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Presbyterian Church in Canada

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The Teachers Monthly

Rev. E. Douglas Fraser, M.A., Editor
Rev. J. M. Duncan, B.D., Associate Editor

Vol. XI.

November, 1905

No. 11

Ed The General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee have agreed that henceforward Children's Day shall be known as Sabbath School Day. The new name will not lessen, but increase, the enthusiasm with which the day is observed by the schools.

Ed What the Synods and Presbyteries may do to forward the Sabbath School work, was perhaps the dominant note at the recent meeting of the General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee. It was the first meeting with the new Secretary, who is sure to find the Synod and Presbytery Committees sympathetic in the working out of the Assembly's Committee's plans. These include, amongst other important matters:— The Teacher Training Course, which is now complete in a series of five Handbooks, each by a specialist in his subject; the Supplemental Lessons, which provide for the more accurate knowledge of the Bible, systematize the memorizing of Scripture, the Catechism, and the great hymns of the church, and embrace the Question on Missions with its answer, each Sabbath. The Committee have now added a finishing touch to their plan for the promotion of the missionary idea and work in the schools, by a plan for systematic giving. This is in response to the request of the General Assembly, which asked the Committee to devise a plan by which systematic giving might be secured in the Sabbath Schools. The following is the method in outline. It is worth studying out clause by clause, and better still, worth carrying out.

"An offering by each member of the school each Sabbath.

"Some proportion of each Sabbath's offerings to be for the Schemes of the church.

"Where an offering each week for the Schemes is not at present practicable, a monthly or quarterly offering for these.

"The offerings for the Schemes to go through the regular treasurer of the Sabbath School.

"The treasurer to remit the funds for the Schemes at least once each quarter to the general agent of the Church."

The Child-Soul

By Rev. Professor E. A. Mackenzie, B.D.

There is a charming story that deserves to be told over and over again, of how a little girl, having received some dim impression regarding the soul, was asking her mother what it was. "Can you feel the soul, mother? Can you hear it?" she asked; and, "Can you see it?"

The mother answered that the soul could not be felt nor heard, but that sometimes it seemed as if it could be seen in one's eyes. "Let me look into your eyes," said the little one, and gazing into her mother's dear eyes, she saw there the tiny image of herself, and exclaimed, "O mother, your soul is a little child!"

This unconscious parable lays bare one unfulfilling secret of successful teaching. The years will rob us of our youth, and time may write wrinkles on the brow and efface every line of youthful beauty, but the soul need not grow old. How often one has known persons who, as they grew older, grew harder, more conventional, more artificial. They lost the child-soul. And there are those

whom one has known in youth, and whose acquaintance has been renewed after a long interval of years, only to find them as frank, as sincere, as full of enthusiasm, and as unspoiled as in the days of childhood.

We do not often read that Jesus was displeased, but it is once written that He was "much displeased"—the disciples were discovered driving away from His presence a group of little children. When He called them back and put His hands on their heads and prayed, they were not afraid. With the unerring instinct of childhood, they saw the child-soul in His eyes and were drawn to Him. On another occasion He frankly told the disciples that unless they abandoned all assumptions of greatness and became as little children, they could not set their feet upon the threshold of the kingdom.

Does any one wonder how Sunday Schools were held together before the days of conventions and pedagogics? It was done then, as indeed it is best done now, by an elect number of men and women with the child-soul. They loved the child, they understood the child, they sympathized with the child; and they were led unconsciously into the best methods of teaching. Teacher, is your soul "a little child?"

Presbyterian College, Montreal

He Knows ²⁶

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, B.D.

"I know thy works"—thus begins the message from their living and glorified Lord to each of the seven churches of Asia. And in this perfect knowledge there is inspiration and comfort for all who serve Him.

Two elements enter into Christian service—activity and endurance. These are found in individual lives in very different proportions. There are some whose robust and vigorous health marks them out for a large place in the aggressive work of the church. Others by weakness or disease or infirmities of advancing age are confined to a limited sphere. Not by chance does this difference arise. He "knows" the way in which we may do most for His cause, and with this in view He fixes our lot.

Our service, at best, is full of imperfections. So poor, at times, it seems to us, that we are tempted to give it up as not worth while. But He knows the faults of our work, and makes infinite allowance for them. There were blemishes enough in the seven churches, and yet their Lord uses as the symbol of each a golden lamp burning with a clear and steady flame. The twelve disciples had often grieved the Master with their wilful and wayward conduct. But He said of them to the Father, "They have kept Thy word." So generous is He in overlooking defects in performance where there is honesty of purpose, so keen-sighted for every desire and effort after the good.

Others can see only the results of our service, and these often appear meagre enough. Concealed from human gaze are the efforts it has cost us to accomplish ever so little, the struggle we have gone through to acquire even a small measure of self-control and patience. These secrets are not hid from Him. He knows them all, and He will not measure His praise by any outward achievements, but by the diligence and faithfulness we have shown.

He knows, too, why we serve Him. And if only it is for His "name's sake," because we love Him who is altogether lovely, because in our inmost heart we honor Him who is worthy of all praise, then, be our service never so little and never so lowly, He will be glad, and will gladden us with His approving smile.

Toronto

"Why Stand Ye Here All the Day Idle?"

By Rev. Principal R. A. Falconer, Litt.D.

That great scholar and saint of the nineteenth century, the late Bishop Westcott of Durham, says in one of his letters, "Are not those poor, whose feelings are atrophied? Are not those unemployed, whose powers of devotion and service find no exercise?"

Much of the Bishop's time in his last years was occupied with social questions, and the problem of the poor and the unemployed was ever before him. It seemed to press more heavily upon his soul than almost any other. And yet to his earnest, simple heart

there were deeper depths of poverty than any hunger of the body or homelessness; there was a far emptier life than that of men standing idle because no one will hire them.

Alas! how many there are in our churches whose lives are worn thin because they have starved their finer feelings. They are athirst for true love, and they have not yet found it; they are an hungered for something to fill the heart, and they know not what aileth them.

Knowledge and capacity there are in abundance in the membership of the Christian congregations. Many highly educated men and women, who have had the advantages that towns and cities can afford, as well as those that come from travel and the possession of comfort, are standing idle to-day, as though no service were required of them. But what are art, music, intellectual accomplishment, knowledge, unless they are shared with others, and increase with the expenditure? Our heart ceases to love unless we love. Our love to God dies unless we love our fellows also.

The children of our churches and homes and the open street are an expanse of human life richer by far than the golden acres of our North-west. Richer, did I say? Nay, rich beyond comparison, for they yield that harvest of human love for which the world's lone heart is longing to-day. In those young, beautiful lives, tantalizing almost because of their variety and uncertainty, there is at least one sure return, if only they are approached with love—love itself. Love never faileth, even though we may think so at times.

"Ah! but the children are so wilful, and I have no tact. I have tried to love them, but see no success. Let another take my place." May it not be that your heart needs more practice in loving, and that your head is disciplined better than the heart? If that may be a possible reason of what you deem to be your failure, do not yield too soon to your discontent, for the young, wilful heart of the child may be God's instrument for training you to love. And in this child you may be discovering a deeper depth in the love of God Himself. Redeeming love is the new love which has been made known to the world in Jesus Christ. That is true

love indeed. But it had its agony. It also has its joy in the bringing to the Father, through the wondrous sacrifice of Calvary, His wandering sons. That joy will be in some measure ours, when the impenetrable or elusive heart of the child yields at last to our unwearied service and affection.

Presbyterian College, Halifax, N.S.

How Sir Galahad Got Hold of a Class

By Rev. A. L. Phillips, D.D.

One Sunday afternoon my boy came home with a book under his arm, and when I asked what it was, he replied, "Sir Galahad." "Who is he," I asked. "Don't you know Sir Galahad? Our teacher has been telling us about him, and we have got very much interested in him, and this is his picture." I watched the boy, and in a few minutes he went up to his room and hung the picture beside his mirror; and now, if you are looking for trouble, just you interfere with Sir Galahad. Why? Because their teacher had enthused the boys by holding up to their gaze this great hero, and their ideals had been touched by coming in contact with him.

Try the story of David. The boys don't care about his having written the Psalms particularly; what does David say about himself, that fresh, ruddy-complexioned boy? I like to think of him as he came up to King Saul and requested to be allowed to fight the enemy of Israel. Saul asked him, "Can you fight?" and he replied, "Yes." "But you are a very little chap"; and he then tells the king how he had slain a bear and a lion in defending his father's sheep, and says, "By the help of the God of Israel I will slay this giant." You know all about Goliath. We would think it a miracle to-day; but have you not seen a man who could take a rifle and hit a target with a bullet? Well, David could do the same with a stone from a sling. The boys nowadays would say, "He is a great shot." And David said, "My feet are like hinds' feet." Your boy would no doubt say, "He is a great sprinter." And again he said, "I can run through a troop." Whatever that means I should like to know; but if it were in our day and

down South, no doubt, he could go through the centre in a foot-ball rush.

This is the way to get hold of the boys. Take any of the great Bible characters, and see whether your boys will not be interested. That is how Sir Galahad got hold of that class. Do you think it would be hard to carry your boys a little farther, raise them a little bit higher, and get them interested in the greatest Hero of the Bible, Jesus Christ, who came to this world as a little boy, came to champion our cause, met and defeated Satan on his own battlefield, and has now returned to His home in all His strength and majesty?

I think it would be well for us to learn something from modern methods, in directing a boy's activities into the proper channel. I do not think it would be difficult to take the other characteristics and deal with them in the same manner.

Richmond, Va.

The Teacher's Preparation

Think yourself empty ;
Read yourself full ;
Write yourself clear ;
Pray yourself hot.

The Use of Sunday School Literature

By *Rev. John A. McKamy*

Editor, Sunday School Publications, Cumberland Presbyterian Church

While editors and publishers appreciate the great confidence reposed in them, they do not feel that their products can render the best service without the intelligent co-operation of those who are responsible for their use. Sunday School workers may learn much in this matter from workers in other branches of education. The literature that is used in the Sunday School occupies a place closely analogous to that which is used in the secular school. At least equal care should be occupied in its introduction. One can scarcely guard too closely the approach of the printing press to the Sunday School, and through it, to the home. Then, it should not be assumed that the pupils of the Sunday School are entirely capable, unaided, of mastering even the best constructed Lesson Help, or of get-

ting the full profit of the reading Papers.

It becomes plain, then, that, among the more important duties falling to those who manage our Sunday Schools, is that of a close acquaintance with the literature used in the schools. Pastors, superintendents, and teachers are under heavy obligations in this regard. In Presbyterian churches, it ought not to be too much to expect Sessions to have at least a speaking acquaintance with the literature in the schools for which they are responsible. Once or twice a year, if not more frequently, in the quiet of his study, the pastor ought closely to examine representative numbers of every reading Paper and Lesson Help used in his Sunday School. It is not enough for him to have a working acquaintance with the higher grade scholars' or teachers' Helps that he may find useful in his personal study of the Sunday School lesson; he should know these in detail in all the grades, and know, too, how they are used by fellow-workers.

The superintendent, also, should be no less familiar with all the literature in the school. Through his intelligent watchfulness, boys and girls of ten or twelve will not be confused by Lesson Helps that are prepared for senior pupils. He ought also to be in a position, through personal investigation, to call the attention of teachers and pupils to the best things in the reading Papers. Of course, all of this requires time, but it is time profitably spent.

Again, it depends very much upon the teacher, whether the pupil learns how to use his Lesson Help, or discovers that which is truly worth while in the reading Papers. Let the teacher take all the time that may be required, to explain to the pupils the proper use of the Lesson Help. It is one of the ways of promoting home study of the lessons. In his own preparation of the lesson, the teacher should invariably use the Lesson Help that is in the hands of his pupils, no matter how many other helps to lesson study he may use besides. There is no better way of getting on common ground with the class. The reading Papers are enhanced in value by teachers taking pains to call the attention of pupils to their several features. Here is an opportunity to direct the reading of children and young people

which should not be wasted. In a small way, at least, every class may become a reading club.

Once a quarter, near the beginning, the teachers' meeting may well devote an evening

to the discussion of the literature in use in the Sunday School. This is a meeting in which the pastor, as well as the superintendent, may render service of special value.

Nashville, Tenn.

Missionary Methods in the Sabbath School

AN EXPERIENCE

By Rev. J. McP. Scott, B.A.

We aim at the accomplishment of certain things in our school:—(1) That the scholars understand why they should be interested in missionary work. (2) That they become informed, so far as possible, upon the Bible authority for this work, and also upon facts in mission history and work. (3) That they are led to see how, by their gifts and prayers, they may at once share in this great work.

In seeking to reach these ends the following methods, amongst others, are employed:

1. A number of our best teachers actively promote missionary interest amongst the scholars by frequently treating the Lesson of the day in the light of life in mission lands. It is not difficult to find illustration from mission story to enforce Bible truths.

2. The weekly review from the desk by the pastor, at the close of the teaching hour, is found to be an effective means of missionary education. At this point we make use of the Question on Missions that appears week by week in the *TEACHERS MONTHLY* and the *QUARTERLIES*. By constantly reviewing these Questions, and by giving other and related facts, the sum of the scholars' missionary knowledge is gradually increased. Thus the scholars come to know the need of mission lands, and at the same time they have learned that it is the will of Christ that they should do something to meet that need.

3. We ask the school to make a regular monthly gift for missions. We are sorry that all our collections in the school are not for missionary purposes. This, we hope, will come when our congregation is stronger. The missionary offering is taken on the last Sabbath of the month, a special envelope being given to each scholar the Sabbath before. A brief, crisp announcement of

this collection is made when the envelopes are given out. In connection with the announcement, a missionary letter is usually read to the school from the desk by the superintendent, or, at his request, by one of the teachers. Frequently this letter is from one or other of members of our congregation, now serving as missionaries on the field.

4. An invaluable stimulus to missionary interest among the children of the congregation has been the periodical letters of the congregation's missionary in Honan, Rev. Geo. M. Ross, B.A. These are always "duplicated," and one copy reaches each home in the church. Recently one came written to the boys and girls of the school. This was greatly prized. Failing a missionary belonging to the congregation, suitable letters from other missionaries are easily procured. The duplication and distribution of a good missionary letter is neither costly nor difficult. It could be done in any school, and always pays.

5. A personal visit from a live missionary is always welcome. Occasionally, instead of the Quarterly Review, we have a bright address from some missionary who may be in the city and available.

6. We seek that the atmosphere of the school, as of the congregation, should be missionary. This is seen and felt in the prayers at the opening and closing of school, as also in the praise selections for the day.

We do not forget that many of our scholars are members of missionary organizations in the congregation, and that what we do in the school in the line of missionary education relates itself very sympathetically to other factors of mission education in the church.

We believe strongly in the missionary atmosphere of the school, and seek that members of our school should come into full communion with the church with well-formed, intelligent convictions in regard to the missionary character of the church.

St. John's Church, Toronto

E. A. Hardy, B.A.

The Summer School and the College

The Summer School in the Maritime Provinces—this year there were four schools at different points, with at least five hundred registered students—has shown the Sunday School teachers what the Theological College has for them, and has given the College its opportunity in reaching the Sabbath School, and through the Sabbath School, the young life of the church.

The movement began four years ago in a resolution of the Senate of our Theological College at Halifax to co-operate with the Synod's Committee on Sabbath Schools in the better training of teachers. Principal Falconer has been in, and of, the movement from the first, and never more effectively than this past year. Professor Walter C. Murray of Dalhousie University, and Principal Kennedy of the Halifax Academy have been able colleagues.

The new Teacher Training Handbooks were the basis of the teaching this year, and thereby the influence of the schools was multiplied many fold, for the teachers who attended will thus be the better prepared to guide classes in their own localities through a winter's course in these same Handbooks. It means much to the Sabbath School teachers present and prospective to be brought into living touch with the higher ideals and the best methods of teaching, and we can hardly imagine a stronger stimulus to young men in the direction of the Christian ministry than this same extra-mural training.

The Sunday School Library: How to Select It

By *E. A. Hardy, B.A.*

The importance of the Sunday School library is very generally under-estimated, so much so, in some cases, as to prevent any

serious effort at putting it in good working condition or keeping it fresh and helpful. Yet few departments of the church can be made to give better results, intellectual and spiritual.

How shall we have a good Sunday School library? Just solve two problems by the expenditure of your time, energy and money, and it is done. The two problems are: How to select the books; and, How to distribute the books. Is there anything about the library not connected with these two questions? A few words on library selection may be of some help to perplexed Sunday School workers.

The first and most fundamental thing in selection is the question of policy. What is a Sunday School library? What is it for? Why do we want it? These questions are often answered by the librarian in a more or less hazy way, and often answered by no one at all. But surely the authorities of the schools should seriously consider them. They lead directly to the heart of the whole matter of policy. What kind of books are we to have? Is any good story, suitable for a Public Library, suitable for us? Are Henty, Dickens, Scott, Gordon Stables, Stevenson, Kipling, to be placed in our library; or is it to be restricted to books of a distinctly moral and spiritual character? I take this to be the biggest question of the Sunday School library, for all matters of detail as to choice of authors and volumes, purchase and distribution, can be settled for a matter of dollars and cents; but this question your school must settle for itself. In determining this policy the pastor should have by no means the least voice.

Having determined the character of your library, appoint a Library Committee of at least three, who should from time to time report progress to the teachers' meeting, with full details of their work. Their first task is to prepare lists of suitable works. To do this, send for publishers' catalogues. Any bookseller can give you names and addresses. After careful consultation of these catalogues and very careful preparation, your lists will be probably about three or four times as long as your purse can afford, and yet all the books on the list are good

books, you are quite sure. Then comes the tug of war; these lists must be cut down to perhaps one-third. With a pang you cut out this, and that, and that. But the remainder represents the combined wisdom of your Committee.

But, mark this also, it is not necessary to buy all these at once. Buying three or four times a year, you get freshness in your library and a constant demand for the new books. Again, in a library of any considerable size, monthly additions would be still better, affording opportunity of frequently getting a book right fresh off the press.

The Library Committee will do well to keep an accession book, in which to enrol for every book, such details as title, author, publisher, price, where purchased, date of purchase. They should also keep a subject catalogue, so as to keep careful note of what the library contains in each department. This secures balance of departments and means justice to all classes of readers. May I suggest the following departments: Missions, Biography, History, Travels, Science, Teachers', Boys', Girls', Little Ones'?

Ontario S. S. Association, Toronto

Organized Sunday School Work in Nova Scotia

By *Stuart Muirhead, Esq.*,

Secretary, Nova Scotia S. S. Association

[The second in the series of articles on the most marked or promising features of work in the various Provincial Associations. The first, from P. E. Island, appeared in the October issue.—EDITORS.]

The Nova Scotia Sunday School Association aims to be a real factor in the work of the individual schools of the Province. We do not simply meet and hold a grand convention, and then do nothing to carry into practice the principles and methods advanced; but, through effective organization, the most advanced methods of work are being brought to the attention of the schools, and assistance is being given in their introduction.

In our eighteen Counties we have good working Associations. Four of them had to be divided, so that we have twenty-two County Associations. In sixteen of these

there is complete district organization, in three partial, and in three no district organization whatever. (Our districts correspond to townships in most of the other Provinces.) In all our County Associations, and in many of the District Associations, we have Superintendents of the different departments, namely, Education, Home, Temperance, Primary; and, of course, corresponding Provincial officers. These officers, through visitation and other methods, bring the plans of our Provincial Association to the individual school.

Our Department of Education embraces two features of Sunday School work receiving special attention from the churches at the present time, Teacher Training, and the Gradation of the Sunday School. In the latter our Province has taken the lead of the whole International field. Four years ago a simple, workable, and comprehensive plan of Grading and Supplemental Lessons was adopted. Through the efforts of our Association, 138 schools, at our last Convention, had adopted wholly or in part this system, which is now known as "The Nova Scotia Plan." This means that all these schools are on the way to becoming thoroughly graded schools within the next few years, and that the scholars are receiving instruction in Bible knowledge adapted to the different periods of their physical, mental, and spiritual development.

Our Teacher Training Course embraces four years of study with post-graduate Courses. The following are the text-books: First year—Revised Normal Lessons, Hurlbut; Second year—Four Gospels, Hurlbut; From One to Twenty-One, Murray. Third year—Old Testament Studies, Hurlbut; The Sunday School Teacher, Hamill. Fourth year—Acts of the Apostles, Loomis; The Organized Sunday School, Axtell. Examinations are held semi-annually, the examiners being some of the leading educationists in the Province. Over 1,000 have already received our Diplomas, and the number of students is increasing yearly. Through the efforts of the Convener of the Sunday School Committee of the Synod of the Maritime Provinces, students taking the Course of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and

passing the examinations in that Course, can receive our Diploma, as well as the one given by their own church. This enables them to become members of our Teacher Training Alumni Association, and to be recognized in our conventions in the same manner as the students in our own Course.

In Temperance work our Association has also been a pioneer. The White Ribbon Army was adopted over ten years ago as a

Department of our work. This is a simple method, whereby the Quarterly Temperance Sunday is set apart for the meeting of the Army. Besides the regular Lesson, appropriate exercises are carried out, and scholars invited to sign the pledge. 224 schools have adopted this method of Temperance work, and in them 12,000 scholars have signed the total abstinence pledge.

Halifax, N.S.

Lesson Calendar: Fourth Quarter

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT FROM ISAIAH TO MALACHI

1. October 1. Daniel and Belshazzar. Dan. 5 : 17-30.
2. October 8. Daniel in the Lions' Den. Dan. 6 : 10-23.
3. October 15. Returning from Captivity. Ezra 1 : 1-11.
4. October 22. Rebuilding the Temple. Ezra 3 : 10 to 4 : 5.
5. October 29. Power Through God's Spirit. Zech. 4 : 1-10.
6. November 5. Esther Pleading for Her People. Esther 4 : 10 to 5 : 3.
7. November 12. Ezra's Journey to Jerusalem. Ezra 8 : 21-32.
8. November 19. Nehemiah's Prayer. Neh. 1 : 1-11.
9. November 26. Abstinence for the Sake of Others. 1 Cor. 10 : 23-33.
10. December 3. Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls of Jerusalem. Neh. 4 : 7-20.
11. December 10. Reading and Obeying the Law. Neh. 8 : 8-18.
12. December 17. Preparation for the Messiah. Malachi 3 : 1-12.
13. December 24. The Character of the Messiah. Isa. 9 : 1-7.
14. December 31. REVIEW.

OUR PUBLICATIONS

Lesson Helps

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Lesson VI. ESTHER PLEADING FOR HER PEOPLE November 5, 1905

Esther 4: 10 to 5: 3. Study ch. 4: 1 to 5: 3. Commit to memory vs. 13, 14.

Read the Book of Esther.

GOLDEN TEXT—The Lord preserveth all them that love him—Psalm 145: 20.

10 ¹ Again Es'ther spake unto ² Ha'tach, and gave him ³ commandment unto Mordecai.⁴

11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, *there is one law* ⁵ of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

12 And they told to Mordecai Es'ther's words.
13 Then Mordecai ⁶ commanded to answer Es'ther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then shall* ⁷ there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall ⁸ be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art ⁹ come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

15 Then Es'ther bade them return ¹⁰ Mordecai *to his answer*.

Revised Version—1 Then Esther: ² Hathach: death; ⁶ bade them return answer unto; ⁷ relief and; manner; ¹² entrance; ¹³ given thee even to.

16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shu'shan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast ¹¹ likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Es'ther had commanded him.

Ch. 5: 1 Now it came to pass on the third day, that Es'ther put on *her royal apparel*, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the ¹² gate of the house.

2 And it was so, when the king saw Es'ther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Es'ther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Es'ther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

3 Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Es'ther? and what *is* thy request? It shall be ¹³ even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

³ a message; ⁴ saying; ⁵ for him, that he be put to ⁸ perish; ⁹ not; ¹⁰ answer unto Mordecai; ¹¹ in like

Shorter Catechism—*Ques.* 101. *What do we pray for in the first petition?* A. In the first petition (which is, *Hallowed be thy name*) we pray, That God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

The Question on Missions—42. What language is chiefly used by our missionaries in India? Hindi is the language spoken by 80,000,000 people. The first thing the missionary must do after arriving in his field is to study the language.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, 438 (Supplemental Lesson): 250; 256; 100 (Ps. Sel.); 580 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY); 255.

LESSON PLAN

- I. The Queen's Responsibility, 10-14.
- II. The Queen's Resolve, 15, ch. 5: 3.

DAILY READINGS

(By courtesy of I. B. R. Association)

M.—Haman's wicked decree, Esther 3: 1-13. T.—Great sorrow, Esther 4: 1-9. W.—Esther pleading for her people, Esther 4: 10 to 5: 3. Th.—The plot frustrated, Esther 7: 1-10. F.—The decree revoked, Esther 8: 1-8. S.—Joy and gladness, Esther 8: 9-17. S.—Pride and destruction, Prov. 16: 5-19.

EXPOSITION

By Rev. James Wallace, B.D., Lindsay, Ont.

Time and Place—473 B.C.; Shushan, one of the capitals of the Persian empire, about 200 miles in an easterly direction from Babylon.

Connecting Links—Nearly half a century has elapsed since our last Lesson. When Zechariah's message of encouragement came to the returned exiles, Darius Hystaspes was king of Persia. He died in 485 B.C., and was succeeded by his son Xerxes (the Ahasuerus of the Bible), who reigned until 464 B.C. Among the Jews who did not return to Palestine under Zerubbabel (see Lesson III.) was Mordecai, who dwelt in Shushan. In his home lived his young cousin, Esther, whose parents were dead. In the earlier part of the book bearing her name, we have the story of how this beautiful Jewish maiden became Ahasuerus' queen. The Lesson tells, in part, how she frustrated a plot for the

extermination of the Jews, laid by Haman, the king's favorite, who hated and was jealous of Mordecai, Esther's cousin and guardian.

I. The Queen's Responsibility, 10-14.

V. 10. *Esther*; a Persian name meaning "a star." The queen's Jewish name, "Haddassah," means "a myrtle," which is a beautiful and favorite shrub in the East. She was a granddaughter of one of the exiles carried away by Nebuchadnezzar in 598 B.C. (see ch. 2: 5, 6); and was probably not more than fifteen when she was married. *Spake unto Hatach*; one of her attendants, giving him a message unto Mordecai (Rev. Ver.). Mordecai (v. 8) had urged Esther to entreat the king on behalf of the Jews, because of Haman's wicked plot, which seemed likely to succeed (read ch. 3).

V. 11. *One law . . . to put him to death.* This was the doom that stared Esther in the face should she venture to carry out Mordecai's wish. *Except . . . the king shall hold out the golden sceptre.* Oriental monarchs were, as a general rule, fickle and despotic, and held human life cheap, so that oftentimes for the most trivial offence or lack of deference for authority, the death penalty would be inflicted. *I have not been called . . . these thirty days.* Keil thinks that "Esther would not at first ask permission to approach the king, because for the nonce the king was displeased with her, inasmuch as for a whole month he had not sent for her." If this was so, the queen in undertaking the mission was running a double risk.

Vs. 12-14. *Think not . . . thou shalt escape.* One reason why Esther must act is for self-preservation. She was a Jewess, and would perish with her people. *If thou altogether holdest thy peace;* an emphatic phrase in the Hebrew, meaning, "If you do not at least make an attempt." Our Lord condemns those who "did it not," Matt. 25 : 45. "As we must render an account of every idle word, so must we likewise of our idle silence." (Ambrose.) *Deliverance . . . from another place.* The name of God does not appear in the Book of Esther, but we have here an expression of faith in Him. No one who did not trust in God could be so sure that His people would be saved. Mordecai's confidence probably rested on such prophecies as Jer. 31 : 35-37. This was a second reason for Esther's undertaking her people's cause—otherwise she would lose the glorious opportunity of rescuing her countrymen. *Thy father's house shall perish* (Rev. Ver.); a third reason. And here, again, Mordecai's words imply his assurance that God's word will be fulfilled, and that God's providence controls all things. *Who knoweth,* etc? The queen's beauty was the gift of God. He had raised her to her royal dignity and influence. What was the divine purpose in all this? *For such a time as this.* Like a key into the lock, Esther's divinely bestowed powers fitted into the task before her. Unfaithfulness in the use of these powers—how would she answer for this to God?—the fourth reason urged by Mordecai.

II. The Queen's Resolve, Ch. 4 : 15 to 5 : 3.

Vs. 15-17. *Then Esther, etc.* In spite of the temptations of a luxurious court, she proved herself "a heroine—capable, energetic, brave, and patriotic." *All the Jews . . . fast ye for me, . . . I . . . and my maidens will fast.* No mention is made of prayer, but fasting for a person meant fasting to obtain God's blessing on that person, and would undoubtedly be accompanied by prayer. Esther believed in the power of sympathy and united prayer (compare Matt. 18 : 19). "Esther had more confidence in God than in her beauty, which must have suffered through a long fast." (Wilbeoer.) *So will I go;* a queenly resolve, indeed, flinging open the door upon a high duty and a wonderful destiny. *If I perish, I perish.* Better to die nobly in the attempt to deliver her people, the queen thought, than to live basely, though in safety and ease, while they were left to their doom.

Ch. 5 : 1. *On the third day;* the fasting having been observed as arranger¹, ch. 4 : 17. *Esther put on her royal apparel.* She was a woman of resources. She would use whatever charms God had given her for a good purpose. "Beauty is a gift, a talent to be used for good, like any other divine endowment. Esther consecrated it to noble service, and thereby it was glorified." (Expositor's Bible.) *Stood.* Boldly disobeying the law and custom of the court, Esther, leaving the women's apartments in the palace, took her stand at the entrance to the pillared hall at the opposite end of which sat the king on his throne. Looking down the avenue of columns, he must see her.

Vs. 2, 3. *When the king saw Esther.* Surprised he would certainly be. But would he be pleased or angry? How much turned on this! *The king held out . . . the golden sceptre.* Now, the queen could breathe freely; her life was safe. *What is thy request?* etc. After the frequent fashion of Oriental monarchs, the petition is granted before it is asked. How Esther induced the king to issue a decree that saved her people, how the wicked Haman perished, and how Mordecai became the king's chief officer in his place, the rest of the Book tells.

Light from the East

By Rev. James Ross, D.D., London, Ont.

THE KING—Mentioned in this Book, is generally identified with Xerxes, emperor of Persia 485-464 B.C., although no monumental or historical confirmation of any of the incidents mentioned here has as yet been discovered, except that the Feast of Purim celebrating the deliverance from Haman's plot (ch. 9 : 26-28) was observed by Jews in all parts of the world in the time of Josephus.

SHUSHAN—The Susa of the Greeks was originally the capital of Elam, and subsequently one of the capitals of the Persian empire. Wherever the name occurs except here, the phrase, "the palace," is added. This, no doubt, refers to the remarkable

audience room in the form of a Greek temple, with the throne in the place of the Divine Statue, where the emperor received the ambassadors from all countries of the world. The ruins cover about two and a half acres, and the porticoes and staircases opened upon a terrace forty-five acres in extent. Much of the beautiful frieze of enameled bricks, by which the walls were adorned, is now in the Louvre in Paris. The city was taken, after a desperate struggle, by Assurbanipal, its buildings destroyed, and all its treasures carried off to Assyria. Later, it was taken and plundered by Alexander the Great, who found \$60,000,000 in its treasures. After the Arab conquest of the East, its site was abandoned.

APPLICATION

By Rev. Clarence Mackinnon, B.D., Winnipeg

Again Esther spake, v. 10. The path of duty was the path of peril, and we are not surprised that the queen should hesitate.

Life had its charms and its comforts for one in so royal a position; and an action that would rashly exchange these for the grim presence of the executioner might well make one falter. Nevertheless, the true course is to do the right and leave the consequences to God. A clerk who had been requested by his employer to do something dishonest, consulted his minister. "I shall lose my place if I disobey," he argued. "Look to God first, and trust in Him," was the wise reply. "Do not think He will let you suffer, because out of regard to His commandment you have lost your place. Never!" The young man lost his situation, but maintained his character, and in doing that, laid the foundation of future prosperity. Not the fear of man, but the fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom, and it always pays to serve Him.

Think not, thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews, v. 13. She belonged to the Jewish nation; that would be enough! The tempest would level the tall tree as well as its less lofty neighbor, so long as it was part of the forest. No one lives to himself. Each is part of the other, in a family, a com-

munity, a church, a nation. The individual suffers in the national calamity, even as he receives his ray of glory when the nation is honored. And, therefore, to give the thought a slightly different turn, every one is responsible for his neighbor's welfare. His goodness enriches his community, his dishonor brings shame upon it. It is a strong incentive to right living to recognize that our holiness is a contribution to the common good.

If thou altogether holdest thy peace, v. 14. There is a sinful silence. Men are still possessed of a "dumb devil." Churches are sometimes found like that fabled people who dwell on the banks of the Ganges, and who had no mouths, but fed only upon the smell of herbs and flowers. There is a fragrance of religious sentiment about their walls, but no voice to denounce fashionable vices, nor to preach righteousness and duty at any cost. Such churches are not indispensable. They stand self-condemned.

At this time, v. 14. Mr. Bart Kennedy, in his recent book, *A Tramp through Spain*, describes the average Spaniard in this fashion:

"The Spaniards are the most dignified loafers in the world. To-morrow is for them the day of days. On that day everything will come right." "Manana" (to-morrow), says the indolent Spaniard. Nor does he stand alone.

A People with
no Mouths

Manana

Cannot Live
to Oneself

How ready most of us are to put off some plain duty, to turn aside from some obvious opportunity of service, until to-morrow. But the golden moment is really the present. Is there something we ought to do? It should be done "at this time"—now.

Then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, v. 14. God calls us to be His instruments. He honors us with opportunities in His service. He lays the responsibility of His work upon our shoulders. Nevertheless we are not the only people in the world, and the divine purpose does not stand or fall with our faithfulness or the lack of it. If we will not go, another will be found who will. The Reformation did not depend upon Luther alone; it would have come through another agency had he declined the task. But he would have missed forever the opportunity of his life, his name would have been erased from history and his crown of service given to another.

Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? v. 14. Each cog in the machinery has its own appointed task. Even the wayside weed has its purpose, if nothing more, a drop of honey to contribute to the common good. God had placed Esther on the Persian throne to deliver His people, Mordecai at the gate to give her courage and advice. He sent to the king a sleepless night, that it might assist in the great design. All people and events have their purpose to serve. As the Lord brought

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Teachers of the Older Scholars

By *Rev. W. H. Smith, Ph.D., Sydney, N.S.*

To make the most of this Lesson demands a good deal of work. Study the whole book. Understand the political and religious condition of the Jews in Palestine, and throughout the Persian Empire. Advanced classes should look at the problems of this book, as authorship, historicity, and the testimony of secular literature, especially Greek history.

Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, as He sent Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt, so has He a task for each of us. Our task undone, the whole world lags.

Esther put on her royal apparel, ch. 5 : 1. It was not enough that the queen had decided to do her duty to her countrymen at all hazards. It was not enough that for three days and nights, she should have proclaimed a

Pains as Well as Prayer

fast, the most intense form of ancient prayer. She did not neglect other and more extreme aids to the accomplishment of her purpose. Nor in the great enterprises of our church, or the great schemes of moral reform, are we to think it sufficient merely to decide upon their rightness or necessity and to pray over them. We must take every pains to secure success. The organization should be perfected, and the administration prudent. There is really nothing secular when employed in a sacred cause. The object sanctifies it. Esther's royal apparel became part of a patriotic and sacred duty.

What wilt thou? . . . to the half of the kingdom, v. 3. Who can read these words without thinking of another Sovereign, not ruled by passion or caprice, but moved

A King's Offer

by justice and love. "The half of the kingdom"—is this the offer He makes to us? Nay, He has given us the Son who is the Ruler of the kingdom. No greater gift could even He bestow, who controls the riches and resources of heaven. And this Gift is the pledge that He will withhold nothing needful from us, when we come as petitioners to His throne.

TEACHING HINTS

A period of 50 years elapsed between the 6th and 7th chapters of Ezra, of which there is no record of affairs at Jerusalem. It was during this interval that events of great importance took place at the Persian Court. Some of these are recorded in the Book of Esther.

Briefly sketch the life of Esther, her parentage, social position, guardian, natural beauty. Note how she became queen, and the light it sheds on the degradation of women in the Persian Court. Bring out the causes of the great disaster which threatened her

people. Who was Haman? Why did he seek revenge? (ch. 3: 1-5). What does this show regarding his character? Trace the scheme of Haman (ch. 3: 8-15), the bribe offered (v. 9), the effect on Mordecai (ch. 4: 1), the people (ch. 4: 2), and the queen (ch. 4: 4). Note her inquiry, ch. 4: 5-9.

In considering the Lesson, observe the following points:

1. The queen's appreciation of her dangerous task, v. 11. Unless the king should be favorable, it was death. Cite similar instances, as Herod, Matt. 14: 3-12. His regard for Esther was evidently cooling, v. 11. Make the danger real.

2. Recall Mordecai's argument for her action, vs. 13, 14. Note his four reasons, and discuss their power as motives.

3. Observe Esther's decision to act, vs. 15-17. She chose the dangerous way, in the interests of her people. Note her religious zeal, her thoughtfulness in approaching the king, her common sense methods.

4. Her success (ch. 5: 1-3) in securing a favorable hearing, and her delay in order to secure a favorable opportunity and to gain time to mature plans. Follow her method, consider the saving of her people, and its influence upon the Jews, ch. 9: 1-13. Discuss her sanguinary temper and its ethical bearing.

This Lesson is an illustration of how much one can do by using his or her influence in the interests of the oppressed. As a model in wise, careful handling of a trying situation, Esther deserves special attention.

The lesson to be emphasized, is the value of heroic service on behalf of our country. The foes are many—name some of them. Show the dangers assailing our land. Show how great lives have blessed the country, and the need there is for heroic service. The basis of public heroism is the heroic spirit in daily life. It is seen in small, as in great, actions. The heart of it is Christian faith and love. Its ideal is Jesus. The teacher should take advantage of the opportunity for dealing with the common duties of life, which, in many instances, lack the heroic spirit.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

By Rev. E. Douglas Fraser, M.A.

Practically a whole book of ten chapters in one short half hour. Be jealous therefore of the minutes; select very carefully the points of emphasis.

Chapter I.—A queen, Vashti, deposed.

Chapter II.—A new queen, Esther, chosen, young and beautiful; her cousin Mordecai—they were both Jews—disclosing the plot against the king's life.

Chapter III.—Proud Haman winning a decree from the king for the slaughter of all the Jews, because this Mordecai had refused to do honor to him.

Chapter IV., vs. 1-9—Mordecai's message to Esther, that *She* must intercede with the king for her people. What a task for a young girl perhaps not more than out of her teens.

And here the Lesson takes up. Be sure you have all the figures distinct—King Ahasuerus, Mordecai the Jew, Esther the Queen, Hatach the messenger.

What is the message? Have the scholars disentangle it from v. 11. Question about the sceptre: what it was, and what it signified (see cut. HOME STUDY QUARTERLY); and about the power of kings in those olden times. Ask for other like instances. Question also as to the king's thirty days' coolness towards Esther and the additional peril this was. Was Esther a coward? We shall see. Just now she was bewildered, as if some fierce goblin had sprung up from the earth and confronted her. It was a peril sudden and appalling. The value of a wise friend to whom we may appeal in our times of difficulty, is brought out in v. 12.

Verses 13, 14 contain Mordecai's reply. He was a friend worth having. He spoke plain truths. Go over his arguments with Esther. The first? V. 13, an appeal to self-preservation, as if he had said, "It is your only chance: do this, or die." A very proper and natural motive. His second argument? V. 14, first part, "If you do not save the people, some one else will, and his will be the glory." How did Mordecai know? The only answer is, He trusted in God that He would not fail His people. The third appeal? Esther would be the destroyer of her father's house. The fourth appeal?

Esther Pleading for Her People

(This, again, showed this good man's trust in God.) "Who knoweth whether, etc." It would be her one great opportunity of serving God, and her nation. Press upon the scholars to have a quick eye to opportunities, and especially to opportunities of serving God. If we believe that God made us and redeemed us, we must believe that he has some work for us, which we can and should do.

How long a pause was there between vs. 14 and 15? Picture Esther's struggle with herself. Then hear her wonderful answer, v. 14. Why does she fast, and her maidens? Why does she want the Jews to fast? What is her resolve? "If I perish, I perish." Was she right in imperilling her life? When is it a sin not to risk one's life? Whence did

Esther get the courage for this resolve? What has the Golden Text to say?

The chapters that follow show how true it is. Again, a sentence from each must suffice; but the scholars will want to know, and many of them to tell, how it all turned out; how the king held out the golden sceptre; how the king and Haman were invited to Esther's feast; how the sleepless king recalled Mordecai's service in disclosing the plot, how Haman was disgraced, and Mordecai honored; how Esther pleaded for her people, to save them from the slaughter. It all turns on one young girl—for the queen was after all but a young girl—being ready to trust God and do the right thing, cost what it might.

ADDED HINTS AND HELPS

In this section will be found further assistance under various headings.

Lesson Points

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, B.D.

Care in commencing a task is as useful as courage in carrying it out. v. 10.

The more clearly we recognize a danger the more easily shall we avoid it. v. 11.

We cannot shirk a duty and shun the penalty. v. 13.

God demands our service, but He does not necessarily depend upon it alone. v. 14.

Every opportunity constitutes an obligation. v. 14.

Prayer is an armor that always protects, a weapon that always prevails. v. 16.

Faithfulness is required of those in a subordinate no less than of those in a superior position. v. 17.

He who defies a king is safer than he who disobeys conscience. Ch. 5 : 1.

Even the caprices of a despot are under divine control. v. 2.

When we ask according to God's will we can never ask too largely. v. 3.

From the Library

This book (of Esther) is marvellously true to Persian manners. It is redolent of the atmosphere of the Court at Susa. Its accuracy in this respect has been traced down to the most minute details. The book bears

evidence of having been written in the heart of Persia, by a man who was intimately acquainted with the scenery he described.—Expositor's Bible.

"The gods are just, and of our vices
Make instruments to scourge us."

The man who is exalted to the pedestal of a god is made dizzy by his own altitude. Absolutism drove the Roman Emperor Caligula mad; it punished the Xerxes of Herodotus with childishness. The silly monarch who would decorate a tree with the jewelery of a prince in reward for its fruitfulness, and flog and chain the Hellespont as a punishment for its tempestuousness, is not fit to be let out of the nursery. When the same man appears on the pages of history as Ahasuerus, his weakness is despicable.—Expositor's Bible.

"I have tried, and tried in vain,
Many ways to ease my pain;
Now all other hope is past,
Only this is left at last :
Here before Thy Cross I lie,
Here I live, or here I die.

If I perish, be it here,
With the Friend of sinners near;
Lord, it is enough—I know
Never sinner perished so :
Here before Thy Cross I lie,
Here I cannot, *cannot* die."

—Quoted in Pulpit Commentary.

Prove from Scripture

That we should pray for others.

Lesson Questions

[From the HOME STUDY QUARTERLY]

Juniors—To what race did Esther belong? What did she become? Who plotted against her people? From whom did she hear of this?

10, 11 What does "Esther" mean? Give the queen's Jewish name. Its meaning. What had Mordecai urged her to do? Into what danger would this bring her?

12-14 If Haman's plot succeeded, what would happen to Esther? Who else would perish? Who had given her power to save her people?

15, 16 What did Esther resolve to do? From whom did she ask help?

Ch. 5 : 1-3 How did Esther prepare for going to the king? How received? Did she save her people?

Seniors and the Home Department—What and where was Shushan? Describe Haman's plot against the Jews. How was it defeated?

10-14 What duty had been urged upon Esther? Why was it dangerous? Show that we should not fear when we are on God's

side. (2 Kgs. 6 : 16.) Why was it Esther's duty to save her people?

15, 16 How did Esther seek strength and help? What does Jesus teach about the power of united prayer? (Matt. 18 : 19.)

Ch. 5 : 1-3 What quality besides courage did Esther show? Prove that true faith shows itself in good works. (James 2 : 17, 18.) How much does God promise in answer to prayer? (John 15 : 7.)

The Catechism

By **Rev. J. M. Duncan, B.D.**

Ques. 101. *The Lord's Prayer*—its first petition. Like the Third Commandment, this petition has to do with the right use of the name of God. The name of God is just God Himself as He is made known to us in nature, in our own minds, in His Word and ordinances, and especially in Jesus Christ His own Son. "Hallowed" here means, made known as holy. We hallow God's name when we make known the holiness found in Him. The word "glorify" in the Question has practically the same meaning as "hallow." God's purpose in all He does is to show forth His own perfections, and we are living our true life when we are furthering this purpose. This petition teaches us to pray for grace to glorify God in our own lives, and for the removal of everything that dishonors Him.

FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

By **Mrs. Jessie Munro Johnston, North Bay, Ont.**

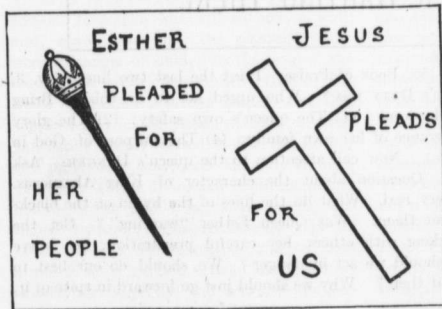
Lesson Subject—God redeeming His people by defeating plots against them.

Introduction—We are going to place this crown on the head of one of our girls this

time, for our story is to be about a queen. We have heard so much about good and bad kings; we shall be glad to hear about a good queen. Away off in the country where the children of Israel were captives, in a beautiful palace in Shushan, this young girl is queen—ESTHER.

Review—Recall the going home to Jerusalem of so many of God's people, to rebuild the temple. But they did not all go at that time.

Lesson—Mordecai, one of them, served the king, Ahasuerus.



Esther Pleading for Her People

Queen Esther—The king wanted a queen. She must be very beautiful. Messengers were sent all over the kingdom to seek the fairest maidens, ch. 2. She who pleased the king best should become queen. Mordecai brought his beautiful cousin Esther, ch. 2 : 7. The king did not know she belonged to God's people, the Jews. He loved Esther very much, and set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen.

Haman's Plot—Tell of the proud Haman, ch. 3. Mordecai, the Jew, refused to bow down to him. Haman was angry at Mordecai, and made a plot to kill him and all the rest of the children of Israel found in the kingdom, ch. 3 : 8-15. But God is watching over His own people. He will find some way to help them. When Mordecai hears of the plot, he is full of grief. He thinks of beautiful Queen Esther. She will be killed, too, if Haman finds out she is a Jewess. He sends a message to her, ch. 4 : 6-9. Tell of the messages that pass between them. Tell of the customs of the Persian court.

A Chance to do Work for God—This is a chance for Queen Esther to save God's people from death. Perhaps it was for this reason that God put it into the king's heart to love

her. Surely he will listen to the pleading of his beautiful queen ! If Esther is afraid and will not plead for the lives of her people, God will find some other way to save them; but Esther will not have God's blessing, and they will take her life and that of her relatives. She is brave and true to God, ch. 5 : 1-3. God puts each of you little ones just where He wants you to do something for Him.

Mordecai Honored—The king is reminded that Mordecai once saved his life and he wants to honor him, ch. 6.

Haman Punished—Tell of Esther pleading for her people, ch. 7. Haman finds out that "pride goeth before destruction," Prov. 16:18.

Esther Honored—Tell of the great favor shown to Mordecai and Esther and her people, ch. 8.

Golden Text—The Lord takes care of the life of ("preserveth") all them that love Him.

Appearing Before the King—The cross is the sceptre our heavenly King holds out to us. We know that He is always ready to receive and listen to all who come to Him.

Something to Draw at Home—Draw a sceptre and a cross.

Something to Remember—God is wise and tender.

SUPERINTENDENT'S BLACKBOARD REVIEW

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, B.D.

WHERE DUTY CALLS, OR DANGER
BE NEVER WANTING THERE

Have the scholars sing Hymn 256, Book of Praise. Print the last two lines of v. 3, as above. Ask what Queen Esther's Duty was ? Who urged her to do this ? Bring out the four reasons advanced by Mordecai : (1) The queen's own safety; (2) The glory of saving her people; (3) The deliverance of her own family; (4) The purpose of God in making her queen. (See Exposition.) Now call attention to the queen's DANGER. Ask about the law that she dreaded. Question about the character of King Ahasuerus. Make it clear that the peril was very real. What do the lines of the hymn on the blackboard say ? Let the scholars repeat them. Was Queen Esther "wanting" ? Get the scholars to tell about her praying along with others, her careful preparation, her brave appearance before the king. How should we act in danger ? We should do our best to avoid it—unless "duty calls." And then ? Why we should just go forward in spite of it, and God will care for us.

Lesson VII.

EZRA'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM November 12, 1905

Ezra 8 : 21-32. Study vs. 15-36. Commit to memory vs. 21-23. Read chs. 7, and 9 : 1 to 10 : 17.

GOLDEN TEXT—The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him.—Ezra 8 : 22.

21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Aha'va, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

22 For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way : because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him ; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.

23 So we fasted and besought our God for this : and he was intreated of us.

24 Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sherabi'ah, Hashabi'ah, and ten of their brethren with them.

25 And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords and all Is'rael there present, had offered :

26 I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, and of gold an hundred talents ;

Revised Version—I humble ; I straight ; I ask ; I princes ; I into ; I and twenty bowls ; I dairies ; I the princes of the fathers' houses ; I the priests and the Levites

27 Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams ; and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold.

28 And I said unto them, Ye are holy unto the Lord ; the vessels are holy also ; and the silver and the gold are a free-will offering unto the Lord God of your fathers.

29 Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Le'vites, and the chief of the fathers of Is'rael, at Jeru'salem, in the chambers of the house of the Lord.

30 So I took the priests and the Le'vites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jeru'salem unto the house of our God.

31 Then we departed from the river of Aha'va on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jeru'salem : and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and so of such as lay in wait by the way.

32 And we came to Jeru'salem, and abode there three days.

that seek him, for good ; chiefs ; even ; for ; bright brass ; and ; Omit also ; the ; the Levites received ; the liar in wait.

LESSON PLAN

I. Seeking Protection, 21-23.

II. Guarding the Offerings, 24-30.

III. Making the Journey, 31, 32.

DAILY READINGS

(By courtesy of I. B. R. Association)

M.—The king's letter, Ezra 7 : 6-20. T.—Royal gifts, Ezra 7 : 21-28. W.—Ezra's journey to Jerusalem, Ezra 8 : 21-32 Th.—Mourning for sin, Ezra 8 : 33 to 9 : 4. F.—Confession, Ezra 9 : 5-15. S.—God's leading, Ex. 15 : 11-18. S.—Trust in God, Psalm 20.

Shorter Catechism—Ques. 102. What do we pray for in the second petition ? A. In the second

petition (which is, *Thy kingdom come*) we pray, That Satan's kingdom may be destroyed ; that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it ; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

The Question on Missions—43. How are the primary schools conducted in India ? They are sometimes held under the shade of a tree. When in a schoolroom, the children sit on mats. They sometimes learn to make figures and letters with the finger in sand sprinkled on bits of board. Besides the ordinary subjects, they learn hymns and scripture verses.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, 438 (Supplemental Lesson) ; 262 ; 297 ; 96 (Ps. Sel.) ; 306 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY) ; 293.

EXPOSITION

Time and Place—458 B.C.; near Babylon.

Connecting Links—Fifty-eight years after the completion of the temple (see Lesson V.), in the reign of Artaxerxes over the Persian empire, Jerusalem was still without a wall ; and, worse than this, the returned exiles were in danger of sinking to the level of the Samaritans who surrounded them. The times demanded a strong leader, and God supplied him in the person of Ezra, a priest and scribe deeply versed in the Mosaic law and profoundly convinced that only through obedience to this divine law could his people become great and free. Ezra having obtained authority from Artaxerxes (ch. 7 : 12-26) to call for volunteers and to raise a money levy, gathers a band of his fellow-countrymen together, and sets out for Jerusalem.

I. Seeking Protection, 21-23.

V. 21. *Then*. Ezra had succeeded in winning the confidence of the leading men of his nation (ch. 7 : 28), and also of the rank and file of the people (v. 15), so that they were ready in large numbers to forsake their homes under his leadership and seek their fortunes in Judea. The good-will of Artaxerxes the king (see Connecting Links, and vs. 25-28) to the Jews may have been due to his upbringing in a court where Esther (Lesson VI.) and Nehemiah (Neh. 1 : 11) were favorites. *I*; that is, Ezra. "He was not a man of the world, but an ecclesiastic—devout, emotional and impulsive." (A. B. Davidson.) *Proclaimed a fast*. "Ezra appoints the fast: (a) as the symbol of submission to God's will and of repentance from sin; (b) as the means of intensifying religious

fervor in prayer, through the restraint laid upon physical appetite; (c) as the testimony that 'man lives not by bread alone.' (Cambridge Bible.) *At the river of Ahava*; unknown, though in all probability one of the many canals in the vicinity of Babylon. Here Ezra, aided by the "chief men" among the Jews, had gathered the company of returning exiles in readiness for the start. *That we might humble ourselves* (Rev. Ver.). Their important mission is not to be undertaken lightly or thoughtlessly, but with deepest heart-searching and trust in God. *A straight way* (Rev. Ver.); that is, a direct road, so that they would not have to turn aside because of attacks and dangers from enemies, also a level road without obstacles (compare Isa. 40 : 3). *Our little ones*. The Hebrew word includes both children and women. *Substance*. They had much goods with them, as the sequel shows.

Vs. 22, 23. *I was ashamed*, etc. To ask a guard from the king would have been to unsay what he had already said about God's protection (compare 2 Chron. 16 : 9) and thus bring dishonor on Him. God thus appealed to is sure to grant the protection sought; for His own honor is at stake in the matter. *Help. against the enemy*; robbers and Bedouins of the desert, who lived by plunder. *The hand of our God*, etc.; His merciful favor kept for those who seek Him, as His wrath for those who forsake Him. *Besought. God. he was intreated*. God answered Ezra's confidence by leading him safely to Jerusalem. Of this safeguarding Ezra now feels sure.

II. Guarding the Offerings, 24-30.

V. 24. *Twelve of the chiefs of the priests, besides Sherebiah, Hashabiah, etc.* (Rev. Ver., Margin). Sherebiah and Hashabiah being Levites (v. 18), the meaning likely is that Ezra selected twelve priests and twelve Levites, of whom Sherebiah and Hashabiah were two.

Vs. 25-27. *Weighed unto them*. The treasures included: (1) silver and gold in bars or ingots, not coined money; (2) vessels of gold and "fine copper," a metal so rare as to be "precious as gold." The Cambridge Bible reckons a talent of silver as worth \$1,875

and of gold, \$33,750. A dram is equivalent to \$5.00. (In THE HOME STUDY QUARTERLY, \$6,250 should read \$33,750, that is, £6,750, which multiplied by five gives the amount in dollars. The total specified values thus amount to \$4,786,250.)

Vs. 28-30. *Ye are holy. the vessels are holy*. Both the treasure and the persons who guarded it were holy: that is, they belonged to God and were set apart for His service. A double responsibility, therefore, rested on these men. *A freewill offering*; among the Jews, an offering not commanded, but presented out of pure love to God. *Unto the Lord God of your fathers*. This appeal to the past would awaken memories of the covenant made long ago by Jehovah with His people, Ex. 19 : 5, 6. *Watch ye*; a word denoting vigilance and wakefulness. They were not only to keep a sharp lookout while on the march, but some of them were constantly to be awake to guard the treasure whilst the others slept. (Compare Matt. 24 : 46; Luke 12 : 36.) *Until ye weigh them. . . at Jerusalem*. There must be faithfulness all the way. They will be asked for a public, solemn account in God's city, in God's own house. Therefore must they exercise the utmost care. *Chambers of the house*; the rooms on either side of the main building (1 Kgs. 6 : 5), used partly as chambers for the priests and partly as storerooms, Neh. 13 : 5. *So took the priests and the Levites*; twelve of each (see on v. 24). The responsibilities connected with the trust had been impressed upon them, but they did not plead inability or say that too much was expected of them, as so many do when asked to consecrate themselves to the Lord.

III. Making the Journey, 31, 32.

Vs. 31, 32. *Departed. . . twelfth day*; after setting out for Babylon, ch. 7 : 9. Three days had been spent at "the river of Ahava" (v. 15), and therefore it had taken nine days to reach this point. *Of the first month*. "The caravan set out on the twelfth day of the first month (April, 458), and arrived in Jerusalem three and a half months (110 days) later. The distance travelled was from 800 to 1,000 miles" (A. B. Davidson), a long detour being made to avoid the desert.

The distance between Babylon and Jerusalem in a straight line is somewhat over 500 miles. The journey took the longer time, also, because the women and children in the caravan could go but slowly, and the household goods had to be carried. They made about nine miles a day. *The hand of our God was upon us*; "the hand that defends, the hand that gives, the hand of friendship." *We came to Jerusalem*; "on the first day of the fifth month" (ch. 7 : 9), corresponding roughly with our August. Chs. 9, 10 describe Ezra's work in Jerusalem. He brought the Book of the Law into prominence, and re-enforced the ritual of the temple and the order of the priests.

Light from the East

HAVA—A town and river of Babylonia, which have not yet been identified, but in all likelihood they were some distance from the capital on the road to the west. Probably it was the Is of Herodotus, now called Hit, about eight days' journey on the trail to-

wards Palestine. It formed a convenient halting place to review the exiles, and from which to make a final appeal to some in the surrounding country who had not come, and to make preparation for entering the desert and dangerous part of the journey.

FASTED—In a company gathered from all parts of the country, with no sense of personal responsibility or moral obligation, the great weakness would be a want of cohesion; and with men in this condition it would be dangerous to proceed with so many valuables, and through a region full of marauders. So Ezra took means to rouse their religious enthusiasm and deepen their sense of responsibility. Then the weighing of the precious vessels and the bullion, and making each of the religious leaders among them responsible for so much, increased the sense of obligation. An Oriental is ordinarily the most heedless of mortals, but when you get his conscience thoroughly roused and his honor involved, he will die in defence of his charge.

APPLICATION

I proclaimed a fast, v. 21. When the Moabites and Ammonites came up against Jehoshaphat, he proclaimed a fast. Before

Esther jeopardized her life by

Why Fast? entering unbidden into the king's presence, she and her

maidens fasted. To Daniel the revelation that the time of the captivity was ended, and to Anna the knowledge that the Messiah had come, were specially revealed after a lengthened season of fasting and prayer. Paul and Barnabas felt it expedient to fast before they ordained elders in the churches of Asia Minor. Not indeed that the mere abstinence from food has any value in itself, but the anxiety for the things of God that can abjure all luxuries of "the table and the wine cellar," and concentrate the whole soul on doing His will, is never without a response from Him. Besides, there are Christians whose flesh renders them slothful and sluggish. "I don't like your rosy faced, jowled, mobile-lipped connoisseurs of cooking and vintage," complained the good Grosart. "There is more fear of a pottingerful of gluttony than of a spoonful of superstition," said Bishop Andrews.

I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen, v. 22. Two locomotive engineers stand with their engines at the end of a newly-built bridge.

Two Men and a Bridge

The one praises its strength and security. He points to the

skilful construction, the excellent material, the care displayed in every detail; but not a foot will he move forward on the bridge. The other man acts differently. No less minutely he examines the structure of the bridge. But once convinced that it is sound and safe, he opens the throttle valve and pushes across, trusting his life to it. It is easy to see which of the two men has real confidence in the bridge. So we trust God when we take His promise of protection, and step boldly out, though it be into a desert filled with foes. And whether we act like Ezra, who refused, or like Nehemiah (Neh. 2 : 9), who accepted, a guard of soldiers, our faith is the same. We depend not on human, but on heavenly help, for deliverance from all perils by the way.

Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, v. 24. There is a distinction between

dependence upon secular means and the use of organization. "Let all things," says Paul, "be done decently and in order." "Order is the sanity of the mind, the health of the body, the peace of the city, the security of the state"; and, we may add, "heaven's first law" for the conduct of the church. Ezra organized in careful detail the perilous and wearisome return journey over the unproductive desert. Had he not done so, he would have been responsible for the needless hardships and fatal mishaps that otherwise would have overtaken them on these lonely wastes. Nor should any missionary be sent to a heathen country, nor any preacher to outpost work in the homeland, without regular arrangements to make provision for his inevitable wants, and to save him from many a needless hour of worry or privation. Organization alone, like the body without the spirit, is dead, but, on the other hand, a handful of disciplined troops are a hundred-fold more effective than a mob.

Ye are holy unto the Lord, v. 28. Holiness, both as definite consecration and in its more ordinary signification of pious character, is an indispensable requisite in all who are engaged in the Lord's work, even if they be members of only some seemingly unimportant committee. As in the old Grecian games, the athletes anointed themselves with an unguent, that they might be quick, agile and nimble in their movements, so there is for the Christian an unction in holiness that gives his efforts a definiteness and a power for which no substitute can be found. The words of an acknowledgedly holy man are always heard with respect, however stammering his utterance may be; whereas the most eloquent periods of the polished orator are received only with incredulity, when they fall from lips notorious for falsehood and insincerity.

Until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests, v. 29. Ezra marked down what each carrier received at the start, and the amount

he handed in at the end of the journey was checked off by the high priest. The carrier had to watch carefully lest, through heed-

lessness or a temptation to dishonesty, or sheer laziness in carrying so heavy a burden, he should lose any of it. Nor ought we at any time to be less exact in the business work of the church. Surely the Lord's work should be a model to the world, of punctuality, exactness and scrupulosity in its conduct. Strictness in accounts is not only profitable to the work itself; it is a safeguard against all unjust and thoughtless suspicion in handling "the free-will offerings unto the Lord," that may arise from the utterances of irresponsible persons. And the principle should be applied to every department of life. Any appearance of dishonesty should be avoided, and above all things the evil itself. "Give me good measure: your master is not in," urged the customer with a sly wink. "My Master is always in." was the deserved rebuke from the honest employe.

He delivered us from the hand of the enemy, v. 31. Sometimes God's providence is quiet and unseen, and sometimes it surprises in startling fashion. A voice sounded in Augustine's ears in the critical struggle of his life.

Cargill was restrained by another such voice when on the brink of suicide in the misery of a sinful life. The covenanting Saunders, when surrounded by the implacable dragoons on a narrow hill, cried out, "Twine them about the hill, O Lord, and cast the lap of Thy cloak over us." Scarcely was the prayer uttered when a mist arose and concealed them from their enemy. But whether openly or unobserved, God is ever present to deliver His own from all their perils. Consecration, fasting, prayer, method, honesty, are like trumpets calling to our side the protecting hosts of heaven. Against these no enemy can fight. Shielded by them, no danger can prove fatal.

And we came to Jerusalem, v. 32. We need never be afraid to put God to the test. The foes that seek to hinder us may be a great multitude, and the ob-

stacles like mountains; but if we place ourselves and our affairs in His keeping He will bring us safely through. From the beginning of the journey, right on to the end, we may count on His protection and help.

Organization
or a Mob

How Holiness
Tells

The Protecting
Hosts

Never Fails

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Teachers of the Older Scholars

Note the place of the Lesson in the history of the people. Eighty years had passed since the first Return. When the temple was dedicated, the interest waned. How account for this? Was it opposition on the part of the people of the land, poverty, or disappointment that so few joined them from Babylon? With the decline of spirituality there appeared a lax condition of morals and intermarriage with the heathen (compare ch. 9 : 1, 2, 11; Neh. 1 : 3; 13 : 15-17).

Study the history of Ezra (chs. 7-10; Neh. chs. 8-10). He was a priest-scribe. The Exile was a time of literary activity (for examples, Ezekiel and some of the Psalms). Ezra was a student of the law, and he was anxious to go to Jerusalem to put the law into effect. He secured an edict from the king. It was written in Aramaic, the language used by the Jews from the captivity onwards, instead of pure Hebrew, ch. 7 : 12-26. Note the substance of this, concerning volunteers, privileges, powers and authority. Observe the composition of this expedition, in all, according to Geikie, more than 5,000 souls.

1. Study the preparations for the journey, vs. 21-23. There were three things: (a) A fast. Discuss the place of fasting in the religious life. Ezra felt the need of penitence for sin. (b) Prayer for guidance and the safety of the expedition and its stores. (c) An assurance of God's favorable answer. It is well to note why Ezra felt so keenly the need of God's help. He had been exalting God's love and power, and he felt he could not accept a military escort. His was faith in the Unseen.

2. Note the method, vs. 24-30. He appointed reliable officers. He gave these the treasures, and held them responsible for safe delivery at Jerusalem. He took account of everything so that there could be no suspicion of dishonesty. What was the amount? What do these things show concerning the condition of the people?

3. Note the journey and safe arrival, vs. 31, 32. They left on the twelfth of the

first month, v. 31, and arrived on the first day of the fifth month, ch. 7 : 9. Probably the distance was about 800 or 1,000 miles.

4. Look briefly at his work. There was the exaltation of the law, enforcement of ritual, spiritual revival, and abolition of mixed marriages (see ch. 8 : 33 to ch. 10).

The immediate lesson is the guiding hand of God in duty. But keeping in view Ezra's work, it is better to consider it as illustrating the process of a genuine religious revival. The power of one zealous man for God, the spiritual preparation, and the ethical consequences are all graphically set forth. Contrast it with movements under Elijah (1 Kgs. 18 : 21-40), Josiah (2 Kgs. 22 : 1-23), Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29 : 1-31), Pentecost (Acts, ch. 2), Wesley, Edwards, Moody. In applying to modern conditions, study three aspects of progress: (a) There must be strong convictions regarding the need of revival. (b) Supreme faith in God. (c) It must issue in moral uprightness. It was these things that made Ezra's reform noteworthy. Emphasize the importance of living in such a way that God can bestow His best blessings.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

A travel lesson! Who were the travellers? (Have this made quite clear.) A small company or a large? What was their starting place? chs. 7 : 9; 8 : 15. To what point? Who was leader? His profession and standing? His object in organizing the return? Whose leave had to be got? How did he deal with the request? Was it a loss to him? What led him to grant permission? What was the distance? About a thousand miles, almost as far as from Halifax to Toronto, from Toronto to Winnipeg, or from Winnipeg to the Pacific Coast. How long did it take? ch. 7 : 9.

The odd start is what we first notice. V. 21 describes it. Where was this river? What is a fast? Of what use? The purpose in this case? What is meant by "a right way"? Who alone can lead us aright? Give some promises which He has made to those who are willing to be led.

Why did Ezra not ask a guard from the

king? For what was Ezra ashamed? Read the last part of v. 22. He had staked God's strength and mercy against all odds. Is it safe to do so? (Have the marginal references here read: they are lamps.)

So they fasted and prayed. "Prayer and provender hinder no man's journey" is an old and true proverb. How is it that the man who prays is safer, stronger, richer, than the man who shuts God out of his thought and life? Did Ezra know that his prayer was answered? v. 12. How many prayers does God answer?

Now let the class read "verse about," or together, vs. 24-29. See who can write down or say out the greatest number of points. Here are some: (a) The very best in the land are not too good for the Lord's work. (b) Good leaders are likely to win great successes. (c) A good deal of God's work is best done by a few persons working to one common end. (We call them committees.) (d) Church money, indeed, trust funds of any sort, cannot be too carefully counted and cared for. (e) God must have been with His people when the hearts of "the king, and his counsellors, and his lords" were so warm to them. (See v. 22, and compare Prov. 16:7.) There will be some talk about money in bars and in coin, about weighing as against counting, and about the

different sorts of the precious metals and vessels, and the number and value of them. Two things will be specially marked: the great value, almost \$5,000,000, and the scrupulously exact count taken and given. We cannot be too business-like in the Lord's work.

Why were they so scrupulous? v. 28. What is meant by "holy" here? Yes, "consecrated, set apart." How long was the charge to continue? v. 29. The very stones of Jerusalem would blister the feet of those who had proven unfaithful to their trust. They were to keep charge, as remembering that the journey would end, and that only through their fidelity to God and to their trust would it end well. A picture of our earthly life and the giving of account at its close.

How did those asked to undertake these heavy responsibilities act? v. 30. As every true servant of God rejoices to act—hearty accepting their share of the Lord's work.

What was the story of the march? V. 31 tells it. Take it up step by step. Note that the task was finished. The Golden Text is the key to it all. Ten miles a day would give plenty of time for song. What were some of the songs? Perhaps Ps. 23, or Ps. 121, or Ps. 122. Duty heartily undertaken attunes for song, and the song of trust lightens the weary way.

ADDED HINTS AND HELPS

In this section will be found further assistance under various headings.

Lesson Points

With God as our guide we can never go astray. v. 21.

Whatever the means we use in His work, the might is of God. v. 22.

Prayer is the key to unlock heaven's supply for human need. v. 23.

Those seldom lack something to do who can do something. vs. 24, 25.

There is more danger of our being too exacting in our demands than of being too exact in our duties. vs. 26, 27.

Purity is power. v. 28.

Our tasks should not be forsaken till they are finished. v. 29.

The most capable leader can accomplish little without willing followers. v. 30.

God's hand is a surer defence than the army of soldiers. v. 31.

A journey begun with God is certain to have a happy end. v. 32.

From the Library

If the community of the Lord was not to lose its individuality and disappear among the surrounding peoples, and the precious treasures which it contained not to be lost to mankind, two things were imperatively necessary: first, a reinforcement to the numbers and spirit of the strict and faithful party; and secondly, the imposition of a new law of worship and life, which would create and continue to express a sharp distinction between the people and all around them.—A. B. Davidson.

We must be struck with his (Ezra's) splen-

did faith, and the loyalty which would run a great risk rather than suffer what might seem like dishonor to his God. Here was one of God's heroes. We cannot but connect the preliminary fast with this courageous attitude of Ezra's. Is it not true now as ever that no boasted might of man can be in any way comparable to the divine strength which takes possession of those who completely surrender their wills to God?—Expositor's Bible.

Prove from Scripture

That we should give ourselves to God.

Lesson Questions

[FROM THE HOME STUDY QUARTERLY]

Juniors—Name the leader of the Jews who first returned from Babylon to their own land. Who led those who now returned?

21 Where did Ezra gather his people? Whither were they going? Whom did they ask to guide them?

22, 23 Who had Ezra said would protect him and his followers? What enemies had they to fear? From whom did they ask help? Did God hear their prayer?

24-30 What treasure did the Jews take with them? Who had charge of it?

31-32 How long did the journey to Jerusalem take? What was Ezra's great work there?

Seniors and the Home Department—

FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

Lesson Subject—God redeeming His people by guiding them to their own land.

Review—You may help to print the name of the beautiful young queen we heard about

last Sunday. Do you remember about the plot that wicked man Haman made? Do you remember the way Queen Esther went to the king to beg him to save the lives of her people? How kind the king was to her and to Mordecai and to all her people! After King Ahasuerus died, the new king was kind to God's people, too, and allowed all who wished, to go back to Jerusalem.

A Camping Party—Have you ever seen a camping party—men, women and children living

How was the building of the temple stopped? When was it resumed? Completed? What interval between the completion of the temple and the return under Ezra?

21-23 What was the purpose of the fast at Ahava? What is required of us if we would have true success? (Josh. 1:7.)

24-30 What was the value of the treasure mentioned in these verses? Describe the freewill offering. What offering should we make? (Rom. 12:1.)

31, 32 To whom is the safety of the returning exiles ascribed? On whom does our well-being depend? (Ps. 127:1, 2.)

The Catechism

Ques. 102. *The Lord's Prayer*—its second petition. There are two points in this question: (1) The kingdom of God—what it is. Here the words mean, not God's rule as Creator over all He has made, but His authority in the hearts of men renewed by His Spirit and yielded to His sway. It is called "the kingdom of grace," because the men can enter it only by having their hearts changed, and for this, divine power is needed. A second name is "the kingdom of glory," because the time is coming when all opposition to its King and laws will be destroyed. (2) The kingdom of God—how it grows: (a) "The kingdom of Satan" must be overthrown; (b) Men must be gathered one by one into the kingdom of God, and kept in it.



Ezra's Journey to Jerusalem

in tents? We'll draw a river, and we'll place a lot of tents along its banks. We'll make a great many strokes for people, and here is a very tall one for the leader, or chief man of the camp. These people are the people of Israel, ready to start for their old home, Jerusalem. The leader is EZRA. This is the river Ahava. They have not started on their journey yet. This is the meeting place and the starting point. It takes four long months, travelling day after day through the hot desert and through all sorts of dangerous ways, before they reach Jerusalem. Ezra's errand is to get the people in Jerusalem again to obey God's laws.

Seeking a Right Way—Speak of the dangers from wandering tribes who would rob and kill, if they got a chance. Travellers usually needed a band of soldiers and horsemen to guard them.

Golden Text—Repeat. This is what Ezra and his people had said to the king, and they would not ask him to send a guard of soldiers with them, for they wanted him to know that they really believed that God would take care of them. They remembered how God had led their fathers through the Red Sea and through the desert. Surely they

can trust Him now! Before they start on their journey, we see them here at the river Ahava, praying that God will show them a right way, a safe way. Vs. 31, 32 tell us how God answered their prayers.

A Right Way for Us—Wherever we are going and whatever we are doing, we should seek a right way, ask God to put into our hearts what is the right thing for us to do.

Two ways—There are two ways—

GOD'S WAY	MY OWN WAY
leads	leads
to	to
HEAVEN	UNHAPPINESS and PUNISHMENT

Let us all **G**^O**D**'S WAY.

Our Heavenly Home—We are all on our way to our heavenly home. You little ones have just started. We older people are further on. Sometimes we lose the path and get into bad ways, through bad play-mates or bad habits, but God will guide us back to the right way, if we ask Him.

Something to Draw at Home—Draw a finger-board pointing to A RIGHT WAY.

Something to Remember—God will bring me to heaven.

SUPERINTENDENT'S BLACKBOARD REVIEW



The Lesson to-day is the story of a journey. The starting-point? Yes, Babylon (Print B on the blackboard). The destination? Jerusalem (Print J). The leader? The king who had given him permission? How many people went with him? (See For Teachers of the Older Scholars.) The rendezvous? On whom did Ezra depend for safety? How did he impress the people with their dependence on God and their responsibility to Him? The arrangements about the treasure? Its value? What was the distance? (Print 1,000 MILES). Why did the company travel so great a distance? How long a time did it take? What about the DANGERS (Print)? Who was the DELIVERER (Print)? Did the Jews get safely to Jerusalem? On what journey are we all? Whither do we wish to go? Have we any dangers to meet? Yes, temptations, etc. To whom should we look for defence? How can we get His help? Emphasize the need and value of prayer. What is required of us? Obedience and faithfulness. Repeat the Golden Text.

Lesson VIII.

NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER

November 19, 1905

Nehemiah 1: 1-11. Commit to memory vs. 8, 9. Read ch. 2.

GOLDEN TEXT—The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.—James 5: 16.

1 The words of Nehemiah the son of ¹Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month ²Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shu'shan the palace.

2 That Hana'ni, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men ³of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jeru'salem.

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 Jeru'salem 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 ⁶God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy ⁷for them that love him and ⁸observe his commandments:

6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest ⁹hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee ¹⁰now, day and night, for the children of Is'ra'el thy servants, ¹¹and confess the sins of the children of Is'ra'el, which we have

Revised Version—Hachaliah: ²Now it is; ³Chislew; ⁴out of; ⁵the; ⁶with; ⁷keep; ⁸hearken unto; ⁹at this time; ¹⁰while I confess; ¹¹yea; ¹²trespass; ¹³peoples; ¹⁴return; ¹⁵your outcasts were in; ¹⁶cause my name to dwell there; ¹⁷delight; ¹⁸(Now I was cupbearer to the king.)

LESSON PLAN

I. God's People in Distress, 1-3.

II. The Prayer of God's Servant, 4-11.

DAILY READINGS

(By courtesy of I. B. R. Association)

M.—Nehemiah's prayer, Neh. ch. 1. T.—Request granted, Neh. 2: 1-8. W.—Resolve to build, Neh. 2: 9-20. Th.—The promise, Lev. 23: 40-46. F.—Far-reaching deliverance, Deut. 30: 1-10. S.—Daniel's prayer, Dan. 9: 3-15. S.—Prayer in adversity, Psalm 80.

Shorter Catechism—Ques. 103. *What do you pray*

EXPOSITION

Time and Place—445 B.C.; Shushan.

Connecting Links—The narrative in the Book of Nehemiah begins at a point some thirteen years later than Ezra's expedition. At this time the Jews in Judæa were in great distress, and news of their condition reached Nehemiah.

I. God's People in Distress, 1-3.

V. 1. *The words*; an expression emphasizing the fact that we have here writings by Nehemiah himself, not merely about him and his work. *Of Nehemiah*; a Jew, probably very young, declared by tradition to belong to the royal house of David, possessed apparently of large wealth (see ch. 5: 16-18). His birthplace probably, and certainly the scene of his early life, was Susa (Shushan). Here he became "cupbearer" to King Artaxerxes, a court position of great power and influence. "Nehemiah was a councillor, statesman, courtier, and favorite." *The*

sinned against thee: ¹¹both I and my father's house have sinned.

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

8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Mo'ses, saying, *If ye* ¹²transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the ¹³nations:

9 But *if ye* ¹⁴turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; ¹⁵though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from hence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to ¹⁶set my name there.

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

11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who ¹⁷desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. ¹⁸For I was the king's cupbearer.

for in the third petition ? A. In the third petition (which is, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven) we pray, That God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

The Question on Missions—44. What are industrial schools? They are schools in which the children are taught some handicraft by which they can earn their own living. These schools increased greatly in number when so many children were gathered in during the famine.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, 438 (Supplemental Lesson); 263; 295; 35 (Ps. Sel.); 401 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY); 313.

month Chisleu; the ninth month of the Jewish year, the end of our November or the beginning of December. *In the twentieth year*; of Artaxerxes (see Light from the East). The date would be 445 to 444. *Shushan*; the chief of the three capitals of the Persian empire, about two hundred and fifty miles east of Babylon. It was now winter, and Shushan was the usual winter residence of the Persian kings. *The palace*. This word seems to mean more than a royal residence; it designates Shushan as a stronghold as well as a royal city.

Vs. 2, 3. *Hanani, one of my brethren*; "not necessarily an actual brother, although according to ch. 7: 2 most probably." (Bertholet.) *Certain men out of Judah* (Rev. Ver.). These men were eye-witnesses of the conditions among the returned exiles. *I asked*. Nehemiah is an alert man and full of interest in his countrymen. *Concerning*

the Jews that had escaped, etc.; that is, "the Jews in the land of Judæa ("Judah") as distinguished from those in Babylon and dispersed in other countries." (Cambridge Bible.) *In the province*; of Judæa, now part of the Persian empire. *In great affliction and reproach*. See Geikie in *From the Library. Wall of Jerusalem. broken down. . gates. . burned*. This answers the second part of Nehemiah's question. The wall had been partly rebuilt, but the work had been stopped, (see Ezra 4 : 12) and it was still in ruins, as Nebuchadnezzar had left it, 2 Kgs. 25 : 10. "In those days, rather one may say, in those countries, of disorder, a city without locked gates and lofty walls was no city at all." (Dean Stanley.)

II. The Prayer of God's Servant, 4-11.

Vs. 4, 5. *When I heard*. "The moment he heard of the deplorable condition of Jerusalem, his resolution was formed to seek leave from the king, though he had to wait several months for the opportunity." (A. B. Davidson.) *Wept, and mourned certain days*; during four months (v. 1 and ch. 2 : 1), pondering the while what he could do, earnestly asking guidance of God, and waiting for a favorable opportunity. *Fasted*; an expression of his intense earnestness. *And prayed*; constantly, day and night, during those long months of delay. The One to whom Nehemiah prayed was : the *Lord God of heaven*, the unseen spiritual God, so far above the dead idols that could be seen; *the great and terrible God*, whom His true worshippers approach with reverent awe, and who produces unspeakable fear in His enemies; *that keepeth covenant* ("agreement," "promises") *and mercy*. Even the present condition of His people was a fulfilment of God's word (see Deut., chs. 28 to 30). Such a God could and would answer Nehemiah's prayers, and He will answer ours. *For them that love him and observe his commandments*. None but the obedient can enjoy God's best blessings. To give them to others would encourage sin, and so add to the misery of the world.

Vs. 6, 7. *Let thine ear. . be attentive. . thine eyes open*. With God to hear is to answer; to see is to help. *Hearken unto the prayer. . day and night, for. . Israel* (Rev. Ver.); an illustration of what we owe to the intercession

of others for us, and of our duty to intercede for them. (Compare Abraham's prayer on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 18 : 16-33, and our Lord's for Peter, Luke 22 : 32.) *I confess the sins* (Rev. Ver.). God's people have only themselves, not Him, to blame for their sad condition. *I and my father's house have sinned*. We share the sin of those around us, (1) if we are influenced by the same spirit; (2) if we fail to do what we can to prevent sin in others. *Have not kept the commandments. . statutes. . judgments*. Compare Deut. 5 : 31; 6 : 1; 11 : 1. These terms describe "the divine law from every point of view,—what God has commanded, the laws He has enacted and recorded on the statute book, His wise judgments or decisions as to right and wrong." (Peloubet.)

Vs. 8, 9. *Remember*. The father in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke, ch. 15) never forgot the wanderer. Much less will the Heavenly Father ever forget His children. *If ye turn unto me*. Only then is it possible and wise for God to bless, though He is always willing to bless. *Outcasts. . in the uttermost part of the heaven* (Rev. Ver.); driven away from their own into distant and strange countries, according to God's word, for their sin (see Deut. 28 : 25). *Will bring them unto the place that I have chosen*. That "the place. . is Jerusalem and the temple at Jerusalem is beyond all doubt." (Cambridge Bible.) (Compare 1 Kgs. 8 : 29; 11 : 36.)

Vs. 10, 11. *Thy servants. . thy people. . redeemed* (Nehemiah is apparently thinking of the Exodus from Egypt); a strong plea. The people in such a woful plight are God's very own. Surely He will not leave them to their foes. *By thy great power. . strong hand*. Compare Ex. 32 : 11. Lesson I, Third Quarter, Sennacherib's Invasion (2 Chron. 32 : 9-23), is a striking illustration. *Who delight to fear thy name* (Rev. Ver.). There is overflowing joy as well as reverent fear in true religious service. For God—His "name" means just all that it He is—is so loving and gentle, so wise and true. *Mercy in the sight of this man*; that is, Artaxerxes, of whom he was about to make a request on behalf of his people. There was reason for anxiety, so uncertain and ca-

precious was the favor of Eastern kings. At last, after four months (see ch. 2), the opportunity came for Nehemiah to present his petition for permission to go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. His request was granted, and Lesson X. will describe the carrying out of his plans.

Light from the East

THE KING—Was, no doubt, Artaxerxes Longimanus (Longhanded), who reigned 464-425 B.C. The name signifies that in his day the Persian spear reached far. He was the third son of Xerxes, and after his father's assassination displayed much energy in reaching the throne by crushing the opposing forces under his brothers and suppressing a revolt in Egypt. After he reached the

throne he is described as a good-natured but weak sovereign, ruled by his wives and favorites, an account which harmonizes with the glimpses of him in Nehemiah. In his reign the ruler of Syria revolted, and this changed the history of Israel.

CUPBEARER—Eastern despots were always subject to court intrigues and were constantly in danger of poison, therefore the person whose office it was to serve the king with food and drink was always one attached to the sovereign by the strongest ties, and whose loyalty was not open to the least suspicion. (He had himself to taste everything that he presented to the king.) This made the post one to be coveted by the nobles because of the influence which it gave them with the king and in the affairs of state.

APPLICATION

In Shushan the palace, v. 1. Oftentimes by the banks of a sedgy river, where the weeds are coarse and rank, may be found a delicate flower scenting the air with its perfume, and redeeming its surroundings by its loveliness. So, too, in the most unlikely places Christian virtues may be found to flourish. In Shushan, the palace, luxurious, effeminate, drunken, debauched, in the East End slums of London, amidst all its metropolitan vice, there stand out men like Nehemiah, of fervid prayer and piety. They are not the creatures, but the conquerors, of circumstances. God's grace in their hearts is a power stronger than environment.

Hanani, one of my brethren, came, v. 2. It was the simple and touching appeal of a native Christian that moved our church to undertake its noble and successful mission to Korea. Tidings of the great need in heathen lands is sure to send Christian people to their knees in prayer to God. And, if their prayers are honest, they will rise with the resolve to give all the help in their power. Were the missionary periodicals more widely and carefully read, there would be more zeal in the cause of missions. Read, learn, tell, definite facts about the church's work in heathen lands. Information is the fuel of

inspiration. Knowledge arouses enthusiasm, and moves to action.

Wept, mourned, fasted, v. 4. The prayers that prevail are the prayers that come straight and hot from a heart that feels its own and its neighbor's need. Formal and feeble petitions that come from the lips merely, are powerless to bring help. If, when we are on our knees, there is no burden upon our heart, nothing that we long to have for ourselves or others, let us not pretend that there is, but frankly confess our coldness, and ask God to take away our stony hearts and give us hearts that honestly realize their lack and seek above all things His blessing.

God of heaven, great and terrible, v. 5. The tiny minnow in his little creek may perhaps form an idea of the boundless ocean; but how much greater the ocean is than the minnow's thoughts of it! So it is with our thinking about God. We know that He is powerful, but we cannot measure His might. He guides the storm, He sends and stills the earthquake, He fills all earth and heaven. But there is terror in the power of God only to those who are His foes. For those that trust Him, that strong arm of His is ever outstretched to protect and defend.

Confess the sins of Israel, which we have sinned, v. 6. It is easy enough to confess

In Unlikely Places

poisonous air with its perfume, and redeeming its surroundings

Prayers that Prevail

That Strong Arm of His

the sins of others, but people are not always so willing to acknowledge their own shortcomings. All the Confession that Brings Forgiveness same, the sins of others are our own. The lives of those around us are mirrors reflecting our own faults. We should be honest enough to look squarely at them and own our partnership in the world's guilt. No set form of confession is binding upon us, and we have no "father-confessor" with a right to inquire minutely into our conduct, nor are there any questions we are obliged to answer; but we should be quite frank and specific in telling our evil deeds to God, who knows the secrets of our hearts. "O Lord, I was proud, I was angry, I was untruthful, it was my tongue that injured my brother and my hand that was lifted in defence of wrong"—it is this sort of confession that brings free and full forgiveness of all our shortcomings and transgressions.

Remember, I beseech thee, the word, v. 8. You enter a coal mine, and descend a slope whose roof is scarcely six feet high. On either side walls of coal but a few feet apart hem you in. Still Fresh Air Down the narrow passage you walk, half frightened that you will be suffocated, but surprised to find the air as pure a thousand feet down as at the surface. On the way down you pass a panting engine pumping out the foul, and pumping in the fresh, air. So the strong, pure promises of

God are continually pouring into our hearts and expelling the distrust and fear that would otherwise poison our lives.

Whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand, v. 10. A child's finger pressing a button sets loose the mighty force

Human Faith and Heaven's Power that hurls thousands of tons of rock into the air, and clears a passage for safe navigation.

In like manner, at the touch of faith, there comes from heaven the resistless might that sweeps away all obstacles to the redemption of men. It is not ours to redeem the world, but it is ours by faith to bring to bear upon this task the power already pledged to accomplish it.

Grant him mercy in the sight of this man, v.

11. God wants us to be definite in our petitions. It is true there may be some unwise requests, which, for our good, He will not grant. The child may ask for a white powder, thinking it to be sugar, when it is really poison, and it will be denied him. But what is good, God will give. Adoniram Judson does not hesitate to write this testimony: "I never prayed sincerely and earnestly for anything, but it came, at some time, no matter at how distant a day; somehow, in some shape, probably the last I should have devised, it came." So was it with Nehemiah's prayer. God answered it in His own time and place.

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Teachers of the Older Scholars

As this is the first of three Lessons from Nehemiah, study what is said about him, chs. 1 : 1; 2 : 3. He was probably of the tribe of Judah and born in exile. He was courageous, God-fearing, of strong will and persuasion, and probably wealthy (see ch. 5 : 16-18). He was cupbearer to the king, a position of honor and influence, and became Governor of Judæa. He lived, a man of God, in the palace of a heathen king. To get a full account of the conditions in Palestine, read the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. The people had

made progress commercially, ch. 3 : 8, 31, 32; 13 : 15, 16; but in other respects their condition was deplorable. The walls had been partly built under Ezra (Ezra 4 : 12), but in a recent attack they had again been destroyed. This was probably caused by Ezra's policy concerning mixed marriages, Ezra. 10 : 9-17. Note the Time and Place of the Lesson.

1. Consider the occasion of Nehemiah's prayer. A company of men, including his brother, had returned from Jerusalem. Nehemiah sought information concerning the progress of the work under Ezra. Their report was distressing, vs. 1-3.

2. Study the prayer, vs. 4-11. (a) Call out the great burden of soul. He mourned

four months (compare ch. 1: 1 with ch. 2: 1). (b) His view of God's character, v. 5. See titles used to express God's exaltation, might, faithfulness, mercy. (c) His confession of sin, vs. 6, 7. Sin was the cause of the Jews' troubles, both social and individual. Refer to the corruption of the people (compare chs. 5: 1-7, 10, 11; 13: 15; Ezra 9: 1; 2 Chron. 36: 14-17).

3. He pleads the promises to Moses, and fulfils the conditions, vs. 9, 10. (Compare Lev. 26: 27-30; Deut. 28: 45-52.) For the promise of acceptance, see Lev. 26: 40, 45; Deut. 30: 1-10. Notice how he pleads with God on behalf of a people to whom God had especially manifested His goodness,—“redeemed by thy great power.” Study history in confirmation, as Egypt, Samson, Deborah, Sennacherib, etc.

4. The request for favor before the king (v. 11), when he would make known his petition. The answer should be briefly noted. It came in many ways (compare chs. 2: 1-8; 4: 7-20).

This Lesson is an illustration of a patriot at prayer. Compare him with Abraham (Gen. 18: 23-33), Moses (Ex. 32: 11-14) and Daniel (Dan. 9: 3-27). As a patriotic prayer it has some special features. Note: (a) Nehemiah's identification with his country, so that he bears its burdens; (b) his identification with the sin and responsibility of the people; (c) his invincible faith in the God of Israel; (d) his self-denying efforts in the interests of the people.

Apply this to the needs of our country. The privilege and duty of intercession and work for our country should be especially prominent. Christian statesmanship is much to be desired, and should command the support of every patriot. The present condition of our country educationally and politically will afford material for profitable discussion.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

A man who is of the right sort says as little as he can about his own honors. This is why we have to go to the very last verse of the lesson to find out who Nehemiah was. What was the king's name? Of what country was he king? How came a Jew to

be there? What were the duties of the king's cupbearer? How did his office rank? Of what character must he be? Was this young cupbearer rich or poor? (See ch. 15: 16-18.)

How does Nehemiah introduce himself? This question will make way for verses 1-3. Explain the month, the year, (“twentieth year” of what?), the place. Visitors come: Who? Whence? Why was Nehemiah interested in them? And in the people there? Quote a Psalm showing how the Jews loved Jerusalem (Ps. 137: 5, 6). What was the report? (v. 3.) See that the words are understood—“remnant,” “captivity,” “the province,” “affliction and reproach.” How had the destruction come about? 2 Kgs. 25: 10. Account for Nehemiah's sympathy. (Compare Heb. 11: 24, 25.) Use this as an argument for Home Missions.

What effect on Nehemiah had the sad news? v. 4. Did the king and courtiers worship this God? Why then does Nehemiah seek His help? What lesson here as to holding true to our convictions in any surroundings? Recall similar conduct in Daniel. Does prayer seem the direct way to help his fellow-countrymen? Why then did he resort to it? We shall see in the verses that follow.

The prayer is worth examining closely. It is a model prayer: First, in the way it addresses God. Let the scholars pick out the names and attributes of God here used—“Lord,” Jehovah, the God of their nation; “God of heaven,” above the earth but controlling it; “great and terrible,” of might to render largest help and crush their strongest foe; “keeping covenant and mercy,” faithful and compassionate;—just the sort of God to give the aid of which Nehemiah stood in need. We learn, that, in prayer, we should address God by the name appropriate to what we are about to ask. Let the teacher work this out.

What is the most urgent thought in vs. 6, 7? The sins of the people. Why does Nehemiah put this in the foreground in his prayer? Because there is no blessing when sin is unacknowledged. Sin is a non-conductor—it shuts out our prayer from God, and God's blessing from us.

What does Nehemiah ask God to do?

To "remember." Remember what? His own promise—nothing more, nothing less. The marginal references should all be turned up. The promise was a thousand years old, that is, as men reckon years. How does God reckon? 2 Pet. 3: 8. God's promises are like gold—they never change in value by lapse of time. All the promises of the Bible, even the oldest of them, are ours, and always fresh.

What is the plea of v. 10? (Have some one read the verse.) What is meant by "redeemed"? When and how did God

redeem the Jewish nation? How is this an argument for present help?

What is the prayer of v. 11? The heart of it is, "prosper thy servant," that is, make me successful in my request of the king. Note how very specific the prayer is. It asks for just exactly what is wished for: a good model for our prayers. Why was Nehemiah so anxious to have favor with the king? What was the result of his request? The substance of ch. 2: 1, 8 should be got at, and it should be shown how the whole incident illustrates the Golden Text.

ADDED HINTS AND HELPS

In this section will be found further assistance under various headings.

Lesson Points

Religion is a plant that grows alike in the palace of the king and the cottage of the peasant. v. 1.

Knowledge about God's work is fuel to the flame of interest in it. v. 2.

The lot of God's people may be hard, but it is never hopeless. v. 3.

Weeping is useless unless it is followed by working. v. 4.

God's character is His people's confidence. v. 5.

Repentance is the first step towards righteousness. v. 6.

Rebellion against the loving God—this gives to sin its darkest stain. v. 7.

The sharp tooth of time is powerless against the promises of heaven. vs. 8, 9.

Those whom God has purchased He will not suffer to perish. v. 10.

In the service of Christ duty and delight go hand in hand.

From the Library

Nehemiah is one of the most engaging personalities in the Old Testament, and the naïve self-consciousness with which he dwells on his own characteristics and doings greatly adds to his attractiveness. He was self-contained and self-reliant, prompt in forming his resolutions, and determined and masterful in carrying them out.—A. B. Davidson.

Nehemiah was a man of profound piety, connecting everything, great or small with

the will of God. His prudence was equally marked; and there is no better example of constant dependence on God, united with practical forethought. He was disinterested and unselfish; his wealth was used for public ends.—Ellicott.

As this man (Nehemiah) was walking before Susa, the metropolis of the Persians, he heard some strangers that were entering the city, after a long journey, speaking to one another in the Hebrew tongue; so he went to them and asked them whence they came.—Josephus.

Their subjection to Persia forced itself on the citizens at every turn. The tribute imposed upon them was a heavy burden to a poor community. Subordinates and their servants lorded it over the people at large. Jewish recruits had doubtless been forced into the Persian armies. The country was pillaged in open day, and many Jews carried off into slavery by nightly surprises, while the corpses of murdered men were often found on the road.—Geikie.

The special petition with which his (Nehemiah's) prayer closes is most definite. It is on behalf of his own need; it is for immediate help—"this day"; it is for one particular need—in his proposed approach to Artaxerxes to plead the cause of his people. Here then is an instance of the most special prayer. It is "to the point," and for the most pressing present requirements. We cannot but be struck with the reality of such a prayer.—Expositor's Bible.

The refuge which prayer affords is not the

refuge of cowardice, which shuts its eyes to danger, but of courage, which looks it full in the face. The optimism of piety is not an optimism which looks on the bright side of things, but one which dares to look on the worst side, and yet believes that there is One higher than the highest.—Abbott.

Prove from Scripture

That Jesus can forgive sin.

Lesson Questions

[From the HOME STUDY QUARTERLY]

Juniors—In what condition was Jerusalem? Who heard of this? What did he do?

1, 2 Where was Nehemiah? Whence did some persons come? About whom did Nehemiah ask?

3, 4 What is said of the Jews in Judæa? Who had broken down the walls of Jerusalem? How did Nehemiah feel? From whom did he ask help?

5-9 What words describe God's strength? His faithfulness? What other quality is mentioned? What had caused the troubles of God's people?

10, 11 To whom did the Jews belong? Would He let them be destroyed? With whom was Nehemiah planning to intercede for them?

Seniors and the Home Department—How long after Ezra's return is the Lesson? 1-4 The cause of Nehemiah's grief? What

was Moses willing to suffer for his countrymen? (Ex. 32:32.) Paul? (Rom. 9:3.) How did Jesus regard doomed Jerusalem? (Luke 19:41, 42.)

5-9 What attributes of God gave Nehemiah encouragement? What parables of our Lord's teach perseverance in prayer? (Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8.) With what had God threatened the rebellious? What promise had He made to the repentant?

10, 11 To what past deliverance does Nehemiah refer? What is the surest pledge that God will hear our prayer? (Rom. 8:32.)

The Catechism

Ques. 103. *The Lord's Prayer*—its third petition. In the kingdom of God there are two kinds of growth. It grows, as we saw in studying the last Question, when men are brought into it. It grows, too, in the hearts of men, when they obey more and more perfectly the "will" of God, its great King. To obey God's will, we must know what it is. This He has taught us in many ways, chiefly in His word, and still more completely and perfectly, in Jesus Christ, His blessed Son. It should be our highest aim to do the will of God. For this He has created and preserved and redeemed us. We have in Jesus Christ a perfect pattern of obedience. When we imitate Him, we shall do God's will "as the angels do in heaven."

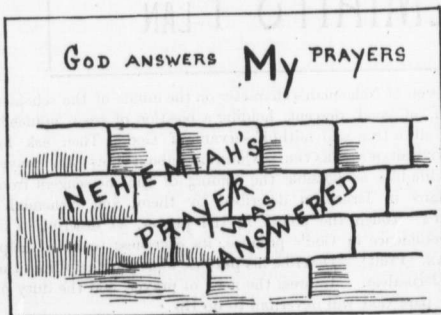
FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

Lesson Subject—God redeeming His people by answering their prayers.

Review—Who can print the name of the leader of that "camping party" we heard about last Sunday? **EZRA!**

Recall the scene when all those campers fasted, and prayed to God to show them a right way.

Lesson—Print **NEHEMIAH**. This is the name of another praying man, one of the children of Israel. He lived in the palace of the king at Shushan. He was the king's cup-bearer (explain). One day, some friends from Jerusalem came to see Nehemiah. "How are the people getting on who went back to Jerusalem with Ezra?" he asks, and, "What does the old place look like?"



"Our friends who went back to Jerusalem are in great trouble," they replied; "the walls of the city are broken down, and the gates burned with fire." Let us hear what Nehemiah did when he heard this sad news, v. 4.

Nehemiah's Prayer—Nehemiah made up his mind that he would get leave from the king to go on a visit to Jerusalem, to see if he could help the people in their trouble. He prays for them. He tells God all about it, and asks God to help him to get leave from his royal master, the king of Persia, to go to Jerusalem.

Prayer Answered—Ch. 2 tells us how God answered his prayer. Tell the story briefly. Ch. 3 tells how Nehemiah got the people all started to build the walls of Jerusalem. Each one did his share of the work, some more, some less, till the work is finished, and we see Jerusalem with a wall around it once more (outline). All this was done because of Nehemiah's PRAYER.

Our Helper—God helped him in his work. Is it not nice to know that we always have a Helper who will listen to every word we say to Him, who is ready to give us all the help we need. Impress the thought that nothing is too small for Him to notice. We may take all our little troubles to Jesus in prayer.

Tell a story of a child who prayed and received help. We need never be afraid that God will not hear us when we pray. For He loves us more than even our father or mother.

Golden Text—Explain words and repeat. Nehemiah was a righteous man, a RIGHT-DOER. He sought to know and do God's holy will in all things.

Right-doers—If we expect God to answer our prayers, we must be right-doers. We must love Jesus and ask all things for Jesus' sake. You know we sometimes say, "Oh, mother, please do this just for my sake." So Jesus says to God, His Father, "Oh, Father, do what my friends ask for My sake."

"In the sunshine of His love

We are living day by day,

And He says our prayers are heard,

When to Him in faith we pray."

Prayer—Repeat (with clasped hands and bowed head)—

"Now the time has come to part—

Dear Jesus come to every heart,

Go Thou with us as we go,

And be near in all we do. Amen."

Something to Draw at Home—Draw a wall, and remember that God ANSWERED Nehemiah's prayer.

Something to Remember—God answers my prayers.

SUPERINTENDENT'S BLACKBOARD REVIEW

NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER PLAN

Try to leave a definite impression of Nehemiah's character on the minds of the scholars. Picture him a young man, rich, of good descent, holding a position of great influence at the Persian Court, and, best of all, a true and faithful servant of God. Then ask for the Lesson Title, and print NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER. Question about how this prayer came to be offered. Make as life-like as possible the coming of the messengers from Judah, the sad condition of affairs in Jerusalem described by them, and Nehemiah's grief. How he loved his nation! Touch the points in the prayer, its description of God, its confession of sin, its confidence in God's promise, its eagerness to be of help. This brings us to Nehemiah's PLAN. (Print). Describe his purpose of getting help from the king to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Impress the need of prayer, and the duty of doing our best. When we do our part God will never fail to do His.

Lesson IX. **ABSTINENCE FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS** November 26, 1905

World's Temperance Sunday

1 Corinthians 10 : 23-33. Commit to memory vs. 31-33. Read chs. 8 : 1-12 and 9 : 19-27.

GOLDEN TEXT—Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.—1 Corinthians 10 : 12.

23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.

25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that

shewed it, and for conscience sake; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other; for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?

30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?

31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

shewed it, and for conscience sake; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other; for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?

30 For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?

31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Revised Version—*Omit* for me; ²each his neighbour's good; ³*Omit* that; ⁴one; ⁵biddeth; ⁶are; ⁷hath been; ⁸*Omit* unto idols; ⁹*Omit* for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; ¹⁰the others; ¹¹by another conscience; ¹²If I by grace partake; ¹³no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God; ¹⁴also; ¹⁵the.

LESSON PLAN

I. A Great Principle, 23, 24.

II. A Practical Problem, 25-30.

III. A Noble Practice, 31-33.

DAILY READINGS

(By courtesy of I. B. R. Association)

M.—Abstinence for the sake of others, 1 Cor. 10 :

23-33. T.—A stumbling block, 1 Cor., ch. 8. W.—

For the gospel's sake, 1 Cor. 9 : 19-27. Th.—Con-

sidering others, Phil. 2 : 1-11. F.—For the good of

others, Rom. 15 : 1-7. S.—A cause of stumbling,

Rom. 14 : 10-21. S.—Be sober! 1 Thess. 5 : 4-11.

Shorter Catechism—*Ques.* 104. *What do we pray*

for in the fourth petition? A. In the fourth petition (which is, Give us this day our daily bread) we pray: That of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

The Question on Missions—45. How is the school for blind children conducted? They are in school about four hours a day, during three and a half hours of which they are engaged in weaving The wool spun in the Widows' Home at Indore is woven into blankets by the blind children at Ujjain.

Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise, 438 (Supplemental Lesson); 216; 50; 7 (Ps. Sel.); 247 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY); 217.

EXPOSITION

Time and Place—56 or 57 A.D.; Corinth, a city in Greece on the isthmus between the Ionian and Egean Seas.

Connecting Links—This being "The World's Temperance Sunday," we turn from our Old Testament Lessons to a passage in one of Paul's Epistles from which some important temperance lessons may be drawn. The Lesson is from a section of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (chs. 8 to 10) in which the apostle answers the question asked by the Christians at Corinth in a letter to him, whether they might lawfully eat food that had been offered to idols, a common practice in heathen cities like Corinth.

I. A Great Principle, 23, 24.

Vs. 23, 24. *All things are lawful* (allowable) *for me*. Our actions are of three classes: (1) those which conscience and God's law command; (2) those which they forbid; (3) those which they permit, but do not command. It is of this third class, such as eating, drinking, rest, social pleasures, the enjoyment of beautiful paintings and sculpture, and here particularly, eating

meat offered to idols, that the apostle speaks in the passage from which the Lesson is taken. All these are permissible to the Christian. *All things are not expedient*; from the Latin "*ex pes*," foot-free. If anything we lawfully wish to do entangles others in temptation, we should abstain. Love limits our liberty. *Edify not*; build not up. Everything that hinders the Christian's building up of a Christlike character in himself and others, and building up the kingdom of God in the world, he should avoid. *No man .his own .each his neighbor's good* (Rev. Ver.). The question is whether we shall please ourselves or be helpful to others. Christ's example settles this question (see Rom. 15 : 3).

II. A Practical Problem, 25-30.

Vs. 25, 26. *Whatsoever is sold in the shambles* ("anything that is for sale in the meat market," Weymouth), *eat* (Rev. Ver.). Before being exposed for sale, the meat might have been offered in sacrifice. Some Christians thought it was still a sacrifice when placed in the market, and using it for food

would encourage idolatry. Others believed that it was mere flesh, and might be freely purchased. Paul agrees with the second view. *Asking no question for conscience sake*; giving one's conscience no trouble about the matter. *The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.* See Ps. 24: 1. This text was the usual Jewish "grace before meat." So long as the Christian acknowledges God as the great Giver of all things, he may without sin eat what he pleases.

Vs. 27, 28. *If any . . . that believe not bid you to a feast*; in a private house. Note that Paul assumes the social intercourse of Christians with heathen. Jesus became the Friend of publicans and sinners, to lift them up from their level to His own, while He condemned the aloofness of the Pharisees. *Whatever is set before you, eat.* In a non-Christian home sacrificial food was likely to be used, and here the Christian's conduct would be narrowly watched. *Asking no question for conscience sake*; that is, the conscience of another, for he would not be eating the meat as a sacrifice to an idol, and so no one would be led astray by his example. *If any man say, etc.* "The reference is to a Christian fellow-guest at a feast in a heathen home." (Meyer.) He detects by some mark that the meat has been offered in sacrifice, and thinks it wrong therefore to partake of it. He whispers his discovery to others. There are two ways of acting towards this man. One is to go on eating the sacrificial meat; this would encourage him to disobey his conscience. The other is to abstain; this would help him to refrain from doing what he thought wrong. Which way is right? Paul says, *Eat not for his sake*; lest he should be tempted to do what his conscience forbids.

Vs. 29, 30. *Conscience, . . . not thine own. . . the other's* (Rev. Ver.). Two lessons are to be learned. "The first is the sacredness or supremacy of conscience; the second lesson is that we must ever use our Christian liberty with Christian consideration for others." (Expositor's Bible.) Paul has laid down the rule that the Christian should show deference to the conscience of others. In vs. 29b, 30, he justifies this rule, saying in effect, "What is to be gained by my so using my liberty that the conscience of a fellow-Christian will

condemn me; and, why should I, who give thanks to God for my food, so act as to lead others to speak evil of me, supposing that I am giving honor to an idol? Shall my thanksgiving lead to blasphemy ('evil spoken of') on their part?"

III. A Noble Practice, 31-33.

The apostle now points out the two great principles which should guide and control the Christian's conduct: (1) *All to the glory of God.* See Shorter Catechism, Ques. 1. We are to ask ourselves, for example, whether eating meat offered to idols, or in our own day, using strong drink, will help us to bring honor to God. (2) *Give no occasion of stumbling* (Rev. Ver.). We should ask, Is our example a safe one for the weak and tempted to follow? *To the Jews* (still unconverted to Christ). *Gentiles* (heathen). *church of God* (Christian believers). These three classes made up Paul's world of men. *Even as I.* Back of Paul's teaching was his personal example, adding power to his words. *Seeking . . . the profit of many.* Paul, like his Master and ours (Matt. 20: 28), was well content to be a "servant unto all," ch. 10: 19. *That they may be saved.* With Paul, saving men was a passion, Rom. 9: 1-3; 10: 1. If it is so with us, self-denial for others will be easy.

Light from the East

SHAMBLES—Now signifies only a slaughter house; but it formerly meant a bench or stall on which goods and especially meats were exposed for sale, and then it came to mean the flesh market. It is here used to render the provision market of the Greeks and Romans, the open square, frequented by cooks, fishermen, poulterers, and men of similar occupations, for the display and sale of their various wares. In small places the forum was used for this purpose, but as a city grew and better buildings began to surround the market square, provisions were banished from it to some more remote district, and the forum was reserved for public gatherings for municipal and political business, and for the administration of justice. Even then bankers and usurers and the more genteel professions had their places of business round the forum.

IDOLS—Are representations of the deity which are made objects of worship. They belong to a comparatively advanced stage in the history of religion. In Greece and Rome there were no images or temples in

very early days, but in later times these were multiplied. They were introduced at first as domestic idols, and were small, painted, wooden figures or adorned with gold and silver, and descended as heirlooms in a family.

APPLICATION

All things . . . not expedient, v. 23. Sometimes in modern warfare the soldiers of an attacking force have suddenly found themselves stumbling into barbed "Barbed Wire" wire entanglements. Floundering and falling amid the meshes of steel, their progress has been checked, and they have been exposed to defeat and destruction. In like manner the great enemy of souls places in our pathway through life the snares and pitfalls of temptation. Only by the most careful and constant watchfulness can we keep our feet free from these hindrances and reach the heavenly goal.

No man . . . his own, but . . . his neighbor's good (Rev. Ver.), v. 24. In Ezekiel's wonderful vision of the stream that flowed from the temple eastward and southward and

Stagnant or Flowing

sweetened the salt waters of the Dead Sea, there were certain miry places and marshes whose waters continued to be salt and bitter. There are hearts, too, into which the glad gospel of Jesus Christ has come, like the healing water of the prophet's river, and yet they are not as strong and pure and joyful as they ought to be. The reason is not far to seek. They have been seeking to enjoy the blessings of salvation themselves, taking no thought about sharing them with the multitudes of needy ones in the world. If the blessed gospel is to do us the most good, it must be in our lives like a flowing stream, not a stagnant pool.

For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, v. 26. From the time the grain was sown in the spring God watched over it. All summer long He sent His sun-

The Grain and its Uses

shine and showers to ripen it into the golden harvest. At last the reaping time came, and the wealth of the fields was gathered into the barns, causing them to burst with plenty. Now, of one thing we may be very sure—God intended

this great gift of the grain for the good of men. He never meant that one handful of it should go towards robbing men of their senses, turning loving fathers into cruel tyrants and good citizens into the worst criminals. And yet that is what is done when the grain is turned into intoxicating liquor and sold to men for drink. What a mockery, to thank God for the grain and then use it, or, by our example to encourage its being used, thus!

Whatever is set before you, eat, v. 27. A Canadian gentleman, on a recent visit to Europe, was taking a walk one morning,

The King's Salute

when, in a garden, he saw King Edward, then spending some time on the Continent. The gentleman raised his hat and bowed to the king, and His Majesty returned the salute as graciously as if he had received the loyal acclaims of an enthusiastic multitude. A polite and friendly recognition of another's effort, or even wish, to give us pleasure, or show us respect, or do us honor, is always a mark of right feeling and good breeding.

For his sake, v. 28. A blind man was seen carrying a lantern. He was asked of what possible service it could be to him, since he could not see. "I carry it," he

The Blind Man's Lantern

answered, "so that it may give light to others, and save them from stumbling." Even if it were certain—and it is not likely that this is the case—that the use of strong drink would not injure us, we should abstain, lest our example should lead others to ruin.

Evil spoken of, v. 30. In some regions the germs of malaria are carried by mosquitoes, which breed in swamps and marshes. Their

Conduct and Its Consequences

bite inoculates the victim with the poison of the disease. There is a moral as well as a physical infection. Our conduct may influence others to their injury. On the other hand, by our actions, we may convey and strengthen the power of right and holy prin-

ciples in the lives of those around us. There is good reason for care when we consider the possible consequences of our words and deeds.

That they may be saved, v. 33. There is no true religion without love. And Christian love has a twofold character: it is filial and fraternal. It is as if we stood at the angle of a carpenter's square, looking upward along one branch to God, and along the other, outward to our brother men. For the good gifts that

The Carpenter's
Square

come in a never failing stream from above, we owe unceasing gratitude. And the thankful spirit will best show itself in passing on to others the blessings—and most of all the priceless blessing of salvation—we have received. What we get with one hand we should give with the other. Here is the spiritual square for the testing of our conduct—Is it a right return to God for His kindness, and will it do good to others? Settle this question, and our duty is clear.

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the school.

For Teachers of the Older Scholars

The Lesson does not specifically refer to the evil of intemperance as commonly understood. It is a discussion of an entirely different subject, namely, How the Gentile Christian should regard meat offered to idols. The principles, however, underlying this question and that of temperance are the same.

To bring out the truth, get a clear idea of the problems troubling the early church. (Compare Rom., ch. 14, 1 Cor., chs. 8, 9, 10.) There were two classes of difficulties: First, those troubling the conscience of Jewish Christians, as their relation to the Gentiles, to the Old Testament ritual, to Sabbath keeping and circumcision. Secondly, those troubling Gentile Christians, especially what to do when meat offered to idols was presented to them as food. What ought the Gentile Christian to do? (a) He should not eat because it would offend his Jewish brethren, and might lead weak Christians astray by causing them to sin against their conscience in following his example. (b) It was allowable to eat, because an idol was nothing at all, and as food it was proper to partake of it. In these circumstances he had the privilege and liberty of abstaining for the sake of others. The Lesson begins with the privilege of personal freedom.

1. Grasp clearly the distinction between essentials and non-essentials in the Christian life. Among essentials should be named loyalty to God, truth, righteousness. In these things there can be no compromise, and Paul is a good example of firmness. Among

non-essentials should be named the method of doing many things. Paul was all things to all men, in order to save some. He would observe ritual with a Jew, but not with a Greek. A particular kind of food, clothing, work or recreation is not essential to the best life, or a condition of salvation.

2. Discuss the Lesson, to bring out this truth by examining the special problem, vs. 24-30. Note the shambles, the social meal, the problem for the individual, and the method of solving it. As long as eating is a social affair, without spiritual significance, it makes no difference whether they eat or not: observe the social custom. But if it is interpreted as an act of worship, then do not eat. Here advanced classes may profitably discuss Paul's view of conscience and its authority in the Christian life.

3. Note the conclusion of his argument, vs. 31-33. He gives this as an ideal for the Christian. All life is to be lived for the glory of God, avoiding offence in non-essentials. By careful thought win others for the kingdom.

Apply this principle to the liquor business or intemperance: (1) Is alcohol necessary for life? Does it enable one to glorify God, and win others for the kingdom? It is not food, nor is it necessary to the higher life. (2) As a non-essential, is its use expedient? Does it help in the best life? No. Does it help others? No. It hinders very seriously, physically, spiritually and socially. It is a real offence among men and an occasion of a stumbling. The only safe ground is Paul's as given in vs. 24 and 31. We have the liberty of leaving all forms of evil alone, and the best interests of humanity demand

that we place our influence on the safe side. The law of individual "rights" is secondary to the Christian's privilege.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

"The World's Temperance Sunday" ! That means that there is peril the world over from strong drink, and need of sound teaching in regard to it, and sound practice, too.

"What's the danger?" Alas, many of the scholars know. There may be many answers, but they are all reducible to these two: "There is peril to me if I use strong drink, for it may be my destruction; there is peril to some one else if I use it, for my example may be his downfall."

The Lesson makes the latter point so clear and strong, that one wonders that there should ever be another drop of drink drunk by a Christian; but this is, perhaps, getting ahead of the Lesson.

Who wrote this letter? To whom was it written? How long had they been Christians? About five years: they were mere baby Christians as yet. What had they been before they became Christians? What question had arisen? Explain that the portions of a sacrifice not actually consumed on the altar were used for food. Now, in such cases, should a Christian eat, or not eat?

What does Paul say? At first, he seems to say, "By all means eat, if you wish" (see first clause, v. 23). But, again, he says, "It is not so simply solved, this difficulty: it may be lawful (allowable); but it may not be expedient (wise): harm may come from it. It may be lawful; it may not edify (build up) some one else."

Why trouble about others? V. 24 is the

answer. Such is God's will concerning us. Such is the example of God's dear Son, Romans 15: 3. If one wishes to follow up the matter of Christ's example, Phil. 2: 5-8 should be studied.

Now for an actual case or two. First, that of v. 25. Explain "shambles." Anything sold there for food, whether previously offered to idols or not, eat: you are at liberty. It is of God's providing, as v. 26 declares.

Another instance. You are invited to a family dinner at a heathen neighbor's house. What are you to do in regard to the food offered? V. 27 is the reply. What is meant by "for conscience' sake"? It means the conscience of other people. Ask no question lest their conscience be hurt by your knowingly eating meat offered to idols.

Still another case. Some one whispers "This was offered to idols." Then, what is one to do? Paul's answer is, "Eat not." Wherefore the prohibition? "For his sake that showed it." Another is in doubt; let not your conduct hurt his conscience. It is easy to apply the principle to the use of intoxicants. If even the least peril threaten another from our example of using drink, then we are unbrotherly if we continue. Nor is it to God's glory (v. 31), for it may lead some weak one astray. V. 32 lays down the rule in another form. Notice how wide its application—Jews, Gentiles, Christian believers, and Paul's personal example is again set forth, v. 33.

If the scholars can be got to see that the safety, perhaps the eternal salvation, of some one depends on their behavior, they will follow Paul and Jesus in their refusal to lead other people into sin.

ADDED HINTS AND HELPS

In this section will be found further assistance under various headings.

Lesson Points

Not the pleasure he may get, but the profit he may give, determines the Christian's conduct. v. 23.

Our own joy is doubled when we share it with another. v. 24.

Christian liberty is regulated, not by outward pressure, but by inward principle. v. 25.

A child in his Father's house—that is the Christian's place in the world. v. 26.

Divine laws place no interdiction on innocent enjoyment. v. 27.

Christ is our Pattern in courtesy. v. 27.

We can exercise our liberty as really by abstaining as by partaking. v. 28.

Conscience, however ignorant, should not be ignored. v. 29.

True regard for others will avoid offending even their prejudices. v. 30.

We give the highest honor to God when we reflect most perfectly His character. v. 31.

Our conduct will either help or hinder others in the upward path. v. 32.

He who would save must be ready to sacrifice. v. 33.

It does not take away our liberty, if we choose to give up what we have a right to do, for the sake of helping others.—Peloubet.

Prove from Scripture

That we ought to help the weak.

Lesson Questions

[FROM THE HOME STUDY QUARTERLY]

Juniors—Where is Corinth? Whence did Paul write to the Corinthian Christians?

23, 24 Is it right to enjoy ourselves? What is there within us that we should obey? How is there danger of our leading others to disobey their conscience?

25-27 To what did the heathen in Corinth offer their food before using it? Who gives us our food?

28-30 Did any Christians in Corinth think it wrong to eat food offered to idols? What was their duty? How could others help them?

31-33 In what are we to seek God's glory? What did Paul say of himself?

Seniors and the Home Department—About what had the Corinthian Christians asked Paul? Where do we find his answer?

23, 24 What is the liberty of Christians called? (Rom. 8: 21.) How should this freedom be used? (1 Cor. 9: 19.) Who is our great Example of self-denial?

25, 30 Under what circumstances was it lawful for Christians to eat food offered to idols? When was it not lawful? What rule did Paul lay down for himself? (1 Cor. 8: 13.)

31-33 How are we to bring glory to God? (Matt. 5: 16.) What does Jesus say of those who make others stumble? (Matt. 18: 6, Rev. Ver.)

The Catechism

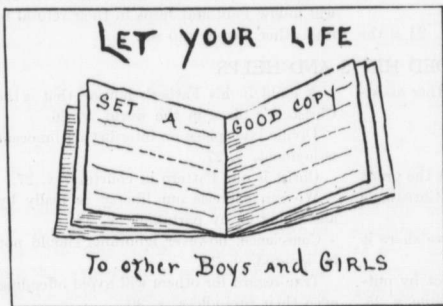
Ques. 104. *The Lord's Prayer*—its fourth petition. In teaching this Question, note the following points: 1. We depend entirely on God. Every blessing we have is His free gift (see such passages as Ps. 104: 27, 28; Acts 17: 25). 2. We have the right to ask a sufficient supply for our actual needs. "Bread" in this petition includes all temporal blessings, for which we may ask in submission to God's will, and also all spiritual blessings, which we may seek without reserve. 3. We should cherish a spirit of trust in God. It is only our *daily* bread for which we are taught to ask. This means that we should leave the future and all its wants with child-like confidence in the hands of a loving Father (see Matt. 6: 25-34). 4. Better than all temporal gifts is the blessing of God.

FOR TEACHERS OF THE LITTLE ONES

Lesson Subject—God redeeming His people by warning them against intemperance.

Introduction—Out in a garden one day we saw a cucumber vine, and in amongst the

leaves we saw a bottle with a large cucumber inside it. The bottle had a small neck. How could the big cucumber ever be put inside? Here is the secret. When the cucumber was a very little one, somebody slipped it into the bottle, still leaving it joined to the vine to grow. It grew bigger and bigger till it filled the bottle. So little sins creep into our heart, and if we do not get them out, they grow bigger and bigger, till they fill our heart and life. Keep the little sins out.



Lesson—If you saw a robber getting into your friend's house, would you not run to tell your friend, and to help to put the robber out? There are two places we ought to guard:

OUR OWN HEART—THE HEARTS OF OTHERS

Example—We'll print a big word—**EXAMPLE**. When you are learning to write, you need a copy. An example is something to copy. Everything we do is an example that some one else may copy. The little ones in our homes will copy what the bigger ones do. How careful we should be to set a good copy for them! We'll draw a picture of a copy book, and we'll print some good things we should be for others to copy: **OBEDIENT, TRUTHFUL, KIND**, etc. Here is a fine example to set—

KEEP FROM STRONG DRINK.

Paul wrote a letter to the people at Corinth, telling them (and us) to set a good example to others and never cause anyone to do wrong through copying us.

Unselfishness—He tells us to be unselfish, to try to do things that will be

HELPFUL
NOT to others
HARMFUL

A little girl said, "No, I'll not play on the dock, because it is not safe for brother Fred

to play there, and he would be sure to follow me." Never do anything that would be harmful for your playmates to do.

The Golden Rule—"What are the rules of the game?" you say. That means "How do you play it?" The Golden Rule is a rule Jesus gave us to show us how to live our life. Repeat Matt. 7:12. Repeat—

"To do to others as I would

That they should do to me,

Will always make me kind and good

As children ought to be."

Golden Text—We sometimes get a fall when we least expect it, if we are walking on a road with stones or holes in it. We must take heed lest we fall into naughty ways, which are like stumbling blocks, and cause us to fall into sin. We must keep clear of these ourselves and clear them away from before other people. (Name some stumbling blocks.)

Sing—Hymn 525, Book of Praise, v. 4—

I want to be like Jesus,

Engaged in doing good,

So that of me it may be said,

"She hath done what she could."

Something to Draw at Home—Draw a scroll and print, SET A GOOD COPY.

Something to Remember—I should set a good example.

SUPERINTENDENT'S BLACKBOARD REVIEW



Begin with a little talk about **LIBERTY** (Print). Refer to the slavery that once prevailed in the West Indies and to the setting free of the slaves. Does liberty mean that we may do just as we please? No, the scholars will tell you there are certain laws of the land which we must obey, or we will lose our liberty. They know that our liberty is **LIMITED** (Print). Now, our Lesson is about Christian liberty. Refer to the special case discussed—the eating of meat offered to idols. Make it clear that there was nothing wrong in itself in doing this. Show, too, that the Christian is free to enjoy all innocent pleasures. Is his liberty limited? Point out that the Christian is bound to do nothing that will injure others. His liberty is limited by **LOVE** (Print). Apply to the use of strong drink. Impress the duty and privilege of denying ourselves for the sake of others.

Assess Ed.
***AN ORDER OF SERVICE: Fourth Quarter**

OPENING EXERCISES**I. SILENCE.****II. THE LORD'S PRAYER** (in concert).

III. SINGING. Hymn 438, Book of Praise
 (It is expected that this hymn from the Supplemental Lessons will be memorized during the Quarter.)

IV. PRAYER.**V. SINGING.**

I hear Thy welcome voice
 That calls me, Lord, to Thee,
 For cleansing in Thy precious blood
 That flowed on Calvary.

*I am coming, Lord!
 Coming now to Thee!
 Wash me, cleanse me, in the blood
 That flowed on Calvary.*
 —Hymn 152, Book of Praise

VI. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. Psalm 126.
Superintendent. When the Lord turned
 again the captivity of Zion, we were like them
 that dream.

School. Then was our mouth filled with
 laughter, and our tongue with singing;
Superintendent. Then said they among
 the heathen, The Lord hath done great things
 for them.

School. The Lord hath done great things
 for us; whereof we are glad.

Superintendent. Turn again our captivity,
 O Lord, as the streams in the south.

School. They that sow in tears shall reap
 in joy.

Superintendent. He that goeth forth and
 weepeth, bearing precious seed,

School. Shall doubtless come again with
 rejoicing,

Superintendent and School. Bringing his
 sheaves with him.

VII. SINGING. Psalm or Hymn selected.

VIII. READING OF LESSON PASSAGE.

IX. SINGING. Psalm or Hymn selected.
 (This Hymn may usually be that marked
 "FROM THE PRIMARY QUARTERLY.")

CLASS WORK

[Let this be entirely undisturbed by Secretary's or Librarian's distribution, or otherwise.]

I. ROLL CALL by teacher.

II. OFFERING, which may be taken in a class envelope, or class and report envelope.

III. RECITATION. 1. Scripture Memory Passages from the Supplemental Lessons, or Memory Verses in Lesson Helps. 2. Catechism. 3. The Question on Missions from the Supplemental Lessons.

IV. LESSON STUDY.**CLOSING EXERCISES****I. ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

II. SINGING. Hymn selected.

III. REVIEW FROM SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK; which, along with the Blackboard Review, may include one or more of the following items: Recitation in concert of Verses Memorized, Catechism, Question on Missions, Lesson Title, Golden Text, and Heads of Lesson Plan. (Do not overload the Review: it should be pointed, brief and bright.)

IV. SINGING.

Simply trusting every day,
 Trusting through a stormy way,
 Even when my faith is small
 Trusting Jesus—that is all.

*Trusting as the moments fly,
 Trusting as the days go by;
 Trusting Him whate'er befall:
 Trusting Jesus—that is all.*

—Hymn 293, Book of Praise

V. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES. Isaiah 55 : 6, 7.

Superintendent. Seek ye the Lord while He may be found,

School. Call ye upon Him while He is near:
Superintendent. Let the wicked forsake his way,

School. And the unrighteous man his thoughts:

Superintendent. And let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him;

School. And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

VI. BENEDICTION OR CLOSING PRAYER.

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Answers
BIBLE DICTIONARY FOR FOURTH QUARTER, 1905.

A-ha'-va. A place nine days' journey distant from Babylon (Ezra 7 : 9; 8 : 15, 31), giving its name to a river or canal on which Ezra assembled the people, who proposed to go to Jerusalem with him, Ezra 7 : 28; 8 : 31.

Am'-mon-ites. A tribe dwelling east of the Jordan who opposed the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah.

A-ra'-bi-ans. Natives of Arabia, the most westerly of the three great peninsulas in southern Asia. Some of them joined the Ammonites in their opposition to Nehemiah.

Ash'-do-dites. Inhabitants of Ashdod, one of the chief cities of the Philistines.

As'-sur. The same as Assyria, a country on the river Tigris. For 700 years after 1300 B.C. it was the leading power in the East.

Bab'-y-lon. The capital of the Babylonian empire, a city on the river Euphrates, 500 miles east of Jerusalem.

Bel-shaz'-zar. The son of Nabonidus who usurped the throne of Babylon. Belshazzar was slain on the night that Babylon was captured by the Medes and Persians, Dan. 5 : 1-31.

Chal-de'-ans. A people dwelling originally on the shores of the Persian Gulf, who conquered Babylonia, and afterwards gave their name to the whole of that country.

Cy'-rus. King of the Persian Empire from B.C. 558 to 529. Having become ruler of Babylon by conquest, he allowed the captive Jews to return to their own land.

Dan'-iel. A Jewish youth carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. He rose to one of the highest positions in that kingdom.

Da-ri'-us. Called Hystaspes. He became king of the Persian empire in 522 B.C.

E'-sar-had'-don. Son of Sennacherib who became king of Assyria about 680 B.C. He was eminent as a general and a political ruler.

Es'-ther. A beautiful Jewish maiden brought up in Susa (Shushan) by her cousin Mordecai. She became the wife of Ahasuerus the Persian king and saved her people from a plot to destroy them (see Mordecai).

Ez'-ra. A Jewish priest, who in 458 B.C. led 1,500 of his countrymen back to Jerusalem from their captivity in Babylon.

Hash-a-bi'-ah. One of the twelve Levites who, along with twelve priests, acted as guardians of the treasure which was being conveyed to Jerusalem by Ezra (see Ezra 8 : 19, 24, etc.). Another of these Levites was Sherebiah.

Ha'-tach. An officer of King Ahasuerus who was appointed to attend Esther (see Esth. 4 : 5, 10).

Jer-e-mi'-ah. A great prophet, who prophesied for about forty years, in the reigns

of Josiah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, kings of Judah.

Jesh'-u-a. Or Joshua, the great military leader who succeeded Moses as the ruler of God's people.

Jor'-dan. The most important river in Palestine, flowing through the land from north to south.

Ju'-dah. The name of the southern kingdom of the two into which Solomon's kingdom was divided, and after the exile a part of a province of the Persian empire.

Medes. A nation belonging to Asia, south of the Caspian Sea, who took part with the Persians in the capture of Babylon.

Mid'-i-an. A region east of the Jordan, whose army was routed by Gideon, Judg., ch. 7.

Mith'-re-dath. Treasurer under Cyrus, king of Persia, through whom the sacred vessels were restored to the Jews, Ezra 1 : 8.

Mor-de-ca'-i. A Jew dwelling in Susa (Shushan), who discovered a plot devised by Haman, the king's favorite, against all the Jews in the Persian empire. He made his discovery known to Esther, the queen, by whom it was defeated. Haman was hanged on the gallows he had erected for Mordecai, and Mordecai became the second man in the kingdom.

Naph'-ta-li. The tribe descended from Jacob's sixth son. Their territory was in northern Palestine.

Neb-u-chad-nez'-zar. The king of Babylon who carried the people of Judah captive to Babylon in 587 B.C.

Ne-hem-i'-ah. A Jew of the captivity who was cupbearer to the king of Persia, and who was appointed governor of Judah. Under him the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt and a political and religious reform effected.

Nun. The father of Joshua.

Per'-sia. A country in western Asia whose king, Cyrus, conquered Babylon in 538 B.C.

Per'-sians. The inhabitants of Persia.

San-bal'-lat. One of the leaders in the opposition to the building of the walls of Jerusalem under Jeremiah. Associated with him was Tobiah.

Sher-e-bi'-ah. See Hashabiah.

Shesh-baz'-zar. The Babylonian name of Zerubbabel, a prince of Judah, who in 538 B.C. returned to Jerusalem and laid the foundations of the temple.

Shu'-shan. Or Susa, a city and royal residence in the Persian empire.

To-bi'-ah. See Sanballat.

Ze-bu'-lun. The tribe descended from the tenth son of Jacob. The territory assigned to them was in the northern part of Palestine.

Ze-rub'-ba-bel. See Sheshbazzar.

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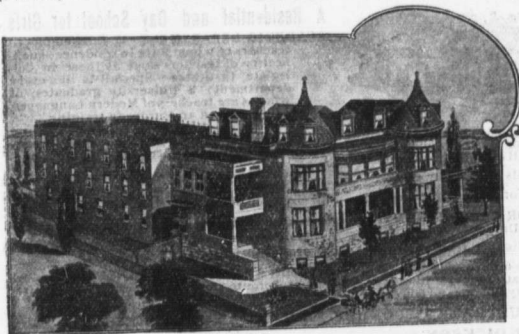
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THE BOOK PAGE

Books for review to be sent to the EDITORS OF THE TEACHERS MONTHLY, Room 123, Confederation Life Building, Toronto.

Amos R. Wells' work possesses that most delightful of characteristics—constant surprise. It is the unexpected he says, and in the unexpected way. Keeness of observation, shrewd common sense, and abundant experience, these are evidently the elements of a book of more than common interest and value, even on such a time worn subject as **Sunday School Problems** (W. A. White Company, Boston and Chicago, 297 pages, \$1.00). It is an entirely fresh and novel treatment of an old theme. It has nothing to say of "the Sunday School movement," but much of "the very humble, but infinitely more important question, how to get Bible wisdom into Tom Jones and Susie Brown." Any half dozen of the thirty-eight chapter titles will awake a desire to possess the volume—and to use it:—The Last Five Minutes, What to do With the Disorderly Scholar, A Good Sunday School Patch, The Pedagogic Value of Fun, The Teacher by Post, What to do With the Harder Lessons, The Superintendent That Needs a Muzzle, The Right Bait. These are sufficient. The skilled hand is everywhere in evidence, and with anecdote and wit and quip to carry off the weightier matter or to point the needed advice. We could wish every Sunday School teacher, actual and prospective, to have a copy of *Sunday School Problems*. There will be no question as to its being read through.

From Jenny Geddes' stool, to the martyrdom of James Renwick and the revolution of 1688, this new volume by Rev. Dr. Robert P. Kerr, **The Blue Flag of the Covenant** (Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Va., 146 pages, illustrated, 75c net, postpaid) gives a fresh and original treatment of an inexhaustible theme, the story of the Covenanters. Dr. Kerr's style is clear and current. One reads on with eagerness, and finds it hard to lay down the book before the tale is finished. The sketch is written specially with an eye to the young, and to Young People's Societies, in which it may be a book of study. But old and young alike will be glad to have set forth so attractively the lessons of sturdy conscience, sincere faith, the eye that sees the invisible, the hand that can fight for liberty, the devotion that counts no suffering too great, which the story of the Covenanters illustrates. They were no narrow men, these brave souls. The fight was, it is true, against the imposition of a church government and liturgy; but it was a matter of conscience with those who resisted; and our Presbyterianism owes, one may say, so far at any rate as its Scottish origin is concerned, its very existence to the brave fight made by these heroes of two centuries ago. Their story will never grow old.

Roger Trewinlon (The Copp, Clark Co., Toronto, 319 pages, four full-page illustrations, \$1.25 net) is Joseph Hocking's latest story; and a stirring story it is of the rugged Cornish coast, a story of mad love and mean plotting, and the fear and dread which superstition brings. For it is placed in the old days

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Further information regarding scholarships, medals, etc., may be obtained from the Calendar, or on application to the Secretary.

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when witches and ghosts were rife in Cornwall, when even the clergymen would turn the prayer book upside down at the burial to prevent the ghost rising. The struggle of Roger Trewinon against the curse which was supposed to rest on his family, his strange adventures by land and sea, the life-long tragedy of the enmity with his younger brother, and the ending in the quiet light of joy and a happy marriage with sweet Ruth, form an enticing tale. The writer is a Cornishman through and through, and evidently mourns for the time when ghosts, witches, charms and omens were believed in—before the telegraph and the railway had driven them from the land.

The scene of **The Little Hills**, by Nancy Huston Banks (The Macmillan Company, New York and London, Morang & Company, Toronto, 325 pages, \$1.50), is laid in a quiet village, and the author portrays its people with keen insight and delicate humor. The principal character is a woman, young, beautiful, but whose chief charm is willingness to spend herself in loving service. She devotes herself to the care, first of a man whom she marries while he is sick of a disease that proves fatal, and afterwards of his father and mother. Our admiration grows as we follow the story of unselfish devotion, and we are glad when at last the burden is lifted from the shoulders that have borne it with such sweet and cheerful patience, and see the one who had ministered to others entering at last upon a pathway strewn with the flowers of a new happiness and joy. The book does not preach; it tells its tale in a simple, unaffected fashion; but we rise from its

perusal feeling that the best life has for any of us is the opportunity of loving and serving.

The Epistle to the Ephesians (272 pages) and **The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and the Thessalonians** (303 pages, Hodder & Stoughton, London) two books by the late Dr. Joseph Parker, come to us from the Upper Canada Tract Society, Toronto. They are typical productions of that great pulpit orator and original expounder of the scriptures. They are not critical. They embody the results of meditation and study. They put the apostles' teachings in clear light. Here is the thought, the heart-food, truth-seekers in God's Word hunger for. By simplicity of statement and mind-gripping expressions the deeps of these epistles are searched. As you read, you realize that Parker was eminently fitted to expound Paul. He says: "To my own heart, Paul is always at his best." If you want to know the length and breadth of Paul as founder of churches, leader, teacher of the soul of morals, you will search long before you discover anything as good as these thoroughly modern volumes.

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