were few indeed. It is so hard to fight for the right when most men are against us. **In the province.** In Judah or the territory around Jerusalem. **Affliction and reproach.** (Read chap. 2. 17 and 4. 2, 3.) No people have suffered more persecution and reproach than the Jews. They have ever been the object of sarcasm and taunting scorn. **The wall . . . broken down.** It is not probable that the walls had been fully rebuilt since their destruction by the Babylonians in B. C. 588, or nearly one hundred and fifty years before this visit of Nehemiah. (See 2 Kings 25. 10.) We know that Artaxerxes some years before this had interfered with the rebuilding of Jerusalem. (See Ezra 6. 21.) **Gates . . . burned.** The flame was a great agent in the destruction of conquered cities. The Bible, as well as the excavations in Bible lands, bears testimony to this fact.

**4. When I heard.** Occupied with business of state, and enjoying great prosperity, he may have lost sight of the Jews for a time. If people knew the misery around them, much more would be done to alleviate the same. **Wept.** Shed tears. **Mourned.** Manifested great grief, such as one would for a dead friend. **Fasted.** Fasting became very common after the exile. **God of heaven.** High above all earthly power. This title of God, though very common in post-exilic writings, and, indeed, in the Persian inscriptions, is certainly not of Persian origin. (See Gen. 24. 3, 7 and Jonah 1. 9.)

**5. The great and terrible God.** Almighty to defend his people and terrible to his enemies. **Keepeth covenant and mercy.** The humblest believer finds great comfort and strength in meditating upon the character and attributes of God. There is a striking resemblance between this prayer and that of Daniel (9. 4). (Compare also Exod. 20. 5, 6; Deut. 7. 9, 21; and 1 Kings 8. 23.) **With them that love him.** The more we love God the more we realize his mercy and the

steadfastness of his promises. The doctrine of love to God, though preeminently of the New Testament, is, nevertheless, constantly taught in most every book of the Old Testament.

**6. Let thine ear,** etc. Almost the same words as those used by Solomon. (See 1 Kings 8. 29, 52.) **Confess the sins.** One of the conditions of forgiveness clearly taught in the law of Moses. (See Lev. 5. 15.) Confession and prayer went naturally together. (See Ezra 10. 1; Num. 5. 7; and Deut. 9. 20.) **I and my father's house.** Tradition makes Nehemiah a descendant of David; thus of the royal house of Judah. Hence the appropriateness of his confession.

**7. We have dealt very corruptly.** The story of Israel from Egypt to Babylon was one of continuous backsliding. It was such as to humiliate the pious Jew. **Commandments.** The entire Mosaic law. **Statutes.** Nearly the same, but having reference to particular written laws. **Judgments.** Not necessarily written laws, but decisions handed down by tradition—precedents. These three words, as very much of the language of Nehemiah, occur constantly in Deuteronomy.

**8. The word.** The exact quotation cannot be found. **Thy servant Moses.** Nehemiah was old-fashioned enough to believe in the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy and the other books of the Pentateuch, from which he so often quotes. (Compare Lev. 26. 33 ff.; Deut. 4. 25 ff.; and 30. 4 f.) Had he studied some of our modern theological books, he might have written differently. After all, it is at least conceivable that he knew as much about the matter as the average higher critic of our day, who says, "We know absolutely nothing about Moses" (*Prophets of Israel*, page 17).

**9. Your outcasts.** This is a collective term, and refers to those Jews driven out of Canaan by Jehovah. **Uttermost part of the heaven.** The most distant country. The place where the arch of heaven seems to rest upon the ground; therefore the farthest point. (Compare Deut. 30. 4.)

**4.) Unto the place that I have chosen to cause my name to dwell there.** Another quotation from Deuteronomy. (See Deut. 12. 11.) This is one of the most common passages in that book; it occurs in substance no less than twenty times. The place referred to, without doubt, is Jerusalem and its glorious temple. The name of Jehovah is constantly used by Hebrew writers as equivalent to Jehovah himself, and expressing his character, essence, and attributes.

**10. Thy people.** No longer aliens on account of their sins, but penitent Israelites; therefore restored to the land of their fathers as well as to the favor of God. **Redeemed by thy great power.** These words also recall Deut.

7. 8; 9. 26, 29, etc. The reference is to the miracles of Jehovah in Egypt, the wilderness, and all through the story of Israel.

**11. To fear thy name.** (See note on verse 9.) **Prosper . . . thy servant.** Help him so that he may help his fellows. **In the sight of this man.** That is, of Artaxerxes. We are not to think that this prayer was silently made in the presence of the king. **I was cupbearer.** None but the trustiest were chosen for this office, since it presented numberless opportunities for poisoning the king, and otherwise betraying him. Oriental cupbearers were compelled in some courts to taste all drinks offered the monarch so as to make poisoning as difficult as possible.

## Thoughts for Young People.

### The Example of Nehemiah.

**1. Notice Nehemiah's fidelity to his father's God** while in a strange land, in the temptations of the palace and the cares of public life. Let the young man away from home follow his example.

**2. Notice Nehemiah's devotedness to the interests of the Church.** His first inquiry was concerning it; his prayers were in its behalf; for it he was ready to make every sacrifice.

**3. Notice Nehemiah's industrious, practical spirit.** Read the story of his inspecting the condition of the city, his endeavor to arouse the people to action, and his labor in rebuilding the wall. What are you doing to build up Christ's Church?

**4. Notice Nehemiah's self-denying liberality.** He gave up much of position and wealth for the sake of God's people.

**5. Notice Nehemiah's persevering spirit,** not yielding to obstacles, but overcoming them.

**6. Notice Nehemiah's intense zeal for a pure Church.** He led the people back to an obedience of God's law, to a solemn covenant with God, to keeping the Sabbath.

### Orientalisms of the Lesson.

BY J. T. GRACEY, D.D.

If the date fixed by the Magi for the life of Zo-roaster be accepted as correct at about six hundred years before Christ, we see a remarkable preservation of the pure theology of the Hebrews in the midst of the idolatry of the period. That such a simple, sublime, and unadulterated prayer as this of Nehemiah could have been composed in such an environment as Persia, at that time, is in evidence of the remarkable spirit of inspiration which was never absent from the Hebrew nation, though prophets proved faulty, and Urim and Thummim failed. Let this prayer be

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compared with the purest and best of the Zenda-vesta hymns, and the contrast will be greatly in favor of the Hebrew utterance. We are told that the Persians were the only nation of the East with whom the Israelites came in contact who did not worship idols. But idolatry pervades those hymns. Zoroaster himself became an object of worship, as "the holy lord of the ritual order;" his words in the Avesta also became revered so as to be an object of worship: "We worship the utterances of Zoroaster and his religion, his faith, and his love." They were so liberal in their religious inclinations that they praised every system of religious creed and ritual: "We worship the former religions of the world. . . . We worship the milk offering and the libation. . . . We worship all plants and all good men and women." The inferiority of the best portions of the sacred literature of the Persians and of the total religious ideals of the times of Ezra and Nehemiah in the East leave little room for doubt of the strangely divine providence which preserved these Hebrew Scriptures from material corruption. After a century, when Nehemiah caused them to be rendered even in free translation from the language in which they were written—a language which had become as a "dead" language to the hearers except as the readers "gave the sense"—the people instinctively recognized their majestic superiority to all the other religious literature of the times. No monarch, no poet, no priest, no prophet of the period outside of Israel could have composed such a prayer as this of Nehemiah.

The "remnant" left (verse 3), and who as a community had survived after ninety years, was little acquainted with the experiences of the exile, save as they had been told of them by their fathers. This was a new generation. They are represented by the "remnant" left in Persia, many of whom are still faithful to their Hebrew traditions after centuries of subjugation and persecution. There is said to be a congregation of Jews who still observe their Jewish traditions in secret. The report is from German sources, dated at Teheran, the capital of Persia. It was published in *Die Welt*. The town where they live is on the frontier of the Russian province Transkaspir. The community numbers but about three hundred. As long ago as about one hundred and eighty years they were forcibly converted to Mohammedanism, but their conversion was only nominal, for they kept faithfully to the religion of their fathers. They possess four hidden synagogues, in which the congregation meet on the Hebrew Sabbath days and Jewish holidays. They are forced to keep their business places open on these days to keep up the dis-

guise, but as they are principally in one bazaar, they take turns in watching over the stores. They do no work on holy days. They circumcise their male children on the eighth day after birth, and they instruct their youth in reading and writing through the rabbi. They neglect no religious rite, and the language used in correspondence is Hebrew; but they are all able to read and write Persian. They all have two names, the biblical name for the family, friends, and fellow-believers, and the Turkish name for strangers. They marry only among themselves, thus furnishing a contrast to the "remnant" left in Jerusalem, whose intermarriage with others than Jews was the source of so much evil that Nehemiah was obliged to degrade from the priesthood persons thus allied with heathen through these mixed marriages. The thousands of "remnants" of Jews found in various parts of the world afford a living commentary on the "remnant" left in Jerusalem.

### By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

*Nehemiah and his work.* Dr. F. B. Meyer was asked what led to his full consecration. He answered:

"There were two sayings that impressed me very deeply. One was quoted by Mr. Moody. He overheard one man say to another in Dublin, 'The world does not yet know what God can accomplish through a thoroughly consecrated man.' The other saying was from Hudson Taylor, made to me one day, 'God told me that he was going to evangelize inland China, and that he would do it through me if I would only walk by his side.'"

God wants to do many great works through his children if they will only walk by his side.

*Nehemiah's compassion.* Compassion for those who suffer is an outgrowth of piety. Our Lord was the impersonation of compassion. The *Daily Telegraph*, of London, says, "Out of every hundred pounds given to charity in England to-day ninety-nine come from religious men and women." Spurgeon quaintly says: "It is a wretched business for a man to call himself a Christian and have a soul which never peeps out from between his own ribs. It is horrible to be living to be saved, living to get to heaven, living to enjoy religion, and yet never to live to bless others and ease the misery of a moaning world."

*Nehemiah's prayer.* A striking characteristic of this petition is its use of Scripture. Daniel's supplication, Solomon's prayer of dedication, and the pleas of Moses make up almost every sentence. These "old masters" in the art of prayer are ever worth studying. The Bible is no collection of

imaginary situations and possible escape, but the record of God moving among the nations, and the majesty and mercy with which he came into those lives, is still the world's hope. No man suffers or conquers for himself alone.—*C. M. Southgate.*

*Importunity in prayer.* A little Sunday school boy in Jamaica called upon the missionary and stated that he had lately been very ill, and in his sickness often wished his minister had been present to pray for him. "But Thomas," said the missionary, "I hope you prayed yourself."

"Indeed, I did."

"And how did you pray?"

"I just begged, and God made me well."

*Power of prayer.* A woman came to a missionary at Bengalore, asking him to interfere and prevent a certain native Christian from praying for her any more. When asked how she knew that the Christian was praying for her she replied: "I used to perform my worship to the idols quite comfortably, but for some time past I have not been able to do so. Besides, he told me at one time that he was praying for my family, and now my son and two daughters have become Christians. If he goes on praying, he may make me become a Christian too. He is always bringing things to pass with his prayers. Somebody must make him stop."—*Missionary Herald.*

*Prayer in extremity.* Many men have learned to pray when they were in great difficulty. Stanley in darkest Africa, and in great extremity, learns to trust God, and finds in prayer his strength for each hard day. Lord Shaftesbury, who carried to successful completion the great labor reforms of England, told the people that they must not praise him; the work had been wrought out through prayer to an Almighty God, and to him was all the glory.

*Nehemiah's patriotism.* Let us re-define patriotism. It has been a willingness to go out with a brass band and kill somebody for our country's sake. Let it also be a willingness to practice self-denial and save somebody for our country's sake.—*Monday Club.*

## Heart Talks on the Lesson.

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES.

Nehemiah knew the source of power. He saw the unseen. He held the secret of great accomplishment. He believed that things which are impossible with men are possible with God. He recognized a force behind the Persian throne. God was real to him. He was accustomed to pour out his heart to him. He relied upon prayer not as an exercise profitable for his own soul, but as a means to bring to pass things which he greatly desired. He used it in a sin-

cere, simple way, as a matter of course, the habit of his life, expecting God would hear and answer, and, according to a spiritual law which we cannot understand, also according to human experience through all ages, he proved that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

We cannot explain how one can talk with another over the telephone hundreds of miles away, nor the greater wonder that we can communicate without any visible medium, but we accept the fact without the explanation, and get the benefit of it. God has always known these possibilities; the underlying natural laws have never been secret or strange to him. Man is just beginning to find them out. God knows there is a spiritual law which connects the prayer of a sincere soul with its answer. And because this is so vital to our well-being he has not left us to await the slow discoveries of the ages before we can make use of it, but has revealed it in his word. We are not told how prayer affects our lives, or how it affects the mind of God; but we believe that it does because God says so. Perhaps one of the delights of heaven will be the revelation to us of those secret laws whose working we now accept and use only by faith. God says: "Call upon me, and I will answer;" "Ask, and ye shall receive;" "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God;" "What things ye desire when ye pray believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." The Bible is full of exhortations, promises, and illustrations concerning prayer. "We say we believe in it, but I doubt if we have tested fully its power in the affairs of every day. The prayer of Nehemiah is a golden key with which to unlock the door of each new morning. "Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day;" and then as each emergency comes along if, as he did, we lift our heart to the God of heaven, the guidance, the wisdom, the prospering, are given according to the need.

May we pray about everything? Yes, "in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God." But be careful of the spirit in which you pray. God is pleased only with unselfish and sincere requests. Sometimes this experience is spoken of in a very irreverent way. I have heard one say to another, laughing as she said it, "Pray that it may not rain and spoil all our fun," or, "Pray that I may get that thing I want so much." The least thing that affects our happiness or comfort our Father in heaven cares for. He notices the fall of a sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our head. But we must speak to him reverently, sincerely, unselfishly, not wanting our own way

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if he sees something else is better for us. This was the spirit of Nehemiah's prayer. He was true to God in a heathen court, and had the habit of communion with him; not just when he was in trouble or had some special want, but every day and all the time. He had prayed "day and night" about this matter before he spoke to the king. It is said of George Muller, whose life is a wonderful testimony to the power of prayer, that if ever he became conscious of being too busy to pray as he ought, at the expense of his public work he would take time to be alone with God, and he often said to those who had "too much to do" to spend time in this way that "four hours' work for which one hour of prayer prepares is better than five hours' work with the prayer left out." Any undertaking, any difficulty, any besetting sin, any differences between friends, any worry or anxiety, can be successfully managed by any one of us if we take Nehemiah's way to do it.

**The Teachers' Meeting.**

In the study of this lesson do not fail to read the entire Book of Nehemiah; urge the scholars on the Sunday before the lesson to read the book, and to bring to the class their estimate of Nehemiah's character, its traits, etc.... Show on the map the location of Shushan, Judea, etc., and Nehemiah's journey.... The "Thoughts for Young People" will suggest a line of treatment, presenting Nehemiah as an example in character. An interesting story may be made of his work, and of his noble characteristics.... Another plan might be made on the basis of Nehemiah's "seven hindrances," and how he overcame them: (1) The distance—one thousand two hundred miles; (2) The poverty of the Jews; (3) Their discouraged, apathetic spirit; (4) Their miserable class strife—nobles against common people; (5) The extent of the work; (6) The opposition of the enemies; (7) The general laxity of obedience to the law of God. Show how God's workers encounter the same hindrances now.... Still another plan is to consider God as the Helper of his people: (1) The difficulties amid which Nehemiah prayed for help; (2) The purpose for which he asked help; (3) The divine Helper; (4) The character of the help given.

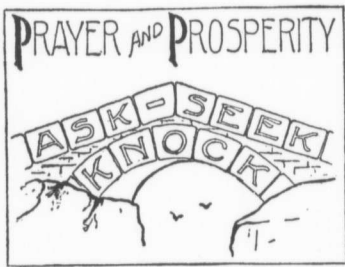
**OPTIONAL HYMNS.**

Lord, we come before thee now.  
 Father, I stretch my hands to thee.  
 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah.  
 Father, lead me day by day.  
 Saviour, listen to our prayer.

Awake, my soul, in joyful lays.  
 Hear thou my prayer.  
 Shine on our souls.  
 Come, Jesus, Redeemer.  
 Out on the midnight deep.

**Blackboard.**

BY THOMAS G. ROGERS.



It grieved Nehemiah when he inquired concerning Jerusalem to learn that the city was in ruins and his people in great affliction and reproach. In his extremity he fasted, and prayed that God would prosper him. The bridge of prayer is on the true path of prosperity; we must ask and seek and knock in prayer. Thus Nehemiah received the king's assistance, finding favor in his sight, and a door of opportunity was opened whereby he might restore Jerusalem. In the accomplishment of all our plans let us pray for success, and God will prosper us and our work, as he did his servant of old.

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BY REV. S. G. AYRES.

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 Hill, *Companion Characters*. Ewald, *History of Israel*. Geikie, *Old Testament Characters*, page 467. Robinson, *Scripture Characters*, vol. i, page 348. Morris, *Sacred Biography*, vol. ii, page 176. Geikie, *Old Testament Portraits*, page 360. Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. iii. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, vol. vi, pages 499-505. Hunter, *After the Exile*.  
 HANANI.—Ewald, *History of Israel*, vol. v, page 148. Hengstenberg, *Kingdom of God in the Old Testament*, vol. ii, page 161.  
 ARTAXERXES.—Rawlinson, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, pages 18, 82. Morris, *Sacred Biography*, vol. ii, pages 130-153. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, vol. vi, pages 427, 487.

SHUSHAN.—Taylor, *Ruth and Esther*, pages 106, 107, 161. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, vol. vi, pages 455, 456.

FREEMAN'S HANDBOOK OF BIBLE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS: Ver. 1, Chisleu, 377. Ver. 11, The royal butler, 378.

SERMONS ON THE LESSON.

Verse 4.—Maclaren, Alexander, "The Church and Social Evils," *The Homiletic Review*, March, 1893, page 235. Nettleton, A., "The Duty of Fasting, and the Manner in Which the Duty Should be Performed," *Remains*, page 230.

LESSON VII. REBUILDING THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM. [Nov. 12.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Watch and pray. Matt. 26. 41.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Read the chapter.]

Neh. 4. 7-18. [*Commit to memory verses 15-18.*]

7 But it came to pass, that when San-bal'lat, and To-bi'ah, and the A-ra'bi-ans, and the Am'mon-ites, and the Ash'dod-ites, heard that the walls of Je-ru'sa-lem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth,

8 And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Je-ru'sa-lem, and to hinder it.

9 Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

10 And Ju'dah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and *there is much rubbish*; so that we are not able to build the wall.

11 And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.

12 And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us *they will be upon you*.

13 Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, *which is great and terrible*, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.

15 And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.

16 And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons: and the rulers *were* behind all the house of Ju'dah.

17 They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, *every one* with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other *hand* held a weapon.

REVISED VERSION.

7 But it came to pass that, when San-bal'lat, and To-bi'ah, and the A-ra'bi-ans, and the Am'mon-ites, and the Ash'dod-ites, heard that the repairing of the walls of Je-ru'sa-lem went forward, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth; and they conspired all of them together to come and fight against Je-ru'sa-lem, and to cause confusion therein. But we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. And Ju'dah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come into the midst of them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease. And it came to pass that, when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times from all places, Ye must return unto us. Therefore set I in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in the open places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work. And it came to pass from that time forth, that half of my servants wrought in the work, and half of them held the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the coats of mail; and the rulers were behind all the house of Ju'dah. They that builded the wall and they that bare burdens laded themselves, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held his weapon; and the build-

18 For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet *was* by me.

ers, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.

**Time.**—About B. C. 444. **Place.**—Jerusalem.

### Home Readings.

- M.* Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem. Neh. 4. 7-18.  
*Tu.* Tempters unheeded. Neh. 6. 1-9.  
*W.* The wall finished. Neh. 6. 10-16.  
*Th.* Dedication and rejoicing. Neh. 12. 27-30, 43-47.  
*F.* Evil designs frustrated. Psa. 64.  
*S.* Able to stand. Eph. 6. 10-18.  
*S.* Watching and prayer. Mark 13. 28-37.

### Lesson Hymns.

No. 168, New Canadian Hymnal.

There is work to do for Jesus,  
 Yes, a glorious work to do,  
 For a harvest fully ripened  
 Rich and golden lies in view.

No. 165, New Canadian Hymnal.

Work, for the night is coming,  
 Work through the morning hours;  
 Work while the dew is sparkling,  
 Work 'mid springing flowers.

No. 164, New Canadian Hymnal.

Gather them in, for there yet is room,  
 At the feast that the King has spread;  
 Oh, gather them in, let His house be filled,  
 And the hungry and poor be fed.

### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

#### 1. Trials and Temptations, v. 7-8.

- Who was Sanballat?  
 Why was he angry at the rebuilding of the city walls?  
 What walls are Christians building to-day?  
 Why are their efforts opposed?  
 What should be the effect of opposition upon good men?  
 How long shall the wicked triumph?  
 Whom does God help in this world?

#### 2. Praying and Watching, v. 9-12.

- Who was it that made a prayer unto God?  
 For what purpose was the prayer offered?  
 What else was done besides praying?  
 Why should we work with God to make a prayer to him effectual?  
 What is the command of Jesus? GOLDEN TEXT.

Against what foes should Christians watch?

#### 3. Watching and Working, v. 13-18.

How were the people arranged?

What was the advantage of this?

What is expected of the rulers in time of danger?

Why were the Israelites not to be afraid?

For whom were they to fight?

How did God bring to naught the purpose of the foes of Israel?

In what way did the Jews work? Verse 18.

### Teachings of the Lesson.

1. Some persons always oppose a good work. At first they despise those who labor in it, then they ridicule, and then they persecute. All in vain! He fights against God who fights against his people. The foes die, but the work goes on.

2. Pray, and use the means to avert danger. Trust in God, and trust in the weapons he gives. To everyone his work.

3. It is said "the rulers were behind all the house of Judah." They were there not to shun danger, but to give counsel and help. Rulers should have great public spirit.

### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

#### 1. Trials and Temptations, v. 7, 8.

- What enemies had Nehemiah?  
 Who was Sanballat?  
 Who was Tobiah?  
 Who were the Arabians? the Ammonites? the Ashdodites?  
 Why were they wroth?  
 What did they set out to do?

#### 2. Praying and Watching, v. 9-12.

- What did the Jews do to prevent it?  
 To whom did they pray?  
 What did Judah say in discouragement?  
 What did the enemies say?  
 What report did the Jews bring?  
 What said the Saviour about praying and watching? Matt. 26. 41.

#### 3. Watching and Working, v. 13-18.

- Where did the governor station guards?  
 How were these armed?  
 Whom were the people to remember?  
 What were they told to do?  
 Who defeated the plots of the enemies?  
 What work was then resumed?  
 While some worked what did others do?  
 Where were the rulers?  
 How were the builders armed?  
 Where was the trumpeter?

**Practical Teachings.**

What are we taught in this lesson—

1. Concerning seeking God's help?
2. Concerning helping ourselves?
3. Concerning helping one another?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

What did King Artaxerxes allow Nehemiah to do? **To go back to Jerusalem.**

How long a journey was it?

What did the people do when he came to Jerusalem? **Heard what he said.**

What were they ready to do right away? **To build the walls.**

Who tried to hinder and oppose them? **Their enemies.**

What did their enemies do first? **Laughed at them.**

What made them angry after a while? **To see that the work was going on.**

What did they do then? **They came to fight the builders.**

What did Nehemiah do when he heard this? **He first prayed to God.**

What did he do next? **He set a watch.**

How did the men work? **With sword in hand.**

What are we told to do? **"Watch, and fight, and pray."**

**THE LESSON CATECHISM.**

(For the entire school.)

1. What is the command of Jesus? **GOLDEN TEXT: "Watch and pray."**

2. What did the enemies of the Jews do? **They conspired to prevent rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem.**

3. What did the Jews do? **They made a prayer unto God and set a watch.**

4. What did Nehemiah bid his people remember? **Remember the Lord, who is great and terrible.**

**NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.**

9. Are there more gods than one?

There is but one only, the living and true God.

Isaiah xiv. 22. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

Jeremiah x. 10. But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king.

**THE LESSON OUTLINE.****Requirements for God's Workmen.****I. PRAYER.**

*We made our prayer.* v. 9.

Call upon me. Psa. 50. 15.

In everything by prayer. Phil. 4. 6.

**II. WATCHFULNESS.**

*Set a watch against them.* v. 9.

Be vigilant. 1 Pet. 5. 8.

Watch ye. 1 Cor. 16. 13.

**III. COURAGE.**

*Be not ye afraid.* v. 14.

I will not fear. Heb. 13. 6.

Stand therefore. Eph. 6. 14.

**IV. FAITH.**

*Remember the Lord.* v. 14.

The name of the Lord. Psa. 20. 7.

The shield of faith. Eph. 6. 16.

**V. LABOR.**

*Everyone unto his work.* v. 15.

To every man his work. Mark 13. 34.

Work out...salvation. Phil. 2. 12.

**EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**

Our lesson to-day gives us Chapter II of the story begun last Sunday. Artaxerxes, sympathizing with the sorrow of his cupbearer, commanded him to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and gave him many facilities. Nehemiah found conditions in Jerusalem even worse than had been reported. Before the walls could stand in their place money must be collected, workmen procured, and a fighting force organized. But there was sad lack of enthusiasm among all classes. The outlying tribes conspired to defeat Nehemiah, and there were intrigues against him among the old inhabitants of Jerusalem. Nehemiah did his duty item by item, and God gave him the largest success. This lesson gives us glimpses of three groups: (1) heathenish outsiders with murder in their hearts awaiting an opportunity to pounce on the builders; (2) traitorous citizens whose apathy and covert, hostile words were worse than foreigners' swords; (3) between these two a little group of men with swords and trowels and prayers, setting their watch day and night, and resolutely working until the wall was reared and the permanence of their nation secured. The verses between the last lesson and this should be carefully read.



**Verse 7. Sanballat.** A high Persian officer living in Samaria. He was of Moabite extraction, and had come originally from Horonaim. Though the line on which the Hebrew kingdom had divided was now obliterated, a geographical rivalry between the cities of Samaria and Jerusalem was inevitable. During the collapse of Jerusalem Samaria had become the chief city of Palestine. The restoration of Jerusalem under so vigorous a governor as Nehemiah threatened Sanballat's preeminence. There are indications in the story that Sanballat was supported by a party in Jerusalem. His daughter was married to a grandson of the high priest, Eliashib. **Tobiah.** A Persian officer apparently still higher in rank than Sanballat. East of the little kingdom of Judah, and a thorn in its side through all its history, was the little kingdom of Ammon. Like Damascus and Israel and Judah and Moab, Ammon had fallen before the fury of the eastern invaders. Its people, like the Jews, were exiled, and individual Ammonites, like Daniel and Nehemiah and other Jews with whose history we are familiar, grew to be favorites in the heathen courts. Although Tobiah was of low extraction, born of a family of slaves, if we rightly understand the intimations of Scripture, he had risen to be a favorite at the court of Artaxerxes, and, like Nehemiah, had now been made the governor of his own nation. But he did not, as one might expect, link his forces with those of Nehemiah; but, on the contrary, joined his enemies, and probably for reasons similar to those which had aroused Sanballat's energy. Ammon and Samaria were far enough apart to flourish without interfering with each other, and it seemed to be to the interest of both that Judah should be divided between them, or at least, in modern phraseology, that each should have its "sphere of influence" in southern Palestine. Like Sanballat, Tobiah was supported by Jewish nobles, and apparently was related by marriage to some of the stronger families in Jerusalem. **The Arabians.** Wild desert wanderers on the south of Palestine, who fattened on the wretchedness of the country, and dreaded nothing more than the reestablishment of military power to any degree in Jerusalem. Geshen, or Gashmu, is mentioned as their leader. That he was powerful is indicated by the grouping of his name with that of the influential Sanballat and Tobiah. **Ammonites.** This tribe had through all its history been less civilized than Moab or Judah. To the end a large number of its people were nomadic, and even predatory, producing little, and living on the weakness of their national neighbors. As we have seen, Tobiah had probably been commanded to organize the nation, but the Ammonites here men-

tioned were still unorganized and nomadic, willing to join Tobiah and the other conspirators against Jerusalem, but not willing to be governed by him or any other man. **Ashdodites.** Philistines, taking their name from one of the old capital cities of the southern seacoast. **The walls of Jerusalem were made up.** Nehemiah seems to have built on the old foundations. The Hebrew idiom here is picturesque—"a bandage was applied to the wall of Jerusalem." **The breaches began to be stopped.** Before the days of explosives battering rams were relied upon in war against fortresses. An immense shock was given to one part of the wall—given with endless repetition hour after hour and day after day, and often for weeks and months together, until its strength gave way. Sometimes where the masonry was very sturdy it toppled over; at other times great holes were made in it through which the hostile soldiers rushed. These are the "breaches." **Wrath.** Mad with jealousy.

**8. Conspired all of them together.** They had their own jealousy and dislikes, but were now united in mutual antagonism to Jerusalem. **To fight against Jerusalem.** Their prime purpose was to prevent the success of Nehemiah's endeavors. They would not rush into actual warfare if they could deter him by other means; but we need not think it strange that actual bloodshed was expected by both parties, for the immense empires of ancient times were loose and ragged at their edges, and the rulers of remote provinces were frequently a law to themselves. Thus even in the time of our Lord and under the Roman sway Herod Antipas, who was the subject of Rome, had his private war with Aretas. Such a conspiracy as this was very dangerous to the Jews, for it would be more natural for Artaxerxes to believe the testimony of five or six chieftains whose loyalty he had not doubted than to believe the single unsupported testimony of Nehemiah.

**9. We made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night.** "Watching unto prayer" is the godly man's first duty. "Our God" is a beautiful phrase, for while God is the God of all men, he is in a peculiar sense the God of his own people. For "against them" some scholars read "beside them," believing that a special attack was now anticipated.

**10. Judah.** The residents of the territory of the old kingdom of Judah. Not all of the returned captives, however, were of the tribe of Judah. **The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed.** The workers employed on the wall had given up in despair. Very likely their wages came fitfully, or not at all, and the

accumulated débris of one hundred and thirty-five years must be cleared away. **We are not able to build the wall.** They were able to build it, however, and they did. All they needed was a competent leader and God's blessing.

**11. Our adversaries.** Named in verse 7. **They shall not know, neither see, till we come.** Our conspiracy must be perfected before a movement is made, so that the surprise shall be complete.

**12. The Jews which dwelt by them.** The policy of the returned Israelites had been to settle around Jerusalem; and naturally so, because a majority of them were members of the tribe of Judah; but there were many of other tribes, as we know from the phrases, "the men of Gibeon," "the Tekoites," and "the men of Jericho." But it is probable that these had settled near to their old family homesteads. Living among the conspirators, they overheard some of their plans, and promptly reported them to their countrymen. **Ten times.** That is, indefinitely, many times; as we would say dozens of times. The rest of this verse has a very different meaning and a simpler one given to it by the Revised Version, "They said unto us ten times from all places, Ye must return unto us." They were talking to their relatives who had flocked to Jerusalem partly to earn wages, partly urged by patriotism. These more distant Jews, having a full view of the danger, urge their friends and kinsmen to return to protect their homes.

**13. In the lower places . . . on the higher places.** "In the lowest parts of the space," "in the open places." Wherever the wall was especially weak there Nehemiah stationed armed men. **Behind the wall.** Which was to be used as a rampart. **After their families.** Everything that the Jews did was done by tribes and clans and families; not altogether unlike the highland organizations of the Scotch clans is the tenacity with which this relationship was held by the Jews for centuries.

**14. Said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people.** For "rulers" the Revised Version (margin) gives "deputies." The meaning is that Nehemiah gave general orders, which were repeated by un-

der officers, until every workman and every armed man heard his proclamation. **Be not ye afraid of them.** An injunction which God and God's servants most frequently repeated. **Remember the Lord.** Such a moral power comes with the consciousness of God's presence that one man with God is mightier than many without him. **Fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.** Though nominally they were fighting for the privilege of rebuilding their walls, this statement also was true, because without the walls none of their homes or dear ones was safe.

**15. When our enemies heard . . . that we returned.** When, as Nehemiah profoundly believed, God had frustrated the plans for attack, the work of rebuilding, which had temporarily ceased, was resumed.

**16.** This attack taught Nehemiah a lesson—**from that time forth** he was abundantly prepared for any attack. Nehemiah's **servants**, sometimes called his young men, were his body-guard, his personal retainers, whom he had brought with him from Susa. So great was the need of hurrying the work, and so few were the workers, that he detached one half of these men to work upon the walls while the other half stood guard. Such an example must have greatly inspired the rest of the people. **Habergeons** were coats of mail. **The rulers** were hereditary chieftains. They stood **behind all the house of Judah**, as commanding officers should stand, so as to direct without being in the way.

**17.** The statement of this verse is that the common workmen from Jerusalem and from the surrounding country were armed while they worked, the bearers of burdens especially holding weapons in one hand while they worked with the other.

**18. Builders.** Dr. Terry thus explains: "Unlike the bearers of burdens, who could work with one hand and carry a weapon with the other, the builders needed both hands in their work, and so carried swords, which hung girded by their sides." **He that sounded the trumpet was by me.** That is to say, I was the commander of all the workmen and of all the forces, and all orders came directly from me.

### CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

**Verse 7. Sanballat.** Nothing is positively known of this man, except that he was a fierce enemy of the returned exiles. His name, signifying "Sin [that is, the moon god] gives life," is Assyrian. He was governor of Samaria, and was called a Horonite, perhaps because he lived in Bethoron, or, as others think, because he was a

native of Horonaim, in southern Moab. **Tobiah.** In chap. 2. 10 he is called "the servant, the Ammonite." His name, "Jehovah is good," seems to point to a Jewish origin. He may in some way have become a slave to the Ammonites. He is not to be confounded with the Tobiah mentioned in chap. 7. 62 and Ezra 2. 60. **Arabians.** Either

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b. **Tobiah.**  
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some Arabs under Geshem (chap. 2. 19) from the territory southeast of Judea, or a colony settled by Sargon in Samaria after the deportation of the Jews in B. C. 722. The Assyrian monuments refer to such a tribe of Arabs. **Ammonites.** These people, ever hostile to Israel, occupied the territory east of the Jordan between the Arnon and Jabbok. **Ashdodites.** Ashdod, called Azotus in New Testament (Acts 8. 40) was a city of Philistia, three miles from the Mediterranean coast and nine miles north of Ascalon. The Ashdodites were therefore the inhabitants of this city and adjacent country. **Heard that the repairing of the walls, etc.** Literally rendered, "a healing went up upon the walls." The fortified city of Jerusalem was conceived of as a wounded man, in the process of healing by bandaging.

**8. Conspired.** The verb signifies "to bind firmly." They formed a secret alliance or league to frustrate Israel's plans. **Cause confusion therein.** This is a better rendering than "to hinder it," as in the Authorized Version.

**9. But we made our prayer.** Both Ezra and Nehemiah were men of strong faith in the efficacy of prayer, as frequent references in their books show. A good man instinctively turns to God in prayer, not simply in danger, but also in prosperity. **Set a watch.** Prayer alone is not sufficient. God expects all men to work as well as pray. Prayer without work is just as futile as work without prayer. "Watch and pray" should be the motto of all who expect victory in any righteous cause. Many of us could answer our own prayers if we should try.

**10. And Judah said.** That is, the Jews or the people of Judea. **Is decayed.** This is a poor translation. The Hebrew word rendered "decayed," means to totter, to fail, or to become exhausted. **There is much rubbish.** The accumulation of one hundred and fifty years. The hardest work in every enterprise is to get ready, to clear away the rubbish, and to lay the foundation broad and deep. Many of our preachers and would-be reformers need learn this lesson.

**11. Our adversaries.** The enemies from without, or Sanballat and his allies. The enemy from within—the careless, the discouraged, and the discontented—is often fully as detrimental to a cause as the open adversary from without. This has been seen time and again in all reforms.

**12. The Jews which dwelt by them.** The Jews from the border lands, from towns like Jericho, Gibeon, Mizpah, etc. It is so difficult to associate with wicked people without imbibing their spirit and ideas. It is so easy to get accustomed to sin and to excuse it in others. **Ten times.** A definite number loosely used for an indefinite one. (Compare Gen. 31. 41, where Jacob

accuses Laban of having changed his wages "ten times"—that is, repeatedly.) **From all places.** From the homes of those working on the walls, their friends and relatives came to induce them to give up the work so as to avoid the ever-increasing danger of an attack from the foreign foe.

**13. Lowest parts of the space.** Near the least protected parts of the city, where the walls were the lowest and the most likely to be attacked. **In the open places.** The literal meaning seems to be: places open and exposed to the sun. "Bare, uncovered, or empty places, perhaps bare hills, where approaching foes might be discerned at a distance."—*Keil.* **After their families.** The family tie is very strong in the East. One would be more apt to defend his own family and near relatives than strangers. Indeed, perhaps many of them would be stationed immediately in front of their own houses.

**14. Nobles.** The heads of families or clans or tribal subdivisions. Something like the modern sheik. **Rulers, Margin, deputies.** The subofficers who were directly charged with the administration of affairs; not necessarily of noble birth or belonging to the aristocracy like the nobles. **Remember the Lord.** Recall his goodness and power and his loving-kindness to Israel.

**15. Heard that it was known unto us.** The conspiracy and secret plans of the enemy had in some way leaked out. **God had brought their counsel to nought.** The enemy had expected to come upon the Jews suddenly (see verse 11), but Nehemiah's vigilance, good generalship, and faith in God had been too much for them. The courageous man has gained many a victory by being well prepared. This is especially true of victories over sin and Satan. **We returned.** This implies that they had, for a while, quit work.

**16. My servants.** Or, rather, my young men. Those in the personal service of Nehemiah; not necessarily the Persian guard who accompanied him from Shushan to Jerusalem. **The rulers were behind all the house of Judah.** The rulers were the head men, the captains. These were in close proximity to the workers on the wall, ready to direct them in their work or to lead them in case of attack from the enemy.

**17. They that builded the wall.** This phrase seems to be dislocated. Perhaps we should follow the marginal rendering of the Revised Version, and connect it with the preceding clause; thus, "All the house of Judah that builded the wall." Or it may stand absolutely as a title of verses 17 and 18—"As to those who built the wall." That is, the builders were divided into two classes: helpers, or carriers, and masons.

**They that bare burdens.** These were the common laborers, working under the immediate directions of the regular masons, or "the builders," of the next verse, who are said to be girded with a sword. The exact way in which the two classes were armed is not known. It has been commonly assumed by the commentators that the unskilled workmen, or the helpers, worked with one hand and carried some weapon in the other, while the regular masons, needing both hands for more delicate work, had to gird their swords. Such an explanation seems improbable. The language of verse 17 probably means no more than that the workmen of whatever grade had their arms always near them, ever ready for an attack from the enemy.

**18. He that sounded the trumpet was by me.** Nehemiah acted not only as the head architect, but also as commander-in-chief and gave general directions; thus it was quite natural that the trumpeter should be close to him.

### Thoughts for Young People.

#### "Sure I must fight if I would reign."

1. *The best work, if it interferes with anyone's selfish plans, will inevitably arouse hostility.* Virtue is always popular until it gets in the way of viciousness. Half-hearted Christian churches, without aggression, are seldom attacked by the forces of evil. There might have been ten consecutive generations of Zerubbabels and Jeshuas without arousing the envy of Samaria and Ammon and Philistia, but one Nehemiah was too much for them.

2. *Praying should not prevent watching, nor watching working, for duties never are in conflict.* There is a great flaw in the character of a good man who emphasizes any one of these duties at the expense of any one of the others.

3. *Every plan against God is sure to come to naught if only God's people are faithful.* The Christian should be so identified with his Master that he would have nothing to fight for but his Master. When he has personal interests independent of those of his Master he has become an unfaithful steward.

4. *The Christian must at all times be prepared for either work or war, for either life or death.* Our lives run on in monotony, but emergencies come to all of us, and they are rather greater than less because they have not been visibly worked up to. The awfulness of the vision of Mirza lies in the fact that none who passed over the bridge saw the holes until they fell through them. Such is life, but for all events the true Christian is prepared.

### Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The preliminary inspection which Nehemiah made of the walls of Jerusalem, of which there is an account in verses 12-15 of the second chapter of the Book of Nehemiah, has been strangely and strongly confirmed in detail by the Palestine Exploration Fund Society, and they have rendered it far easier to understand Nehemiah's route. They have discovered a new gate leading directly to the valley of Hinnon. The "dung gate" has also been found by Dr. Bliss; it leads directly to Tophet. The "fountain gate" has been found in the southeast angle close by much water, and leads to Bir Eyub. The "King's Pool" was Hezekiah's Siloam. Beyond this Nehemiah could not ride on the "beast," which was the only one thought prudent to allow to the company, lest they be detected in their investigations. The reason for his abandoning the "beast" at the King's Pool is made plain. Nehemiah said there "was no place for the beast which was under me to pass." Neither is there to-day, for the path is now obstructed, as it probably was then, by fallen stones. He therefore went on foot up the brook, that is, Kedron, probably until he saw the temple wall in its whole length, and then he turned back and reentered by the Valley gate. The interest which attaches to the recent confirmation of these two verses lies in the revivification of the whole narrative, and the assurance of the accuracy of the entire record of Nehemiah's enterprise in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. He was as admirable a scout as he was architect. He made thorough investigation of the conditions of his undertaking, and an accurate detailed statement of them, which after nearly twenty-five hundred years has thus been confirmed in its minutest statement, excepting only that the "dragon's well" has not been established; but it is plain that water is near the locality where it should be, according to Nehemiah's description of his night ride; and the Exploration Society says, "A reservoir filled from a pool above by an intermittent flow would be so called."

Nehemiah received "letters" of authority to the governors beyond the river. These were colonial governments under the direction of the monarch of Persia, and naturally did not like any special order from the central government which would displace them or interfere with their own direction of things, and as the Jews were a subject people, they were exposed to persecution and oppression. But they had to regard the "letters." This is incidentally a suggestion of the ancientness of the use of letters, and shows in Cyrus's time communication between potentates by writing. The art of writing had been prac-

ession.

in Nehemiah which there is a chapter of strangely and Palestine Explorer rendered it route. They directly to "gate" has been found in water, and Pool" was Nehemiah could be the only company, lest tions. The "last" at the said there as under me the path is as then, by foot up the he saw the and then he Valley gate. cent confir- revivifica- ssurance of Nehemiah's Jerusalem. as architect. e conditions te detailed twenty-five d in its mi- the "drag-"; but it is y where it description ion Society above by an authority to ese were co- sion of the not like any ment which their own were a sub- ection and d the "let- tion of the d shows in potentates been prac-

ticed in Babylonia centuries before Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, and in Egypt centuries before the Jews entered the valley of the Nile. It was in use in the towns of Canaan before the Jews conquered the land, and Hebrews wrote documents at the time of the exodus: they inscribed the law on the plaster of an altar (Deut. 27. 4, 8) and engraved words on gems and metallic plates. The ancient inscriptions of Babylonia were impressed on soft clay afterward baked; and were engraven on stone tablets, and on stone statues, and on metal and precious gems. The letters sent to Pharaoh from Canaan, it is supposed, were written on clay tablets.

Sanballat was a heathen Cushite. He would naturally dislike to see any revival of the pure Hebrew conditions, because his daughter was married to a son of the high priest at Jerusalem, and it proved later that Nehemiah expelled the high priest from office because of this marriage; and this son-in-law of Sanballat founded or greatly promoted the Samaritan religion, and possibly built the temple on Mount Gerizim. These social obstructions to the purest Jewish community were the most difficult to overcome of any in all the history of Israel. The Hebrew law was very exacting as to the lines of marriage. Nehemiah sought to make a preponderance of pure Hebrew families resident in Jerusalem, and so he first reckoned how many they were already according to their genealogical tables, and then tried to get one in ten of the Hebrew population of the rest of the country to move into Jerusalem, thus making a large Hebrew constituency round him as the new governor. The genealogical tables down to the time of Christ were carefully preserved, because the royal sovereignty, the high priesthood, and the headship of the tribe, the tribal family, and the father's house all depended on lineage. There was a general knowledge on the subject from the earliest period, so Nehemiah would not have to instruct them how to make an accurate investigation. The tribes themselves were divided on lines of growth into great families, and these in turn into smaller families and so-called "houses." Birth in a household declared one's relation to the several divisions of the tribe as distinctly as the native place determined one's classification according to geographical divisions and subdivisions of a kingdom. Definite genealogical records are traceable from the beginning of the Hebrew nation. Under the investigation made by Ezra, it proved that many of the claimants who sought to register as pure Hebrews were debarred because their lineage had been corrupted by marriage outside the pale of Judaism, and these of course were expelled from the priesthood. It was according to these genealogical

lines that Nehemiah reorganized the entire social and political structure of the government, and also the entire responsibility and labor in rebuilding the walls; the force was distributed "after their families" (verse 13).

### By Way of Illustration.

*Rebuilding the walls.* Nehemiah captivates my reason as well as my imagination by the zeal and good sense as well as by the original picturesqueness of his methods. In less than two months he built two massive walls, one of stone and one of backbone around Jerusalem, and of the two the best safeguard on all occasions is the wall of granite purpose.

*We made our prayer.* Through prayer the very air about us may be charged with God, so as to bear us up like eagles in electric clouds. Closer than our breath is God with his almighty Spirit and grace. Before Franklin's experiment for harnessing the lightning the air was as full of electricity as it is to-day, but men did not know how to appropriate it. A battery may be charged with electric fire, but you must make your connections to get the power.—*E. M. Poter.*

*Verse 9. Faith and works* went together. Watching and praying, weak when apart, are a Gibraltar of strength when united. Praying is not a substitute for the use of means, but the power that inspires zeal. On the other hand, all the natural means form channels through which God conveys his grace in answer to prayer. To stop these channels is to cancel prayer.

No evil can surprise us if we watch; no evil can hurt us if we pray. Frederick Douglass used to say that when a slave he often prayed for freedom, but his prayer was never answered till he prayed with his feet.

*"Judah said, and our adversaries said."* "Fightings without and fears within" is an entry which might be made by every Christian in his log book almost every day. One thinks one could get along with the "adversaries" if it were not for Judah. It is harder to resist the persuasion of discouraged friends than the attacks of enemies. It is the man who lives inside our clothes who gives the most trouble. Workers for God must be prepared for all sorts of opposition—from friends as well as from enemies.—*R. R. Doherty.*

*Verse 14.* The father of a small family at the outbreak of the secession war felt he could not stay at home while his neighbors went to the war. The boys agreed to help their mother while their father fought for the flag. The boys' farming elicited the commendation of a gentleman passing, to whom one of them said,

"Father's fighting, I'm digging, and mother's praying."

*Hard and persistent work.* "All at it, and always at it," as Wesley says, will accomplish wonders. In most of the churches one fourth of the members do three fourths of the giving and working. Near John Knox's house, in Edinburgh, is a coffee house called the "Heave Awa' Coffee House." Thirty-two years ago a six-story brick building which stood on the spot fell suddenly, crushing thirty people beneath its ruins. One after another they were rescued. Deep in the ruins, entirely out of sight, was a little boy. And whenever the men stopped working he called out, "Heave awa'; I'm not dead yet." He was rescued, and the new building was named from his cry.—*Blouet.*

*Nehemiah's great work.* Nehemiah was not the only man who was at this time building a city wall amid discouragements. But the fact that he was building Jerusalem's walls, the walls that should defend the interests of God, makes his work immortal. If it had been the walls of Tarshish beyond the seas, or some city of the plain, we would care little to-day about his discouragements or his valor. So our own commonplace lives take to themselves high dignity because of the God for whose cause we strive. A missionary wrote back from India: "Here I am, teaching little children to sew and read and do their daily tasks. It seems like trivial, humdrum work until I remember that I am helping to bring in God's kingdom, and am a colaborer with him. This gives dignity and beauty to all the service."

### Heart Talks on the Lesson.

Surely this chapter of Old Testament history is written for our instruction in righteousness. Sanballat and Tobiah assume here other names, but they cannot hide their identity. We know them well, and their associates—the Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites. We know Judah too, and the Jews which dwell near our adversaries. "Fightings without and fears within" is the experience of every Christian who has "a mind to work." Those who have not such a mind, who think the spiritual building will go on whether they put their minds to it or not, are not troubled by Sanballat and Tobiah. So we get some comfort out of our tribulations. They are proof that we are doing something. Satan never disturbs easy-going, nonaggressive, self-indulgent persons. They do his work by doing nothing. But let us begin in earnest to build the spiritual walls of our own hearts, or to help build up the kingdom of Christ in the world, and at once the

opposition begins. What do these feeble Jews? Will they revive the stones out of burned rubbish heaps?

Doesn't that sound exactly like the man who said to Bishop Thoburn: "Why are you trying to convert these heathen? They are born faster than you can Christianize them. You might as well try to dip up the ocean with a teaspoon." If you begin the Christian life in earnest, very likely some one will say you have undertaken more than you can do; it is a useless effort; there is not much difference between Christians and the world; where is the use? Or some will say, If you do begin, you will soon give it up; some little temptation, like a fox on the wall, will break you down. Or the rubbish of old habits and tempers will discourage you, and half-hearted Christians, who ought to be ashamed of their faint-heartedness, will say, not once, but ten times over (because they live very near the enemy's country), "The difficulties are very great; it is hard to live a Christian life; it is easier to let the wall go unbuilt." So runs the opposing current of temptation through the outward and inward experience of every builder. But the people and the circumstances which might have discouraged Nehemiah only made him more determined to succeed. As soon as he heard what Sanballat and Tobiah said he talked with God about it. That was a sure, safe way to dispose of their scoffs and criticisms. Then he began to plan to get advantage of his foes. He did not talk about them, nor say how great and terrible they were. He said, "Be not afraid of them; remember the Lord, which is great and terrible."

It is not good for us to talk about trials and difficulties; but it is good to talk of One who can conquer them all. Nehemiah did not ignore his enemies, because he knew they were real, not imaginary, foes, and would hinder his work if they could; so he made his prayer to God and set a watch against them day and night. In the lower places, where the wall had not been built very high, he set a special watch, and at the highest places too. Mark that; for temptations get the better of us more easily both when our spirits are depressed and when we are very jubilant. Those are the times when we need to watch closely. They assail us where we are not morally or spiritually strong; and heights of spiritual attainments are especially dangerous unless we set a watch against pride and self-righteousness. Builders and burden-bearers alike kept one hand free to use a weapon. It does not do to get so engrossed even with Christian work that we forget to watch and pray. I have seen people so busy working with both hands in church work that they quite forgot the need of a weapon, and

the enemy has got the better of them in ill-temper or some other besetting sin. Burden-bearers faint under their load when they forget to pray. The work is indeed great and large. We need the courage of Nehemiah, his habit of prayer, his common sense, his perseverance, and his trust in God.

### The Teachers' Meeting.

Relate concerning Nehemiah's journey (chapter 1); his exhortation; his fellow-workers (chapter 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 20, 30).... Ascertain how many varied kinds of "opposition" are mentioned, their varied character and motives.... What difficulties at home stood in his way?... What were the characteristics of his work? It was (1) Prayerful; (2) Watchful; (3).....(?) (4).....(?).... What elements of character does Nehemiah show in this lesson?... What lesson may we learn: (1) For church work? (2) For times of discouragement?... Draw in the class a rough map, showing Jerusalem, and locating the various foes around it.... Give three word pictures: (1) The conspirators looking at the rising walls; (2) The workers at prayer; (3) The guard around the walls, with Nehemiah and the trumpeter on the watchtower.

### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Sound the battle cry.  
Oft in danger, oft in foe.  
Onward, Christian soldiers,  
Arise, go forth to conquer.  
To the work.

There's work for us all.  
I want to be a worker for the Lord.  
Forth to the fight, ye ransomed.  
Go forward, Christian soldier.  
Ready to follow God's command.

### LESSON VIII. PUBLIC READING OF THE SCRIPTURES. [Nov. 19.]

GOLDEN TEXT. The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. Neh. 8. 3.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

[Read the chapter; also Luke 4. 16-22.]

Neh. 8. 1-12. [Commit to memory verses 1, 3.]

1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ez'ra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Mo'ses, which the Lord had commanded to Is'ra-el.

2 And Ez'ra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and

### Library References.

Consult the references on Nehemiah in the last lesson.

TOBIAS.—Stanley, *Jewish Church*, vol. iii, page 147. Ewald, *History of Israel* (index). Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, vol. vi, pages 510, 537.

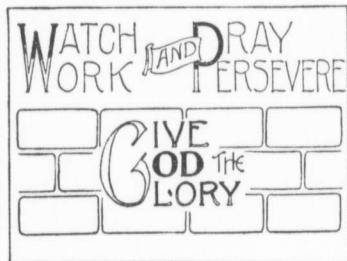
FREEMAN'S HANDBOOK: Ver. 16, Habergeons, 251.

### SERMONS ON THE LESSON.

Verse 14.—Horwood, W. D., "The Power of Memory," *The Pulpit*, London, vol. lxxi, page 150.

Verse 17.—Gladwell, A., "Working and Warring," *The Pulpit*, London, vol. lxxiii, page 191.

### Blackboard.



When people have a "mind to work" neither the wrath nor mockery of men should hinder them. The strength and success of Nehemiah lay in watching and praying. Enemies were on every hand, and a constant guard became necessary, lest the wall should be again broken and the work retarded. By perseverance in their task the builders at last completed the wall of the city. They had employed the four elements of success—watching and praying, working and persevering—but to God, who had wrought the work, they gave the glory (chap. 6. 15, 16).

### REVISED VERSION.

1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ez'ra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Mo'ses, which the Lord had commanded to Is'ra-el. And Ez'ra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh 3 month. And he read therein before the broad

all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law.

4 And Ez'ra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mat-ta-thi'ah, and She'ma, and An-a-i'ah, and U-ri'jah, and Hil-ki'ah, and Ma-a-se'iah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Ped-a-i'ah, and Mi-sha'e'l, and Mal-chi'ah, and Hash'um, and Hash-bad'a-na, Zech-a-ri'ah, and Me-shul'lam.

5 And Ez'ra opened the book in the sight of all the people: for he was above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

6 And Ez'ra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

7 Also Jesh'u-a, and Ba'ni, and Sher-e-bi'ah, Ja'min, Ak'kub, Shab-beth'a-i, Ho-di'jah, Ma-a-sei'ah, Kel'i-ta, Az-a-ri'ah, Joz'a-bad, Ha'nan, Pel-a-i'ah, and the Le'vites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place.

8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

9 And Ne-he-mi'ah, which is the Tir'sha-tha, and Ez'ra the priest the scribe, and the Le'vites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for *this* day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

11 So the Le'vites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were *attentive* unto the book of the law.

4 And Ez'ra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mat-ta-thi'ah, and She'ma, and An-a-i'ah, and U-ri'ah, and Hil-ki'ah, and Ma-a-sei'ah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Ped-a-i'ah, and Mi-sha'e'l, and Mal-chi'ah, and Hash'um, and Hash-bad'a-nah,

5 Zech-a-ri'ah, and Me-shul'lam. And Ez'ra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when

6 he opened it, all the people stood up: and Ez'ra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with the lifting up of their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshiped the LORD with

7 their faces to the ground. Also Jesh'u-a, and Ba'ni, and Sher-e-bi'ah, Ja'min, Ak'kub, Shab-beth'a-i, Ho-di'jah, Ma-a-sei'ah, Kel'i-ta, Az-a-ri'ah, Joz'a-bad, Ha'nan, Pel-a-i'ah, and the Le'vites, caused the people to understand the

8 law: and the people *stood* in their place. And they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they

9 understood the reading. And Ne-he-mi'ah, which was the Tir'sha-tha, and Ez'ra the priest the scribe, and the Le'vites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when

10 they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye grieved;

11 for the joy of the LORD is your strength. So the Le'vites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye 12 grieved. And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

**Time.**—About B. C. 444. **Place.**—Jerusalem.

#### Home Readings.

*M.* Public Reading of the Scriptures. Neh. 8. 1-12.

*Tu.* Obeying the law. Neh. 8. 13 to 9. 3.

*W.* God's word to be studied. Deut. 11. 13-21.

*Th.* Delight in the word. Psa. 119. 1-16.

*F.* The Scriptures believed. 2 Kings 22. 3-13.

*S.* The word rejected. Jer. 36. 9-24.

*S.* Reward in keeping. Psa. 19. 7-14

#### Lesson Hymns.

No. 289, New Canadian Hymnal.

Sing them over again to me,  
Wonderful words of life.



## No. 295, New Canadian Hymnal.

Father of mercies, in Thy word  
What endless glory shines.

## No. 296, New Canadian Hymnal.

I long to tell the Story  
Of unseen things above.

**QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.****1. Reading the Word, v. 1-6.**

Where did the people gather?  
Who was Ezra?  
What was his great work?  
Why did the people need to hear the law of Moses?  
To whom was it read?  
How long did he read?  
How was the reading received? GOLDEN TEXT.

For what reason did they worship the Lord?

**2. Teaching the Word, v. 7, 8.**

For what purpose were Ezra's assistants?  
Why did the people not understand the law?  
How did Ezra and others read from the book?  
Should the Scriptures be read with comments in the public services of to-day?  
What is the end to be gained by a comment?  
Is it enough to understand the Scriptures?  
What should go with our knowledge?

**3. Receiving the Word v. 9-12.**

What did Nehemiah say to the people?  
What was the cause of their weeping?  
What duty besides feasting was enjoined?  
What is meant by "the glory of the Lord?"  
How is such joy strength?  
Why should understanding truth make us glad?

Is there joy in solemnity?  
How should reverence show itself in the Church?

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

1. The reading and hearing the Scriptures read should be accompanied by a devotional spirit. The word of God is better than the word of any earthly king.
2. The Scriptures are intended to be understood. If necessary, we should ask questions. Persons should ever be found to study them closely so as to read distinctly and give the sense.
3. Tears and smiles are not always far apart. They meet and mingle like raindrops and sunbeams on an April day. Always something to give us joy, always something to sadden. To him who has the "joy of the Lord," to him is strength.

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.****1. Reading the Word, v. 1-6.**

Where did the people assemble?  
For what did they ask Ezra?  
Why did they ask this of Ezra? See Ezra 7. 10.

Before whom was the law brought?  
Upon what day and month?  
How long was the law read?  
How did the people receive the word?  
Who were with Ezra as helpers?  
How did the people show their reverence for the word?  
To whom did Ezra offer thanks?  
How did the people respond?  
What is the duty of all who have ears? Rev. 2. 7.

**2. Teaching the Word, v. 7, 8.**

Who were the teachers in this Bible school?  
What clause in verse 7 shows that they were good teachers?  
What three things are stated of their teaching? Verse 8.

Under what king of Judah had the people been taught the law? 2 Chron. 17. 7-9.

Whose duty was it to give such teaching? Lev. 10. 8-11.

**3. Receiving the Word, v. 9-12.**

What command was given to the people?  
By whom was it given?  
Why was this command necessary?  
How were the people to show their joy?  
What was a source of strength to them?  
What did the Levites say to the people?  
Why did the people obey promptly?  
Who is a wise hearer of the word?

**Practical Teachings.**

Where in this lesson have we a good example—

1. For Sunday school scholars?
2. For Sunday school teachers?
3. For all of God's people?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

How long did it take to build the walls of Jerusalem? **Fifty-two days.**

What did the people want to do then? **Have a kind of thanksgiving feast.**

Where was the meeting held?

What was Ezra asked to bring?

Who came to hear him read?

How long did he read?

What did Ezra do besides reading the law?

**He explained it.**

Where did Ezra stand?

Why did some of the people weep as the law

was read? **Perhaps they thought how they had broken it, and were sorry.**

Who helped Ezra to explain the law? **The Levites.**

What did the Levites tell the people to do? **To be glad, and not sorry.**

What did Nehemiah say was their strength? **"The joy of the Lord."**

### THE LESSON CATECHISM.

(For the entire school.)

1. For what purpose did the people assemble?

**To hear read the book of the law of Moses.**

2. How was it read? **It was read distinctly and the sense was given.**

3. How did the people hear? **GOLDEN TEXT:**

**"The ears of all the people were attentive," etc.**

4. What was the effect upon them? **"The people wept, when they heard the words of the law."**

### NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.

10. How many persons are there in the Godhead? In the Godhead there are three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Matthew xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

2 Corinthians xiii. 14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

### THE LESSON OUTLINE.

#### How to Read the Bible.

#### I. READING BY EVERYBODY.

1. *All the people gathered.* v. 1.

Read this law before all. Deut. 31. 11.

2. *All that could hear.* v. 2.

Men, and women, and children. Deut. 31. 12.

#### II. READING ON THE SABBATH.

*First day...seventh month.* v. 2.

A sabbath....holy. Lev. 23. 24.

Read...every sabbath day. Acts 15. 21.

#### III. CONTINUOUS READING.

*Morning until midday.* v. 3.

Teach them diligently. Deut. 6. 7.

Read....all the days. Deut. 17. 18, 19.

#### IV. REVERENT READING.

*Stood up....worshipped.* vs. 5, 6.

Give ear, O my people. Psa. 78. 1.

My hands....lift up. Psa. 119. 48.

#### V. STUDIOUS READING.

*Caused....to understand.* vs. 7, 8.

I will meditate. Psa. 119. 15.

Dwell in you richly. Col. 3. 16.

#### VI. JOYOUS READING.

*Mourn not, nor weep.* vs. 9-12.

Delight....in the law. Psa. 1. 2.

Sweeter....than honey. Psa. 19. 9, 10.

### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

In the face of difficulties apparently insurmountable Nehemiah accomplished his purpose. In fifty-two days after the first stone was laid the wall was finished. The ruler then called together the people to listen to the reading of God's law. They came not only from within the city, but from the villages near and far. They met in the open square, at the southern entrance to the temple inclosure, a vast company of men, women, and children. A platform had been erected, upon which stood the chief men of the land, the priests, and the appointed interpreters. In the midst stood Ezra, the priestly scribe who had come from the East several years before Nehemiah. As he opened the parchment roll the entire company first stood, then prostrated themselves upon the ground, in token of reverence for the sacred word. Then began the reading. The priest read a brief portion in the ancient Hebrew tongue, and then paused, while the Levites on each side gave the explanation, which was probably partly a translation into a more modern form, partly a paraphrase, and partly an application. For six hours the service was continued, for the people were eager to know the contents of their sacred books, and the message came as a revelation. Its first effect was to awaken the conscience, and loud cries arose as the listeners realized how unfaithful they and their fathers had been to the ancient covenant. But the Levites quieted their sorrow by telling them that this was a day of rejoicing, and not of grief, when God's word was revealed to them. On that day began a new era in the history of Judah, an era of Bible study and of renewed loyalty to the faith of the fathers.

**Verse 1. And all the people gathered themselves together.** People from all Judea who celebrated the Jewish New Year and the completion of the wall together. **As one man.** There is an impressiveness and moral power in a multitude assembled for religious services. **Into the street.** "The broad place." A park or plaza on the inclosed slope, Ophel, south of the temple. **Before the water gate.** The gate near the present entrance to el-Aksa. **They spake.** By their chiefs, doubtless, who had called them together. But evidently the interest in God's word was nearly universal. **Ezra the scribe.** Called "the priest" in verse 2. He was both; a priest by birth, born in a land where there was no temple to Jehovah, he devoted himself to the written law, and consciously or unconsciously founded an order of interpreters, teachers, and copyists who exerted a great influence on later Israel. **The book of the law of Moses.** Whatever of explanation might afterward be needed, they first of all wanted the book.

**2. Brought the law before the congregation.** It was written. Before the invention of printing, and especially in ages when learning was low, the value of manuscripts arose to figures beyond easy belief. Many of these people probably had never seen any book. **All that could hear with understanding.** Including the older children and youths. **Upon the first day of the seventh month.** Which was kept, as we learn from Lev. 23, 24, as the New Year celebration. It corresponded nearly with our October.

**3. He read therein . . . from the morning until midday.** A glimpse of this sacred book which had been preserved through countless dangers must have been wonderfully impressive to these men of Jerusalem. It is not likely that Ezra read all these hours without help. We learn from verse 18 that the reading went on during the next day and the seven days of the feast of tabernacles. **The people were attentive.** The last word is supplied by the translators, but it is implied in the original. If there were but one authentic copy of the Bible in the world to-day, we would prize it more. From the remainder of this lesson we learn that several men spake at once. This was in accordance with oriental customs. Dr. Gracey refers to a great Brahman council, held in the interest of Hinduism, which, having reached its conclusions, proclaimed them from the four corners of its great tent, four men speaking at the same time. Missionaries in India often preach from the four corners of a great wagon.

**4. A pulpit of wood.** A scaffold or platform or "tower." It was broad enough and high enough to keep fourteen men "in the sight

of all the people." **Beside him stood,** etc. Here come the names of thirteen men, prominent probably because of hereditary position. It very probably added dignity to the service to have the support of such men. John Wesley spoke truly when he lamented the condition of the Church which depended upon its rich men. Nevertheless the rich and honorable have as distinct a duty in relation to God's Church as those less liberally endowed with this world's goods.

**5. Opened the book.** Unrolled the scroll. **When he opened it, all the people stood up.** The crowd had been sitting on the ground. In England or America if a thousand men had to wait together in the open air, they would stand crowded in great discomfort, but in the Orient, where life goes more leisurely, the people sit down whenever they have to wait, which to the traveler seems to be most of the time. They now arose in reverence for God's word, and a most impressive sight it must have been—the simultaneous rising and sitting again of that great multitude.

**6. Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God.** And probably with genuine Hebrew ceremony he repeated a psalm of praise. Bishop Wordsworth suggests Psalm 119 as a record of Ezra's feelings at this time. **The people answered, Amen.** This response of prayer was doubtless spontaneous. But with orientals the word and the action—**lifting up their hands**—would be more reverent and dignified than with a Western congregation. This lifting up of the hand, pointing toward the heaven, calling upon God to witness, is a most ancient custom in worship, and there was a thrilling modern instance of it last August when Dreyfus, the French Jew, was arraigned for the second time. He threw his hand up and appealed to God to testify his innocence. **They bowed their heads, and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.** They probably bowed their heads, then fell on their knees and bent forward until their faces came between their hands. The formality which is native to the oriental seems almost a mark of hypocrisy when imitated in our free and easy country. But Protestantism especially may well take lessons in reverence from these old Jews. A disposition to look around the congregation while others' heads are bowed, to whisper during prayer time, to put on wraps during the singing of the doxology, and to greet with effusiveness friends the moment after the last words of the benediction have been pronounced, is a mark of the want of reverence of soul, and no skeptic's criticism outside or in the Church, and no vice made legitimate by law, so directly imperils the Church of Christ as thoughtless irreverence or the part of its members and supporters.

**7. Also Jeshua . . . and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law.**

We have here thirteen names, which, however, seem to be names of families or clans rather than of persons. "And the Levites" should probably read "even the Levites," for all these men belonged to the priestly tribe. Where did they stand? Evidently they did not stand upon the pulpit of wood, where Ezra and his thirteen supporters were. Probably they were stationed at intervals through the crowd and repeated and explained the words that Ezra slowly read. How they "caused the people to understand the law" is described in the next verse. **The people stood in their place.** Observe that the word "stood" is in *italic*, which means that it has been supplied by the translators. It is not in the original. From all oriental analogy we may be sure that the people did not stand. They remained in their places sitting on the ground, as every oriental company does when it is not engaged in direct physical action.

**8. They read in the book in the law of God.** Put a comma after "book" (Revised Version), and this phrase becomes plain. The book that they read was the law of God. **Distinctly.** The margin of the Revised Version gives "with an interpretation," which is probably the meaning. **Gave the sense, and caused them to understand.** They repeated distinctly every word that Ezra read; chanted it, as some believe, or gave it in a sort of choral recitative. And then, making signs to him to stop for a while, they answered the questions of the multitude. This verse has often been referred to as beautifully stating the duty of the Sunday school teacher. Very likely part of what the Levites had to do was to translate sentence by sentence the words from the old Hebrew into the vernacular dialect.

**9. Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha.** "Tirshatha" is a term of reverence and dignity for a governor. It is related to the modern Turkish title pasha. **Said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep.** The duty of reading the word of God was sacredly reserved for Ezra. He was a priest and minister of God, and the laymen who supported him did not interfere with his work. Neither did the great Nehemiah, who at this time was the most potent factor in the little community at Jerusalem. But when **the people wept, when they heard the words of the law,** the strong common sense of Nehemiah asserted itself, and we can easily in imagination see the soldiers clear the way while the great man advances to Ezra and suggests the quieting of the people, who in their first contact

with divine truth make the mistake of mourning instead of rejoicing. So I have seen a little child whose father had been long absent cry at the sight of him who loved it most. These people, knowing their moral infirmity and their distance from God, instinctively felt, like all sinners, disposed to run farther away from him instead of doing what the heavenly Father, as well as all earthly parents, longs for his children to do—coming nearer. But there was another thought, doubtless, in Nehemiah's mind. This day, the first day of the seventh month, had been ordained by Moses "as a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation," during which no servile work should be done. It was rather to be observed as a day of festivity. So while the portrayals of sin and the threats of punishment which the people heard from the law might well sadden their hearts, it was their duty on this occasion to direct their attention rather to the promises, which are far more abundant in God's word than threats of punishment, and to rejoice rather than to weep.

**10. Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet.** These words and what follow are probably the words of Nehemiah, Ezra and the Levites repeating and indorsing what he said. The East is a region of alternate fasting and feasting. People starve themselves for weeks together that they may stuff themselves for days together. Their festivities are like nothing known in Europe or America. Fresh meat is a rarity in the East, but on festival occasions it is inordinately indulged in, and marrow and fatness, and milk and oil, and honey and wine, are the typical phrases for dainties. **Send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared.** For they, too, are the children of Abraham and children of God. The perfect truth that our Lord has sheep of another flock, that Gentiles, as well as Jews, are children of God, had not broken forth in luster upon the earth; but within national limits the conscientious Jew had a higher recognition of the rights of his neighbors than the average conscientious Christian in the best land under the sun to-day. In the modern mad rush for wealth there is a terrible and heathenish (rightly speaking, it is an infidel) disregard of the poor fellow. Notwithstanding his poverty and notwithstanding his vice, he is a fellow, a brother, and it is our duty even more than it was the duty of these old Jerusalem Jews to "give portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared." We won't have to travel far to do it. **This day is holy unto our Lord.** Here was the chief reason for Nehemiah's interruption. It will never do to be sorry on the Lord's festal day; for **the joy of the Lord is your strength.**

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A truth which, if constantly remembered, would greatly multiply the prosperity of the modern Church.

**11. So the Levites stilled all the people.** Ezra and Nehemiah from their lofty pulpit could give the orders, but these could only be carried into effect by the help of the Levites, who were down among the common people. Here is a beautiful suggestion about the helpfulness of the ordinary church member. Great men in the Church may be able to give extensive directions, but to have them carried out requires the ordinary Christians each to do his duty. **Hold your peace, for the day is holy.** They must not mar the gladness of the holy day by manifestations of sorrow even for their sins. But yet sorrow of a godly sort is a privilege and a duty. Sorrows are spurs, but joys are wings.

**12. The people went their way.** Some of those who left went to their homes, the rest to their temporary stopping places. **To eat, and to drink.** Which was their duty to God on this occasion. **To send portions.** Which was

their duty to their fellow-men. Let us remember that no social system has yet been practically worked which does not leave many in bitter poverty. **To make great mirth.** This was their duty to themselves. Their mirth was not rioting; it was the hilarity, as it is called in the New Testament, of souls who feel that God is their Father and all men and women their brothers and sisters. It was a duty to indulge in mirth of such sort. **They had understood the words that were declared unto them.** This was the cause of their gladness. They had reason to thank the Levites and other plain men who had helped them so to understand. I fancy some of them seeking such Levites to thank them, but not finding them in the crowd. So many of us have sought in maturity to find the Sunday school teachers who helped us in childhood and have not found them; so—and it is comfortable and cheering thought—some will seek to find the Sunday school teacher of to-day. Perhaps they will not find us, but all gratitude and thanks will cluster about all saved souls in eternity.

### CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

**Verse 1. The broad place.** A public square suitable for gatherings; not "street," as in the Authorized Version. **Before the water gate.** This gate was directly south of the temple. So the open place on which the people assembled must have been southwest of the temple precincts, but inside the city wall, in that portion of Jerusalem marked "Ophel" on our maps. **Ezra the scribe.** It is quite remarkable that Ezra, who had been in Jerusalem some thirteen years (see Ezra 7. 8) before Nehemiah is not mentioned earlier in the book. Three explanations are possible: (1) He had returned to Babylon before the arrival of Nehemiah; (2) Being a radical reformer, he had failed in his efforts, had incurred the hostility of his fellow-countrymen, and had become so unpopular with them as to be relegated to the background; or, (3) Being himself a priest, he would naturally work under the direction of Eliashib, the high priest. **The book of the law of Moses.** The Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Bible. It is interesting to know that the contemporaries of Ezra and Nehemiah had a book called the "law of Moses," which they believed to have been given by the hand of Moses. (See chap. 9. 14; 10. 29.) There are no less than ten clear references to the "law of Moses" in Ezra and Nehemiah. It is barely possible that Ezra and Nehemiah knew quite as much about the origin of the Pentateuch as the average modern higher critic, who loudly pro-

claims that we have not a line from the pen of Moses.

**2. Both men and women.** Or, as we read in chap. 10. 28, "All they, . . . their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding." This verse plainly teaches the high position of women even at that early day. The nonsensical rabbinical teaching, which crept in in later times, that the law should not be read to women, has no warrant in the Old Testament. Women are equally interested as men in hearing the word of God, and should have equal rights in all matters pertaining to religion. **First day of the seventh month.** September-October, depending upon the full moon. It was on this day that the feast of trumpets occurred (Lev. 23. 24), and therefore it was especially sacred.

**3. From early morning.** Literally, from the light, or daybreak. Thus the meeting would last at least seven hours. Of course we are not to understand that Ezra read during all this time, but was assisted by several others. **The people were attentive.** The word "attentive" is not in the original. We simply have "the ears of the people were to the book."

**4. Pulpit of wood.** Literally, "tower" of wood. This was a raised platform or stage, large enough to hold over a dozen people. **Beside him stood Mattithiah,** etc. Nothing more is known of these persons than their

names. They were probably priests or Levites, though some are inclined to the opinion that a part of them were laymen.

**5. Opened the book.** As the manuscript was probably a scroll, and not a book, in our sense of the word, "unrolled" would be a better translation than "opened." **All the people stood up.** Orientals do not like to stand up for any length of time, but on this occasion, out of respect to the law, the people stood up. The Jews of modern times do not stand during the reading of the law.

**6. Blessed the Lord.** He praised Jehovah for his goodness and mercy to the people. He may have recited a psalm of thanksgiving. **Amen.** This word is pure Hebrew, and derived from a verb meaning to be firm or to be true. When used adverbially the meaning is "surely" or "certainly." In general it is now used to express a wish that a prayer should be answered. Our "May it be so," or "Let it come to pass," fairly expresses the meaning of "amen." **Lifting up of their hands.** As if to receive the blessings of God from heaven. **Bowed their heads.** The oriental is naturally reverent, much more so than the average European or American. Constituted as most men are, it is certainly easier for them to worship God with closed eyes and bowed head than in a careless, indifferent attitude. Let all religious parents educate themselves and children on this line.

**7. Also Jeshua, etc.** Seven of them are mentioned elsewhere. (See chap. 9, 5; 10, 9-14.) Beyond this we know nothing of them. **And the Levites.** The conjunction "and" of the clause is very confusing; it is probably an error, and should be omitted; then the word "Levites" stands in apposition with the names preceding. **Caused the people to understand.** Explaining all obscure passages.

**8. Distinctly.** Plainly or clearly, not mumbling. **Gave the sense.** Some of the hearers were doubtless very ignorant, knew but little about the law, and, having been brought up in Assyria, some of the Hebrew expressions would sound strange to them. And, indeed, unless the Jew was a much better Bible scholar than the average Christian of our day, the reason for the necessity of such explanation is not difficult to find.

**9. Tirshatha.** The Persian title of Ezra, corresponding to *pecha* (our *pasha*), and interchangeable with it. (Comp. Neh. 7, 65; Hag. 1, 1.) Both words mean governor. **This day is holy.** Therefore intended to promote joy and gladness, and no time for mourning and weeping. **For all the people wept.** The portions of the law read in their hearing vividly recalled their short-

comings. No sinful man can attentively listen to God's word without feeling sad at his own perfidy. Careful reading of the Bible will produce a better class of men. Let all our ministers and teachers insist upon reading the word.

**10. He said.** Whether "he" refers to Ezra or Nehemiah is not clear. **Eat the fat, and drink the sweet.** Enjoy the good things which in the mercy of Jehovah are yours. Live henceforth in such a way that your life may be a continuous stream of joy and gladness. **Send portions.** We know of no direct command to this effect in the law of Moses, but it is in perfect harmony with its spirit. (See Deut. 16, 11, 14, and, for later usage, Esth. 9, 19-22.) **Neither be ye grieved.** You have now repented; the past is past; you cannot change it; take courage, and do better in the future. **The joy of the Lord is your strength.** The consciousness of God's favor produces happiness and promotes joy; this happiness comes through obedience to his law, and by trusting him. Whoever fully trusts God has perfect peace. No wonder, therefore, that the Christian is asked to "rejoice in the Lord always."

**11. Hold your peace.** Do not mar the joy of this festive occasion by giving way to your feelings of sorrow.

**12. To make great mirth.** The word "mirth" must not be understood in its ordinary meaning of merriment or frolic or noisy gaiety, but rather in the sense of cheerful gladness and joy. **Because they had understood the words.** Not the command that they should not grieve and feel sorry, but rather the words of the law read to them. They now rejoiced that they had discovered the source of their past sorrows, and the way to avoid future troubles and dangers.

### Thoughts for Young People. Reading the Bible.

**1. God's word is given to men that it may be read and followed as a guide in life.** The sailor in an unknown sea consults his chart; so should we consult the Bible. More than one ship has been lost by striking upon a rock not laid down in the chart, but every danger is warned against in this guidebook.

**2. The Bible should be read publicly, in assemblages for worship.** Its place upon the desk indicates the honor that it should receive.

**3. It should be read by all the people, old and young, rulers and commons, ministry and laity; for all need its golden precepts, and all will be helped by them.**

**4. It should be read as a whole, in continuous sections, a book at a time.** The best view of

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London is from the dome of St. Paul's; of Montreal, from Mount Royal; so we need to take a landscape view of Bible truth.

5. *It should be read reverently, as God's message.* When a Japanese officer saw the signature of the mikado he fell prostrate before it. We should treat with reverence a message from our King.

6. *It should be read with careful study and explanation, to give the sense, and not to interject a meaning into it.* We need not the opinions of men, but the mind of the Spirit.

### Orientalisms of the Lesson.

The impression which Ezra made in restoring the law and the reading of it extended far beyond the Jewish peoples themselves. The entire Arab peoples came so to admire and revere Ezra because of this one feature of his career that it entered not only into their traditions, but into the sacred text of the Koran itself, every syllable of which is held to be divinely inspired. In the *Bura*, known as "The Declaration of Immunity," Mohammed says, "The Jews say Ezra is the son of God; and the Christians say Christ is the son of God." The Arab commentators have endeavored to explain away the idolatry of Ezra, charged in this text against them, but the very explanation serves to show the traditional respect in which Ezra was held in regard to the republication of the law. These commentators say that it was heterodox Jews who taught that Ezra was the "Son of God," or some Jews of Medina; and the reason for their extreme reverence was that the law being utterly lost and forgotten during the Babylonish captivity, Ezra, having been raised to life after a hundred years, dictated the whole anew to the scribes out of his own memory; at which they greatly marveled, and declared that he could not have done it unless he were the "Son of God." This comment is read and accepted among a hundred and seventy-five millions of Mohammedans at this time.

The early "Fathers" of the Christian Church, such as Ireneus, Tertullian, and Clement, all followed this tradition, which is found in the Apocryphal book of Esdras, "a book too absurd," says Dr. Clark, "for the Romanists themselves to receive into their canon." What Ezra did was probably to get as many copies of the Law together as possible, and to make a correct edition, or, as we would say to-day, an "Authorized Version" of the Scriptures. He divided these into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa, or holy writings; the Mohammedans now divide them into the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

As to the manner of the writing, it is believed that those books were written not perpendicular, but in long lines clear across the parchment from right to left. Anciently it is supposed the Hebrew verses each occupied a line, the roll being wide enough to contain any verse of the book, though the ancients did not know any verse division. Ezra wrote the whole book in Chaldee character, to which they had become used during the period of their captivity. The old Hebrew character has been retained in common use only by the Samaritans, of whom we have so often spoken as now reduced to a very small remnant residing near Jacob's well.

Ezra continued this Bible study after he ceased to be governor, and became the Secretary of State, or of the Department of Religions, if we may make such analogy, under Nehemiah. Ezra is supposed to have been the author of the division of the Scriptures into the fifty-four sections, for use in the readings in the synagogue, each Sabbath day having its own Scripture appointed for that day, as we read so frequently about in Christ's times, and as it is the custom to do in the synagogues all over the world in our own times.

It is singular that the knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures has fallen so commonly out of mind among great portions of the Jews of to-day. Dr. C. C. Adler, writing of the Jews in Amsterdam and western Europe, remarks that it seems strange that missionaries have to carry the Old Testament to the Jews, who, as a rule, do not possess a complete Hebrew Bible. He affirms that they would not understand it if they had it given them without a living teacher, and that the number of rabbis and professional readers among them capable of explaining it to them diminishes every year. The missionaries offer them a bilingual Old Testament, thereby doing for them what Ezra did for the people of Jerusalem; they give them the Hebrew text in one column and the "sense," as Ezra would have called it, in Dutch, and the people now are willing to buy it. There was a great synagogue, said to have been organized by Nehemiah about 410 B. C., consisting of one hundred and twenty members, of which Ezra was president. To this body the prophets transmitted the Law as given by Moses. It was succeeded by the Sanhedrin. Its special work was to reorganize religious worship among the returned captives from Persia and Babylon, and to gather together the canonical books. Such is the Hebrew tradition, and though it is not unquestioned, there is reason to accept it as far more than probable, and perhaps historically accurate. Josephus does not mention this great council, and no such council by name

appears in Scripture. Accepting its existence as a fact, one can readily surmise that it became the seat of authority for the decision of theological questions, as a hundred and twenty prominent men, which numbered among all the leading scribes from Ezra to Simon the Just, covering in time a century and a half, would naturally come to be.

Previous to the captivity worship of the highest kind could be performed only at the temple of Jerusalem, but the Scriptures, even then, could be publicly read elsewhere, and the people could receive instruction in them from the prophets at any time or place. Worship at Jerusalem during the times of the captivity being impossible, it is supposed that the synagogue originated in Babylon. It was designed, not as a place for sacrifice, but for religious instruction and prayer. Synagogues may have been merely "meetings," about some prophet or other leader for instruction and devotion, but specially meetings for observance of feasts, festivals, or holidays. In our English Bible the word is found but once in the Old Testament.

#### By Way of Illustration.

*Attentive ears.* People with hungry hearts have attentive ears. When people are eager to know a thing they stretch forward to grasp it. That is what attention is—a stretching forward.

The Bible is the mightiest book in the world when brought into contact with an attentive soul. Even a fragment of it is sufficient to stir cities and usher in national reformations. When a small part of it was discovered in the days of Josiah the result was a purging of the entire kingdom. When Ezra in Babylon discovered a small part of it he faced the dangers of a thousand miles of sand in order that Jerusalem might be born again. When it was discovered in the fourteenth century by Wyclif there was commotion throughout all England. When it was re-discovered in the sixteenth century the whole world entered upon a new era. It was the Bible which drove the Pilgrims and Puritans across three thousand miles of sea, and which armed the legions of Cromwell to fight against the king. Many a man dates his life from the discovery of this book. A Bible on the shelf or on the center table or on the pulpit amounts to nothing. It is a Bible listened to which transfigures the soul.—*C. E. Jefferson.*

*Verses 4 and 7.* I used to wonder why all those hard, unpronounceable names were put in this story until it occurred to me that Nehemiah was thus honoring Bible class teachers. Wherever this Bible in its two hundred and fifty languages

and dialects is printed these names are inscribed as Bible teachers. Like the woman who broke the alabaster box, they are immortal.

"*Caused them to understand.*" I purchased a guidebook, and found that the chief directions were in Italian, which I could not read. If you were lost on the mountains, it would be more profitable to meet a poor, ragged girl who would simply tell you the way home than a profound professor who would merely explain the geological formation of the soil on which you are standing. So it is better to have a religious teacher who can in simplicity tell the way to heaven than a profound scholar who cannot be understood.

Lord Shaftesbury was a follower of Ezra when he opened the great theaters of London for Bible preaching and song, so that the poor might come in to a simple religious service which they could understand. His memorable words were, "The Church which does not lead in evangelism will die of dry rot, if not by divine judgment."

*Verses 9-12.* Emotion is deadening and destructive if it does not lead to action. The great psychologist James says that when one has been stirred to good impulses and does not act upon them it is worse than never to have been stirred. "Do something," he says, "if only to give a drink to a child or a chair to your old grandmother."

*Monday Club* says: "To use the lachrymal ducts is no certain proof of piety. God's law asks not sorrow, but obedience. 'To obey is better than sacrifice,' Ezra tells them to wipe away their tears and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. Ah! this scribe is a prophet. His words remind us of Him who said, 'But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'"

#### Heart Talks on the Lesson.

Dear, blessed old Bible! Never was there another book like it. In the days of Nehemiah, five hundred years before Christ, it was the same spring of joy and comfort for the people who were attentive to hear it as it is to-day. Perhaps Ezra read to them the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, the very one we love to read because it tells us the Lord leads us all through life, and that sorrows and trials are meant to prove us and to make us know that there is something much better for us than having our own way. The sweet words came as a message from heaven as Ezra gave the sense and caused them to understand. "Thou shalt remember all the way that the Lord thy God hath led thee." All the way? In the captivity? In the persecutions? In the



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loss of home, and nation, and temple? Yes; even through those grievous things which seemed so utterly against his will God had led them for a purpose. There was light on those dreary years of exile when they heard, "As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee;" and light upon the future in the promise, "The Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills." Something very good was yet to come to them, the chosen people of God, if only they would "obey his voice indeed."

Whether it was this or some other part that Ezra read, their hearts were broken under the strange, sweet power of the book. They went their way to be glad, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them. It is so now when we are attentive to hear it. Would you neglect, or destroy, or disbelieve the only revelation from God which throws light upon the sorrows and mysteries of life and promises a future of blessedness? "I am the Light," Jesus said, and for all who believe him death is only a passing shadow and the life beyond beautiful and attractive. What is it in this book which gives it universal power over human hearts to comfort, strengthen, and encourage so that "we see the path of life more clearly and walk in it more bravely and steadily?" There is but one answer. It is the word of God that lives and abides forever. Worry and sorrow would have left the race hopeless ages ago if there had been "no light but reason," no book except those written by the wisest philosophers. No other book ever said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." No other ever said, "Let not your heart be troubled; . . . in my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." No other book has been translated into almost every language upon earth, and made a transformation in the character of those to whom it is given. It has just penetrated into Tibet, having been translated into that tongue by a Moravian minister years before the missionaries were allowed to enter that fast-barred door. The entrance of the word that "giveth light" into every land the world over is a testimony that it is God's word, and he wills that it shall find its way to every creature.

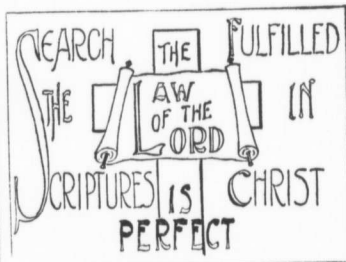
When Dr. Duff, one of the earliest missionaries, went to India he carried with him a library of Greek and Latin authors. The vessel was wrecked and everything lost. The crew and passengers, thankful to save their lives, were gathered round a fire kindled on the shore when a sailor came running up the beach crying, "See what I have found," and handed Dr. Duff his

Bible, the only thing that had escaped the sea. He says, "My classics went to the bottom, but when the Bible was brought back to me I seemed to hear a voice from heaven saying, 'Greek and Latin are not needed to convert the natives of India; the Bible alone, with God's Spirit, is sufficient, for it is the sword of the Spirit and mighty through God to the pulling down of Satan's strongholds.'" And so it has proved, not alone in India, but in every heathen country in the last half century. Won't you try what this blessed book will do for you when you are attentive to hear it?

### The Teachers' Meeting.

Describe the walls of Jerusalem as rebuilt by Nehemiah. . . . Draw a map of Jerusalem, and show the "water gate," where the events of the lesson took place. . . . "An Old Testament Sunday school." Note (1) that it was held on Sunday, "the first day of the seventh month;" (2) that all the people were included in it, either as teachers or scholars; (3) its text-book was the Bible; (4) its superintendent was Ezra, an earnest worshiper, a godly man, and a thorough Bible student. Notice his peculiar fitness for the place; (5) its teachers were godly men and Bible scholars; (6) its exercises, taken from the story; (7) its aim, to give clear understanding of God's word; (8) its results, conviction of sin and the joy of acceptance with God.

### Blackboard.



The first unanimous desire of the returned Jews was to have read to them the word of the Lord, that they might know and keep his perfect law. Accordingly a pulpit was erected, and when Ezra, the priest, read and expounded the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. From the same book One of later time stood up to read, and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on

him. "This day," He said, "is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Let us reverently hear and read and search the Scriptures; for Christ, who fulfilled all in himself, speaks to us from the sacred pages.

### Library References.

Consult the references on Nehemiah for November 5.

FREEMAN'S HANDBOOK: Ver. 9, The Tirshatha, 383. Ver. 10, Sending portions, 384.

#### SERMONS ON THE LESSON.

Verse 1.—Kanaga, J. B., "A Great Religious Awakening," *The Treasury*, vol. vii, page 689.

Verse 10.—Skinner, Thomas H., "Spiritual Joy as an Element of Strength," *Pulpit Eloquence of the Nineteenth Century*, page 363. Hughes, D. C., "Thanksgiving Sermon," *The Homiletic Monthly*, January, 1882, page 203. Carpenter, H. S., "The Duty and Privilege of National Festi-

ty," *The Homiletic Monthly*, November, 1883, page 75. Field, Henry M., "A Thanksgiving Sermon," *The Preachers' Magazine*, 1895, page 481. Eldridge, C. O., "The Power of Holy Joy," *The Preachers' Magazine*, 1896, page 499. Pearse, Mark Guy, "The Source of True Joy," *The Treasury*, vol. v, page 687.

### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

Father most holy.  
Almighty Spirit, we confess.  
How precious is the book divine.  
Thy word, almighty Lord.  
More love to thee, O Christ.

The praying spirit breathe.  
Give me the Bible.  
Holy Bible, book divine.  
Holy Bible, well I love thee.  
What glory gilds the sacred page.

## LESSON IX. WOES OF INTEMPERANCE.

[Nov. 26.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.** Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. Prov. 20. 1.

#### AUTHORIZED VERSION.

Prov. 23. 29-35. [*Commit to memory verses 29-32.*]

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35 They have stricken me, *shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.*

#### REVISED VERSION.

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions?

Who hath complaining? who hath wounds without cause?

Who hath redness of eyes?

30 They that tarry long at the wine;  
They that go to seek out mixed wine.

31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,  
When it giveth its color in the cup,  
When it goeth down smoothly:

32 At the last it biteth like a serpent,  
And stingeth like an adder,

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange things,  
And thine heart shall utter froward things.

34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in  
the midst of the sea,  
Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35 They have stricken me, *shalt thou say, and I was not hurt;*

They have beaten me, and I felt it not:  
When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

### Home Readings.

M. Woes of Intemperance. (Temperance Sunday.) Prov. 23. 29-35.

Tu. God's judgment. Isa. 5. 8-16.

W. Anger of the Lord. Isa. 5. 18-25.

Th. The mocker. Prov. 20. 1-11.

F. Sudden destruction. Nah. 1. 1-10.

S. Desolation. Isa. 24. 1-12.

S. His portion. Matt. 24. 42-51.

### Lesson Hymns.

No. 338, New Canadian Hymnal.

See, the Church of Christ arises,  
Smile or frown of man despises.

No. 335, New Canadian Hymnal.

Homes there are of woe and sorrow,  
Where the sunlight ne'er appears.

No. 337, New Canadian Hymnal.

Friends of temperance, onward go,  
Fear ye not to face the foe.

### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR SCHOLARS.

#### 1. Woes, v. 29, 30.

What questions are asked in this lesson?  
What is meant by "babbling"?  
What by "wounds without cause"?  
What harm does a drunkard do to others?  
What harm does he do to himself?  
What is the worst evil of drunkenness?  
What is the first step to removing the evil?  
How far can legislation go?  
Does increased legislation against the evil decrease moral suasion?  
What is the duty of a man who feels that he is in no danger of excess of drink?  
What is the best reason for total abstinence?

#### 2. Warning, v. 31-35.

Recite the warning in the GOLDEN TEXT.  
How does wine bite and sting?  
Why do men begin to drink?  
Why do they seek strong drink "yet again"?  
How does the lesson show the unconsciousness of the drunkard?  
Is drunkenness a disease?  
If so, how can it be a vice?  
Why does the law hold a man responsible for crime done when under the influence of drink?  
What should be the position of the Christian Church against the evil?  
What is your position?

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

1. Pity, not ridicule, should be given to him who is the victim of strong drink. Many are led astray by the mirth and music which attend festive gatherings where wine is conspicuous. Social customs should be on the side of abstinence.

2. "At the last" (verse 32). The trouble with multitudes of young people is that they do not see or do not regard the inevitable end of an evil course. The path is now a flowery one, but if it is downward, it will lead to a desert where no flower blooms and no bird sings.

3. "I will seek it yet again," cries the man who is the slave and then the victim of strong drink. Here is the evil of drunkenness. It breaks down the strong will of a once strong man. He becomes helpless and miserable.

### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

#### 1. Woes, v. 29, 30.

What six questions are asked in verse 29?  
What answer is given?  
Who pronounces a woe on the wine-drinker?  
Isa. 5, 11, 22.  
Against what deceiver are we warned in the GOLDEN TEXT?  
Is wine any less a foe to-day than when this was written?

#### 2. Warning, v. 31-35.

What council is given about wine?  
Why is this the safest course?  
What is the final effect of wine drinking?  
How does it affect the passions?  
To whom is a drunken man likened?  
What complaint will the drunkard make?  
What will he do when he recovers?  
What says Solomon elsewhere about such folly. Prov. 26, 11.  
From what blessedness will all drunkards be excluded? 1 Cor. 6, 10.  
What is said of him who makes drunkards? Hab. 2, 15.  
What is the wise course about wine and strong drink? Col. 2, 21.

#### Practical Teachings.

How in this lesson are we taught—

1. That drunkenness brings misery?
2. That drunkenness shortens life?
3. That total abstinence is the way of safety?

### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was Solomon? **The son of King David.**

What great gift did God bestow upon him? **Wisdom.**

From whom does all true wisdom come? **From God.**

What book of the Bible did Solomon write? What was a proverb? How many proverbs did Solomon write? Who hath woe? **The drunkard.**

Find other questions in the same verse which are all answered in the same way. Do you believe this is true? What is the safe thing to do? **Not to even look at the wine.**

What does it do at the last? To what end will the drunkard certainly come? **To poverty.**

How do we know this? **God says so.**  
Who cannot enter heaven? **A drunkard.**  
How do we know this? **God says so.**

**THE LESSON CATECHISM.**

(For the entire school.)

- 1.** Who hath sorrow? **They that tarry long at the wine.**
- 2.** What is said about wine and strong drink?  
GOLDEN TEXT: "**Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging,**" etc.
- 3.** What effect has it at the last? **It biteth like a serpent.**
- 4.** What does the drunkard exclaim? "**I will seek it yet again.**"

**NEW CHURCH CATECHISM.**

- II.**
- What are the works of God?

The works of God are the exercise of His glorious attributes, as seen in creation, providence, and redemption.

Romans xi. 36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

**THE LESSON OUTLINE.****Woes in the Wine Cup.****I. REMORSE.**

*Who hath sorrow?* v. 29.

Sorrow of the world....death. 2 Cor. 7. 10.

**II. QUARRELS.**

*Who hath contentions?* v. 29.

Leave off contentions. Prov. 17. 14.

**III. WOUNDS.**

*Who hath wounds without cause?* v. 29.

Whence come....fightings. James 4. 1.

**IV. BLEARED EYES.**

*Who hath redness of eyes?* v. 29.

Of the flesh....corruption. Gal. 6. 8.

**V. LUSTFUL PASSIONS.**

*Shall behold strange women.* v. 33.

Whoever looketh....to lust. Matt. 5. 28.

**VI. EVIL IMAGINATIONS.**

*Heart....utter perverse things.* v. 33.

Out of the heart....evil. Matt. 15. 19.

**VII. REELING GAIT.**

*Lieth down in....sea.* v. 34.

Reel....like a drunkard. Isa. 24. 20.

**VIII. EVIL HABIT.**

*Will seek it yet again.* v. 35.

Turned to his own vomit. 2 Pet. 2. 22.

**EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**

As the "Psalms of David" are named after the chief of Hebrew hymnists, though he did not write them all, so the "Proverbs of Solomon," containing selections from the sayings of the sages of Israel through several centuries, take their name from the wisest of Jews and of men. One section of the book was arranged and written out under King Hezekiah. Agur, the son of Jakeh, and a king named Lemuel are named as the authors of the last two chapters. But the chapter from which our lesson is taken was probably written by Solomon. The wise old king rises over the mists of the ages, and, bending down with fatherly tenderness, addresses us as his sons, and, entering into many of the details of human life, shows us the folly of sin and the wisdom of virtue. Surely, if any vice advertises its own folly, it is the vice of drunkenness. If a man commit any other sin in the long list, he injures himself, his victims, and his own and their relatives—bad enough, surely; but when a man, by drinking rotten and distilled sugar, turns himself first into a simpleton, then into an idiot, and then into a lunatic, he prepares himself to commit every crime, and carries iniquity as infectiously through the streets as a sufferer from smallpox could carry disease. This lesson, however, refers more to the personal experiences of the drunkard than to his baleful, far-reaching influence. It is well, as we study and teach it, to reflect that all the misery that Solomon here describes as the drunkard's doom came before the dangerous arts of distillation had been invented. Methods of rectification greatly increased the evil results of liquor-drinking, and modern methods of poisonous adulteration have multiplied them to an incalculable degree. If, before the world knew anything of brandy or whisky or gin or rum, drunkards had woe and sorrow and contentions and complaining and wounds without cause, what immeasurable misery have they now! And what misery have their wives and children! And what awful evils do they bring on the community in which they live! And to what an awful degree does that community share in the responsibility of their guilt!

**Verse 29. Who hath woe? who hath sorrow?** Literally, "Who has Oh? who has Alas?" Whose life is made up of exclamations of distress? "O's" and "Alases" are occasional interjections with most of us; they are outcries of pain that suddenly interrupt the peaceful flow of life. But Solomon knows a man whose life is one prolonged outcry of agony.

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Matt. 5. 28.

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15. 19.

24. 30.

1. 2. 22.

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Who is he? **Who hath contentions? who hath babbling?** The liquor shop is the headquarters of fighters and of fools. If a man is determined to fight with another, he must get rid of human kindness, so he takes alcohol and becomes a brute. If a man wants to learn a fool's secret, he must first get rid of the fool's lingering senses, so he gives him alcohol, and the secret is divulged. **Wounds without cause.** Without reason. A large proportion of the diseases which scourge us, a larger proportion of fatal accidents, and nearly all the causeless and unprofitable disputes of life, arise from alcohol and intoxicating drugs. **Who hath redness of eyes?** "Dimming of eyes" would be a better translation, but bloodshot and bleared eyes are marks of a drunkard.

This verse is an awful arraignment of wine. In Solomon's day no intoxicant stronger than wine was known; in ours distilled liquor and the adulteration of popular drinks bring ruin much nearer to our households. Robert Hall, the famous Baptist, called brandy "liquid fire and distilled damnation." The fabled Circe invited men to delightful banquets which, partaken of, transformed the guests into beasts. Such is the "liquor habit." Alcohol overworks the heart, poisons the blood, weakens the lungs, paralyzes the nerves, congests the brain, dulls the mind, and destroys the soul. In our day, as in Solomon's, the twenty-ninth verse can be truthfully answered only by the thirtieth; only that we have to add to "wine" and "mixed wine" a wearisome list of intoxicating drinks and drugs.

**30. They that tarry long at the wine.** There are in almost every community drunkards whose "sprees" are protracted through days and even weeks. There is an evil charm in all intoxicants. **They that go to seek mixed wine.** "Mixed wine" is wine spiced and drugged to strengthen it. "Go to seek" is literally "go in to sample," to test. So we have in this verse grouped together those who drink "respectably" at home and those who haunt the grogshops. The weaker always leads to the stronger: cider to wine, wine to whisky, whisky to the strongest intoxicants.

**31. Look not thou upon the wine.** If Circe is charming, turn thine eyes away. Total abstinence, then, is no "nineteenth century doctrine." Three thousand years ago wise men saw clearly that moderate drinking was not the best means to develop thoroughly sober men, while it makes millions of drunkards. But how pernicious is this vice! Three thousand years! Ninety generations! During those long years how many lives have been ruined by intoxicants,

how many souls lost! What immeasurable practical folly there is in this world in spite of all its aggregated wisdom! **When it is red.** Or golden. The beauty of wine adds to its fascination and its danger. **Give him his color in the cup.** Sends the sparkling "head" up to the surface. **Move him himself aright.** The Revised Version has "goeth down smoothly." Whichever of these phrases be preferred the reference still is to the evil charm of wine; it glows and sparkles to please the eye; its flavor delights the sense of taste.

**32. At the last it biteth like a serpent.** However fascinating at first, in the end it stings. And how multiple is the pain of its sting—physical infirmities, remorse, defamation of reputation, degradation of character, despair! **An adder.** Probably, according to Dr. Plumtre, this is the *cerastes*, or horned snake, which coils itself up in the sands of the East and darts unexpectedly at wayfarers.

**33. Thine eyes shall behold strange women.** The Revised Version translates, "Thine eyes shall behold strange things," a phrase which suggests delirium tremens. "Strange women" is the phrase used by our Authorized Version to describe women who earn their livelihood by indulging sensual lust. "Stranger women" would be better—that is, foreign women, heathen women, who had a low code of morals. **Thine heart shall utter perverse things.** The Hebrew word, says Dr. Taylor Lewis, "denotes topsy-turviness, utter contradictoriness, absurdity, and wild confusion." The intoxicated man having stupefied his moral purpose and depraved his senses, his lawless imaginings are free. Neither will nor words are under control. Strong drink greatly arouses the lower passions.

**34. As he that lieth down in the midst of the sea.** Very giddy and very sick; very much in danger too. **As he that lieth upon the top of a mast.** A climactic restatement. So reckless and wretched a bed as the masthead of a vessel plunging in the trough of the open sea would not be easy to duplicate; but it is a comfortable, safe place of repose compared with that of a drunkard.

**35. They have stricken me . . . and I was not sick.** Rather, "I was not hurt." The drunkard is contemptuous; when his friends expostulate with him he says, "It does me no harm. You say that bad habit has beaten me, but I felt it not." **When shall I awake** should not be cut off from what follows. It is a statement of the behavior of every man who has given himself over to this fatal fault—"when I shall awake" **I will seek it yet again.**

## CRITICAL AND HOMILETICAL NOTES.

**Verse 29. Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow?** No one more than the slave of strong drink. The words rendered "woe" and "sorrow" are not substantives, but interjections, and are correctly rendered in the margin of the Revised Version as "Oh!" and "Alas!" respectively. The "Ohs" and the "Ahs" are to be regarded as the groanings of the tormented inebriate and the agonies and suffering of those affected by his wicked course. Let the class recall the suffering which its several members can directly trace to the curse of drink among those they know. **Who hath contentions?** Disputes, bickerings, and quarrels breathe their native air in a man filled with liquor. How many cases of assault and battery, yea, of murders, can be traced to the saloon? "Strong drink inflames the passions, removes the restraint of conscience and will—it first maddens and then unchains the tiger."—*Meredith*. **Complaining.** Wallings over lost time, lost property, lost opportunities, and lost character. **Wounds without cause.** Wounds received while gratifying an ungodly appetite, when the mind was too beclouded to take proper care of the body. **Redness of eyes.** "Dimness" would reproduce the original better than "redness." Drunkenness closes the drunkard's eyes so that he cannot see his dangers.

**30. They that tarry long at the wine.** They who have become the slaves of alcohol. They who spend hours, yea, days and weeks in the clutches of the enemy! Who are these? What were they once? They are now the immoderate drinkers, but were once the nice, the clean, the good-hearted boys—those who could take a glass of beer or wine or let it alone, just as they chose. No one begins the way to a drunkard's grave by drinking immoderately, but all immoderate drinkers at one time drank moderately. The lesson is clear. Never, never, drink intoxicating liquors. **That go to seek out.** Or rather, who go to make a thorough test. The Septuagint renders: "Those who go to hunt out where carousals are taking place." **Mixed wine.** Wine mixed with spices and pernicious drugs. Ordinary wine becomes too insipid; they seek something more intoxicating. The old story over again. Little cider or home-made wine; then beer and whisky, and, finally, the strongest of all drinks in large quantities. Father and mother, intoxicants on your sideboards or in your cellar are more dangerous than arsenic or the deadliest poisons.

**31. Look not thou.** Keep out of the street where liquors are sold. Refuse to associate with

those who may tempt you, unless it be with the avowed purpose of doing them good. Avoid the very appearance of evil. There is no greater evil than the liquor business. It is a monster that kills its thousands every year. An English brewer, *yes, brewer*, not Gladstone, has well said, "It destroys more people than war, pestilence, and famine combined." Brother, what are you doing to put down this great enemy of the human soul? **When it is red.** When its color is tantalizingly inviting. **When it giveth its color in the cup.** Literally, when it giveth its eye—that is, when the little bubbles sparkle like twinkling eyes on the surface of the fluid. **When it goeth down smoothly.** Glides into the glass or goblet from the decanter, or perhaps better, glides down the throat with the most pleasant sensation. "The smoothness here spoken of is highly appreciated by wine-drinkers, and is called by them 'mellowness.'"—*Stuart*.

**32. At the last it biteth like a serpent.** It poisons, it pains, it kills, it ruins body and soul. What folly, therefore, to tamper with such an uncompromising foe! **Like an adder.** This is probably the horned snake of the sandy desert. A very venomous reptile, and greatly dreaded by the Arabs.

**33. Thine eyes shall behold strange things.** The Authorized Version has "strange women," that is, foreign women, not subject to the laws of Israel. Though drunkenness and sensuality often go hand in hand, especially in the case of women, yet the context fully justifies the rendering of the Revised Version, namely, "strange things." Crazed with drink, the wretched inebriate fancies himself the victim of many dreadful things, and in his delirium sees many strange sights. "An old Hebrew parable compares the changing circumstances which wine produces with the manner of the lamb, the lion, the swine, the monkey; here juggles and phantoms of the imagination are meant which in the view and fancy of the drunken man hunt one another like monkey capers."—*Delitzsch*. **Forward things.** The primary meaning of the verb from which "forward" is derived is to turn, especially from that which is moral, to act crookedly. No one is more apt to act perversely than he whose moral vision is beclouded with strong drink. It is easy for him to utter falsehood and pervert the truth.

**34. As he that lieth down in the midst of the sea.** As one who hath fallen overboard and is already drowned, or about to be. Others think that the words refer to a person lying

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down, fast asleep, on the deck of ship tossed about by the stormy sea. In either case, a striking picture of the thoughtless drunkard, constantly exposed to danger and death. **Lieth upon the top of a mast.** “Lieth” in both clauses is used in the sense of sleep. A man who would fall asleep in the fore royal yard of a mast or on the slender scaffolding of a lofty spire would be thought insane. But what of him who deliberately drinks that which renders him insane? Do you know any such a man? Are you doing anything to save him? Do you know that the beastliest sot, the most brutal drunkard, was once an innocent child, as dear to some parent or sister as your child or little brother is to you? Do you know that every boy in your Sunday school is in danger of the saloon power? If so, what are you doing to prevent such a condition? The saloon cannot be run without boys. Let us therefore crush it out of existence.

**35. They have stricken me . . . and I was not hurt.** This and the next clauses must be regarded as the words of a man awakened from his drunken stupor, oblivious of all that is past. **When shall I awake?** The particle translated “when,” though usually interrogative, is not necessarily so. We may therefore read: “When I shall wake up, I shall seek it again;” that is, No sooner shall I get over this spree than I shall again return to the wine. The sentiment of the last verse is awfully true. The intemperate man, though knowing well the consequences of drinking, and fully realizing the agonies and suffering entailed thereby, yet clings to the habit as if bound by an iron chain. O Lord, awaken us one and all to the enormity of the evils produced by this great evil, and help us in thy name to do something.

## Thoughts for Young People.

### The Evil of Intoxicants.

1. The depraved heart is the same in all ages, and drunkards now are like drunkards of ancient times. (Verse 29.)
2. The use of liquor brings men into misery of every kind, into poverty and injury and disease. (Verse 29.)
3. Those who begin by tasting are in danger of carrying long at the wine. (Verse 30.)
4. There is a vast difference between the glow of the first glass and the final agony of the serpent's tooth. (Verses 31, 32.)
5. The greatest danger in strong drink is its

tendency to create an appetite which overmasters the will. (Verse 35.)

**6.** The only safeguard against the habit of drinking is total abstinence. (Verse 31.)

**7.** The only safeguard of universal total abstinence is total prohibition.

### By Way of Illustration.

*A picture of a drunkard.* As a great artist can with a few lines draw a portrait which shows us perfectly the character of the man, so the writer of this lesson has with a few words given us a living picture. And whoever sees it must want to turn away from the repulsive sight. In Sparta those who were training the youths gave them an object lesson on the effect of wine-drinking. The worst drunkard in his fit of delirium and debauch who could be found was led in before the young men, who were bidden to look at him if they wished to see what they would look like if they dared to tamper with the wine cup.

*A famous editor's opinion.* I resolved never to touch liquor, because it ruined some of the finest minds I have ever known. One of the most brilliant editorial writers, who could command a hundred dollars for a single editorial, became so unreliable through drink that he is to-day living in a cellar in beggary.

Perhaps you say: “But this man drank to excess. One glass will not hurt anyone.”

How do you know that it will not? One drop of kerosene has been known to throw into flame an almost hopeless fire, and one glass of liquor may fan into flame a smoldering spark hidden away where its existence was not known. Why take the risk?

I inquired of twenty-eight of the leading business men of our country, and found that twenty-two of them never touch a drop of wine. If liquor brings safe pleasures, why do these men abstain? When I saw that these were the men whose opinions in great business matters were accepted by the leading concerns of the world I concluded that their judgment in the use of liquor would satisfy me.—*Editor Bok, of the Ladies' Home Journal.*

Verse 35, “I will seek it yet again.” Every drunkard was first a moderate drinker. The drink habit is like the camel in the fable. It asks only to put its nose under the tent curtain. Soon its head is in, and then its whole body, and the rightful owner is turned out.

A drinker said that a glass of whisky made him a new man. That new man wanted another glass.

*Cobweb Saloon.* Passing along the street of a certain Western city, one may read in large, glowing letters the sign, "*Cobweb Saloon.*" A very appropriate name, surely; it tells the whole story. Look at a fly in a spider's web, and then tell me if it is not a pretty good representation of one caught in the drink web.

*Bismarck's testimony concerning German beer.* We sometimes hear it said: The trouble is with our Canadian beer. German beer is healthful. Bismarck was a guest at a table where the host apologized because the beer was lacking. "That is no loss," he said. "Our beer makes people stupid, lazy, and useless, and we ought to deplore the fact that such immense quantities are being consumed by the German people!"

### Heart Talks on the Lesson.

Nothing can be added to this intense word-picture of the woes of intemperance. In these few sentences is written the heart-breaking record of many a life. Woe, sorrow, contentions, wounds without cause. That tells the story. Woe and sorrow for the one who drinks; unutterable woe and sorrow for those who see the destruction of all that is good in one they love. Read it over and over until your heart burns with pity, and your soul abhors the thing which works such ruin. Think of what you have seen and known in many a home, and make before God your solemn vow never to put yourself or anyone else in danger by the use of wine or any other intoxicating thing even by what may seem at first moderate and harmless indulgence. Remember, it is a mocker; it deceives; it seems good at first, but at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. God says so, and experience confirms it. There are other snares that deceive besides wine and liquors. There are drugs that produce unnatural exhilaration, dull the senses, lull the conscience, distort and destroy the moral consciousness.

In the pressure of business, the excitements of society, and the nervous strain of life even in the family, the danger is great. "A little stimulant to-day; something to make one sleep; a tonic to tide over this emergency; just a little spur for brain and nerves for this one effort." Yes, just to-day, then another day, then every day; then a habit; then woe, sorrow, wounds. That is the story in more instances than we like to believe. Take warning; whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. There is always danger of any stimulant producing an unnatural and uncontrollable appetite, and making a slave of one who is "quite sure there is nothing to fear." There is a physiological cause for this. The exhilaration of a stimu-

lant is the effort of the nervous system rousing all its energy to throw off the poison, and is followed by depression, which calls for a renewal of the stimulant. Every successive exhilaration is followed by greater and ever-increasing exhaustion of nervous energy, until even large quantities of the once exhilarating drink or drug fail to give relief from the soul-sickening misery, and all capacity for enjoyment, either physical or mental, is destroyed. It is a course downward to death with ever-increasing momentum. I cannot speak too strongly. I wish my words, or rather the Bible words, might burn in every heart with solemn, tender, warning. It is a sad fact that young women need the warning as well as young men. Too many wrecks lie all about us for us to try to hide the truth, revolting and painful as it is. Wine is a mocker. It mocks the girl in "good society" who takes it at first thoughtlessly, and because others do, and at last because she loves it. It mocks the young man who "can take it or not as he pleases," until at last he would give all he possesses if only he could break the awful fetters that enslave body and soul. There is safety only in refraining from its use altogether. One who has had large observation among the poor says, "I never yet found a family borne down by poverty that did not owe its fall to rum." A very large percentage of criminals in prisons and paupers in poor-houses are victims of liquor or opium. Each one of my class has influence for or against this great evil. Be thoughtful, conscientious, strong, and true. Have clear convictions and hold to them always and everywhere.

### The Teachers' Meeting.

This is a lesson which suggests its own plan of teaching. Let the teacher take it up clause by clause, illustrating its statements by facts which are known to all.... A good plan would be to draw on blackboard or slate the picture of a wine-glass with a serpent coiling round it. Write between the folds of the serpent the ten woes—the ten stings of the winecup: "woe, remorse, passion, babbling, wounds, disease, lust, crime, giddiness, abnormal appetite"—and show their application to drunkards of to-day.... The safeguard against intemperance, as stated in verse 31, should be impressed upon the scholars—"Look not thou," etc. Show that the only way of safety is total abstinence.... A man said, "I am worth seventy-five thousand dollars, and I will give half of it to anyone who will help me to get past that tavern without going in." A good way to help him safely past would be to shut up the bar.



**OPTIONAL HYMNS.**

March along together.  
Lead me, lead me.  
Lo! a mighty host is rising.  
We must work and pray together.  
Now to heaven our prayer ascending.  
Gushing so bright in the morning light.

Soldiers of the cross, arise.  
Lift up the Gospel banner.  
Rally for the cause of temperance.  
Help the erring.  
Soldiers of Christ.

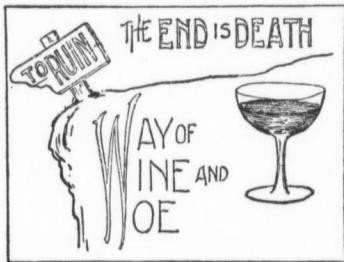
**Library References.**

The literature of temperance is a library of itself. *Temperance in All Nations*. Hargreaves, *Over Wasted Resources*. Dorchester, *The Liquor Problem in All Ages*. Montgomery, *The Way Out*. The government report published by the Department of Labor on the Gothenburg system. These represent some of the best material available.

**SERMONS ON THE LESSON.**

Verses 29, 30.—"Life Insurance and Intoxicants." *The Homiletic Monthly*, September, 1887, page 273.

Verses 29, 35.—Frazer, W. J., "The Drunkard—A Remarkable Pen Portrait of Scripture," *The Homiletic Review*, June, 1896, page 525. "Relation of Drink to Pauperism, Crime, and Insanity," *The Homiletic Review*, January, 1897, page 83.

**Blackboard.**

The way of wine has ever been a way of woe. However fair and pleasant the path may seem, the ends thereof are the ways of death. All the high and holy powers God has given us will die under the curse of strong drink. Intemperance

mocks the reason and deceives those who yield to its influence. They will seek yet again that which cannot satisfy, and which will destroy both body and soul. Let us be contented to know that this road leads to certain ruin, and touch not the unclean thing.

**Infants in the Church.**

THERE are at the same time too many and too few. We are not speaking of the blessed little ones whose presence at the services is always to be welcomed, provided they can be kept still enough not to disturb the worshippers and destroy the effect of the word. We refer rather to adults who are at the same time babes. There are either too many or too few, according as the word is taken in a depreciatory or appreciatory sense. Paul generally uses the term in the former, Jesus in the latter, meaning. The apostle has in mind the weakness, ignorance, and general immaturity of the babe, and so applied the appellation by way of reproof and warning to Christians having these characteristics. The Saviour looks at the little child on its more lovable side, and considering its docility, simplicity, and trustfulness, commends it to his disciples for imitation.

Of the latter kind of babes we have certainly too few in all our churches—too few of those whose mouths are open wide for food, who are not too big to beg for blessings, nor too proud to take what the Lord longs to give; too few of those who trust themselves as completely to the care of the heavenly Father as the serene, smiling infant does to its mother's superior intelligence and abounding love. But there are far too many who are still children in their knowledge of the way, in their impatience under control, in their fitfulness and caprice. It is not of much use to bring young converts into the church when the cradles are all full of those who have been twenty or thirty years under training. There is no room for additions in that case, nor is there much likelihood of there being any. More childlikeness, but less childishness, is a crying need.

**Thoughts for the Quiet Hour.**

—Prayer is the key of the day and lock of the night. We should every day begin and end, bid ourselves good-morrow and good-night, with prayer. This will make our labor prosperous and our rest sweet.—*Berkley*.

—The will of the pure runs down from them into other natures as water runs down from a higher into a lower vessel.—*Emerson*.

## PRIMARY TEACHERS' DEPARTMENT.

### Teachers in Council.

In one of our city schools, where the primary class is obliged to meet in the church proper, the teacher found a waiting room, not in use in the school hour, which would accommodate the children of three and four years of age, some sixteen in number; two kindergarten tables with low chairs were arranged for their use. A trained kindergarten teacher, a member of the senior department of the school, readily consented to give the lesson. The teacher adopted supplemental lessons, and pictures appropriate and interesting were secured. When the lesson story has been told each child is given a picture to paste on a colored card. The name of each child is written on the back of his card, and all will be retained by the teacher until the close of the quarter. The cards are of one size, though of different colors. On the left side of the card near the center are two small holes; at the end of the quarter each child's cards will be tied together with baby ribbon, and the picture lesson-book, which he has made himself, will be given him to take home.—*ScL*.

**THE BIBLE IN THE CLASS.**—I believe that teachers do not put half the stress they should upon the importance of the Bible.

It is well to place upon the wall a cut of the Bible—such can be found in the advertising pages of those journals which offer Bibles as premiums. I have pinned such a cut in my primary room, and on teaching the lesson I point to it and tell the class that our lesson is to be found in that book, every word of which is true.

I have found that the children will better remember to bring their Bibles to the class if I make it a rule to teach the lesson from their Bibles.

In teaching the books of the Bible it is well to have the books in sections, allowing the children to arrange them in their proper order.

Below are the books of the New Testament in rhyme. I do not know the author. The books of the Old Testament need not be attempted by very small children. They are better adapted to scholars of the intermediate department.

### BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

"This is the way the Gospels run;  
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.  
Then comes the Acts inviting you

The Apostolic Church to view.  
The Romans and Corinthians are  
To cities sent renowned afar;  
Galatians and Ephesians then,  
Writ by the same inspired pen.  
Philippians and Colossians stand  
With Thessalonians nigh at hand.  
Timothy leads to Titus on,  
This brings us down to Philemon;  
The Hebrews then we gladly find,  
And that of James comes close behind.  
To Peter then our thoughts we give,  
With loving John we wish to live.  
Pious Jude will pierce the soul,  
And Revelations close the whole."

**A BIBLE DRILL.**—I have met a primary teacher who drills her class on finding passages in the Bible. The little folks are delighted when they can find in the class a desired reference in a short time. She also has them drill along this line at home.

**HOW TO REMEMBER THE NUMBER OF BOOKS IN THE BIBLE.**—I once heard a gentleman give this helpful bit of reckoning. In the word "old" are three letters, in the word "testament" nine. Three placed beside nine makes thirty-nine. In the word "new" are three letters, in the word "testament" nine. Three times nine are twenty-seven. Our reckoning stands thus:

Old Testament.....	39 books
New Testament.....	27 "

Total.....	66 "
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A. M. D.

**HOW THE CHILDREN MAY HELP.**—Our Church has a big debt and everyone is trying to help every way possible. Here is what we are doing in the primary class.

First the teacher explained to the children the meaning of a debt and then told about the church debt.

Then she showed a pretty bank as much like a church as possible.

We have a sweet birthday song we sing when one or more children have had a birthday during the week, and now these birthday pennies go into the pretty church bank. Then we march and

drop our regular pennies into the little tin basin dressed with dainty ruffles and ribbons—we like to hear the pennies drop in the basin. And then, last of all, as many children as have brought *two* pennies come forward and drop the extra penny into the church bank.

Sometimes we let the children tell how each one earned this extra *debt penny*. Last Sunday, a rainy day, seventeen pennies went into the church bank. If only one penny is brought, it always goes into the pretty basin. Then we have found out just what it costs to carry this primary class through the year—graduating class and all, and the cost for each Sunday. So whatever is in the basin above the cost of the class for a week also goes into the church bank.

Missionary Sundays we try to make the basin offering as large as possible, and give it all.

By these plans we expect to raise the \$90 apportioned our primary class for this year toward the debt fund.

C. C. T.

### Thanksgiving Day.

REV. E. A. RAND wisely and pertinently says: "There is nothing finer in this world than to have one heart feel for another heart, to send its voice of sympathy across a waste of sorrow, sickness, temptation, hands of help and feet of relief accompanying the voice. Sympathy; it had its highest expression in the ministry of Jesus. It is a great want of the world to-day, and the followers of Christ should meet it. It is painful to go into the streets of any town of size—and the country sometimes startles us—and as we look around we see frost-nipped cheeks and shrunken limbs and scanty clothing. It is a great thing to arouse in children's hearts a tender commiseration for the sufferings of humankind. The feeling is there, but it needs to be aroused and then directed. There is a big quantity of motive power in child nature, but it is a power that must be developed and then trained. A teacher thus developing and directing can do grand missionary work, helped by the warm hearts, and ready hands, and willing feet of the primary department. Let us enter upon this work with enthusiasm. Train the little folks to have great sympathy for anyone sick, maimed, poor, decrepit. Tell them in what way they may not only be sympathetic, but positively helpful, at home and wherever they go. Across such a work will fall the shadow of the approving presence of One whose name is Love, whose work is the healing of the nations."

Primary teachers should avail themselves of the Thanksgiving season to impress little hearts

with the joy and privilege of "helping." If the class can furnish one Thanksgiving dinner through the individual service or sacrifice of the children, how much sweeter will be the home feast.

Give them something to do. A "Thanksgiving Party" in the church, when each child brings a toy or an article of clothing to send to some home or hospital, is a good thing. In some way make the season to minister to your flock in the grace of thankful giving.

### Signal Lights.

BY JULIA H. JOHNSTON.

DOES it often occur to you, dear primary teacher, that you belong to a great company? Have you "a realizing sense" of it, and does your heart thrill with the privilege of this fellowship? Well and good. Surely it should do so!

The work is one, though the details and conditions are so different, and although the workers differ in personality and opportunity, the obligation is the same, and all have one aim. It is a goodly fellowship.

But the intercourse is limited. There are little circles of acquaintances here and there; but the hosts of those who are unfamiliar, each to each, may not be numbered. How delightful it might be if we could all come together. But we would need to annihilate space and lengthen the days to do it, for the distances are magnificent, and time is pressing, and we are all so hurried, and the hours overflow with the must-be-dones. What then? Since we cannot meet face to face, shall we be content to give no sign of the interest and affection with which we really regard each other? Never think it! We really care very much for our unseen fellow-workers, because the work makes our hearts one wherever we are. May there not be a passing salute, then, though we be like ships that pass in the dark? We may not see each other's faces, but we may flash a signal light that shall speak for us, and by such interchange come nearer, heart to heart.

The first possible signal light is

#### EXPERIENCE.

There are some experiences that are common, no matter how circumstances may differ, and when one who has had a long term of service and manifold opportunities signals from this general store an answering sign flashes in quick response from the consciousness of all who see the light.

But there are special experiences which may mean much to others who have not had them, and when these beam out in the signal flame it may be a revelation to those who are watching. These may be the very things needed by which to direct an uncertain course, and their value is great.

Have you thought much about the less highly favored ones, you who have every advantage of surroundings and appliances? Have you stopped often to estimate the numbers of those who toil under difficulties in obscure places, loving their work, and longing ardently to do it well, laboring, as they do, for immortals no less than others whose scholars may present a different outward appearance? Have you considered how you might come into closer fellowship with these? Pass on a bit of your experience. You must pass some of them somewhere, or at least come in contact with those who are in touch with them. Reach out, even at a distance; send out the signal light, and it will not be in vain. Look about for the chance to share what you have gained with some worker in a smaller school near by, or at a distance which may be covered by the United States mail. Have you nothing which you have used which you might send on to be used again? "Let your light so shine."

But another signal flame is

#### SYMPATHY.

Common experience and labor will bring common feeling. There is mutual understanding in the very nature of things. But it must be shown, or how shall any darkness be illuminated? Why is it that so many go their ways and give no sign of what they really feel? Is it not a distinct loss to others and to themselves as well? Consider the experiences and needs of others, call to mind the sacred tie that binds, listen to the appeal which comes from those who crave sympathy, and while you muse the fire will burn. The signal fire will glow, and presently kindle and flash, and those who pass will be gladdened and grateful. The sin of concealment may not be thought a very heinous crime, but when actual good feeling is covered from sight, and has never a revealing light, making others poor by what they miss, then is it not culpable? It is not hard to manifest sympathy if one feels it genuinely. This, too, may be passed on along the line. There is always some one near enough to each of us to answer the signal, and not only respond, but pass it on. "Let your light so shine."

And there is another—a white light, a ray of blessing, warming and illuminating. It is—O, you know that it must be

#### LOVE.

There is no signal light which receives so quick an answer as this. "Love is of God," and all who are "born of God" and who are engaged in his own loving work for the little ones must surely love each other. "The children's bread" is put into our hands "for finest breaking" and for distribution to the little ones, "whose angels do always behold the face of the Father." Unless we break it for love's dear sake, how shall they be fed? If we have love enough for the work we must do, will we not love other workers too? Shall we not let them see it everywhere and always, if it be by no more than a passing salute as we sail the sea that is often tempestuous and where the friendly signal light is welcome and precious beyond measure?

Somehow let us show it, by spoken, written, or printed word; or, best of all, by prayer for all engaged as we are. Let the light so shine that our Father will be glorified.

### The Cradle Roll.

BY ALICE MAY DOUGLAS.

ONE of the latest ventures in the primary department work is the Cradle Roll. This consists of an enrollment of the babies of the parish and neighborhood, in case little ones come to families who claim no church home. I have never yet heard of parents who refused to have their little ones thus made members of the school. In fact, they are pleased that so much notice is taken of the wee newcomers, for what father or mother does not, even from the birth of a child, begin to desire for it an upright career? Not long ago a father, who was not a churchgoing man himself, said in regard to his baby boy, "O, I want him to begin to go to Sunday school when he is old enough. I want him to be a good boy."

The teacher of the class who has a baby roll is, of course, expected to call upon these tiny members as surely as upon the other scholars who attend the sessions; also to observe their birthdays by sending them birthday letters, cards, flowers, or some appropriate gifts. There might be, if desired, a special collection box for the babies. Its contents, doubtless, would not be burdensome, provided a cent for each year lived be the basis of contribution, but it would early imbue the future pillars of the church with the principles of benevolence.

A pleasant feature is to have hanging to the wall of the primary room the names of all on the Cradle Roll, and what is even more pleasant is to have as many pictures of the little ones as

it is possible to obtain, placed in one large frame near by.

The class are exceedingly interested in their babies and hunt up many to enter the list. When a new one is admitted to my roll I send it a card containing its name and these words: "Your name has been entered upon our Cradle Roll. We welcome you to our Sunday school." ..... (Name of teacher, etc.) Occasionally I send tiny text cards to these wee scholars. Such can be preserved in their baby books, and are a constant reminder to the mother of the fact that she is to bring up her little one for God. One of the most helpful things about this work is the interest it incites in non-church-going parents. They have a curiosity to attend the church that pays so much attention to their little one, who does not yet know the difference between right and wrong. In this connection it might be well to have a Baby Day, during which the babies with their mothers could attend the class, the latter being allowed the privilege of making all the noise they wished.

Of course the babies have the right of way on Children's Sabbath, and this is a fitting time for those of the Baby Roll to receive any ceremony in accordance with the doctrines of the Church. For the children of those who believe that baptism should only be administered to such as are conscious of sin and desirous of a renewed heart a consecration service could be held, for surely no one would hesitate to give back to God the little life he has so kindly given.

The Cradle Roll has its dark as well as its bright side, for the angel of death seeks more from the ranks of the babies than from any other, but when he makes an inroad on the little ones on the teacher's list she has an excellent opportunity of talking to the bereaved parents of the Saviour of little children. Surely nothing draws one so close to God as the death of one of his babies.

Take Notice.

NOVEMBER 26 IS WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY.

THE sad facts that have come to light in connection with camps and canteens during the past year should arouse us to intrench our young people against strong drink. The primary class in the Sunday school is the place to begin.

This world movement has been indorsed by the Methodist General Conference, the Presbyterian General Assembly, the Congregational Council, the International Lesson Committee, and other important bodies.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.  
FOURTH QUARTER.

LESSON VI. (November 5.)

NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER. Neh. 1. 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT: "Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day." Neh. 1. 11.

Primary Notes.

BY JULIA H. JOHNSTON.



*Introductory.* Review carefully the lessons past, using the rounds of a lesson ladder named respectively, Praise, Precept, Promise, and the special thoughts connected with them, Rejoice and give thanks,

Trust God, He will bring it to pass, Seek of Him a right way, and They shall reap. Recall enough of each lesson story to illustrate and emphasize its own special teaching, as written on the review ladder. It is line upon line, but if one line from a lesson be written in memory it will be a lasting gain.

And now we have a lesson from the Book of Nehemiah. The Lord gave parts of the Bible to different men to write, and told each one what to say. About forty persons had part in the writing, and it took sixteen hundred years to write it all. As there is so much to learn from God's book, we must begin early to study it, and try to get each Sunday's lesson by heart, so that we will not forget it. To-day we have a prayer lesson, written by Nehemiah. We will write on our ladder, under the round named Prayer, "Hear the prayer of thy servant." That is a good prayer for us to make. Nehemiah lived in Persia, but he was not a poor slave like some of the Jews. He was the king's cupbearer, and handed him the cup to drink. Yet, although he perhaps lived in the palace, and was well off, he could not go and come as he chose, but had to do exactly as the king said. We will find out the reason for Nehemiah's earnest prayer, as he has written it out for us, by finding out what was

*The trouble.* He was not in trouble about himself. He had enough to eat, enough to wear, money to spend, and a good place to live. He had the favor of the king too, and was not in danger of losing his place in the palace. But his heart was in Jerusalem, where the temple was, and where so many of his own people had gone back to live. Some Jews that must have been on a visit, or had found out in some other way

how things were in the old city, told a sad tale indeed when Nehemiah asked the news. They told of broken walls and gates burned with fire, of trial and sorrow and shame suffered by the people there. When the good Nehemiah heard this story he sat down and wept certain days, he was so sorry. But that would have done no good if he had not prayed too; so let us learn about

*His prayer.* First of all, he confessed his sins and the sins of his people. There was something wrong, he knew, in the hearts and lives of them all, and he wanted to tell it out to God. That was confessing. Then he asked the Lord to remember his own promises, that even if his people were cast out to the farthest parts of the earth, yet, if they turned to him in their hearts, he would gather them home again, forgive them, and do them good. "Now these are thy servants," said Nehemiah, and this was true. They belonged to their Father in heaven, no matter how great their trouble or their sin. Suppose a boy disobeys his father, and even runs away from home, does that change his name? As soon as he is sorry he may come home again to be forgiven. His father loves him still; so God, who made us, is our Father, and loves us, even when we are sinful. This should make us confess, as Nehemiah did. This good man prayed that the king might be willing to let him go up to Jerusalem.

*The answer.* One day afterward, when he served him, the king asked Nehemiah why he was so sad. After praying in his heart to God, he told the whole story, and his desire. God made the king willing to let him go and to give him a guard, and an order on the keeper of the forest for timber.

See on the board a broken wall and half-burnt gates. When people stay away from church and



Sunday school, when they forget to study and to pray, when they come only to play, when God is forgotten, then there is a break in the wall—that is, in the strength of our church and school. How can we build it up? We have something to

do to help others. We must bring them in and help them when here. Let this be a prayer week after this prayer lesson. God will show us how to build the wall, how to do our work for him right here. Ask him every day.

### Kindergarten Hints.

BY JULIA E. PECK.

**GOLDEN TEXT:** "Pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matt. 6. 6. "For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." Matt. 6. 8.

### HINTS ON METHOD.

Following our lesson of last Sunday on the petition, "Lead us not into temptation," we can use in natural order this lesson of Nehemiah's prayer to teach us how to make confession of sin, and to ask forgiveness. We can teach the children to pray as Nehemiah prayed. First, his thoughts are full of worship and praise of the "King of heaven." Next, he confesses sin. Third, he prays for the people. Last, he asks mercy and help for himself.

### LESSON STORY.

Once there was a king who, sitting down to supper, missed his cupbearer. The man who brought him wine or water in bottles made of skins of beasts was not followed as usual by the cupbearer, whose duty it was to taste and see that the drink was safe for the king. Messengers were sent in haste to say, "Hurry, the king waits his supper for you."

Nehemiah, the cupbearer, had just met his brother and another man who had come from home. Our map (as before suggested) shows us where "home" was, the long distance the men had come, and where Nehemiah lived all his life in the heathen court, never once seeing the home country.

Bad news! The men told Nehemiah of enemies who destroyed property and life. They told of ruined homes, ruined people, and of sins and disturbances. What could Nehemiah do? Pray to the Father "which is in secret." Nehemiah's heart ached for the home people and for the home country. He must smooth out his face and hurry to wait on the king. Another thing he could do: ask the king to help, and rouse interest for his people.

First, the prayer. Nehemiah asks the Father to bow down and listen. Assured that the Father hears, and his thoughts full of God's love and goodness, Nehemiah confesses: "I and my people are not good. Our punishment is de-

served because we have been so wicked. If we were good, we might be stronger to resist evils and wrongs from enemies, stronger to defend our country and our homes." Nehemiah prays a few words, asking mercy and help for himself, then takes his life in his hand, to tell the king he wants to go home and help.

Nehemiah was a true patriot. What is that? Teach that a false patriot is one who counts the glory of war as the greatest good.

Teach by contrast: A true patriot holds the best good of the people nearest at heart, loves even the very soil of his country, would freely give all he had, and give up even the chance to seem like a hero, if by giving up he could save and help his people.

To ask that heathen king for leave to go home was to risk his life. Would a true patriot stop at that? To go home was to face greater dangers. Do you think the true patriot stopped at that?

The king, who liked Nehemiah because he was faithful and true, noticed his sad face, and said, "Why are you sad?" "Trouble at home. Our city in ruins, homes destroyed, gates burned." Nehemiah answered bravely, though he confessed afterward he was "sore afraid." "I have been praying," said Nehemiah, "to the God of heaven to help us."

We show how God answered this prayer for help. So Nehemiah came home, secretly visited the ruins by night, and encouraged the people by saying, "The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore, we his servants will arise and build." After Nehemiah had prayed, he followed up his prayer by courageous work in rebuilding ruins, fighting enemies, and teaching the people that God ruled over all.

#### LESSON VII. (November 12.)

#### REBUILDING THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM. Neh. 4. 7-18.

GOLDEN TEXT: "Watch and pray." Matt. 26. 41.

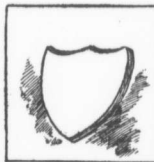
#### Primary Notes.

##### INTRODUCTORY.

I will hear what God will speak,  
I will listen to his voice,  
Jesus' blessing I will seek,  
In his love will I rejoice.

Do not allow such words to be sung carelessly, but by reverent manner and earnest word impress that what we sing as well as what we say should be sincere.

The very first thing that Nehemiah did after what we learned of him last week (and have now gone over again) was to go out and look around the city to find out what needed to be done. That is always a good way to begin. Next, he called the people together and set them at work, every-



one over against his own house. No one need run

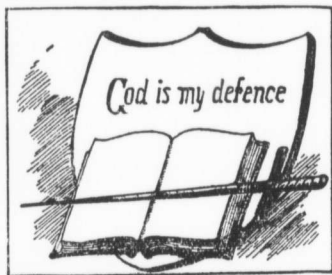
away off to his neighbor's wall to find something to do, when there were broken places just by his own door. Let us remember, too, that we can find enough to do at home in our own hearts, building up what is right and true, without taking time to look at others' faults, which are like broken walls. Each one must build for himself. But there will be trouble, you may depend. There is always some enemy outside or inside to prevent good work, if it can be done. Nehemiah found it so. Two men especially, among the heathen there, Sanballat and Tobiah, set themselves to make trouble. They were very angry, and Sanballat said, "What do these feeble Jews? Will they do it all in a day?" And Tobiah answered as mockingly, "If a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." But Nehemiah said nothing to them. He only spoke to God about them, and the people went on fast, for "they had a mind to work," and there's nothing better than that. Yet, after all there was

*A plot against the builders.* When Sanballat, and Tobiah, and many more of the men around there heard that in spite of everything the walls were going up, they made up their minds to stop it. They were not going to have that city built and that temple used for worship. They hated the true God and all his people, and they wanted everything their own way. "Come," they said to each other, "we'll all get together and go up and fight those Jews, and hinder their work." They thought the feeble Jews would be frightened at sight of so many, and it would be easy to stop them, they said, "They shall not know, neither see, till we come and kill them." And some that should have known better said, "Those who have to bear burdens are too weak, and we can't build," and everything seemed discouraging enough; but see

*What the builders did.* They prayed to God and watched against the enemy. They did all they could and then trusted God to take care of them. They got their spears and swords and shields, and kept them by them, and every one with one hand carried something to fight with, and with

the other kept on with the work. And the enemies heard that God had helped them to do this, and that the builders were going on, and at last they found that they could do nothing against the men who were watching and praying and working. Now, this is a precept lesson, and the rule, the teaching, we will put down in the words of Nehemiah. Can you not hear the brave voice ring out, "Be not ye afraid of them." Then he said, "Remember God." That was enough to make them brave. It did, and the work went on.

We will make on the board a shield, such as was used to keep off the flying arrows and the blows of the spear, and across an open Bible we will make a sword. Those builders had sword and shield, and so have we, only the Bible tells us that our shield is faith, and the sword is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. We have broken walls to build. Whenever there is need to put out wrong and do good, either in the church, in the class, at school, anywhere outside, or in our own hearts first of all, inside, there we must build so that we may be strong for Jesus. People who do not love him will try to hinder us. Satan will hinder us, and sinful thoughts and wishes will hinder us. But remember, "Be not ye afraid." God is on our side. Hold up the shield of faith and take the sword; that means trust God, and use his word to drive away all the wrong. "Jesus says so" is enough always. If anyone says, "You can't do anything—you can't be good, or do good," answer, "Jesus will help me. He says so." Watch always. Pray always; and keep your shield and sword with you all the time, as those men upon the wall held a sword while they worked.



#### Kindergarten Hints.

**GOLDEN TEXT:** "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." 1 Cor. 16. 13.

#### HINTS ON METHOD.

After a lesson on prayer it is fitting that we should teach next in order a lesson on faithful

service. By showing to-day the varied duties of the workmen engaged in rebuilding the walls we can teach of valor and faithfulness in holding persistently to the appointed task in spite of what might seem reasonable excuses to give up and go away. We show, too, that "they also serve who only stand and wait." We can hold to this topic for several weeks to come, because we may use Lesson VIII to teach that "ears must be attentive to the word," as an important part of faithful service. With Lesson IX we may use "On Guard" as our title, showing how each may build a wall around himself, strengthening weak places, and standing guard lest the enemy come in and take possession of the citadel of the body.

#### LESSON STORY.

Suppose, in imagination, we take a walk into the country. When we get out of the city streets what do we find? The children who have been on excursions describe the fields and woods which surround our city.

Leading from the near to the remote, we teach that in Bible times people could get to the country only by passing through gates in a wall so high that nobody could climb over it, and its gates were often guarded by soldiers.

Here are pictures of different parts of the wall built around Jerusalem; and here is a picture of one of the great gates. All the gates were named. Here is one called "Sheep Gate," for this is the way to lead the flocks to pasture. Jesus Christ saw this wall when he was here, and many times must have walked in and out of these gates, followed by people who needed his healing touch, and would wander far into the country to hear him speak.

Let us, in imagination, take a walk around the outside of this wall in a time hundreds of years before Jesus came. We find ourselves stumbling over great stones and heaps of ruins, for we have chosen to go at night, and the wall is all broken down. People and their flocks are exposed to many perils when the walls are down. While we are looking at the ruins we meet some one who has come to protect them. We have met him before.

If this protector carries a torch, we notice that its light is hidden. He tells no one his plan. Followed by a few trusted servants, he must explore secretly or the enemy will destroy all their work.

After describing Nehemiah's secret investigations, and in our imaginary walk having completed the tour around the wall, we let the children suggest what they think Nehemiah will do about this. Then we get in our application by showing that the workmen's faithful service in



whatever Nehemiah gives them to do will save the city and protect the homes of the people.

Let a good deal of suggestion come from the children as to the necessity for division of labor. Here is a man with a trumpet. What must he do? He must stand close beside Nehemiah to give the alarm, "The enemy is upon us." Why not all have trumpets? Here are spies and sentinels. Their share in the work is —. Here are men carrying tools and keeping swords at hand. There are men in the rear of the ruins who do nothing but watch and wait, fully armed. Why do they not work? All have to be ready to work or watch night or day. All must take turns in going to sleep.

Nehemiah is faithfully served by those who work, those who watch, and those who only stand and wait. We show how much Nehemiah needs this faithful service by speaking of treachery within the walls, and the jeers of the enemy outside. More than one call comes to Nehemiah to leave the work for a time and attend to what seems like very important business. Nehemiah is sure only of one thing, and that is the Lord has given him this rebuilding work to direct, and important business must wait till the walls are finished.

How do you think Nehemiah felt when these seemingly important business calls turned out to be frauds and tricks planned by the enemy to move him from his post, and when he saw the walls daily growing wider and stronger?

Let the children suggest that when we are set to work or to watch or to wait it is easy to see good reasons why we might be needed somewhere else. Let the suggestion come from the class that the man who refuses to leave his God-given task, whatever comes, is by far the strongest on the field. We leave Eph. 6. 13 as watch-words with the class.

#### LESSON VIII. (November 19.)

#### PUBLIC READING OF THE SCRIPTURES. Neh. 8. 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT. "The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." Neh. 8. 3.

#### Primary Notes.



*Introductory.* After review, drill on title and Golden Text. Hold up a Bible. What is this book? The word of God. Sometimes we call it the Scriptures. That means writings. Writings would be useless unless read or heard. This is a precept lesson, and the teaching

is, "Hear the word of the Lord." [Write on ladder.] We are to learn to-day about a great meeting outdoors to read and hear the word of God. But the chance for this peaceful meeting did not come without more trouble. Nehemiah's enemies could not let him alone, and tried five times to get him to leave his work and talk with them, or to hide himself for fear of them, but he said, "I am doing a great work, and cannot come down." So he refused to talk with them, and when they tried to frighten him he trusted God the more and worked the harder. In fifty-two days the wall was finished. When the enemies and heathen all about heard this they "were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God."

You see, the best way to keep out of trouble with those who want to frighten us and make us do wrong is to be so busy with the work our Father wants us to do that we won't have time to talk with those who wish to tempt us and hurt us.

So now we come to the great Bible reading.

*Esra read.* The good priest was a scribe, or writer and copyist too, as well as a priest. He stood on a pulpit of wood, which had been made on purpose, and many good men stood on each side of him. The people were all gathered in a street by one of the gates of the city, and there, when they earnestly asked it, Ezra, whose name means "help," brought out the law of God. It was not all that we have now. Only part of the Bible had been written then, but they had all of the law that Moses wrote in the first five books of the Bible. So Ezra stood up in the sight of all the people, for he was above them all on this pulpit of wood, and opened the holy book, and all the people stood up. When he blessed the great God they all said "Amen, amen," and lifted up their hands and bowed their heads to show how they worshiped God. There were wise men, too, who helped the people to understand what was read. Everything was read so that it could be heard and understood, no mumbling of words and skipping over hard places. It was the best sort of reading.

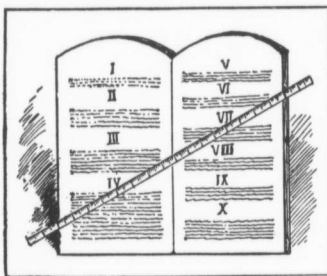
*The people listened attentively.* It was God's word to them. They wanted to know what God the Lord would speak. How could they hear without listening? And the true way to listen is with attention—that is, with an earnest wish to hear, letting nothing call away the mind, not allowing other things to come in.

"Ned," called mamma, and Ned heard, for he said, "Yes, mamma," and went on pasting his kite. Mamma talked on, giving him an errand to do; but though Ned heard her voice, he did not pay attention, and when she stopped knew nothing

about mamma's wishes. We must pay attention to God's word whenever we hear it.

*The people were obedient.* When they found that it was their duty to help each other, and send good things to those who had nothing, they obeyed. Hear and do is a good rule. How will anyone know you have heard if you do nothing? "I've told you how, now do the work," said mamma to Nell; "try it, and you will learn how." So it is.

*The people were glad.* At first, when they found from hearing the law how they had broken it, they mourned and wept. You find out how crooked your line is by measuring by a straight rule; so, from hearing God's word, these people found out how sinful and far away they were. But Nehemiah told them not to be sorry. It was God's day, and he was good. They must be glad in him. "The joy of the Lord is your strength," he said. When we are sorry we are weak. When we are joyful we feel strong and able to do much. "I'm glad, and joyful, and happy," wrote a little eight-year-old Indian girl who had learned of Jesus in a mission school. Love Jesus, trust him, be glad, and you will be strong.



### Kindergarten Hints.

**GOLDEN TEXT:** "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever." Isa. 40. 8. "He that is of God heareth God's words." John 8. 47.

### LESSON STORY.

It was decided that the first public gathering after the walls were rebuilt should be for the reading of the Bible. This gathering would have to be something like our camp meetings, where we live in tents and go to church out of doors.

After reviewing the lesson on rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem: People had been careless

about going to church, and careless about celebrating a certain feast which they used to hold, something as we do at harvest time. We can hardly imagine how anyone could forget thanksgiving time, but when we recall the trouble they had with their heathen neighbors, and the years they spent in a heathen land, and the rebuilding of their walls against such odds, we think it not so strange. Now that they could settle down to regular work at home, they began to think of the Bible, and that they must celebrate God's goodness to them in giving them a home in a walled city. It was part of Nehemiah's mission to tell these people that if they had remembered God's word in stormy times, and not waited till all was safe and quiet, they would have been spared great troubles.

The children remember the name "Ezra," and recall something of our lessons about him. Ezra was to read the Bible at this out-of-door gathering. Early in the morning came the people bringing all their children, and ranging themselves before the wooden platform on which Ezra was to read the Bible. Their Bible was like this. [Show model of "Book and Roll," Milton Bradley Co., Springfield, Mass. Price, 10 cents.] The chapter chosen was that giving God's command spoken to their fathers from a mountain. The people listened to the reading and explanation with uncovered heads. The lesson showed them how much they had forgotten and neglected God's word, and they began to feel badly, and to confess their wrong. Ezra told them to "stop!" "It is a day," said Ezra, "for giving thanks and praise to God, and for remembering the poor."

This holiday was called "the feast of trumpet blowing," and must be kept holy like the Sabbath, but they must be sure to leave gleanings of their harvests in the fields for the poor and for strangers among them, as God commanded.

The next day the Bible reading reminded the people how their fathers, on this very day, used to hold a feast which we would think something like our camp meeting. They decided to keep it now exactly as had been their habit before soldiers carried them into a heathen country. Let us follow them, in thought, and see how they celebrate.

They go up on the hills exactly as did their fathers in times almost forgotten, and they gather great branches of olive, and palms like giant ferns. Bringing these branches to the city, they build tents and bowers with them, setting up some in the field outside the new wall, others are put up in the narrow city streets, and some are built on the house tops. [Show model of

"House," Milton Bradley & Co. Price, 50 cents.] In these tents they sleep at night, during their celebration, and go early in the morning to hear the Bible reading.

We tell of the day set apart for the dedication of the walls, explaining the word "dedication." They were to march in procession on top of these walls, which were large enough to hold an army. We describe the procession as making its circuit in two divisions, marching in opposite directions. Nehemiah leads one division, Ezra the other, each division followed by a choir singing glorious songs of praise to God, who gave them strength and courage to build these walls for the safety of home and children. When the two divisions met before the church all joined the choir in singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving.

Their Bible, strange as it may seem, had not been lost in all the years spent among the heathen, though it had been neglected and forgotten. God the Father was watching over his own, and would speak to them again and again through his prophets, and through his word.

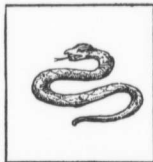
God the Father would lead them through sorrow and stormy times to the safe haven of home—a home where our Saviour would come as soon as it should be ready for the King of heaven.

#### LESSON IX. (November 26.)

WOES OF INTEMPERANCE. Prov. 23.  
29-35.

GOLDEN TEXT: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Prov. 20. 1.

#### Primary Notes.



*Introductory.* Who was the wisest man? Solomon; yes. He knew a great deal? He spoke three thousand proverbs, or wise sayings. We have a few verses from this Book of Proverbs today for our lesson. Solomon got some of his wisdom in a very sad way.

He tried some things that were wrong and found out that they were bad. He wanted to keep others from taking the wrong road, to find out for themselves where it led, and so he wrote these teachings, or precepts, and to-day we have a precept lesson from Solomon's book. The lesson is about wine, and we will write on our ladder the precept, "Touch not, taste not, look not." If

you keep so far away from what will hurt you that you can neither touch, taste, nor see it, you will be safe, wont you? Now, in the very beginning we have

*Six questions.* We will make on the blackboard six question marks or interrogation points. The first one stands for "Who hath woe?" Woe is great trouble and distress. Generally there is some reason for it that can be found out. If it comes because one has done wrong, it is very necessary to know how it came about. The second question is, "Who hath sorrow?" Even little children know what sorrow is, and how the heart is grieved and sorry when it comes. Then, "Who hath contentions?" That means quarrels and fights. You may know that men sometimes do fight and abuse each other. It is a very sad and dreadful thing. Solomon asks sadly about them and why they fight. But he keeps on and asks a fourth question, "Who hath babbling?" That means foolish, silly, useless, and hateful talk. One that babbles is quite sure to make trouble. And yet again the question comes, "Who hath wounds without cause?" It is surely bad enough to be hurt when there is some good reason for it, as when a soldier goes into battle for his flag and his country and a shot from the enemy's gun strikes him. But to be wounded for no good cause—O what a pity! "Who is the man?" asks Solomon. And once more, "Who hath redness of eyes?" That is something surely that no one wants.

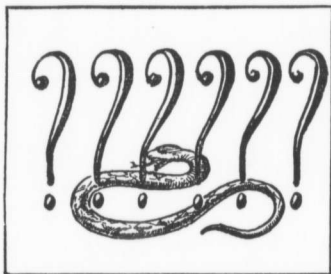
*The answer.* There is one answer to these six questions. O, remember it always! Here is the reason for all the woe, sorrow, wounds, and such distressing things. Who are they that have them? "They that tarry long at the wine." Those who drink anything that can intoxicate, anything that has alcohol in it; those are the ones that have all this deep trouble. Solomon tells us not even to look at the wine, for, though at first it may seem to be harmless and pleasant, at last it "biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." Both these are among the most poisonous things that crawl. Strong drink is like these.

We will make a serpent coiled, or curled up ready to spring. We will put it right among the interrogation marks, for this dreadful serpent of strong drink, this serpent alcohol, is the one that makes this grief and trouble. Not all trouble comes from drink, for there are other reasons for it sometimes; but let anyone drink and stay too long at the wine, and he is perfectly sure to have these woes and wounds. He may get hurt in some drunken fight, when there was no need of his being hurt at all.

*How to escape.* A man once went to another

and warned him of a great danger, but he did not tell him any way of escape. What good did it do? Solomon, who wrote as God told him, did not leave the matter in this way after telling of the woes of intemperance. He told what would harm and how to escape it. "Don't look at it," he says, and you will be safe. Touch it not, taste it not, see it not, and the serpent cannot bite. This is the only way to be sure.

A man once kept a little creature and fed the pet with the food that was good for it. By and by he gave it a taste of something hurtful, but the creature liked it so well he kept on just to please it. As the creature took more and more, it wanted more, and kept growing larger and stronger all the time, and more fierce, till at last the man could do nothing with it. Call the creature appetite, the desire or wish to eat or drink, and remember that if you feed it alcohol, it will want more and more and grow stronger and stronger till you can do nothing with it. Then it will mock you when you try to keep it where it ought to be. O be careful of the beginnings!



#### Kindergarten Hints.

**GOLDEN TEXT:** "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Gen. 8. 22. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Gal. 5. 22, 23.

#### HINTS ON METHOD.

In the kindergarten department we always plan some special exercise for Thanksgiving Sunday. As it comes on the date of our temperance lesson, we can make of it a harvest festival, teaching the right uses of God's gifts. Our room is decorated with sheaves of wheat and a showing of fruit and grain. The children march while singing a harvest song, the leaders decorated with

sprays of wheat or oats. After a talk about harvest blessings, and the memorizing of our Golden Text from Genesis, our opening prayer asks the Father to make us worthy of these his gifts, to make our bodies strong enough to enjoy them, and our souls generous enough to find ways of sharing them. With the promise that each child shall have fruit to take home we begin to talk of Thanksgiving time. The lesson would be more concrete if we were not obliged to combine it with our regular temperance instruction. Teachers who must hold to the temperance topic may make a combination lesson, as suggested in the opening paragraph.

#### LESSON DEVELOPED.

The children are somewhat restless and unmanageable, because their heads are full of the coming joys of feasting and family reunions. An outlet for their restlessness will be to let them talk of their hopes and plans for their holiday, and then we get in a sharp contrast by telling them of slum children, who will have little more than a crust for their feast day. If we rouse the sympathy of the class by presenting facts about these neglected children, we must not waste or scatter this emotion of pity, but give it a direct and practical outlet by making plans to feed these hungry children. Having previously put ourselves in communication with a city missionary, we can give the class opportunity to make a thanksgiving day for at least one child.

When we have set forth our plan and engaged the help and interest of our children we offer a simple petition: "Father, give us this day our daily bread, and show us where and how to share thy gifts with our hungry and cold little brothers and sisters."

The children are noticing our harvest decorations and clamoring for the fruit. Where did it come from? Who made it grow? We talk of the food (nourishment) of the trees and vines. Who feeds the trees, vines, and growing grain? Who made your body? To whom does it belong?

Were you ever given any kind of a treasure to hold in trust, to guard and keep for a little while? God gives us our bodies to hold in trust for him, for his use. The plants must eat the food they find at hand. They cannot move about and choose. God asks us to think and choose wisely that which shall make our bodies strong and keep our souls pure.

The children are instructed in what are called "health talks" in their secular kindergartens, and are able to take part in a discussion of those things which "hurt," and those things which

strengthen. We speak of those things which "hurt" as enemies, though sometimes appearing like friends. God has forbidden us to allow enemies to enter the temple of the body.

To draw on preceding lessons for figurative illustration: Go back to the account of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Inside the walls was "home," the most precious thing in all the world. Outside the walls, breaking them down, entering and spoiling "home," were enemies. The men must build up walls of defense, and must also stand guard to fight the enemy. Each man building his own section of wall, makes it strong as possible. What is he to do when he sees the enemy creep up to his neighbor's section?

Those hungry children whom we plan to feed have had, many of them, the walls of home broken down by a terrible enemy. Even the youngest child here knows its name.

When we are enjoying our Thanksgiving feast let us remember that we are building strong walls of defense with this food God has given us. Let us thank him that we have been allowed to help a neighbor build, and let us ask to be made strong and ready to take part in driving out the enemy that hurts body and soul.

### Whisper Songs for November.

#### SIXTH LESSON.

The heavenly Father bends above  
The little children of his love.  
He sees them when they kneel to pray;  
He hears the tender words they say.

#### SEVENTH LESSON.

The heavenly Father stands beside  
Each child from morn till eventide.  
His loving and defending arm  
Shall keep them night and day from harm.

#### EIGHTH LESSON.

The heavenly Father is so near  
That every little child may hear  
His voice within his holy word,  
And learn to know and love the Lord.

#### NINTH LESSON.

When we that holy prayer have said—  
"Give us this day our daily bread"  
O give us wisdom too, that we  
May take our meat and drink from Thee.

### Order of Service

FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

#### Fourth Quarter.

*Teacher.* Why do we come to Sunday school?

*Class.* To learn about God.

*T.* What book teaches about him?

*C.* The Holy Bible.

*T.* The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

*C.* Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

*T.* The Lord our God be with us: . . . let him not leave us, nor forsake us.

*C.* That we may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments.

*T.* Be thankful unto him, and bless his name.  
*C.* For this God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death.

#### SINGING.

Safely through another week,  
God has brought us on our way;  
Let us now a blessing seek,  
Waiting in thy courts to-day:

Day of all the week the best,  
Emblem of eternal rest.

*T.* What is it to pray?

*C.* To speak to God.

*T.* Why should we speak to God?

*C.* Because he is our Father, and he wants us to tell him all our pleasures and all that grieves us.

*All.* O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

*T.* We bring our offering to-day to Jesus.  
Why should we give to him?

*C.* Because he gives us all things, and we should love to give what we can to him.

Sing (while offering is taken) "Hear the pennies dropping."

#### BIRTHDAY EXERCISE.

BIRTHDAY SONG.—Tune, "Precious Things,"

We praise thee, we praise thee,  
Our dear heavenly Father,  
For birthdays, for all days,  
The gifts of thy love.

#### Chorus:

Teach us how to spend them,  
Begin them and end them,  
Thy blessing attend them,  
Dear Lord from above.

We love thee, we love thee,  
Our dear heavenly Father,  
We lift up our voices  
Together in song.

*Cho.*

#### MOTION EXERCISE.

LESSON TAUGHT.

ECHO PRAYER.

CLOSING.

(Touch finger tips over the head.)

"As we raise our hands toward the sky above  
We remember God's banner o'er us is love.

(Fold hands in lap and bow the head.)

And we bow our heads again in prayer,  
Giving ourselves to his loving care.  
May the lesson learned in our hearts sink deep.  
May the Lord between us a loving watch keep.  
May we show this wish in our work and play,  
That we've learned of Jesus on this holy day.  
We pray thee to take each little hand,  
And lead us all to the better land. Amen.

## Home Department.—How to Organize a County.

The Home Department work was first started in Coaticook some five years ago. At a meeting of the Sunday-school workers, representing three Sunday-schools, a committee was appointed to canvass the village to secure names of those not attending Sunday-school and would take home study of the lessons. Having completed the canvass, a superintendent was appointed from each school, the names secured, distributed according to their expressed choice. The result was about 100 taking home study. The work thus begun was continued with about the same number of members, they being visited by the superintendents and assistants and supplied with lesson helps, and report of study and contributions gathered.

Two years ago the executive of our County Association decided to make a county canvass. A Christian worker was employed, under the direction of a committee appointed by the executive. The course pursued was to visit each school, call a meeting of the workers, explain the nature and object of the work, secure if possible the appointment of a superintendent and assistants, and spend at least one half day with each in canvassing in their district, usually spending about two days in connection with each school, and leaving them to complete the work and continue to visit the members quarterly and supply them with helps, gather reports and their free contributions, giving them such help and encouragement as suited to their needs.

In this canvass of about eleven weeks some 35 schools and about 500 families were visited, 25 Home Departments organized, with nearly 500 members. The cost was about \$90, raised by private subscription, mostly before the work was begun.

Last year the work was repeated. A lady was employed to revisit those organized, encourage and assist the superintendents in their work, revive some which had dropped the work, and organize new Home Departments. The time occupied in this canvass, not quite two months; results, resuscitating eight Departments, which had ceased the work, and gaining 380 new members; the expense of this canvass, about \$70.

We have now in the county 35 Home Departments, organized with membership of about 700. There are in the county 50 Sunday-schools, about 2,500 membership, besides Home Department members. Ten of the schools are Episcopal, which do not affiliate with us in Home Department work. While some superintendents have not had the success they could desire, and some became discouraged and dropped the work, yet there are many pursuing the work with earnest zeal and grand success, and great good is resulting from this department of Sunday-school work.

In our own town the work begun five years ago has continued to grow in interest and usefulness. Bible study is taken up in many homes where before it was neglected. The visits of the Christian ladies who distribute the helps and literature carry blessing to many homes and hearts, and the visitor in carrying light and sunshine and sympathy to those shut in, receives rich blessing herself.

A school of about 70 has a Home Department with 50 members, all of whom she visited personally once or more during the summer, and all are supplied regularly with Quarterlies.

One Sunday-school of about 100 scholars had a Home Department with 25 members in the fall of 1896, and 48 in the fall of 1897; has now 80 members, and great interest is manifest in the lesson study.

In starting this work, no doubt better results would be attained if a canvasser were employed to canvass the entire county or district for which she is employed, assisted by those who are appointed by the schools as superintendents of the work, as sometimes the canvass is not completed by those in charge of the class or members. But while a general canvass is desirable, yet any church or Sunday-school, or any Christian worker in church or school may take up the work and make it a blessing in the community.

In selecting superintendents and visitors it is important that we select the best and most consecrated Christian workers in the church or school. Many homes are neglecting the study of the Word of God, many hearts are waiting and ready to receive the help and encouragement the Christian visitor can give.

Too many people are electric lights in prayer-meeting and tallow dips at home.

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