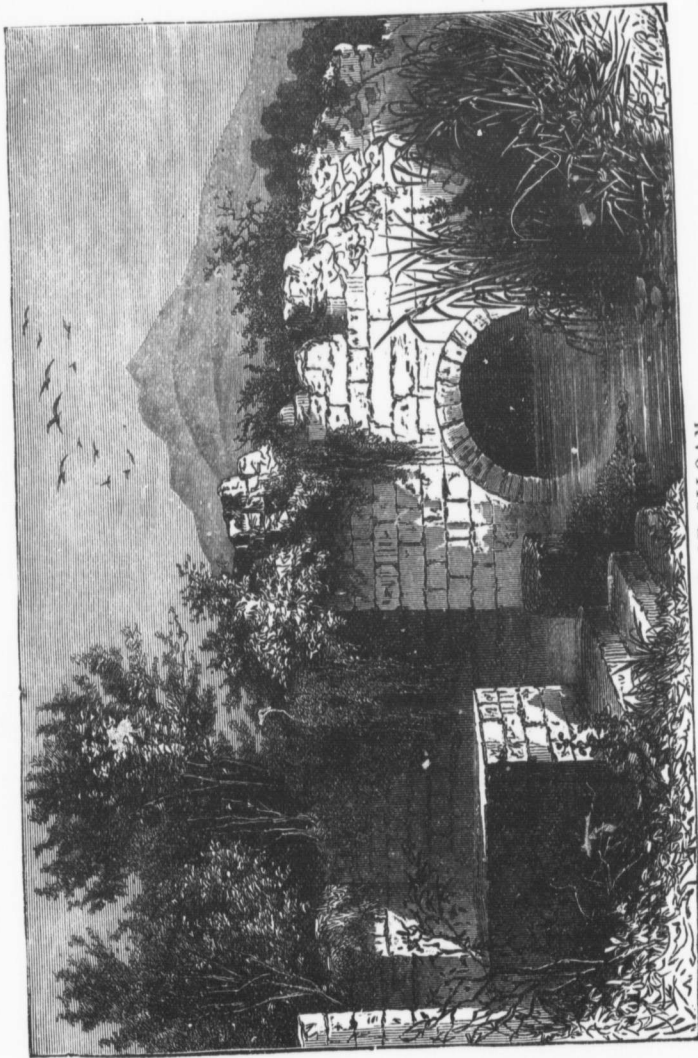


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# SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. XX.]

MARCH, 1886.

[No. 3.

## The Faithful Teacher.

BY MARY L. W. TOWLE.

You have passed the shuttle forward and back  
In the sunlight and the gloom,  
With fingers deft you have woven the threads  
In life's mysterious loom.

The fabrics your hands have patiently formed,  
In woof and warp are as white  
As chrismal vestments of lilies just oped  
To the dawning of the light.

You have worked and prayed in season and out,  
At rising and set of sun ; [the glass,  
Your sands, which have rapidly slipped from  
Have marked your service well done.

You have sought the sheep in the forest paths  
And brought them back to the fold ;  
The tired lambs you've borne in your arms  
And sheltered them from the cold.

[prayed

At the touch of pain you have watched and  
And soothed the suffering one,  
From the midnight hour of agony  
To the rising of the sun ;

With your tired body claiming the rest  
Which you had not time to take,  
You have lengthened your vigils night by night  
In love, for the Master's sake.

[ways,

The waifs you have found on the great high-  
The drift of the alleys and street,  
Are so transformed by the touch of your hand  
They are for the Master made meet.

The poor, unfortunate, helpless ones,  
Who have fallen at your side,  
You've harbored and pulled to the shore again  
From out the engulfing tide.

You've cast the mantle of charity broad  
O'er much that betokened ill ;  
The cup that was mingled with bitterness  
You've tried with love to refill.

You have chosen to suffer affliction,  
To stand in the shadows and gloom ;  
You were first at the cross in the morning  
And last with your Lord at the tomb.

You turn away from the pageant and pomp,  
From the glitter and the glare,  
From the baubles and husks and empty parade  
Of life's great Vanity Fair.

The honour that cometh from man you know  
Hath no gold without alloy ;  
The honour that cometh from God you pray  
May be your perfected joy.

You have walked in the rugged, narrow way,  
With travellers only a few ;  
The Saviour you loved had passed on before,  
The print of His footsteps you knew.

You have run the gauntlet of evil tongues  
For the sake of Him who saith,  
I will give you a harp and a crown of life,  
If faithful found unto death.

[cious stones,

You have learned that the gold and the pre-  
And prizes of the earth,  
Compared with the gift of eternal life  
Are of passing, transient worth.

[pomp,

You've turned your back on the world and its  
On its paths so wide and broad,  
In the straight and narrow way you have sought  
The city of your God.

If this is the faithful record of years  
Engraved in letters of light,  
You have done what you could for the Master,  
You have walked with Him in white.

## OUR PUBLICATIONS.

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Guardian and Magazine together .....	3 50
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## Sunday School Banner.

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

TORONTO, MARCH, 1886.

### Sunday Schools and Revivals.

METHODISM is an organized revival. The spirit of revival is its vital air. As a Church we thoroughly believe in religious revivals. We pray for them, we work for them, we expect them; and, thank God, we have them. The record of the past year has been one of unprecedented revival; and during the year on which we have entered, already from many parts of the country come reports of similar showers of blessing. These revivals will furnish the best solution of all the financial and other difficulties of the hour.

We expect, of course, conversions at all our services, in summer as well as in winter. But the comparative leisure and long evenings of our winter months make them especially seasonable for special evangelistic effort for an abundant harvest of souls. To this all the social arrangements, the parties and entertainments, and even the church festivals of our people, should be secondary. The conversion of those to whom we preach is far more im-

portant than their amusement. And when they experience the joys of salvation they will not hanker after the questionable or forbidden amusements which are calculated to estrange them from the house of God and from the pleasures of religion.

Much may be done to promote revivals in our Sunday-schools. Let teachers exercise much faith and prayer for their scholars. Let them take an opportunity to speak in private the word in season—to make a personal appeal for decision to be the disciples of Jesus. Let a special service of prayer be held in connection with the school. Let all the instruction given have a direct bearing on the conversion of the scholars. Thus may teachers enjoy the exceeding great reward of leading their scholars to the Saviour, of bringing full sheaves to the Master, and rejoicing before God with the joy of the harvest.

### The Pool of Siloam.

THIS is one of the few places near Jerusalem the identity of which is undisputed. It still retains its ancient name almost unchanged—*Silwan*. It is endeared by sacred song and association. Milton sings of "Siloam's streams which flow fast by the oracles of God," and McCheyne of "Cool Siloam's shady stream." The pool is fifty-two feet long, eighteen feet wide, and nineteen feet deep; but it seldom has more than three or four feet of water. It is now quite ruinous and overgrown with moss, ivy, and wild flowers, and the caper tree throws its deep shadow into its placid depths. Isaiah speaks of the "waters of Shiloah that go softly." It is a spot sacred to the Christian, the Moslem, and the Jew. It was to Siloam that the Levite was sent with the Golden Pitcher on "the last and great day of the feast" of Tabernacles. It was from Siloam that he brought the water which was poured over the sacrifice, in memory of the water from the rock of Rephidim. It was to this Siloam water that our Lord pointed when He stood in the Temple on that day and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." The Lord sent the blind man to wash not *in*, as our version reads, but *at* the Pool of Siloam, for it was the clay from his eyes that was to be washed off. Very tender and thrilling are the associations that flood the soul as one stands beside Siloam's sacred Pool.



DON'T FORGET THE

SUNDAY SCHOOL

## Aid and Extension Fund Collection

—ON—

REVIEW SUNDAY—MARCH 28.

It will be remembered that the General Conference directs that this collection be taken up in all the Sunday-schools of our Church on the Review Sunday either in September or March. Some schools, it is to be feared, neglected to take it up in September. That is the best time. For then all the schools are open. In March those schools that close in winter have not yet come out of winter quarters. But we specially request that the direction of the General Conference be carried out by all those schools which may have neglected it in September. The ministers are all asked at the May District Meeting if this collection has been taken up; and, if it has not, the ministers often pay it out of their own pockets. Now, no school desires this to be the case. The ministers cannot themselves take up the collection, for few of them can be in the schools. It is the duty of the superintendent of the school to see that it is duly taken up and handed to the minister.

## WHAT THE S. S. AID FUND IS DOING.

We give extracts from a few only of hundreds of letters received from schools needing help. It will be observed that these schools are doing all they can to help themselves, and to pay back part or the whole of the grant given by the S. S. Board.

A missionary in Newfoundland writes: "I am directed by the Sunday-schools of this circuit to convey to you their respectful and sincere thanks for the papers kindly sent by the Sunday-school Board. They have been carried into many a home where Methodist papers seldom go, and they are not only thankfully received by the people, but eagerly read. Since the periodicals have been discontinued we have noticed less interest in our Sunday-school work. Last year we contributed \$2.10 to the Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund, and will do our best for that excellent fund this year. Our people, as a rule, are poor—being of the fisherman class—and can do little more than they are doing to supply their families with religious reading."

A minister in New Brunswick writes: "Our people are so poor here, and so taxed in their

poverty to keep up a church at all, that, after having done all we can, we are compelled to ask a grant in aid of our school. We are in competition with Sabbath-schools of other Churches, and they are strong and self-supporting, and we have to struggle for existence. Our hope is in our Sabbath-school, in which some devoted and godly women are labouring with most self-denying earnestness to save our cause from extinction. As there are no industrial enterprises here to furnish employment, and the last few years there has been great depression in the trade in fish, the people—our people especially—are quite dependent, and it is impossible to raise money, for the people have not got it. We have done our utmost to raise the amount we now forward with this, \$8.15. I regard the cause here as a just claimant, in view of all the circumstances, upon the fund, and I trust you will be able to make us a grant in aid."

A missionary in the Quebec District writes: "This school is poor, and has to struggle with difficulties which I am sure you would sympathize with if you knew them. We have concluded to keep the school open through the winter, therefore we would ask you if possible to extend the grant of S. S. papers till July next, hoping by that time we shall have some funds to help ourselves. If I am spared till spring I am going to try and open another Sunday-school on this Mission. May God help me in these humble undertakings, and give me wisdom and grace. If this school is opened can I depend on some help from the Sunday-school Board till the school gets established?"

A superintendent in Nova Scotia writes: "Your postal card filled me with joy, and I want to say that we highly appreciate your interest in, and kindness to, our Sunday-school. I was as modest as possible in making a request for aid, for I know there are many poor schools that need help, and I just asked for what we could barely get along with. But I have so often wished when distributing the papers that I had a few more, as some families have to go without. The papers are greatly enjoyed by the scholars, and I read them with a great deal of interest myself, as they seem adapted to old and young. My prayer is that God may bless you even more abundantly in the work in which you are engaged."

A missionary in Manitoba writes: "We are striving to make our Sunday-school a success. When I came here it was about closed. We got it reorganized, and now we have a working school. I purchased maps at my own expense, and have borne half the expense of the school ever since I came here. Our people have been much discouraged, and are so low in financial circumstances that they don't seem able to do much more than they do. But I think we shall, by a little more effort, be able to raise the cash to pay for the greater part of the grant asked for now before next Conference. We are praying for the Spirit's influence over the young. God is giving us their attention more and more. As I can't be in the Sunday-

school much on Sunday, I have a meeting of the young people on Monday evening, and teach them to sing by note, and talk a little while on some scriptural subject and pray with them, and they are taking an increasing interest in the class. If you can see your way to assist us for the present we shall be very glad indeed."

A missionary in British Columbia writes: "In this country there are a great many of the older people who care nothing for religion. By the Sunday-school we reach the children, and through the children we reach the parents. Such papers as the *Pleasant Hours or Home and School* carry the truth into homes otherwise inaccessible. I have seen many Sunday-school papers, but none equal to our own."

A missionary in Muskoka writes: "We have just succeeded in organizing a connexional school that promises to be one of the best in this missionary district. Our people here are in very limited circumstances, and but for our Sabbath-school Aid and Extension Fund we dared not to have attempted to organize a school."

Another superintendent in Muskoka writes: "We labour under great difficulties up here in this new country. The superintendent of this Mission has only paid us one visit since Conference. The young man who has supplied has been obliged to leave on account of ill health, so that our services have been only occasional lately. Hope the new appointee will be able to be more punctual. The whiskey influence has done our cause much damage; we fought hard to keep it at a distance. I enclose \$2.00, all the funds in hand at present."

Another missionary writes: "Enclosed you will please find \$5.00. This is the best we can do at this time. If you can favour us with some help we would be very thankful. We have never received any help from the Sunday-school Aid and Extension Fund, and consequently our school has been greatly neglected. The required collection will be taken up. This is a new country, and if help was given now when the school is young, it would greatly strengthen it. I believe that the Sunday-school papers would be the means of putting new life into our school, as the old library is now useless; and we trust, through God's blessing, to see better things in the future."

Another Sunday-school superintendent writes: "I hope that you may aid us in some way. I feel alone in this work, as our people are discouraged. But I wish to follow Him who 'never failed or was discouraged.' He will guide and lead."

Supplying just such needs as these all over the continent, from Labrador to the borders of Alaska, and helping to plant new schools wherever a handful of children can be gathered together, and a loving heart to point them to the Saviour, is the work that the S. S. Aid and Extension Fund is doing. But it needs funds

to do this work, and appeals to every school to give one good collection in the year. Even the schools that receive help, no matter how poor, are required to contribute what they can to this fund.

Written for the BANNER.

### Our Morning Shadow.

BY ADELAIDE STOUT.

OUR morning shadow runs before our feet,  
When we give note at all  
It is to think of it as heralding  
Our joy. Our thought doth call  
To it in merriment, as it glad heart  
Companioned our glad deed.  
The silver-footed shade is beautiful,  
We laugh to see it start,

And shift, and change. We are not lone at all,  
Our pulses beat so strong,  
And we can make as if part of their life  
To the shade did belong.

### OUR EVENING SHADOW.

Slowly the silver-shodded feet have turned,  
And shifted, growing grey  
In place of silver. Now they follow us;  
We have no quaint by-play.  
And this dark shade that slides so close to us  
Hath taken other mood;  
'Tis leaden-footed—does not seem at one  
With echoes from the wood

That once seemed voice for it—a fitting voice,  
With the same tremblement.  
This shadow does not catch up any voice,  
It follows as if sent  
To haunt the guilty, or to track the hurt,  
This leaden-footed one;  
Is it the flickering, changing shape that with  
Our morning heart did run?

The shadows fall behind thee! lift thou up,  
O face, toward the west! [changed,  
The shadows fall behind! thou shouldst be  
Transfigured, by that test.  
God throws the shadows so: thou shouldst divine  
The sweetest of all clews,—  
The tenderest thought of God in this still hour,  
O heart, be quick to see!

The shadow falls away, that all the west's  
Full glory may be seen;  
There is no flicker of a grey, weird shape—  
Nothing to intervene.  
God maketh all the shadows of our life  
To fall behind our feet;  
We quite forget the shapes that haunted us,  
The gloaming is so sweet.

If in the grooves of silence, gates of pearl  
Should open on our eyes,  
(Our soul so long has looked steadfastly on  
heaven,)  
'Twould scarcely give surprise.

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Rev. Sc

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## \$250,000 FOR MISSIONS.

Rev. Dr. Sutherland on "Sunday-School Missionary Societies."

[We beg to call the special attention of Sunday-school Superintendents and officers to the following articles by the Rev. Dr. Sutherland, the indefatigable Missionary Secretary of our Church, and by Mr. L. C. Peake, an energetic Sunday-school worker, connected with the Mission Rooms, on the important subject of Juvenile Missionary Societies. In the present important juncture in our missionary operations, our schools can render important aid to this great cause, with great benefit to themselves and to the Missionary Society. We therefore reprint the excellent remarks of Dr. Sutherland, and a part of the very excellent paper by Mr. Peake; and also the Constitution of the Sunday-school Missionary Societies.—ED. BANNER.]

"Some time ago an Association of Methodist Sunday-school Teachers was formed in Toronto, and among the questions that have come before them for discussion, the relation of our Sunday-schools to the Mission work of the Church has held an important place. A special evening was appointed for the consideration of this subject, and Mr. Peake, of the Mission Rooms staff, was requested to prepare a paper. In response to that request, Mr. Peake delivered the address given in part in the following pages.

"A committee was appointed to draft a constitution for Sunday-school Missionary Societies, and at a subsequent meeting of the Association, the following form was received and recommended for adoption in the various schools. It is sent forth with the hope that many of our Sunday-schools throughout the connexion will be induced to adopt a similar method of supporting our great missionary movement. No special originality is claimed for this plan: it is simply a combination of what were regarded as the best features of systems already in use, including what is known in England as the 'Blake System.' Doubtless it is better adapted for towns and cities than for country places; but it is believed a large number of our schools might adopt it with great advantage.

"The faithful working out of a plan similar in its leading features to that presented in these pages would insure the following benefits:

"1. The cultivation of a *thorough missionary spirit* among the children of our Sunday-schools.

"2. The raising up of an army of *trained collectors*.

"3. Habits of *systematic giving* to God's cause.

"4. A vast increase in the funds of our Missionary Society.

"5. A guarantee for the healthy growth of our mission work through coming years.

"Collecting books, missionary boxes, etc., etc., can be obtained on application at the Mission Rooms; and the General Secretary will be glad to hear from Ministers and Sunday-school superintendents who may desire to give the method a trial.

"A. SUTHERLAND."

"P.S.—The suggested constitution has been adopted by a number of schools, and always with good results where faithfully carried out. One notable instance may be given, that of the Yonge Street Sabbath-school, Yorkville, Mr. J. T. Moore, Superintendent, with about 150 scholars, where, by the adoption of the two cents a week plan, the noble sum of three hundred dollars was collected and paid into the Missionary Society during the first year after the adoption of this method.

"A. S."

### Our Sunday-Schools in their Relation to Missions.

BY LEWIS C. PEAKE.

I have taken some pains to obtain information in regard to several Sunday-school Missionary Societies—as to their modes of operation, the benefits derived therefrom, and the financial results. As far as my knowledge extends, the system has been brought to the highest state of perfection in Montreal. I find the plan to be generally as follows: Each school is formed into a society, electing a president, one or two vice-presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer. Each class in the school elects quarterly a secretary—sometimes the teacher, but usually a scholar—whose special duty it is to see that the collection is taken up and entered in a little book, somewhat similar to an ordinary class-book; the money, in an envelope or purse, handed with the book to the treasurer, who enters the class totals similarly into a larger book, the amount being announced to the school, compared with the corresponding Sunday of the previous year. Quarterly meetings of the society are held, usually presided over by one of the scholars, the programme consisting of the announcement of the amounts contributed by each class during the quarter, music, recitations, an occasional lecture, etc.; and lastly, the annual gathering of all the societies on New Year's Day.

Many schools provide a silk or satin banner, with the name of the school thereon. This is placed at the end of the seat occupied by the class, during the previous month, has contributed the largest amount, and is, of course, liable to change every month. The class so distinguished is known as the *Banner Class*. Where

the banner is in use, there is enthusiastic testimony as to its influence upon the classes in stimulating to greater exertions, in the hope of attaining to this honorable position; nor need we wonder at this in the case of children, when we bear in mind that even many "children of a larger growth" are not insusceptible to similar influences.

As to the benefits derived. From statements made by brethren connected with several of the Montreal schools, I cull the following:

1st. The offensive system of Christmas-card begging has been superseded by "a more excellent way."

2nd. Scholars are encouraged to give their own money, and, as a consequence, take a deeper interest in the work. As one brother remarks, "You know there is always greater interest in a thing that costs something" and a spirit of liberality is being developed.

3rd. Success attends the effort, because all are engaged in it.

Many individual illustrations might be given of the truth of the foregoing. For instance: One boy contracted to blacken the boots for the family for a compensation, which was all devoted to the missionary-box. Others denied themselves sugar in their tea, receiving cash instead, which also went to missions. One noble fellow collected, saved, and gave nearly \$70 in one year.

I wish here to call attention to another plan which is worked with good results by the Presbyterian Sunday-school in Sarnia. The society is formed in a similar manner to those in Montreal, but their mode of operations is different. A certain number of collectors are appointed—say twelve; the town is divided into a corresponding number of wards, and each collector is furnished with a book in which to enter the names of persons who agree to contribute a certain sum monthly. This is regularly called for by the collector, and entered in its proper column in the book. Monthly meetings are held, when returns are made by the collectors; and two young people, previously appointed, relate some missionary incident, or something in that line. At the close of the year the society, by vote, distributes the amount in hand to the several missionary enterprises of the Church. In their school-room, neatly printed lists of their mission-stations are hung upon the walls, and occasionally a photograph or picture of a mission-house, convent, or locality is displayed. Missionary intelligence is extensively circulated.

This paper would be incomplete without a reference to what has been for many years known in England as the Blake System, which is neither more nor less than a *small weekly contribution* system. Mr. Blake, the originator thereof, had for years been a witness to the unsatisfactory working of the Christmas-card system, as well as the lack of properly-trained adult missionary collectors, and set his mind upon devising a plan which, while yielding at least equally good financial results, would at the same time train in the Church a continuous

supply of efficient and interested missionary collectors. His plan, in brief, is as follows:—Books are prepared with spaces for eight names, and fifty-two columns for as many weeks; opportunity is then given to the children, as many as will deem it a privilege, for the sake of the cause, to take possession of a book, and secure within a circle of their friends or acquaintances the promise of *eight persons* (no more) to contribute *one halfpenny* (no more) *weekly*, with a distinct understanding that it does not interfere with any existing contributions. A limit is placed upon the number and amount of subscriptions, in order that none may be prevented from contributing, and to give opportunity to the largest possible number to engage in the work of collecting. Great importance is attached to the *weekly* collection of these halfpenny, which are by the collectors paid regularly to a treasurer elected for that purpose. Each juvenile collector is entitled to receive a copy of the Society's magazine, *At Home and Abroad*, filled with missionary information and incidents.

The results quoted are in many cases really surprising. For instance, in one of the schools in Manchester, which was about to be abandoned, the plan was introduced. The first year the result was £17; the second, £29; the third, £64; the fourth, £75. In the Sheffield West Circuit, the three best years of the Christmas-card system yielded £113. The *small weekly contribution* system, during the first three years, yielded £459; and in the Sheffield East Circuit the increase was from £252 to £755 in the same time.

As the success of our missionary operations depends upon *collecting* as well as *contributing*, it is worthy of consideration whether the best features of the several systems named might not be incorporated into one that may serve as a model not only for the schools connected with this association, but for those of the Church at large.

## Constitution of the Sunday-School Missionary Society.

### I. NAME.

The organization shall be called "THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL MISSIONARY SOCIETY."

### II. OBJECT.

The object shall be to raise funds on behalf of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, by such means as shall best inculcate the principle of systematic beneficence, and train the scholars in the work of collecting for and advocating the claims of Methodist Missions.

### III. METHODS.

1. CLASS CONTRIBUTIONS.—Each class shall be furnished with a book, ruled with columns for one year, in which the names of members of the class shall be entered, and their weekly contributions credited.

2. SUNDAY SCHOOL.—The discipline of the school shall be such as to secure each week a regular attendance of the scholars. Fund.

3. MISCELLANEOUS.—The Society shall either for occasional occasions be furnished and are not plan; and by the S.

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The duty to receive tributions lectors that and open each year in the be received the Class upon the make no surer of with the

NOTE.—Constitution persistent is evident be exercised their suggest any other

Each of retary, for an eligible

The duty receive e some in such book the Secret

Each C subscriber of ten s shall be excepting when sp received others. these sub obtain Society, in Sec. V

2. **SUBSCRIPTIONS.**—Any member of the School willing to become a Collector may, at the discretion of the officers, be furnished with a book prepared for the names of ten persons, each of whom agrees to contribute two cents each week towards the funds of this Society; said subscription not to interfere with their regular yearly contributions to the Mission Fund.

3. **MISSIONARY BOXES.**—For use in the homes, either for the scholars' personal savings, or occasional contributions of friends. These will be furnished by the officers upon application, and are recommended to those especially who are not engaged in collecting by the foregoing plan; said boxes to be brought to, and opened by the Secretary-Treasurer quarterly.

#### IV. OFFICERS.

The officers shall consist of a President, two Vice-Presidents, and a Secretary-Treasurer. The Superintendent of the Sunday-School for the time being shall, *ex-officio*, be President.

#### V. DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER.

The duties of the secretary-treasurer shall be to receive from the Class Secretaries the contributions of the classes, and from the Collectors their weekly gatherings; also to receive and open the missionary boxes at the end of each quarter. He shall duly record the same in the books of the Society. The amounts so received shall be verified by his initials upon the Class Secretaries' and Collectors' books and upon the missionary boxes. He shall also make monthly returns to the Missionary Treasurer of the Circuit, accompanying the same with the amount accumulated.

**NOTE.**—As the successful working of this Constitution will very largely depend upon the *persistent* fidelity of the Secretary-Treasurer, it is evident that the greatest possible care should be exercised in the selection made. It is further suggested that this officer should not hold any other office in the school.

#### VI. CLASS SECRETARIES.

Each class shall quarterly elect a Class Secretary, for which position the teacher shall be an eligible candidate.

The duty of the Class Secretary shall be to receive each member's contribution, record the same in the class contribution book, and hand such book, with the total amount received, to the Secretary-Treasurer each Sabbath.

#### VII. COLLECTORS.

Each Collector, upon being furnished with a subscription book, shall first secure the names of ten subscribers only, whose subscriptions shall be limited to two cents each per week, excepting on the last two weeks of the year, when special Christmas contributions may be received from such subscribers, but from no others. The Collector shall each week collect these subscriptions, and hand the total amount so obtained to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Society, who shall receipt therefor as provided in Sec. V.

#### VIII. MEETINGS.

A Public Meeting shall be held during the last week in March, June, September, and December in each year, when reports shall be presented of the amounts contributed and collected during the preceding quarter, the names of the Class Secretaries for the ensuing quarter announced, and any other necessary business transacted. Essays or addresses on missionary topics, interspersed with music, may form part of the programme of these quarterly meetings.

The March Meeting, provided for above, shall be the Annual Meeting of the Society, when the two Vice-Presidents and the Secretary-Treasurer shall be elected; those competent to vote at such elections being the Sunday-School Committee, the Class Secretaries, the Collectors, and the Box-holders. The names of the Collectors and Box-holders who have been appointed by the officers of the Society shall be announced at this meeting.

### Methodism in the Far West.

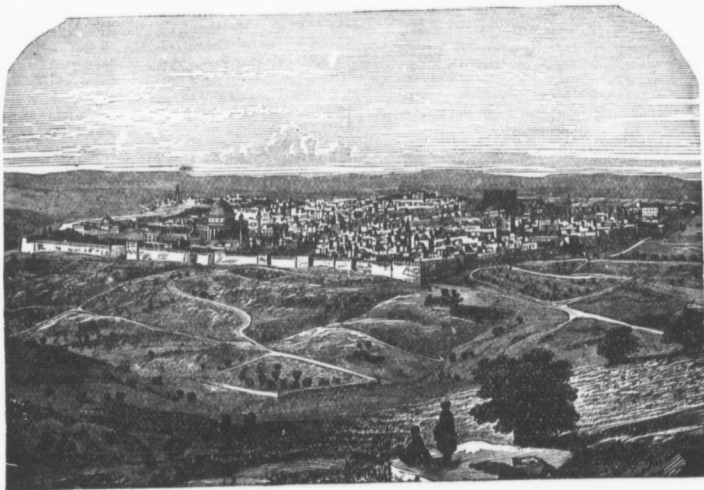
WE make the following extract from an interesting letter from the Rev. A. Andrews. His friends will rejoice that he is able to resume work.—ED.

LETHBRIDGE, N.W.T.

DEAR BROTHER,—Here I am under the shadow of the Rockies, on the banks of the Belly River, as minister to our Methodist people. I have secured the permission of our President and Conference Special Committee to fill this vacancy till next June. And what urgent need there is you will see when I mention the fact that we have a population of over 800, and no minister within 24 miles of the place. We made a beginning yesterday, and from what I see there seems good reason to look for times of refreshing. I like the place and the people very much; and the climate is, without exception, the most delightful that I have ever seen anywhere. I am hoping that we shall start our church here, not on the footing of a mission, but an independent station—not very strong at first, but with elements, I hope, of real success to be attained in the near future. We have made a beginning in Sunday-school work here. I should be glad of a few papers to give out until we can get funds to buy. As ever yours, ALFRED ANDREWS.

It is stated by a writer in the *Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Magazine* that "out of every five persons of the entire population of England and Wales one is a Sunday-school scholar. The present Sunday-school population of England is greater than the entire number of inhabitants of the kingdom in the days of John Wycliffe. There are more Sunday-school scholars in England than there are inhabitants in London and its suburbs." And all this from nothing within the last hundred years!





JERUSALEM, FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

## Jerusalem.

BY LAURA DAYTON EAKIN.

THE Holy City is almost encircled by ravines; so much so, indeed, as to seem situated in an amphitheatre. The appearance, however, is much changed since the Saviour's time—Mount Sion, the highest part, having been cut down, and the places near Calvary thrown near the centre. The city is built on a rocky plateau about three miles in circumference, protected by a wall, and the Mount of Olives faces it on the east. Properly speaking, this elevation is not so much a mount as a ridge, a mile long, running north and south, and bending to the west on the northern end, forming an enclosure to the city on that side also; but a mile of space lies between that part and the city walls, while on the east side there is only the ravine of the Kidron, and this is the Mount of Olives of Bible history. It was only three hundred feet above the Temple mount, and is rounded, swelling, and regular in form. There are four separate summits to be seen from Jerusalem—the most interesting to us being the Mount of the Ascension, said to be the spot from which Jesus passed into heaven. The Empress Helena built a church there, in A. D. 325, to commemorate that joyful event in our Lord's life.

Then, just half way down, the traveller is shown the mound upon which Jesus stood looking towards Jerusalem and speaking those pathetic words of the lamentation: "O Jeru-

salem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

About these two localities the authorities differ; but I believe all agree about the holiest of all—the Garden at the foot, Gethsemane—where, in lonely agony, the Saviour spent the last sad night before His betrayal. Not long ago, I saw some pressed geranium blossoms, gathered there from the Monks' garden, on the same site, and their scarlet hue made me think of the Saviour's blood, so freely shed for you and me.

Of the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, the *Montreal Gazette* says: The January number of this excellent and popular magazine is one of the best that have yet appeared in literary contents, while in paper, type and illustrations it is far in advance of any previous issue. Altogether it is an admirable number, the first fruits of what promises to be an admirable year. The price is only \$2 a year. Now is the time to subscribe. Address, Rev. William Briggs, Toronto.

We have received several copies of *Our Youth*, the new paper for young folks, edited by Dr. Vincent and published by Phillips & Hunt, New York—\$1.25 a year. We had formed high anticipations of it from the character of the editor and publishers, but our anticipations were far surpassed by the paper.

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## New Sunday School Books.

THE Methodist Book Concern—Phillips & Hunt, New York—is bringing out a good-sized and elegantly bound Sunday-School book every week—a very remarkable evidence of enterprise and of literary activity. The following are some of the recent issues:\*

*The Lost Silver of Briffault.* By Amelia E. Barr. 12mo, pp. 318. Price \$1.25.

This is a book of superior literary merit, by the same skilful hand that wrote "Jan Vedder's Wife," and "The Hallam Succession." It describes life in Texas at the close of the American war. The "lost silver" is the Briffault family. The sketches of negro life are graphic and pathetic. Like "The Hallam Succession," the story is a striking description of the religious influence of Methodism. The finding of the "lost silver" is a record of the triumphs of grace.

*The School in the Lighthouse.* By the Rev. E. A. Rand, pp. 324, price \$1.25.

This is Vol. II. of the Up-the-Ladder Series. The same boys appear as in first volume, but they are a good deal older. It describes a school held under very peculiar circumstances. It has sufficient adventure to capture the attention of the most heedless boy, and it shows the power of the gospel to bring peace to the penitent.

*How it All Came Round.* By L. T. Meade, with six illustrations, pp. 363, \$1.00.

This is a larger book at a less price than the two previous ones. It is by an English writer of much literary experience and ability. The characters, scenes, etc., are all English, and will be none the less attractive to Canadian readers on that account. The story, which is told with much force, describes the stern discipline undergone by a young girl who has been cheated out of her fortune, but who afterwards recovers it and is restored to well-deserved happiness, while the hidden sin is brought to light, and the agent of the fraud is deservedly punished.

*Under the Apple Trees.* By Sophie Worthington, pp. 320, price \$1.00.

This is a book for a younger class of readers. With its bold type and numerous pictures—head pieces, tail pieces, initial cuts, etc.—it is very attractive. It tells how little Daisy waged a successful contest with "The foe within the citadel," and is thus fraught with useful lessons to every boy and girl.

*The Seven Wonders of the New World.* By the Rev. J. R. Peck, A.M., pp. 320, price \$1.

In this book we find our feet again on the solid ground of fact. We greatly prefer books of this sort, and have pleasure in commending

them for the use of Sunday Schools. Our author first gives a brief sketch of the seven wonders of the ancient world, which were wonders of art; and then describes the greater wonders of nature in this western world. They are the Falls of Niagara, Yellowstone Park, Mammoth Cave, Garden of the Gods, Giant Trees of California, Natural Bridge, Virginia, and Yosemite Valley. These are all illustrated with engravings.

## New English Books.

THE Wesleyan Conference Office, London, England, is not one whit, we think, behind any other house in the number and elegance and high-class literary merit of the Sunday-school books it publishes. The following are among its recent issues. These books can be ordered through the Methodist Book Rooms at Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax.

*The Hallam Succession.* By Amelia E. Barr. London: T. Woolmer.

This is a graphic tale of Methodist life in two continents. It gives us first an account of Yorkshire life, and sketches in Yorkshire dialect, which are very racy of the soil. The scene is afterward transferred to the New World; and life in the Southern States, and adventures in Texas, are described with a verisimilitude that can only be given by an eyewitness. The writer, if not a Methodist, has at least strong sympathy with Methodism, and a spiritual insight into its character and institutions.

"*The Man with the White Hat;*" or, *The Story of an Unknown Mission.* By C. R. Parsons. Crown 8vo. Cloth extra, full gilt. Twenty-one illustrations by Tresidder. London: T. Woolmer.

This is a graphic account of mission work among the lowly in a crowded London neighbourhood. It makes one thank God that amid so much spiritual destitution there are yet such noble examples of moral heroism as are here described. There are scenes worthy of the pen of Dickens, but there is exhibited a spirit of Christian zeal which Dickens seemed incapable of appreciating. There is much pathos, a good deal of humour, and many capital character sketches. The illustrations are wonderful studies of heads and faces, and the cover in four colours is very tasteful. No house issues more elegant books than the Wesleyan Conference office, which is situated on the very site of the Old Foundry, the scene of so many of Wesley's triumphs.

*The Opposite House, with Other Stories for Cottage Homes.* By Annie Frances Perran, pp. 230.

These are tales of life among the lowly, and many of them are touched with a deep and tragic pathos. They will deepen and broaden

\* These books can be ordered at the Methodist Book Rooms at Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax.

our sympathy for the poor, the tried and tempted; and will, by God's blessing, help some of this class to escape from their temptations "as a bird out of the snare of the fowler." Some of these sketches treat of the drink traffic, novel reading, infidelity, and kindred evils. The author vouches for the reality of the most remarkable incidents recorded.

*Wayside Wisdom; or, Old Solomon's Ideas of Things.* By the Rev. John Colwall.

In this racy little book the author proves his introductory statement that "under the quaint thatch of our dear English homesteads dwells many an Old Solomon." This village philosopher dispenses his homely wisdom, somewhat after the fashion of Spurgeon's "John Ploughman," in strong, shrewd Saxon English. The vein of quaint humour, the sturdy common sense, and the sincere piety of the old man will make him a favourite. The book is copiously illustrated.

*Life in a Parsonage; or, Lights and Shadows of the Itinerary.* By W. H. Withrow, D.D. London: T. Woolmer.

This is the third of the author's stories, written for the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, that the Wesleyan Conference office has republished in England. Instead of performing the rather difficult task of reviewing our own book, we quote the following from the *New Connection Magazine*, London: "Produced by the practised pen of the Editor of *The Methodist Magazine*, this little book will gain easy access to many a Methodist home, and wherever it goes will excite intense interest. The lights and shadows fall on the parsonage of a Canadian Itinerant, but the life of Laurence Temple and his fair wife Edith represents very thoroughly the experiences of many a worthy couple in the circuit homes of British Methodism. Those experiences are traced with a tender and skilful hand, and will be read with many a tearful eye; although not all tears of sorrow, thank God! True to the life is this picture, and people as well as preachers and preachers' wives will be all the better for looking upon it." This book will shortly be published in Canada by the Rev. William Briggs, Book Steward, Toronto.

*Saving Faith.* By James Morrison, D.D. Toronto: S. R. Briggs. Price 40c.

This little book, now in its ninth edition, has been a means of grace to thousands. In its improved form it goes forth on a renewed mission of counsel and encouragement to anxious inquirers after salvation.

*With Christ in the School of Prayer.* By the Rev. Andrew Murray. Toronto: S. R. Briggs; pp. 268, price 90c.

The author collates in thirty sections the references to prayer in the New Testament, especially the references of our Lord to this subject. Upon some he briefly, but with great force, comments, bringing home to every devout mind the greatness of the privilege and duty of prayer.

## Opening and Closing Services for the First Quarter.

### OPENING SERVICE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### LESSON SERVICE.

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

### CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. Singing.
- II. Responsive Sentences.
 

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

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

### THE APOSTLES' CREED.

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

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

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## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER: THREE MONTHS' STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

B. C. 444.]

LESSON X. READING THE LAW.

[March 7.

Neh. 8. 1-12. [Commit to memory verses 8-10.]



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

2 And Ez'ra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

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

4 And Ez'ra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Ma'h'i-thi'ah, and She'm'a, and An'a'iah, and U-r'i'ah, and Hil-k'i'ah, and Pe'a'sa'iah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pe'da'iah, and Mish'a-el, and Mal-ch'i'ah, and Has'h'u'm, and Hash-bad'a-na, Zech'a-ri'ah, and Me-shul'lam.

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

6 And Ez'ra blessed the LORD, the great God. And

all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## General Statement.

In the face of difficulties apparently insurmountable, Nehemiah accomplished his purpose of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. In fifty-two days after the first stone was laid the wall was finished, and the gates swung upon their hinges. The ruler then called together a great assembly of the people to worship God and listen to the reading of his law. The people came, not only from within the city, but from all the villages in the province. They met in the open square at the southern entrance to the temple enclosure, a vast company of men, women, and children. A platform had been erected, upon which stood the chief men of the land, the priests, and the appointed interpreters. In the midst stood Ezra, the priestly scribe, who had come from the East several years before Nehemiah with the purpose of effecting a religious reformation. As he opened the parchment roll, the entire assembly first stood, and then prostrated themselves upon the ground,

in token of reverence for the sacred word. Then began the reading. The priest read a brief portion in the ancient Hebrew tongue, and then paused, while the Levites on either side gave the explanation, partly a translation into a more modern form, partly a paraphrase, and partly an application. For six hours the service was continued, for the people were eager to know the contents of their sacred books, and the message came as a revelation. Its first effect was to awaken the conscience, and loud cries arose as the listeners realized how unfaithful they and their fathers had been to the ancient covenant. But the Levites quieted their sorrow by telling them that this was a day of rejoicing and not of grief, when God's word was revealed to them. On that day began a new era in the history of Judah, an era of Bible-study and of renewed loyalty to the faith of the fathers.

## Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. All the people. This was a gathering of the people from all Judea, on the Jewish new year; both as an anniversary, and a celebration of the newly completed wall. As one man. There is an impressiveness and moral power in a multitude assembled for religious service. In every age revivals of religion have attended large convocations of worshippers. (1) Hence we should seek to bring all the people to God's house. Into the street. Rev. Ver., "the broad place." It was an open park on the declivity known as Ophel, just south of the temple precincts. Before the water-gate. A gate leading to the subterranean reservoirs under the temple. They spake. That is, by their rulers, who had called the meeting. Ez'ra the scribe. The greatest character in the later history of the Jewish people, called "the second founder of Israel." He was a priest, and a student in the law, who had come to Jerusalem by royal appointment thirteen years before Nehemiah, and wrought great reforms among the people. He is believed by the Jews to have, 1) Instituted "the great synagogue" at Jerusalem; 2) Edited, arranged, and settled the canon of the Old Testament; 3) Introduced the use of the Chaldee characters in place of the obsolete Hebrew; 4) Written, compiled and arranged the Books of Chronicles and Ezra; 5) Established synagogues for worship and the reading of the law. After this he returned to Chaldea, where his tomb is still shown at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The scribe. The scribes arose after the captivity, when the prophets began to fall, and the people turned toward the written law. They were of various ranks, the high-

est being interpreters and teachers of the Scriptures, the lowest mere copyists and writers. As a class, they were held in high respect, but in later years they grew proud and arrogant, well deserving the censures which they received from our Lord. The book of the law. Probably not only the Pentateuch, but with it others of the Old Testament Scriptures, which Ez'ra was then engaged in arranging. (2) We should be like these ancient Jews, eager to read and understand the word of the Lord.

2. Ez'ra the priest. He was descended from Hil-kiah, who had been high-priest in the reign of Josiah. Brought the law. The sacred writings, being in manuscript only, were very scarce and valuable, and only on great occasions brought before the people. So it was in the Middle Ages. In 1309 A. D. a Bible cost the wages of a working man for thirteen years; now eight Bibles can be bought by one day's labor. (3) Are we grateful enough for having a Bible in every house? Both of men and women. The Hebrews were in advance of all other Oriental nations in the respect which they paid to their wives, though even they were below the standards of Christianity, which has elevated woman from a slave to a companion. Hear with understanding. Children of an age to listen intelligently. (4) Let us bring the children with us to worship God. The first day of the seventh month. This was "the Feast of trumpets," Lev. 23, 24; Num. 29, 1-6. A New Year celebration, as this month, the seventh of the ecclesiastical year, was the first of the civil year. It corresponded nearly with our October. (5) It is well to begin the New Year with the reading of God's word.

**3. He read therein.** It was not a bound volume, but a number of manuscript rolls, kept in a case. Each book formed a separate volume, with two rollers between which the pages were shown by being unrolled upon one and rolled upon another. **From morning until midday.** It was a service day six hours' length, and impressive from its picturesque surroundings, the rank and importance of those who conducted it, the multitude of listeners, and from the sacredness of the volume now brought forth from the selection of ages. (6) *How great may be the effect in after years of the memory of attendance during childhood upon God's house!* People were attentive. So in the dawn of the Reformation, all Europe was eager to hear and to read the Bible, for, as in a service day it were scarce. In England, when the "Great Bible," newly translated by royal authority, lay upon its desk chained to a pillar in each cathedral, the people gathered in throngs, stood for hours on the stone floor listening to the reader, and when he paused, cried out, "Read on! Read on!" (7) *Let us cherish a deep interest in the word of God.*

**4. Upon a pulpit of wood.** Literally, "a tower;" probably a raised platform upon which the reader could be seen and heard by the multitude. **Beside him stood.** These thirteen persons were perhaps the priests then employed in the temple service. They added to the moral influence of the service by their presence, and perhaps by turns relieved Ezra in the reading. Their names alone remain, but the influence of their work lives. (8) *The leaders of society should sanction the service of religion by their presence.*

**5. Opened the book.** Unrolled the scroll. **All the people stood up.** The multitude had been sitting on the ground, in Oriental manner; but all arose as a sign of reverence for the word of God. The ancient Jews would not tread upon a scrap of paper, lest it might contain the name of the Lord. (9) *Let us handle God's book carefully, and never misuse a copy of it.*

**6. Ezra blessed the Lord.** Gave thanks, perhaps repeating a psalm of praise. **The people answered.** The whole congregation testified their concurrence with the prayer and praise. (10) *The public worship should not be a spectacle, but a service in which all should participate.* Amen. A Hebrew word meaning "firm," or "be it so;" adopted as the affirmation of prayer. **Lifting up their hands.** This was an ancient custom in worship, Psa. 63. 4; 1 Tim. 2. 8.

**7. Also Jeshua, etc.** These were Levites who assisted in the service. It is uncertain whether they

#### HOME READINGS.

- M. Reading the law. Neh. 8. 1-12.  
 Th. The law described. Psa. 19. 1-14.  
 W. The place for the law. Psa. 40. 1-11.  
 Th. Thinking of the law. Josh. 1. 1-9.  
 F. The law fulfilled. Rom. 5. 1-21.  
 S. The end of the law. Rom. 10. 1-10.  
 S. The royal law. James 2. 1-26.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

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

#### LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 157, Dominion Hymnal.  
 Father of mercies, in thy word  
 What endless glory shines!  
 No. 159, Dominion Hymnal.  
 No book is like the Bible,  
 For childhood, youth, and age.  
 No. 161, Dominion Hymnal.  
 The Gospel bells are ringing,  
 Over land from sea to sea.

**TIME.**—444 B. C. Fifty-two days after the arrival at Jerusalem the wall was done. This service followed. 88d Olympiad. Year of Rome, 369.

**PLACE.**—Jerusalem.

**RULERS.**—Same as Lesson IX, except that Nehemiah is governor of Judaea.

stood by the reader and gave the explanations by turn, or whether they were stationed at distances through the crowd, thus dividing it into Bible classes, an all teaching simultaneously. **Caused the people to understand.** The old Hebrew in which Ezra read was obsolete, as Chaucer's English would be to an audience at the present, and these Levites acted as interpreters, rendering it into the Chaldee, which was at that time the dialect of Palestine. They also explained the more difficult passages. (11) *There is no power on earth than that of causing people to understand God's word.*

**8. So they read.** This verse, the Golden Text of our lesson, states just what should be the aim of every Sunday-school teacher. And it should be the aim of every preacher also. A young minister once asked an old Christian for his counsel concerning the best way to make his preaching effective. He answered promptly, "Read Nehemiah 8." **Distinctly.** This refers to the audible, clear tone of the reading. **Gave the sense.** This refers to the explanation.

**9. Nehemiah.** See notes on the last lesson. **Tirshatha.** This is the Persian title for "governor." It is equivalent to "Your severity," or "Dread sovereign." **This day is holy.** This is the seventh month, to be observed as a sabbath. **Mourn not, nor weep.** Hence it appears that the ancient Sabbath was not considered as a day of solemnity, but of gladness. (12) *We should make God's day cheerful and happy.* **All the people wept.** The contrast between their own conduct and the demands of the law, as well as its threatened penalties, awakened their alarm and convicted their conscience.

**10, 11. He said.** Nehemiah is here referred to. **Eat the fat.** The fat pieces of flesh, considered the best. **Drink the sweet.** The new, sweet wine. **Send portions.** In their own joy they were to remember the poor, and supply their wants. (13) *"God's bounty should make us bountiful."* **The joy of the Lord is your strength.** That is, the joy and peace which spring from reconciliation with God are the signs of spiritual strength. **Hold your peace.** They were not forbidden to regret their sins, nor to think of them, but to mar the gladness of the holiday by manifestations of sorrow.

**12. Went their way.** To their homes. **To make great mirth.** Not in drunkenness and riot, but in glad worship of God. **Because they had understood.** What a cause of joy it should be to any people when they know clearly what is God's will!

**CONNECTING LINK.**—Nehemiah's prayer gives him boldness to address the king in behalf of his countrymen. The king hears and sends him with royal authority to execute the desire of his heart. Facing opposition, overcoming his enemies, he finishes the work, and institutes the service of which we study.

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The authority of the word.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- A Great Congregation, v. 1.**  
 Who composed the great congregation?  
 What was the purpose of their gathering?  
 What similar gathering to hear God's word can you recall?  
 What part of the word of God was read on both these occasions?
- A Bible Reading, v. 2-8.**  
 Were any persons present at this service besides Jews? ver. 2.  
 What was the character of the audience?  
 What respect did they show to the speaker and the word?  
 What occurred besides the reading of the law?  
 Can you recall another scene where thousands were gathered to hear the law expounded by the world's greatest teacher?
- A Day of Gladness, v. 9-12.**  
 Why did the people weep at the words of the law?  
 What did these leaders teach as the true way to keep holy day?  
 What saying of our Lord, preserved by Paul, was proved by these people on this day? Acts 20. 25.  
 What should be the spiritual condition of the one who truly understands God's word?  
 What does Paul declare that the kingdom of God is? Rom. 14. 17.

- Devention to God  
 The true read  
 1. Contrit  
 2. Joy over  
 3. Benefit  
 4. Quiet at

#### QUESTIONS FOR

- A Great Congregation, v. 1.**  
 Where did the people assemble?  
 Upon whom did they look?  
 What did they do?
- A Bible Reading, v. 2-8.**  
 Who came together?  
 How long did they read?  
 How did they read?  
 Where did Ezra stand?  
 How many were present?  
 How did the law affect them?  
 What was done?  
 Who assisted?  
 What was on their minds?  
 How did they feel?  
 What day of gladness?
- A Day of Gladness, v. 9-12.**  
 What important things were said?  
 What advice was given?  
 How had the people wept?  
 What token of joy was there?  
 What was the result?  
 What obedience was shown?  
 Where, in this story, is the word of God's law?

#### QUESTIONS FOR

- Where did the water come from?  
 What was the water used for?  
 Why did they feast of the true manna?  
 What did they do and read it?  
 How long was noon?  
 Where did Ezra stand?  
 What was the pit of wood?  
 Who were with him?  
 What was the law?  
 How did the law attract attention?  
 How was the law read?  
 Why did the people weep?  
 What had sin brought?  
 What did Ezra say?  
 "Weep not, the law is the word."  
 What should they do?  
 For what reason?  
 What is the joy of the law?  
 How long was the law read?  
 How did the law affect them?  
 What was the result?  
 How would it be when he told M. GOLDEN TEXT, v. 2.  
 Notice what he you to listen very or taught to you, do this you will that leads to heaven.

#### THE

- For what part in Jerusalem?
- Who read it?



**Practical Teachings.**

Devotion to God's word brought joy to the hearer.  
The true reading of God's word ends in—

1. Contrition for sin.
2. Joy over salvation from sin.
3. Beneficent works of gratitude and love.
4. Quiet attention to personal duty.

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.****1. A Great Congregation, v. 1.**

Where did the people assemble?  
Upon whom did they call?  
What did they desire of him?

**2. A Bible Reading, v. 2-8.**

Who came together to hear the reading?  
How long did the reading continue?  
How did the people listen?  
Where did Ezra stand?  
How many were with him on the platform?  
How did the people show their reverence for the law?

What was done before the reading began?  
Who assisted in explaining the law? v. 9.  
What was one of the duties of the priests? Lev. 10, 18.  
In what manner was the reading done?

**3. A Day of Gladness, v. 9-12.**

What important personage was present with Ezra?  
What advice was given to the people?  
How had the reading affected the people?  
What token of gladness were they to give?  
What was the reason of their joy?  
What obedience was rendered by the people?

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

Where, in this lesson, are we taught—1. Reverence for the word of God? 2. Carefulness in the reading of the word? 3. To rejoice in the understanding of God's law?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

Where did the people gather together? **In the street before the water gate.**

What was the water gate? **The gate through which water was carried into the temple.**  
Why did they come together? **To celebrate the feast of the trumpets.**

What did they ask of Ezra? **To hear the law of Moses.**

What did he do? **He brought the book of the law and read it.**  
How long was he reading it? **From daylight till noon.**

Where did Ezra stand while reading? **Upon a pulpit of wood.**  
Who were with him? **Priests and Levites, who explained the law to the people.**

How did the people listen? **With reverence and close attention.**  
How was the law read and explained? **Distinctly and clearly, so that every one understood it.**

Why did the people weep? **Because of their sins.**  
What had sin brought upon them? **Sorrow and punishment.**

What did Ezra and the priests tell the people?  
**"Weep not, the day is holy unto the Lord."**

What should they do? **Keep the feast with joy.**  
For what reason? **Because God had forgiven them.**

What is the joy of the Lord? **The happiness that comes from doing his will.**

**Words with Little People.**

If you would like to know the very words God used when he told Moses to read the law mentioned in the GOLDEN TEXT, you can find them in Deut. 31, 10-13. Notice what he said about the children. God wants you to listen very attentively whenever his word is read or taught to you, and to study it for yourselves. If you do this you will find it to be a lamp lighting the path that leads to heaven.

**THE LESSON CATECHISM.**

[For the entire school.]

1. For what purpose did Nehemiah gather the people in Jerusalem? **To hear the law of God!**
2. Who read the law? **Ezra the priest and scribe.**

3. Who listened to the reading? **All who were old enough to understand.**

4. What is said of the reading in the GOLDEN TEXT? **So they, etc.**

**TEXTS AT CHURCH.**

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

**ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.****An Old Testament Sunday-School.****I. ITS TIME.**

*On the first day of the seventh month, v. 2.*

"A sabbath.... a holy convocation." Lev. 23, 34.

**II. ITS MEMBERS.**

1. *All the people.... as one man, v. 1.*

"Read this law before all Israel." Deut. 31, 11.

2. *All that could hear with understanding, v. 2.*

"Teach them diligently unto thy children." Deut. 6, 7.

**III. ITS TEXT-BOOK.**

*The book of the law, v. 1.*

"Search the Scriptures." John 6, 39.

**IV. ITS SUPERINTENDENT.**

*They spake unto Ezra the scribe, v. 1.*

"Had prepared his heart to seek the law." Ezra 7, 10.

**V. ITS TEACHERS.**

*Levites caused the people to understand, v. 7.*

"The priest's lips should keep knowledge." Mal. 2, 7.

**VI. ITS OPENING SERVICE.**

1. *Ezra opened the book, v. 5.*

"Not depart out of thy mouth." Josh. 1, 8.

2. *All the people stood up, v. 5.*

"Stand up and bless the Lord." Neh. 9, 5.

3. *Ezra blessed the Lord, v. 6.*

"I will bless the Lord at all times." Psa. 34, 1.

4. *People answered.... lifting up their hands, v. 6.*

"Lift up our heart with our hands." Lam. 3, 41.

**VII. ITS LESSON STORY.**

1. *They read in the book.... distinctly, v. 8.*

"Teach them diligently." Deut. 6, 7.

2. *Gave the sense, v. 8.*

"They shall teach Jacob thy judgments." Deut. 33, 10.

**VIII. ITS EFFECTS.**

1. *All the people wept, v. 9.*

"We have not kept the commandments." Neh. 1, 7.

2. *The joy of the Lord is your strength, v. 10.*

"Let them... that love thy name be joyful." Psa. 5, 11.

**THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.****Reading the Bible.**

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

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

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

4. It should be read as a whole, in continuous sections, a book at a time. The best view of Washington is from the dome of the capitol; of Boston, from Bunker Hill monument; so we need to take a landscape view of Bible truth.

5. It should be read distinctly, and carefully, and reverently, as God's message. When a Japanese officer sees the signature of the Mikado, he falls prostrate before it. We should treat with reverence a message from our King.

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

### An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

This is a lesson on the Bible. We shall find the Bible possessed by the Jews at the time of which this passage speaks, or at least the first five books of it, mentioned ten times in the fifteen verses, four times as the "book," or "book of the law," five times as the "law," and once as the "words." It is not, however, the Bible in its authorship, its character, or its claims, that is the subject of the passage, but the Bible in its use; and the lesson we are to learn from it is what to do with the Bible.

The returned Jewish exiles who had left their homes in the foreign land, and come back to settle in their own country, in spite of its desolation and degradation from its former position, had undergone a long period of affliction and reproach from the enemies who surrounded them. Until the coming of Nehemiah, Jerusalem had lain waste. But now the work begun in that quiet chamber in "Shushan the palace," the work begun in prayer and carried on with prayer, was completed, and in the seventh month the people gathered together as usual to keep the feast of that month on a larger and more imposing scale than they had previously done. And the chief feature of this gathering as related in the passage was the use of the Book.

A series of graphic pictures may be drawn from the passage—the large concourse by the "water gates," the worship, the attention, the weeping, the comforting; then the festivities at home (ver. 12); the second assembly; the crowds going forth to the Mount of Olives, coming back laden with green boughs; and, and woven in with these, the teacher will find a sevenfold pattern to set before the class.

1. *The Jews blessed God for the Book.* This was because they recognized whence they got it. We buy our Bibles cheap, or we get them given to us, and know there are plenty more to be had. But what if the Bible had never been written? We might have had histories and essays and tales and poems; but without the inspiration of God there could have been no book of God, no sure word from him. Those Bibles in the hands of the class are God's gift to each one. Has God been thanked for them? When Ezra opened the book and all the people stood up and said "Amen," with uplifted hands to his words of praise, and then worshiped

God with their faces to the ground, the sight and the sound must have been truly imposing. But God looks at the heart. He is as well pleased with the true and earnest thanks of the Sunday scholar as with the grand chorus of praise. If each one thanked God for the book, there would be a greater blessing on it.

2. *They read it.* From morning to midday the reading went on, the Levites probably taking it by turn; and so the next day and during the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles. Verse 18. If you make a valuable present to a friend, you do not want empty thanks for it; you want to see it used, not put away and forgotten. The Bibles that never come out except on Sundays or when the lesson has to be looked up, can their owners really care much about them?

3. *They explained it.* It is supposed that the Jews, who since the captivity spoke a mixed language, their own and that of their conquerors blended into one, were not familiar with the original Hebrew, in which the law was written, and needed, therefore, to have it interpreted by those who were more learned. Our classes have the Bible in their own tongue, yet many of the expressions are strange to them, many of its references to history, geography, ancient custom, etc., are unintelligible without explanation. The teacher is endeavoring to do what Ezra and the Levites did, to give the sense, and make the reading plain and easy.

4. *They listened attentively to it.* In such a large assembly, gathered together in the open air, there might be much to attract the roving eye, and we know very well that when the eye is wandering the ear is not taking in much. But the Jews had come to hear; and instead of looking about them, and observing and commenting upon their neighbors, "the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." What a difference it would make could this be said of the class!

5. *They wept over what they heard.* The law that was read contained the record of God's mercies to them as a nation and of their own unfaithfulness. It showed them how they had sinned. It was as a looking-glass giving a true picture of themselves. The Bible does this now for every one of us. It would be a happy thing if each one in the class were to look into this mirror and read his own heart and life in it. It would cause mourning indeed. But let us remind our classes of the Lord's word: "Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh." Luke vi, 21. To discover that you are a lost sinner may seem very wretched, but it is the beginning of true joy. So it was with the Jews.

6. *They rejoiced that they had understood the words.* There were comfort and hope for them as well as condemnation in the book of the law. Such promises as those in Deut. 30, and at the end of the Song of Moses (Deut. 32, 43), might well cause rejoicing. The Bible is the book of good news. But the reason so few rejoice in it is because

so few we rejoiced, words."

7. *They* concerning set to work "very great the ultimate Scripture.

#### Hints fo

Describe miah....D "water-ga place....T lytical and day-school "the first people were 3.) Its text was Ezra, through B the place; scholars; 6 aim, to give results, cor with God. illustration

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12. What To Peter h [Read Mat And to Th [Read Joh

LESSON T Introduct for his cou his faith the Tell that request, an hearts of t willing to b needed aron tried to hin God always how the fa days the w that it was it.

Tell that I went back t what the "a where we n was used in such a roll f we have, in own. Tell those days,

so few weep over it. Unless you have wept and rejoiced, you have not really "understood the words." But there was one thing more:

7. *They obeyed it.* Finding the command of God concerning the Feast of Tabernacles, they at once set to work to carry it out. And the result was "very great gladness." Ver. 17. Such is always the ultimate result of obeying the dictates of Scripture.

### Berean Methods.

#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

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

References. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Verse 9: The Tirshatha, 383. Ver. 10: Sending portions, 384.

### CATECHISM QUESTION.

12. What blessing does he pronounce on believers?

To Peter he gave it thus:

[Read Matthew xvi. 17.]

And to Thomas he gave it thus:

[Read John xx. 29.]

### Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

#### LESSON THOUGHT. *God in His Word.*

*Introduction.* Recall last lesson: Nehemiah's love for his country, his desire to work for the Lord, and his faith that God would make a way for him to work. Tell that the king's hear: was opened to Nehemiah's request, and that when he went to Jerusalem, the hearts of the people were opened, so that they were willing to work with him. Explain why a wall was needed around the city, and tell how wicked people tried to hinder the Jews from building it; show that God always helps those who are working for him. Tell how the faithful Jews worked, so that in fifty-two days the wall was finished, and the wicked men saw that it was God's work, and that they could not hinder it.

#### THE GREAT MEETING.

Tell that Nehemiah called a great meeting before he went back to Persia, to hear the law of God read. Ask what the law of God is, and hold up Bible to show where we may find it. Show picture of a roll, such as was used in that day, or, still better, have imitation of such a roll for children to see. Speak of the advantage we have, in each being permitted to have a Bible of our own. Tell why there were so few copies of the law in those days, and read God's command to the people to

hear it read, from Deut. 31. 10-13. Notice that God mentions the children, and gives the reason why they should hear the law. Make the scene in the street vivid, by bringing out details. These will be suggested by reading and thought.

#### SORROW AND JOY.

Tell that the people wept when they listened to the law, because they could look back and see how often they had broken it. Show that it is a serious thing to disobey God. Nehemiah and Ezra comforted them because they saw that they were truly sorry for their sin, and real sorrow for wrong-doing leads us to break it off, right away. Impress the reality of the fact that God speaks to us in his law.

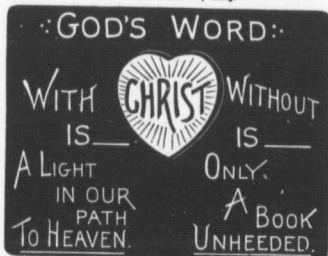


*Lessons for us.* The Bible is God's living word to us. Show that the words are just as true now as when first spoken. Read some sweet promises, and teach that these are the sweet which we may drink. Show that we must reach out for it, and tell ways in which

children may do this by careful attention in church and Sunday-school, etc. Impress the thought that we can only take "the sweet" by turning away from sin.

### Blackboard.

BY J. E. PHIPPS, ESQ.



**EXPLANATION.**—This design is intended as an application of the lesson after its review, or study. Ask a few leading questions, such as these: "Of what value is God's law to me?" "Why does not every body value it alike?" "Why is it that some care for it not at all?" An answer to these questions is made by writing the name of *Christ* in the heart. With *Christ* in the heart, God's word is a lamp that lights our path to heaven. Without *Christ* in the heart, the Bible is only a book unheeded. It will be of no avail, when we appear before the judgment-seat of God, to make excuse that we knew not the law. It is our duty to study it, and understand it.

#### GOD'S WORD IS OUR

LAW,  
INSTRUCTOR,  
GUIDE,  
HELPER,  
TEACHER.

#### Lesson Word-Pictures.

What did you say? A great conference in Jerusalem? Yes, notice the people thronging the street before the water-gate. What a vast concourse of men, women, fathers, mothers, children, all pouring into the space

before the water-gate! There is Ezra, an older man by thirteen years than when he came to Jerusalem's broken walls, but the same upright, reverent, godly leader. You can see him over in that "pulpit of wood," facing the multitude, while on either side are grouped men honored in Israel. Ezra is opening the precious book of the law of Moses. He has turned back the sacred scroll, and the people are rising. What a solemn invocation of the great Jehovah! And all over the assembly, what a deep, impressive response, "Amen, Amen," the people raising their hands to

heaven! And now, with faces prostrated in humility, they worship God. Such a serious, heart-searching hour, a heart-searching even for hour after hour, Ezra's assistants lighting up the meaning of the Word, the people solemnly listening. They begin to weep. All over the assembly there is a breaking into sobs. No, no, this day is for joy. Joy is holy. And dismissed with this assurance, we watch the people breaking up and separating to their homes, there to remember the poor, and there to celebrate God's goodness in great and even holy joy.



B. C. 474.]

Esther 4. 10-17, and 5. 1-3.

#### LESSON XI. ESTHER'S PETITION.

[March 14.]

[Commit to memory verses 1-3.]



the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live; but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

12 And they told to Mor'de-cai Es'ther's words. 13 Then Mor'de-cai 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 there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed; and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

15 Then Es'ther bade them return Mor'de-cai this answer.

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 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 Mor'de-cai went his way, and did according to all that Es'ther had commanded him.

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 gate of the house.

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

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

#### General Statement.

In chronological order this lesson belongs to a period about thirty years earlier than the last, and to the reign of the Persian king Xerxes, the predecessor of Artaxerxes. Xerxes, called in the Bible Ahassuerus, after his disastrous war with the Greeks, gave himself up to the pleasures of his palace. A nobleman named Haman gained great influence over him, and secured an edict ordering the utter destruction of the Jews in the capital and throughout the kingdom. The reason given

for this cruel decree was the hate of Haman toward one Jew, Mor'de-cai, who had refused to show him honor. But we can well believe that in the Jewish traits of that time were the same elements which have in every age and in every land made the Jews objects of persecution, so that Haman was not alone in his enmity. It was a dark day for the chosen people, and sounds of wailing arose around the palace walls. There were two facts, however, of which Haman was ignorant. One was that

in the presence of Esther the king was called to play a part which he could not play. The king's heart was softened, and the fate of the Jews was pronounced.

Verse 11. The restoration of Jewish life, O as one of those who were called to play a part which he could not play. The king's heart was softened, and the fate of the Jews was pronounced.

11. The restoration of Jewish life, O as one of those who were called to play a part which he could not play. The king's heart was softened, and the fate of the Jews was pronounced.

14. For faith, saw desired her

in the palace was a queen of that Jewish race, Esther the beautiful; the other, that on the throne of high heaven sat One who had chosen this despised race to play an important part in earth's history, and man cannot thwart God's plan. Queen Esther heard of the impending destruction of her kinsmen. In the palace, and the favorite of the king, she was safe if she would only conceal her relationship with the condemned people. But to her they were the people of God, and she was prouder of her honor as a daughter of Abraham,

#### Explanatory and Practical Notes.

**Verse 10. Again Esther.** She was the descendant of Jewish exiles, living in Persia, though long after the restoration by Cyrus. Her Jewish name was Hadassah, "myrtle." Her Persian name was Esther, "star." She was not only surpassingly beautiful in appearance, but lovely in character, and won friends in every condition of life. Out of a multitude of maidens she was chosen as one of the wives of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes), and was called "queen," though it is doubtful whether that was her true rank in the court. In the palace she retained her affection for her cousin and foster-father, Mordecai, and obeyed his counsels. **Hatsch.** The name of the eunuch or attendant who waited upon Esther, and through whom she was able to communicate with Mordecai, who was not permitted to enter the part of the palace where the women lived. **Gave him commandment.** A message to Mordecai, in answer to the appeal which he had sent, for her to go to the king and entreat for the lives of her people. **Mordecai.** A Benjamite, descended from Kish the father of Saul, who lived at Shushan or Susa, and was connected with the court. After the fall of Haman, he became prime-minister. He has been identified with a certain Matakaa, a eunuch of great influence during the later years of Xerxes.

**11. The king's servants.** The officers of the court. **People of the king's province.** The entire population of the empire. **Do know.** The law of which she speaks was one widely known, and is referred to by various secular historians, that no person was permitted to come unbidden into the presence of the king of Persia. **Unto the king.** Xerxes, called in this book Ahasuerus, the despot who invaded Greece with five millions of men, and made pleasure an end of many thousands. He was fond of pleasure and of show, but had no capacity for government, and was utterly selfish and unprincipled. His character in secular history fully matches the account in this book. **Into the inner court.** The palace of Xerxes at Persepolis, which was undoubtedly of the same general order with that at Susa, some relief discovered. Its plan in the rear was "the inner court," where the king sat for the transaction of business. **There is one law of his.** Rev. Ver. "one law for him" that is, for the one who enters unbidden. **To put him to death.** The kings of Israel often appeared in public, and were accessible to their subjects; but those of Media and Persia were kept in seclusion and surrounded with mystery, as if lifted above humanity. Only the highest nobles ever saw the face of the monarch. So deep was this seclusion that an impostor personated Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, and reigned in his name six months before the fraud was discovered. **The golden scepter.** In all the scriptures the king of Persia is represented as holding a slender rod, in some reliefs painted red to represent gold, and in length about equal to his own height. **These thirty days.** Perhaps indicating that the king had grown indifferent to her, and might refuse to see her if she sent a request for admission to his presence. (1) *Our King welcomes all, and inclines his ear toward the weakest of his people.*

**12, 13. They told to Mordecai.** Perhaps the message which Esther gave to Hatsch was by him intrusted to some friend of Mordecai. **Then Mordecai.** The grief and alarm of Mordecai at the edict of the king was not for himself, but for his people, whom he regarded as God's own, and the inheritors of the covenant. **Think not with thyself.** Esther, having kept her nationality a secret, might selfishly hope to escape the general slaughter. But Mordecai reminded her that she belonged to the condemned race, and some jealous rival might therefore obtain her destruction.

**14. For if thou.** Mordecai, with the insight of faith, saw God's hand in Esther's opportunity, and desired her to go boldly into the presence of the king

and heirress of the covenant, than as queen of Persia. At the suggestion of Mordecai, whose faith shone like a star in the darkness, she resolved to go in boldly to the king, even at the imminent risk of death, and avow herself one of the people whose destruction had been decreed, and plead for their lives. Her plan was successful, her people were saved, their foe perished amid the wreck of his plot, and the name of Queen Esther gained an everlasting honor.

and plead for the lives of her people. **At this time.** The time for which God had raised her up, and the time when her services were in deepest need. (2) *Every life has opportunities which may be employed to aid God's cause. Enlargement.* Literally, "breathing room," freedom from restraint. **Arise to the Jews.** Mark the magnificent faith of this man, condemned to death! He has no doubt that in some way God will intervene to save his people, and is only concerned that Esther shall enjoy the privilege of delivering them. (3) *Faith trusts in God under a dark heaven. From another place.* (4) *The failure of one agent will not thwart the great purpose of God. Threat and thy father's house.* He believed that one who failed to measure up to such a sublime opportunity could not remain unpunished. (5) *Neglect is as great a crime as wrongdoing.* (6) *The selfish life is sure to defeat its own purpose. And who knoweth.* Mordecai perceived that each link in the chain of circumstances by which the Jewish maiden became a queen was forged by a wise purpose, and hand for the accomplishment of an all-wise purpose. What was true of Esther is true of each and every person. (7) *Every well-lived life works out some divine plan. Such a time as this.* The greatest hour in Esther's life, the hour for which she was born, was not that when the crown-royal was placed upon her brow, but that hour when she stood forth to save others. (8) *Success in life is not in gaining but in blessing.*

**15, 16. Esther bade them.** It may be that her faith needed not this stirring exhortation from Mordecai; or it may be that this appeal aroused her to her noble deed of self-devotion. **Gather together all the Jews.** The Jews have always shown a fondness for city-life, and were probably quite numerous in the capital, since the Persian kings had shown them special favors. **Shushan.** One of the four capitals of the Persian empire, situated in the province of Elam, north of the Persian Gulf. It is supposed to have been founded as early as the time of Abraham; was the principal residence of Xerxes; and is now a mass of ruins, called *Sus*. **Fast ye for me.** Though prayer is not mentioned, yet it undoubtedly accompanied the fasting, and was the most important part of the service. **Three days.** This may mean, as in other places of Scripture, not three whole days, but until the third day, that is, for a day and a half. **I also and my maidens.** The reference to her maidens is suggestive of the influence which Esther obtained over all around her—king, eunuchs, and attendants. **Will fast likewise.** This shows that she relied more upon the power of God than upon the charms of her person, which might suffer from the fast. **So will I go and perish.** In her words note, 1.) Decision; 2.) Patriotism; 3.) Courage; 4.) Self-sacrifice; 5.) Faith. (9) *Teacher, impress this noble example upon your class! Not according to the law.* This was one of the instances when the law of man conflicts with the law of God. Our duty is then to obey the higher law, and abide by the consequences without a murmur. **If I perish, let it perish.** The utterance, not of despair, but of restoration. Hers was a dangerous mission, to enter into the presence of the king uninvited, to request the rescinding of a law which according to Persian custom was unalterable, to confess herself a member of a despised and condemned people, and to oppose a powerful favorite.

**17. So Mordecai went his way.** He could easily send word to the Jews in Shushan, for, according to Oriental usage, their homes were all in one quarter of the city. **Did according.** The service of prayer probably took place in some place of meeting, which about this time began to be known as a *synagogue*, or assembly for worship.

**1. On the third day.** After the fast with its religious exercises was over. **Put on her royal apparel.** That her charms might be heightened by every possible



aid, and the king might immediately look upon her with favor. **Stood in the inner court.** In her see the picture of a soul in the relation of prayer toward One who is a more just and gracious King than was the Persian despot. **Upon his royal throne.** Not a lofty seat, but a chair having a footstool in front. It was either made of gold or covered with it, and was kept sacred for the king's use. **Over against the gate.** There was a great square court, with rooms on each side, and beyond it the throne-room, from which the king could see all who approached.

2. She obtained favor. All his slumbering love awoke, and he welcomed her approach. **Held out... the golden scepter.** He gave her the sign of favor

which thrust back the hands of the guards who stood ready to arrest and slay every intruder. (10) *There are no barriers in the way of our approach to the King of Kings.* Touched the scepter as a mute expression of gratitude to the king's kindness in sparing her life.

3. **What is thy request?** She showed tact in not at once presenting her petition, but in preparing the way by the banquets. Still, there was the request in the background, as the king well knew. **To the half of the kingdom.** We read in Herodotus that Xerxes once promised to grant to a favorite wife any petition which she would proffer, without even this limitation. Esther's prayers were answered, she saved her people, and gained for herself a deserved renown.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M. Esther's petition. Esther 4, 10-17; 5, 1-3.  
 W. The danger to the Jews. Esther 4, 1-9.  
 W. The petition favored. Esther 5, 4-14.  
 W. The banquet held. Esther 7, 1-10.  
 F. The favor of man. 1 Kings 11, 1-13.  
 S. The favor of God. Psa. 30, 1-12.  
 S. Life for the perishing. John 3, 14-21.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. Esther 4, 16.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 114, Dominion Hymnal.  
 Holy Spirit, faithful Guide,  
 Ever near the Christian's side.  
 No. 125, Dominion Hymnal.  
 Great God, and wilt thou condescend  
 To be my Father and my Friend?  
 No. 129, Dominion Hymnal.  
 My faith looks up to thee,  
 Thou Lamb of Calvary.  
 No. 132, Dominion Hymnal.  
 Come, my soul, thy suit prepare,  
 Jesus loves to answer prayer.

TIME.—474 B. C. 74th Olympiad. Year of Rome, 321.

PLACE.—Shushan, or Susa.

RULERS.—Xerxes, called in Scripture Ahasuerus, king of Persia. Annual archons ruling in Athens, consuls at Rome.

CONNECTING LINK.—While the Jews in Palestine were living in peace, those dispersed throughout the Persian Empire were exposed to great danger, from the revengeful spirit of Haman, a noble at the court of the king. He induced the king to order the slaughter of all the Jews in his dominions. They were saved from their enemies through the prayers of Esther, the queen, who was a Jewess.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Faith.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- The Message of Faith, v. 10-14, chap. 4.**  
 What was the scene of this story?  
 What had happened to occasion the message of Esther to Mordecai?  
 What light is thrown on the character of the Persian monarchy by this lesson? 1. The kind of monarchy? 2. Woman's position in it?  
 Is Esther's message a refusal to go to the king?  
 What does it show as to her state of mind?  
 What effect had Mordecai's message of faith to her?
- The Resolve of Faith, v. 15-17, chap. 4.**  
 In what beautiful words does our Golden Text show this resolve?  
 Who did Esther feel were as important in the service she was to perform as she was?  
 What effect would this united prayer have upon the people themselves?

In the New Testament what instance of united prayer delivering from great peril?

How is the doctrine of faith and works as taught by James shown here?

3. **The Power of Faith, v. 1-3, chap. 5.**

What is the picture presented by these verses?

What must be the result of this presence of Esther, unsummoned, in the inner court?

Who must we believe was present, though unseen, besides Esther, the court, and the king?

What special instance is cited by the apostle James of the power of the prayer of faith?

#### Practical Teachings.

The court of the earthly king was unapproachable to Esther unless called. The court of the heavenly King is open to all.

The place one occupies in the world is to be used for furthering God's work. Complete submission to God's will how does all this apply to you?

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- The Message of Faith, v. 10-14, chap. 4.**  
 To whom did Esther send a message?  
 Of what law of the palace did she remind Mordecai?  
 What exception was there to this law?  
 Why did Esther hesitate to enter the palace?  
 What message of rebuke did Mordecai send to the queen?  
 What would follow her refusal to see the king?  
 What question did Mordecai ask?
- The Resolve of Faith, v. 15-17, chap. 4.**  
 What request did Esther make of Mordecai?  
 What did she procure for herself and maidens?  
 What was her resolve?  
 What attention did Mordecai pay to her request?
- The Power of Faith, v. 1-3, chap. 5.**  
 How long did Esther fast?  
 Whose presence did she seek?  
 What preparation did she make?  
 Where did she find the king?  
 What sign of favor did the king show her?  
 What did Esther venture to do?  
 What was the king's question?  
 What was the king's promise?  
 What other king made a like promise? Mark 6, 23.

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where, in this lesson, are we taught—1. Faith's test? 2. Faith's sacrifice? 3. Faith's reward?

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

- What cruel law was made by the king of Persia? **That all the Jews in his kingdom be put to death on a certain day.**  
 What did the Jews do when they heard it? **They mourned in sackcloth and ashes.**  
 Who was the king's queen? **Esther, a Jewess.**  
 Did the king know she was a Jewess? **No.**  
 Who sent a copy of the king's law to Esther? **Mordecai, her cousin.**  
 What did he want her to do? **To ask the king to spare the lives of her people.**  
 What was Esther's reply? **That she might lose her own life in so doing.**

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 11. THE EXAM  
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 Heb. 1.  
 2. Prayer.  
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 4. 6.  
 3. Courage.  
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 "Fear not

Why did she thus reply? Because every one that entered into the presence of the king without his permission was put to death.

Who only were spared? Those to whom the king held out his golden scepter.

Of what was this a sign? Of his mercy.

What word did Mordecai send the queen? That she might be killed as one of the Jews.

What request did Esther make of him? To ask all the Jews to fast for her three days.

What did she promise? To see the king. (Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.)

How did the king receive Esther? With favor.

What did he promise? To grant any request she might ask of him.

#### Words with Little People.

There never need be one bit of fear in your hearts to go to your King and ask him for whatever you want.

Queen Esther was willing to lay down her life for her people. (See the GOLDEN TEXT.) Who gave his precious life for you?

You may be the smallest of those who love him,

The weakest of those who pray,

But if you come as he has bidden,

He never will say you Nay."

#### THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who was Esther? A beautiful Jewess, the queen of Persia.

2. From what did she save her people, the Jews? From death by their enemies.

3. How did she save them? By asking the king for their life.

4. What words of Esther are given in the Golden Text? "So will I," etc.

5. What was the result of her prayer to the king? The Jews were spared, and their enemies slain.

#### TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

#### ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

##### Two Examples in Character.

##### I. THE EXAMPLE OF MORDECAI.

1. **Trust in God.** "Enlargement....arise" v. 14.

"In perfect peace....stayed on thee." Isa. 26. 3.

"He is my refuge." Psa. 91. 2.

2. **Fear of God.** "Thou....be destroyed." v. 14.

"He that believeth not....damned." Mark 16. 16.

"He that loveth his life shall lose it." John 12. 25.

3. **Spiritual Insight.** "For such a time as this," v. 14.

"I girded thee....hast not known." Isa. 45. 5.

"Faith....the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11. 1.

##### II. THE EXAMPLE OF ESTHER.

1. **Love of God's People.** "Gather....all the Jews." v. 16.

"We are sold, I and my people." Esther 7. 4.

"Choosing....to suffer with the people of God." Heb. 11. 25.

2. **Prayer.** "I also....will fast." v. 16.

"Praying always with all prayer." Eph. 6. 18.

"In every thing by prayer and supplication." Phil. 4. 6.

3. **Courage.** "So will I go in." v. 16.

"Be strong and of a good courage." Josh. 1. 8.

"Fear not them which kill the body." Matt. 10. 28.

4. **Self-sacrifice.** "If I perish." v. 16.

"Greater love hath no man than this." John 15. 13.

"Lay down our lives for the brethren." 1 John 3. 16.

#### THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

##### Esther as a Type of Christ.

The Old Testament is a shadow to which the New is the substance. The stories of the Old Testament are intended to illustrate and foreshadow events in the New. Esther stood to prepare the Jewish mind for a revelation of Christ. Thus—

1. When God's people were in danger, a deliverer was divinely provided. God foresaw the plot, and prepared for it. So God saw sin before it came into the world and planned to meet it by a Redeemer from sin.

2. Just at the point of danger, in the palace itself, was found the deliverer, by a plan unexpected both by friends and foes. So God's salvation is the way which men can scarcely comprehend, and by a Saviour who comes from the right hand of God himself.

3. The deliverer of the Jews was a royal personage, on the throne and lifted high above all danger. So Christ is the Son of God, the Prince of the house of David.

4. The deliverer of the Jews offered herself voluntarily to die for her people in coming to the king, and with her people in avowing herself one of them. So the Son of God came to earth, and gave himself to die for us.

5. The deliverance of the Jews was through an intercessor who was the only person in the kingdom capable of standing between the king and the condemned people. Christ, our intercessor, is one with God, yet one with us.

6. The intercession of Esther was successful, and her people were saved. Whether Christ's intercession shall avail for us depends only upon the question whether we will accept his pleadings in our behalf.

#### English Teacher's Notes.

WHEN we hear of any difficult task which has been accomplished, any threatening danger which has been safely passed, any perilous enterprise which has been triumphantly carried out, the question at once comes up with some eagerness, How was it done? And this is particularly the case if we see any probability of finding ourselves in similar circumstances. We then feel, not merely a curious interest in the matter, but a desire to know all about it for our own profit. It is interesting and exciting to read how Hannibal crossed the Alps in the teeth of opposition; but it touches ourselves more nearly to learn how a teacher succeeded in managing an unruly class; how a mother in straitened circumstances contrived to make both ends meet; how a young man overcame the disadvantages of humble birth, or of an unprepossessing exterior; how a girl triumphed over weak health or obscure position. The story of Esther combines several points of interest. It is the story of a queen, and yet of a feeble woman; the story of one who played a heroic part, and yet of one who shrank from peril; the story of one who was instrumental in effecting a mighty deliverance, and

yet who was called upon only to do the plain and simple duty that lay before her.

First let us notice what she had to do.

**Esther's duty.** One would have thought nothing very great or momentous would have fallen to her lot to undertake. She bore, indeed, the name and dignity of queen, but, in spite of her royal position, she lived in a sort of gilded captivity. Even without the testimony of ancient history to corroborate it, the Book of Esther gives a sad picture of the condition of women at that time, and the low esteem in which they were held. Though the wife of the Persian monarch, Esther was little better than a slave, and her sphere of usefulness must have appeared an extremely limited one. Yet there was a great duty for her to fulfill. Her kinsfolk, her nation, were in peril. If any one could speak the word that should save them, it must be Esther; the position she occupied gave her this opportunity, and the man who stood to her in the place of father pointed it out, and enjoined upon her its performance.

**Esther's danger.** Mordecai was, perhaps, hardly aware how great a burden he was laying upon his adopted daughter. She who had been chosen queen by Ahasuerus might be supposed to have some influence over him. But the fact was that for a whole month he had neglected her, and she could not tell whether or not his partiality was waning. She had no opportunity of seeing or speaking with the king, unless she ventured upon a bold step, and presented herself, uncalled, before his royal seat. The penalty of such an act, unless special favor were shown her, was death, and she had no good reason for imagining it would be remitted in her case. Unless her husband's affection revived, there was no hope for her. The queen was as much subject to the "law of the Medes and Persians" as any in the empire, and the story of Daniel shows how true was the description of it, that it "altereth not" (Dan. 6, 8, 12, 15; chap. 1, 19), so that it was not merely a difficult task that lay before Esther, but a duty fraught with the utmost peril.

Now notice how she did it.

**Esther's decision.** "So will I go in unto the king."

The duty must be performed; the danger must be faced; how should it be done? What should be her panoply and her strength? She knew of but one. Humanly speaking, she expected to perish, but there was a Power that could protect and prosper her. To that Power she would have recourse. We miss in Esther that simple unswerving faith of others whose lives are recorded in Scripture. The name of the God of Israel is not even mentioned. But when an Israelite spoke of fasting, it implied humiliation before his God, and the seeking of divine help. This was the only armor of strength on which Esther could rely. "Fast ye for me, . . . I also and my maidens will fast . . . and so will I go in unto the king." She had not David's faith ("The Lord . . . he will deliver me," 1 Sam. 17, 37), but at least she cast herself upon God, and thus went forth to the task laid upon her.

**Esther's deliverance.** There sits the despot on his loyal throne, and Esther stands before him, dressed, in queenly apparel, as befitting her station. But her strength lay neither in this nor in her beauty, but in the panoply of lowliness and humiliation before God, with which she had clothed her soul. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. 21, 1); and the golden scepter is held out to the bold intruder, for this time Esther is delivered—an earnest of the deliverance of her people, which it is given her to accomplish.

This is how the task was performed and the danger passed. The same panoply, the same weapons, will carry the feeblest and most trembling over the path of danger, and crown their efforts with success. Let the class take this thought away with them. It is not station, or talent, or strength, or wisdom, or human courage, but humble clinging to God, that wins the day. He that casts himself as nothing before God, and on God, goes forth mighty.

### Berean Methods.

#### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Let the teacher read carefully the Book of Esther, induce his scholars to do so if possible, and either tell, or better draw from the class, the story of Queen Esther. . . . Show the map, or draw one, and locate "Shushan the palace," or Susa, the capital of Persia. Let the class understand that the scene of this story is not laid in Jerusalem or Judea. . . . There are four persons presented prominently in this book. It might be well to call attention to the traits of character displayed by each—Ahasuerus, the man of pleasure; Haman, the unscrupulous and selfish office-holder; Mordecai, the man of faith; Esther, the self-sacrificing, like our Lord. . . . Every body admires beauty—wherein did Esther's beauty consist? Not merely in her face, which was an index to her soul. See in the Analytical and Biblical Outline her traits as an example. . . . Call attention to Esther as a type of Christ. (See Thoughts for Young People). . . . A man was asked how he obtained a certain high office under government. "O, I have a friend at court," was his answer. We, too, have a Friend who pleads for us with the King of kings.

**References.** FREEMAN. Chapter 4—Verse 11: Etiquette of the Persian Court, 395. Chapter 5—Verse 1: The courts of the house, 387. Verse 2: Scepters, 576.

### CATECHISM QUESTION.

13. How does our Lord teach us his religion? By his word and by his Spirit.

14. What is his word?

The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament, which are the sacred books of the Christian Faith.

### Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT: *The Kindness of Our King.*

INTRODUCTORY. Most children know the story of Queen Esther, and in approaching its beautiful lessons we may depend upon them for the outlines of the story. Question skillfully, calling now upon a child, now upon

a class and so avoid children's indifference they know

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a class and again upon the whole class, for answers, and so avoiding the danger of letting two or three forward children do all the talking while others settle back into indifference, or worse, because not helped to tell what they know.

#### THE QUEEN'S TROUBLE.

See if children remember how so many Jews came to be in Persia; also in what they differed so widely from the Persians. Tell that Esther was a Jewess, and had been taught to pray to the true God, but her husband, the king, did not know or care for God. Tell how sad the queen was when she knew that all her people were to be killed on a certain day, and why she thought she could do nothing to save them. The laws of Persia were very strict, and even a queen might not disobey them without suffering death, unless the king should hold out his golden scepter to her. That meant love and pardon.

#### THE QUEEN'S COURAGE.

Tell that when Esther resolved to go into the king's presence without being called she knew that she might lose her life, but she believed that God wanted her to do it, and that he would go with her. Tell what preparation she made, and teach that when we have something to do that looks hard and dangerous we must always pray to God about it, and get wisdom and strength from him. Esther knew that God was a greater king than Abasuerus, so she went to him first.

#### THE QUEEN'S JOY.

Describe Esther going from the presence of the King of heaven to the presence of the proud king of Persia. Tell what it meant when he held out his scepter to her, and read the kind words he spoke to her. He was willing to give her whatever she asked, even if



she asked the half of his kingdom!

*Our King's Kindness.* Teach that our king, Jesus, asks us to come to him for any thing we want. He holds out the scepter of pardon and peace to every one who comes asking his favor. Read some promise, as "Whosoever will, let him come," and tell that it is our king's invitation. Who will come? Sing, "Come to Jesus."

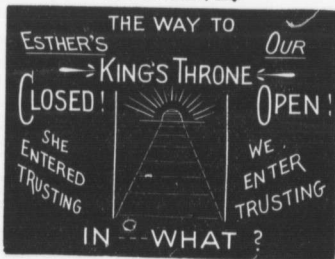
#### Lesson Word-Pictures.

A shadow is sweeping over Shushan. It reaches that home whose opened door you see. It enters, hushes the merry song there, and you hear only the sharp, sudden wail of a mother and her children. The shadow touches that man at his work. He starts, drops his tools, goes home and clothes himself with sackcloth as with the night, and puts coarse, gray ashes on his head. Sackcloth and ashes cannot enter the royal palace, but still that shadow has gone there. It has stolen past all the guards and fallen over the queen herself. What does she care for all the magnificence of Shushan's palace, its pavements of red and blue and white and black marble, its gorgeous hangings like the drapery of a rainbow, its stately pillars, its vessels of gleaming gold, its couches of purple, its gardens bright with the colors of the sunrise? That shadow falls everywhere, darkening all things. Amid all this splendor, as through the unreality of a dream, glides the doomed queen. This is the shadow of death. She and her people must die. They are Jews. Only one person can save them, and that is the great king. Will she venture before him and plead for life? It is death to go

if not summoned, death unless he holds out the golden scepter to any suppliant. "I will go" is the thought of the queen. "Let my people pray for me." Not only sackcloth and ashes now, but fasting and prayer in the homes of the Jews. A great cry is going up to God, from the queen also and her maidens. The day has come when the queen will venture before the king. She puts on her royal robes. Amid all that glory of color, her beautiful face with its dark, lustrous eyes and its wealth of raven hair is like a jewel in some rich setting. Alone, she walks the marble-paved corridors on her way to the king's court. She goes with bowed head. She feels the sunlight; it chills her like the winter moonlight. She hears the birds singing; it is a mockery to her, this queen on her way to death. She has reached the inner court of the king's house. She enters and with beating heart stands waiting. There on his throne sits the king. Of what splendor is he the center! That magnificent throne, those walls bathed in rich colors, the guards in their shining uniform, and O with what sharp, cruel swords! Does the king see that some one has entered, unsummoned, an intruder, a woman? Between those sharp swords and that woman's neck is only the golden scepter. Will he lower it? Does he delay? Is he angry? Is it a scepter of gold in a hand of iron that will not bend? Still, she waits, resolute with all the patience of a last hope. "If I perish, I perish," she has said. Still she waits. Perhaps, he does not see her. Yes, Esther, he sees you. And the scepter! She has only eyes for that. Ah, not a hand of iron, but that of thine husband, a hand of love, yields it! These scepter droops. In all her royal beauty, past stately pillar and pictured wall, over the marble pavements, before the very guards, marches the queen and touches the tip of the lowered scepter.

#### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



**EXPLANATION.** We have studied and read to-day of a king whose pride was such that none could approach him unbidden under penalty of death. Our blackboard illustrates the difference between Queen Esther's king and our King of kings. The way to his court is open, and any one of us may come boldly to the throne of grace, trusting in—what? Esther had faith, and she entered the king's court, also trusting in—what?

**DIRECTIONS.** If you have colored chalk, place this diagram on the board before the school assembles, and divide the words, by writing all on the left of the down lines in one color, and on the right with another color. When the question is asked, in what do we trust? write the answer in the open way. Make the words, "The way to King's Throne," all in one color, so that it will connect with the word written.

B. C. 440.]

## LESSON XII. MESSIAH'S MESSENGER.

[March 21.

Mal. 3. 1-6, and 4. 1-6. [Commit to memory verses 1, 2, 3.]

1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against

those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

6 For I am the LORD, I change not; and therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

7 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

8 And ye shall tread upon high places, for ye shall be ashamed under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

4 Remember ye the law of Mo'ses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

5 Behold, I will send you Elijiah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

## General Statement.

All that can be known of Malachi, the last of the prophets, must be deduced from his brief prophecy, for he is not elsewhere mentioned in the Scripture. The word Malachi means "my messenger," and it is not certain whether it was his name, or the designation of his office. Some have thought that he preached at the time when Ezra was engaged in the work of reformation, and Nehemiah in that of the political reorganization of the Jewish people. But in that case it is hard to explain why one so prominent as the inspired prophet of the epoch is not mentioned in either the Book of Ezra or of Nehemiah. It seems more likely that he lived a few years later, when the reformation had lost its spirit, and retained its forms. The services of the temple were duty fulfilled, but the prophetic formal spirit were people were outwardly worshippers of God, but in heart were living for selfish aims. They were robbing his altar of its due, and were heaping their store-houses with

what belonged to God. In this age of hypocrisy and hollow service arose Malachi. His message was a rebuke for the sins of the time, and a call to more hearty and faithful service. Every class of the Jewish nation shares in his condemnation—priests, scribes, rulers, and common people. But his preaching was not altogether a protest against evil. He points out the path of duty, and promises God's blessing upon faithfulness to the covenant. He proclaims the coming of One who shall restore Israel to its former glory. The advent of the forerunner, who was to appear with all the suddenness and severity of an Elijah, was soon to be followed by the advent of One greater, who was to be the King himself, and to lay the foundation of the new dispensation, and casting away the base. In the coming dawn the Sun of Righteousness should arise, bringing life and healing and peace with his outstretched wings. He does the Old Testament end with the promise of the New.

## Explanatory and

## Practical Notes.

**Verse 1. My messenger.** This is a prediction of John the Baptist, as shown by its appropriation in Mark 1. 2. **He shall prepare the way.** In the East a forerunner goes in advance of every important personage, to clear the road, and make preparation for his coming. (1) *What John the Baptist was, every preacher and teacher should be now, the Lord's messenger.* **And the Lord.** This is a reference to Christ; but in this prophecy the first and the second coming are blended, as is often the case in the prophetic writing. Time and space are very small elements in the dramatic action of the prophets. **Whom ye seek.** This is equivalent to "whom ye are expecting." All the Jews were looking for the Redeemer's coming, though they were not ready to accept him when he came. **Shall suddenly come to his temple.** He came to his temple in his expulsion of the money-changers (Matt. 21. 12, 13), and again in the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70, an event often referred to in the New Testament as the coming of the Lord. **Even the messenger of the covenant.** The margin of the Revised Version reads, "the angel of the covenant," which is the name under which Christ revealed himself more than once in the Old Testament history. **Whom ye delight in.** There is "a latent irony" in this. The Jews theoretically held to the doctrine of Christ's coming as a most precious truth; but practically they ignored it. The same may be said of the attitude of the bulk of the Christian Church toward the promised second coming of Christ.

**2. But who may abide.** This evidently foretells the work of Christ in his incarnation, which was to sift out the true from the false in the Israel of his day. **The day of his coming.** Here as elsewhere the results of the first and second advent are presented together. This is Augustine's comment on this prophecy. **Like a refiner's fire.** To distinguish the precious from the vile and separate between the silver and the dross. **Like fullers' soap.** The fuller was the washer or laundry-man of ancient times. Such was unknown, but a substance of cleansing property was in use. (2) *May ye be ready to receive the cleansing touch of the Saviour!*

**3. He shall sit as a refiner.** In the East the refiner sits before his little crucible, keeping his eyes on the metal, which remains exposed to the heat until it reflects his image. (3) *The great Master keeps us in the furnace until we become like himself.* **Purify the sons of Levi.** The Levites are named because as the priests tribe they were the leaders in the religious life of Israel. **An offering in righteousness.** No offerings are acceptable to God except those that come from a righteous heart; but the blackest sinner who sincerely seeks for such a heart can have it.

**4. Then shall the offering.** The word here used for "offering" is not that denoting an atonement or sacrifice, but that which means a thank-offering or a gift of consecration, the worship of one who is in a state of reconciliation with God. **Ye shall not offer unto me the offering of wicked and unfaithful people is refused (Isa. 1. 11-15);** but when the evil are purged out from among the good, then the sacrifice becomes acceptable. So it is now. When our prayers are received with favour, it is because of the good. **As in the days of old.** Such were the sacrifices of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Samuel, and David in the old dispensation, and such the prayers of saints under the Gospel.

**5. I will come near to you to judgment.** Before God can accept his people he must judge them by holding them up to the true standard and casting out the unworthy elements. The evils which the prophet here names are still prevalent, and still hinder the progress of God's work. **The sorcerers.** There were in the ancient days, as there are now, mediums, who claimed to talk with departed spirits. Both ancient and modern forms of spiritualism consist of fraud and diabolism in about equal proportions. In all ages this sorcery has led people astray from God and the word; and it invariably corrupts the moral nature of those who practice its obscurities. It is suggestive, to find the prophet warning against sorcery and adultery in one breath. The lives of most modern spiritualists give all the commentary needed on this passage. **Against the adulterers.** One of the sins of that time, as we see in

the Books of Isaiah, have doubtless knowledge of strong hands those who rather than fraudulent returns of who robbed the now. Tho' who through their poverty sometimes **widow, and** be under an especially by **stranger for** not belonging returns were first renouew were equal

**6. I am** ableness is "He who is **not consum** verso. To changes not shall not changes not they, the tr dangers of **ness is at on** evil.

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**DOCTRIN**



the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, was the marriage of Israelites to the heathen, which would inevitably have destroyed the holy seed and blotted out the knowledge of God if it had not been repressed with a strong hand. **Against false swearers.** This refers to those who bear false witness against men for gain, rather than to blasphemers against God. There were fraudulent business men in those times, who made false returns of property, and cheated the government, and robbed the Church; just as some of like spirit do now. **Those that oppress the hireling.** Employers who ground down their employes, took advantage of their poverty, underpaid and overworked them, and sometimes defrauded them of their wages. **The widow, and the fatherless.** Desolate as widows must be under any conditions of society, in the East they are especially helpless. (4) *Those whom men can most readily wrong have a great avenger.* Turn aside the stranger from his right. The stranger is the foreigner, not belonging to the chosen people. While the Israelites were forbidden to marry with such, unless they first renounced their idols and accepted Jehovah, they were equally forbidden to oppress or wrong them.

**6. I am the Lord, I change not.** His unchangeableness is implied in his name *Jehovah*, which means, "He who is," the existent one. Therefore ye... are not consumed. There is a double meaning in this verse. To one class of Jews God declares that he changes not in his hate of their sins, and therefore they shall not escape punishment; to another, that he changes not in fidelity to his covenant, and therefore, they, the true sons of Jacob, are preserved amid all the dangers that threaten them. (5) *God's unchangeableness is at once the hope of the good and the terror of the evil.*

**1. That shall burn as an oven.** So John the Baptist warned the Jews of the sifting and the burning which the Messiah should accomplish. **All the proud.** In the Old Testament this word generally means those who live for themselves without thought of God. **Shall be stubble.** And as such, destroyed in the fire. **Neither root nor branch.** Such expressions as these are doubtless figurative, but they mean something, and something terrible to the godless.

**2. Unto you that fear my name.** See the contrast between "the proud," or those who live without God, and those who hold his name in reverence. **The Sun**

**of righteousness.** The Saviour, who is to the moral and spiritual world what the sun is to the material. (6) *Like the sun, Christ brings light which is life to men.* **Healing in his wings.** The beams of the sun are here compared to the outstretched wings of a bird. **Grow up as calves of the stall.** Rev. Ver., "gambol as calves." The reference is to the freedom and enjoyment of God's people, which should resemble that of young animals; a comparison which would naturally suggest itself to a pasture-keeping race.

**3. Ye shall tread down the wicked.** This carries on the illustration of the previous verse. God's people shall not only enjoy freedom, but triumph over all the evil forces of the world; a prophecy to be realized in the full success of the Gospel. **Ashes under the soles of your feet.** No more regarded than the ashes upon which men walk. Even now God's people enjoy in a measure the privileges of this prophecy, for the Gospel is now growing to rule in the world. The powerful nations are Christian nations, the missionary is protected, and evils which once were rampant are now held in check.

**4. Remember ye the law.** The age of the later prophets was marked by an increasing reverence for the law of Moses, which I commanded. Thus the last of the Old Testament prophets declares that the law came from God. **In Horeb.** The mountain on which the law was proclaimed is sometimes called Horeb, though more often Sinai.

**5. I will send you Elijah.** That is, one who should be like Elijah in character and mission. The reference is to John the Baptist, who though not the literal Elijah (John 1. 21), came in the spirit and power of the great reformer. **The great and dreadful day.** This seems to point to that time when the Jewish state was destroyed, and the Jews forever driven from their home.

**6. The heart of the fathers.** The fathers are the godly ancestors of the Jewish people; the children are their degenerate and worldly-minded descendants of Malachi's day. Before Messiah can come these must be brought into harmony by the people coming back to their ancient standards. **Smite the earth with a curse.** The last utterance of the Old Testament is the warning of a curse to fall upon the disobedient; the last sentence in the New Testament is a gracious benediction.

#### HOME READINGS.

M. Messiah's messenger. Mal. 3. 1-6; 4. 1-6.

TV. The messenger sent. Luke 1. 57-80.

W. Preparing the way. Luke 3. 1-22.

Th. The refiner of souls. Matt. 3. 1-17.

F. Offerings to God. Matt. 2. 1-15.

S. Vengeance upon the wicked. James 5. 1-15.

S. Fear of God brings reward. 2 Pet. 1. 1-21.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. Mal. 3. 1.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 151, Dominion Hymnal.

Hail to the Lord's Anointed;  
Great David's greater Son!

No. 153, Dominion Hymnal.

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Doth his successive journeys run.

No. 155, Dominion Hymnal.

O'er the gloomy hills of darkness,  
Cheered by no celestial ray.

TIME.—440 B. C. In Greece, the 84th Olympiad. Year of Rome, 313.

PLACE.—Jerusalem. (?)

RULERS.—Artaxerxes, king of Persia.

CONNECTING LINK.—Malachi lived in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, or immediately after them. He was the last of the prophets, and the last lesson of this quarter points us to the Messiah, whose life begins with the first lesson of the new quarter.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The way of salvation.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Coming Messenger, chap. 3. 1; chap. 4. 5, 6.

What announcement does our Golden Text contain?

What was to be the work of this messenger? chap. 4. 6.

What testimony did the Saviour give that this prophecy had been fulfilled?

How did John the Baptist meet the conditions of this prophecy?

When did the Saviour do what was predicted in chap. 3. 1?

2. The Refining Fire, chap. 3. 2-6; 4. 1.

What was the condition of the Jewish people when Christ came?

What was the effect of his teaching on the Pharisees? Against whom did he pour out bitter denunciations?

What is the effect of a refiner's fire?

What has been the effect of Christ's teaching upon the world?

What does Christianity do for society? What shall be the final end of wickedness?

3. The Sun of Righteousness, chap. 4. 2-4.

What was the effect of Christ's coming upon those who received him? ver. 2.

What was the progress of Christianity like in its early centuries? ver. 2.

What is to be its destiny in the world? In the struggle between holiness and wickedness, which is to triumph? ver. 3.

Upon what foundation is Christianity laid? ver. 4.

#### Practical Teachings.

Christ really has come into the world. His temple is the human heart. Has he entered it?

Trials refine us if we are silver. They destroy us if we are dross. What do they do to you?

The sun cannot shine if clouds are between him and the earth. Can the Sun of righteousness?

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**

1. **The Coming Messenger**, chap. 3. 1; chap. 4. 5, 6.
  - What promise did God here make to his people?
  - What was to be the business of the messenger?
  - By what name is this messenger called in chap. 4. 6?
  - Of whom was he to be the herald?
  - In whom was this promise fulfilled? Matt. 11. 10.
  - What other prophet foretold this messenger? Isa. 40. 3.
  - What is promised of his ministry?
2. **The Refining Fire**, chap. 3. 2-6; 4. 1.
  - What was to be the manner of the coming of the Lord?
  - What two questions does the prophet ask?
  - To what is the Lord likened?
  - From what would he purify his people?
  - What will be the end of the wicked?
  - Against whom would the coming Lord be a witness?
  - What kind of offering is acceptable to God?
3. **The Sun of Righteousness**, chap. 4. 2-4.
  - Who have hope in the coming of the Lord?
  - What is it "to fear his name"?
  - What has Jesus declared himself to be? John 18. 12.
  - What does the Sun of righteousness secure to godly men?
  - What promise of spiritual prosperity is given them?

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

- Where in this lesson are we taught—
1. The need of the natural heart?
  2. The final doom of the wicked?
  3. The safety of those who fear the Lord?

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

- Who was the last of the Old Testament prophets that foretold the coming of Christ? **Malachi.**
- Who did he say should prepare the way for his coming? **His messenger.** (Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.)
- Who was his messenger? **John the Baptist.**
- To whom is he compared? **To Elijah.**
- In what way he like him? **In his teaching and way of living.**
- What would the Messiah bring with him? **Punishment for the wicked and blessing for the good.**
- What is Jesus called? **The Sun of righteousness.**
- What does his light drive out of our hearts? **Sin and darkness.**
- How does he come to us? **With healing.**
- Healing for what? **For soul and body.**
- Who only can cure us of sin? **Jesus.**
- What will his light do for us if we let it shine into our hearts? **Make us strong and happy.**
- What is the life of the earth? **Its sun.**
- What would the earth be without it? **Cold and dark and dead.**
- What is our life? **The Sun of righteousness.**
- What are we without him? **Cold and sinful and unhappy.**

**Words with Little People**

God showed the prophet Malachi that John the Baptist was coming to make the way ready for Jesus four hundred years before it happened. [See the GOLDEN TEXT.]

If you tell to all around what a Saviour you have found, and then, by what you do and say, you show your love from day to day, you will be a little messenger for him, too.

**THE LESSON CATECHISM.**

[For the entire school.]

1. Who was Malachi? **The last of the Old Testament prophets.**
2. What did he foretell? **The coming of the Saviour.**
3. What did he say in the Golden Text? **"Behold, I will," etc.**
4. Who was meant in this? **John the Baptist.**
5. What did Malachi call the coming Saviour? **The Sun of righteousness.**

**TEXTS AT CHURCH.**

*Morning Text*.....

*Evening Text*.....

**ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.**

**The Coming of the Lord.**

- I. **A CERTAIN COMING.**
  - He shall come, saith the Lord.* 3. 1.
  - "This same Jesus... shall so come." Acts 1. 11.
- II. **AN EXPECTED COMING.**
  - The Lord, whom ye seek, shall... come.* 3. 1.
  - "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22. 20.
- III. **A SUDDEN COMING.**
  - Shall suddenly come to his temple.* 3. 1.
  - "Ye know not what hour." Matt. 24. 42.
- IV. **A COMING TO PURIFY.**
  - Like a refiner's fire... shall purify.* 3. 2, 3.
  - "Blameless in the day of our Lord." 1 Cor. 1. 8.
- V. **A COMING TO JUDGE.**
  - Will come near you to judgment.* 3. 5.
  - "Who shall judge... at his appearing." 2 Tim. 4. 1.
- VI. **A COMING TO DESTROY.**
  - All that do wickedly shall be stubble.* 4. 1.
  - "In flaming fire taking vengeance." 2 Thess. 1. 7-9.
- VII. **A COMING TO REWARD.**
  - The Sun of righteousness... with healing.* 4. 2.
  - "Shepherd shall appear... a crown of glory." 1 Pet. 5. 4.
- VIII. **A TRIUMPHANT COMING.**
  - Ye shall tread down the wicked.* 4. 3.
  - "He shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. 11. 15.

**THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.**

**What Christ's Coming Brings to Men.**

There is a time when Christ is revealed to every soul, and that is in a sense, but not in the full sense, his coming to that soul. This lesson shows what his coming brings to men.

1. His coming brings to many alarm and fear. 3. 2. There are those who dread to meet Christ, even though he comes to offer them mercy. A teacher said to his class, "How would you feel if you knew Christ were coming to this room now?" There was silence, until one scholar said, "I should want to go away!"
2. His coming draws the line between the precious and the vile, the silver and the dross, the good and the bad. v. 2-5. Now the evil and the good are mingled; but when Christ comes they will be separated, the sheep on one side, the goats on the other. On which side will you be found?
3. His coming shall make the good better and the Church purer. v. 2, 3. The silver and the gold shall be purified, the worship made more sincere, the offering of the Church more acceptable, by the coming of the Lord.
4. His coming shall bring judgment and punishment to the wicked. 3. 5-4. 1. People are not always seen in their true light now, but then their crimes shall be known and their penalty shall come.
5. His coming shall bring victory and triumph to his cause. 4. 2, 3. May we be permitted to share in that success!

**English Teacher's Notes.**

In the constellation of Ursa Major, the "Great Bear," are two stars known by the name of the "Pointers." The eye that rests on the "Pointers" does not stay there; it travels on in the direction which they indicate. For these stars form a sort of guiding finger to point out one in the smaller constellation, Ursa Minor; they are an index to the

Pole-star, was known trackless. Our les is, emph own nam ness is another and narrow expecting. We are His prop name messenge the Old long-look be recogn But the hold" oe and in th points to send my before m prophecy wildernes ir, Mark the other be the im and who himself to point in th Major; b To wha involvng which, p ernal, ke is therefo messenge one is th changes m him? " shoes I ar Mark 1. 7 before me istent, un star retain now we heavens, and that direction, before th lost indee changing points, th clouds, h of old gli turbed, t Lord, is " King lom aspect aft by opposi other dire

Pole-star, that by which of old, before the compass was known, the mariner steered his course over the trackless ocean.

Our lesson to-day is about pointers. A prophet is, emphatically, a pointer. He appears, not in his own name, but in the name of another. His business is not to bear witness to himself, but to another. And Malachi is one, in the very strictest and narrowest sense. He, alone of all the prophets, excepting Obadiah, has absolutely no personality. We are not told who he was or whence he came. His prophecy is entirely apart from himself. His name means "My messenger." He is just simply a messenger, or a pointer. And his book closes up the Old Testament by pointing to the advent of the long-looked-for Messiah, and indicating how he may be recognized when he comes.

But there is a second pointer. The word "Behold" occurs three times in the Book of Malachi, and in the passage for to-day. The first time it points to the forerunner of Christ: "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." Here is an expansion of Isaiah's prophecy: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness," etc., whence both are quoted together in Mark 1. The one messenger, Malachi, announces the other messenger, John the Baptist, who was to be the immediate preparer of the way of the Lord, and who led the minds of the people away from himself to the Mighty One coming after him! Both point in the same direction, like the two stars in Ursa Major; but one is farther off, the other nearer.

*To what do they point?* The two stars ever revolving round the Pole point to the one star which, practically, as far as human sight is concerned, keeps its place steadily in the heavens and is therefore called the Pole-star. Just so with the two messengers. Malachi points out that the coming one is the Lord, one with Jehovah, the Lord who changes not. Ver. 6. And what does John say of him? "One mightier than I . . . the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." Mark 1. 7. "He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me," the eternally existent, unchangeable I am. John 1. 15. The Pole-star retains its place, though stars appear, now east, now west of it, though planets circle round the heavens, though below the winds blow, this way and that way, and currents flow in this and that direction, and land appears and fades away again before the eye of the mariner. And he would be lost indeed if he guided his course by these ever-changing things. But there, where his compass points, there where the sky is not obscured by clouds, he can see the star which guided the sailor of old glittering in the heavens, serene and undisturbed, true and reliable. So Jesus Christ, the Lord, is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Kingdoms rise and fall, philosophy takes one aspect after another; the minds of men are drawn by opposite currents, first in one and then in the other direction; circumstances change and fling us

first on this side, then on that side. But One never changes. "I am the Lord, I change not." Ver. 6. "With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1. 17); and because he never changes, he is the sure Guide.

*But how does He guide?* It was a welcome sight to the sailor of old when the clouds parted and he beheld the never-erring Pole-star. And so the Jews looked for the coming of Messiah and were ready, as they supposed, to welcome him. He was to them "the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." For, just as the Pole-star reveals the position of the Pole, so Messiah was the revealer and bringer of the covenant mercies of God. And so to some it is pleasant to hear of the Lord Jesus Christ as the merciful one, ready to forgive sins, providing a happy home in heaven. But there is another aspect of the matter. "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" The Pole-star may show the sailor that he has taken a wrong course, that he is in danger, that he has been speeding away from the goal and must return and go back over the path by which he came. And the sight of Christ reveals to the sinner his sin, his danger, his mistakes, his utter helplessness. He is like a refiner's fire; a "swift witness" (ver. 5) against all that is false and evil. He was this at his first coming when John the Baptist testified of him: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor." Matt. 3. 12. He is this now, and we find in him not merely the merciful Saviour, but the righteous One, who cannot tolerate sin, so that we are told: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. 2. 19. So will he be in that day to which Malachi calls attention with his second "Behold." Chap. 4. 1. And because this last fiery revealing will give no place for turning, the third "Behold" tells of a messenger to be sent "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Chap. 4. 5.

But, meantime, to those who have submitted themselves to be tried by the refiner's fire, the star which shone on them and pointed out the right course has become a "Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings," and for those who have steered by its light, instead of perplexed and weary wandering, there is leaping and prancing (said to be the more correct translation) "as calves of the stall." Chap. 4. 2.

Space will not allow of fuller entering into the details of the passage, nor the exact meaning of chap. 4. 5, which will, no doubt, be dwelt upon in other notes. The lesson to be impressed upon the class is this:

It is no longer night, as the time before our Lord appeared. There are thousands of "pointers" to him now. You have been pointed to him to-day—to him, the changeless One, the sure Guide. Are you ordering your course by this Star, and dwelling in the light of this Sun? God grant it may be so with each one who hears!

**Berean Methods.****Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.**

Call attention to the time when Malachi preached, as indicated in his book. . . . Show from this lesson the sins which were then prevalent, as 1.) Formality; 2.) Sorcery; 3.) Immorality; 4.) Swearing; 5.) Oppression of the poor; 6.) Neglect of God. . . . Show how these same sins are characteristic of this age. . . . Next, present the teachings of the lesson concerning the messenger, and show how the traits here named belonged to John the Baptist. . . . Impress the truth that every teacher should be a John the Baptist, preparing the way for Christ. . . . Show also the aspects in which the coming of Christ is here presented, concerning which see the Analytical and Biblical Outline. . . . How is the second coming of Christ foreshadowed in this lesson? . . . Present the requirements of this lesson upon the followers of God. . . . Al o, the privileges of those who are on the Lord's side, especially as contained in the latter part of the lesson. . . . "The light of the world is Jesus" might be sung, or repeated, in connection with chap. 4, ver. 2.

**References.** FREEMAN. Chapter 3—Ver. 1: The herald, 806. Ver. 2: Filling, 636. Chapter 4—Ver. 3: Treatment of enemies, 628, 869.

**CATECHISM QUESTION.****15. How does the Old Testament teach Christianity?**

The Scriptures of the Old Testament were written by many holy men, who prophesied that the Christ was coming, and foretold also what he would suffer and do and teach. [1 Pet. 1, 10, 11.]

**Blackboard.**

BY J. E. PHIPPS, ESQ.



**DIRECTIONS.** With yellow chalk make the rays of light, which represent the wings of the Sun of Righteousness. Write the word "Redemption" in red. Make the sentence, "Our Lord is here," quite prominent, so that it will impress itself on the minds of those who see it. We are not looking forward to the coming, four hundred years hence, of the Sun of Righteousness. He is here. Will you be healed? Will you be his messenger? Have you ever tried to prepare the way before him?

**Lesson Word-Pictures.**

Looking afar, through the mist of the centuries, the prophet beheld him, the messenger of the Messiah. He saw, too, the temple, and what glory filled it, as Messiah entered! The prophet saw him bending over the refiner's fire as he purified the nation. How the metal glowed! Then how it would cloud with the floating

drops of sorcery, adultery, and fraud! How patiently the refiner skimmed the molten surface, till, we are told, he saw his face there, till it was beautiful with the reflection of his character. In the day of the Lord's coming, how hot the flames! The prophet, though, saw another light than that of the furnace, even the glory of the rising of the Sun of righteousness! "Nearer, nearer," all the heavens flushed with gold and purple seem to say. The light sharpens, till over the sea it breaks in glory, and "with healing in his wings," the Sun mounts the sky. And against the glory of that morning sky stands out in grandeur the form of the messenger, the great prophet Elijah.

**Primary and Intermediate.**

**LESSON THOUGHT.** *God our Light.* "Malachi" on the board, and tell that he was the last of the Old Testament prophets. Ask what a prophet does, and show that his power to foretell future events must come from God, since the best and wisest of people cannot tell what will happen even one day ahead. To give some idea how far into the future Malachi saw, make four large arches on the board. Print "100 years" in each. Let children count. How long before Jesus came did Malachi live? Divide one of the arches into ten parts. Let some child who has lived ten years stand up. Thus help little minds to come at some idea of the long time between the utterance and the fulfillment of these words.

**THE MESSENGER.**

Call for Golden Text. Ask who came before Jesus, to tell the people of their sins, and to ask them to stop sinning because One was coming who was so holy that sin could not live in his presence? Read chap. 4, verse 1, and tell that the day is surely coming when all sin must be burned up, and this is what John the Baptist came to warn the people of. Tell that the Holy Spirit has been given to speak in every heart, to hold back from sin, and show that this is because God loves us so that he wants to save us from the sin that would destroy us.

**THE MESSIAH.**

Teach that the Messiah is another name for Jesus. To those who fear sin and look to God to be saved from it. The Messiah comes like the rising of the sun upon a dark world. Talk about darkness and light, and teach that the heart without Jesus is a very dark place. When Jesus comes, all is changed. Ill will, naughty tempers, wrong-doing of all kinds, go away, and there is "healing," cure for sin, in his coming. A heart on the board, with sun rising in it, and its rays reaching out beyond may help to impress the thought.

*Lessons for us.* Teach that when the Spirit of God comes to show us sin in our hearts we must turn to Jesus at once. Impress the truth that Jesus has come. We need not wait. The sun of love and peace will rise in any heart that wants and asks. Read the last verse of lesson, and teach that the heart in which Jesus lives will be a loving heart.

**LESSONS FOR APRIL, 1886.**

- APRIL 4. The Word Made Flesh. John 1. 1-18.  
 APRIL 11. The First Disciples. John 1. 35-51.  
 APRIL 18. The First Miracle. John 2. 1-11.  
 APRIL 25. Jesus and Nicodemus. John 3. 1-18.

M. Lesso  
 Tu. Lesso  
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**REVIEW**

[In studying glancing over is required this quarter memory also Review.]

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## FIRST QUARTERLY REVIEW.

March 28.

## HOME READINGS.

- M. Lesson I. 2 Kings 22. 1-13.  
 Tu. Lesson II. Jer. 8. 20-22; 9. 1-16.  
 W. Lessons III, IV. Jer. 35. 12-19; 2 Kings 25. 1-12.  
 Th. Lessons V, VI. Dan. 1. 8-21; 3. 16-28.  
 F. Lessons VII, VIII. Dan. 5. 1-12, 25-28; Ezra 1. 1-4; 3. 8-13.  
 S. Lessons IX, X. Neh. 1. 1-11; 8. 1-12.  
 S. Lessons XI, XII. Esther 4. 10-17; 5. 1-3; Mal. 3. 1-6; 4. 1-6.

## REVIEW SCHEME FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

[In studying this Review do not be content with just glancing over this Scheme. Absolutely master all that is required. Do the best studying you have done in this quarter. When thoroughly done, write out from memory alone, with no help from any source, the whole Review.]

1. Commit to memory the Titles of the lessons, so that you can repeat them rapidly, and without effort.
2. Do the same with the Golden Texts.
3. Do the same with the Outlines.
4. Do the same with all the names of men who figure prominently in the lessons.
5. Tell to which lesson the following incidents belong, giving with each answer the Title and Golden Text:
  - a. An old prophet clothed with a scarlet robe, and wearing a gold chain.
  - b. A king upon his royal throne, and a queen kneeling before him.
  - c. An old priest handing a dust-stained parchment roll to a young king.
  - d. A young man refusing to eat the food sent him from the table of his king.
  - e. A great out-door meeting in a great city, where the speaker read the Bible from morning to midday.
  - f. A king in chains of brass, blind, his last sight the death of his son.
  - g. Servants of a king lying dead upon the ground, killed by the heat of a burning furnace.
  - h. The cup-bearer of a mighty monarch asked by his king why he looked sad.
  - i. People singing, people shouting, people weeping before the foundation walls of a great building.
6. Tell what lessons are suggested by the following pictures, and give the Lesson Outline of each:
  - a. A prophet weeping, and crying, "The harvest is past."
  - b. A prophet singing—his song, "I will send my messenger."
  - c. A wine-cup empty, that has been untouched for several generations of men.
  - d. A man sitting refining silver.
  - e. A queen and her maidens bowing in fasting and prayer.
  - f. Four young men bending together over books of Chaldean lore.
7. What character, noted for his zeal to purify God's Church, in these lessons?
8. What character willing to risk life for the possible good of a whole people?
9. What character whose principle was total abstinence?

10. What character who polluted in a drunken feast the vessels of God's house?

11. What principles that tend to form good character are brought out by these lessons?

12. What principles that must result in bad character are also shown?

## SEED THOUGHT.

"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

## REVIEW SCHEME FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.



LESSON I. **Josiah and the Book of the Law.** 2 Kings 22. 1-13. What does the GOLDEN TEXT say of King Josiah? Over what kingdom did he reign? Why did he order treasure to be collected? What was found among the treasures? What did the reading of the law lead Josiah to see.

LESSON II. **Jeremiah Predicting the Captivity.** Jer. 8. 20-22; 9. 1-16.—What lost privileges are lamented in the GOLDEN TEXT? Why did the prophet lament? What was the crying sin of the people? What desolation was foretold?

LESSON III. **The Faithful Rechabites.** Jer. 35. 12-19. For what did the Lord rebuke his people? What example of obedience does he set before them? What had been God's message to his people? What heed had they paid to the message? What punishment was promised the disobedient? What reward to the Rechabites?

LESSON IV. **Captivity of Judah.** 2 Kings 25. 1-12. What king captured Jerusalem? Who was carried into captivity? To what place were they carried? (GOLDEN TEXT.) What was done to the captured city?

LESSON V. **Daniel in Babylon.** Dan. 1. 8-21.—What young men did the king of Babylon select from the Jewish captives? For what purpose? What did Daniel refuse? What was the reason for his refusal? What test did he undergo? What was the result? Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.

LESSON VI. **The Fiery Furnace.** Dan. 3. 16-28.—Who were condemned to the fiery furnace? What was their answer to the king? (GOLDEN TEXT.) What befell them in the furnace? Who was with them in their trial?

LESSON VII. **Handwriting on the Wall.** Dan. 5. 1-12; 25-28.—What warning came to a wicked king? Who failed to solve the mystery? To whom did the king finally appeal? What did Daniel declare the words to be? What was the divine verdict against Belshazzar? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

LESSON VIII. **The Second Temple.** Ezra 1. 1-4; 3. 8-12.—What Gentile king favored the rebuilding of the temple? What caused him to be interested in the work? How were the people aided in the building? How was the laying of the foundation celebrated? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

LESSON IX. **Nehemiah's Prayer.** Neh. 1. 1-11.—What sad tidings came to Nehemiah? How was he affected by the news? What did he do in his grief for the people? What is the prayer of every afflicted child of God? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

LESSON X. **Reading the Law.** Neh. 8. 1-12.—Who gathered to hear the reading of the law? Who was the reader? Who helped him? What was the manner of reading? (GOLDEN TEXT.) What was the reason of the great joy on this occasion?

LESSON XI. **Esther's Petition.** Esther 4. 10-17; 5. 1-3.—At whose request did Esther seek the king? Why did she hesitate about going? What was her final determination? (GOLDEN TEXT.) How was Esther's faith rewarded?

LESSON XII. Messiah's Messenger. Mal. 3. 1-6; 4. 1-6.—What is the prophecy of the GOLDEN TEXT? Who was Messiah's messenger? Whose coming did he herald? What title does the prophet give to the coming Messiah? To whom will his coming be a joy? To whom will his coming bring destruction?

### REVIEW SCHEME FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Repeat the GOLDEN TEXTS for the quarter:

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. He did that—       | 7. Thou art—     |
| 2. The harvest—       | 8. They praised— |
| 3. For unto this—     | 9. Give us help— |
| 4. By the rivers—     | 10. So they—     |
| 5. Wherewithal shall— | 11. So I will—   |
| 6. Our God whom—      | 12. Behold I—    |

LESSON I.—Who did right? King Josiah. What did he do in the twelfth year of his reign? He opened and repaired the house of the Lord. With what did God bless him? With peace and prosperity.

LESSON II.—Why were the people not saved? Because they refused to turn to the Lord. What did Jeremiah declare unto them? The desolation of Jerusalem, and the captivity of the people.

LESSON III.—Who obeyed their father's commandment? The Rechabites. For what did the Lord reward them? For obedience to their father's law. For what did he punish the Israelites? For disobedience to the laws he had given them.

LESSON IV.—Who carried the Israelites as slaves to Babylon? King Nebuchadnezzar. What did he destroy? Jerusalem and the holy temple. Why did sorrow and trouble come upon them? Because they bowed down to idols.

LESSON V.—Who among the Jewish captives lived in the king's palace in Babylon? Daniel. What did Daniel reveal in his heart? To obey the laws of God. What did he ask of the chief ruler? That he might have pulse and water to eat and drink. Why did he ask this? The Jewish law forbade them to eat of meat killed by heathen. With what did God bless Daniel? With wisdom and learning.

LESSON VI.—Who refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. What did Nebuchadnezzar do? He had them cast into the fiery furnace. Who was with them in the fire? The Son of God. From what did he save them? From being harmed by the flames.

LESSON VII.—What king made a great feast for his lords? Belshazzar. What frightened him in the midst of the feast? A hand writing on the wall. Who interpreted the strange words? Daniel. What did they mean? That God had taken his kingdom from him.

LESSON VIII.—Who helped the Jews to go back to their own land? King Cyrus. What did they rebuild? The house of the Lord. Who rejoiced when the foundations were laid? The people. Who wept? The priests and the old men. For what did they weep? For the lost glory of the temple.

LESSON IX.—What news came to Nehemiah? That the Jews were poor and despaired. What was the state of Jerusalem? It was without wall or gates. What did Nehemiah do? He prayed to the Lord for help. What did he ask God to remember? His promise to Moses.

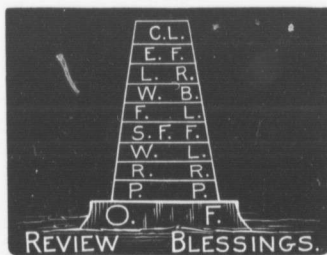
LESSON X.—Who read the law of God to the people? Ezra and the priests. Why did the people weep? Because of their sins. Why did Ezra tell them to rejoice? Because God had forgiven them.

LESSON XI.—Who condemned all Jews to be killed? The king of Persia. Who saved their lives? Esther, his queen. What did she risk in so doing? Her own life.

LESSON XII.—Who was that messenger? John the Baptist. What is Jesus called? The Sun of righteousness. What is our life without him? Cold and dark and dead.

### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



EXPLANATION. Nine of the lessons for this quarter show the blessings that arise from obedience and faith toward God. This simple diagram may serve as a memory help to the school in a general review of the lessons from the stand. Draw it exactly as it is before the session of the school. You can have the letters written in, or write them when you ask the questions. Thus: The foundation stone is O and F. Can the school tell me what these are? [Ans. *Obedience and Faith.*] What are the direct blessings that are bulled on this stone? Lesson I. Peace and Prosperity. Lesson III. Rechabites Rewarded. Lesson V. Wisdom and Learning. Lesson VI. Saved from Fire. Lesson VIII. Foundation Laid. Lesson IX. Walls Built. Lesson X. Law Read. Lesson XI. Esther Favored. Lesson XII. Coming Light. Speak of the remaining three lessons (Nos. II, IV, and VII) that show the results of disobedience.

### The Lesson Leaf Once More.

CRITICISMS upon our lesson-plans, and suggestions for their improvement, are always gladly received and carefully considered. Here are two, which came to our office only a day apart from each other. One superintendent in Pennsylvania wrote, "Why do you print the lesson upon the Leaf? Would it not be better to publish the questions and notes, and refer the scholars to their Bibles for the lesson?" On the next day came a letter from a superintendent in Dakota, saying, "We are bothered by the Scripture references in the Lesson Leaf. Some of our teachers wish to change to lessons published by Mr. Blank, which do not have references with the questions; for our classes do not have Bibles to look up the references in. Give us more explanations and no references." We were quite inclined to send to each superintendent a copy of the other man's letter, but instead, wrote to both that we wish to encourage the use of the Bible in the class, and therefore have references in every lesson. But we cannot afford to have our Lesson Leaves driven out by other Houses, and therefore we print the text with each lesson. Every class should be supplied with enough Bibles to furnish a Bible to every scholar.

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## Review Service for the First Quarter.

*Superintendent.* How long a period of time is embraced in the lessons of the past quarter?

*School.* About two hundred years, from the reign of Josiah, the last of the good kings of Judah, to the preaching of Malachi, 450 years before Christ.

*Superintendent.* To what three periods in Jewish history do these lessons belong?

*Bible Classes.* The first four lessons relate to the decline and fall of the kingdom of Judah, and show its condition about 600 years before Christ.

*Girls' Classes.* The lessons from the fifth to the seventh relate to the period of the captivity, while the Jews were exiles in Babylon.

*Boys' Classes.* The last five lessons belong to the period of the restoration, after the Jews were brought back to their own land.

### SINGING BY THE SCHOOL.

[During the singing of the last verse three scholars come forward and stand facing the school.]

*Superintendent.* What can you tell us about the three lands referred to.

*First Scholar.* Most of our lessons belong to the land of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem. It is a small land, not larger than the States of Massachusetts and Connecticut, yet it has filled the earth with its fame, for out of it came the Gospel for all the world. In the days of David, its empire extended from the Euphrates to the Nile, but at the period of our lessons its scepter was shortened, and finally swept away. For fifty years Zion was a desolation, and ever afterward the land of Judah was subject to foreign rule. At Jerusalem, in our lessons, Josiah reigned and reformed his kingdom, Jeremiah wept while he delivered God's warning of judgment, Zedekiah, the last king, was taken prisoner and dethroned, the returning exiles rebuilt the altar, Ezra read the law, and Malachi gave the last utterances of the Old Testament.

*Second Scholar.* Another land presented in our lessons is Chaldea, of which Babylon was the capital. This city was one of the most ancient in the world, for the Tower of Babel stands at the beginning of human history. For many centuries it was ruled by its younger sister Nineveh, on the banks of the Tigris, but about the time when Josiah reigned in Judah it won its independence, and then transferred the rule of the Oriental world to the Euphrates. For ninety years Chaldea was the mistress of all lands, and Babylon the lady of kingdoms. Its walls were three hundred feet high, and so wide that six chariots could drive abreast upon them. Within them were the hanging gardens and the palaces of Nebuchadnezzar; and near the city rose the golden image before which all the nobles of the kingdoms bowed, save the three Hebrew worthies. Here the Jews were captives, hanging their harps upon the willows by the streams, until in one night the handwriting appeared upon the wall, and the Persian hosts seized the city. To Babylon belong the lessons

which tell of Daniel and his three companions, of Belshazzar's feast, and of the return of the captives.

*Third Scholar.* The third of the countries in our lessons is Persia, which succeeded Babylon in the empire of the East, and ruled all the lands from India to Ethiopia and the Hellespont. Its capital was Shushan, among the mountains north of the Persian Gulf. Here the kings of Persia sat enthroned in their splendid palace, of which the ruins still remain. Here Esther knelt before Ahasuerus, touching the tip of the golden scepter; and here Nehemiah presented his request to King Artaxerxes that he might rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

### SINGING BY THE SCHOOL.

[During the singing of the last verse twelve scholars come forward.]

*Superintendent.* What prominent persons are named in the lessons of the past quarter?

*First Scholar.* I speak of Josiah, the young reformer, who lived in a time when Judah had forsaken God and was following idols. At the age of sixteen years he chose the God of his fathers, and thenceforth served him with his whole heart. He destroyed the idols, read the law of the Lord, and strove to lead his people back to the right way.

*School.* "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left."

*Second Scholar.* I speak of Jeremiah, the weeping prophet. He arose just when the young king Josiah fell in battle, and the reformation of Judah fell with him. He lived through the darkest age of Judah's history, when the people were sinking lower and lower in wickedness. He was a man of tender and gentle spirit, who wept while he delivered God's message, but delivered it though persecuted, imprisoned, and scourged. From him we learn the lesson of faithful testimony against sin.

*School.* "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved . . . Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

*Third Scholar.* I speak of the Rechabites, a strange family, who appeared in Jerusalem in the days before its fall. Their conduct gives us two noble examples, that of obedience to parents, and of total abstinence from strong drink.

*School.* "The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment . . . Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel . . . Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me forever."

*Fourth Scholar.* I speak of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. He received the throne upon the promise of loyalty to the great king of Babylon; but he broke his plighted faith, and rebelled. As a result he saw his land laid waste, his warriors

slain, his people carried away captive, and his own sons murdered. His eyes were then put out, and he was borne in chains to a dungeon in Babylon.

*School.* "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion."

*Fifth Scholar.* I speak of Daniel, the prophet and the prince. He was a captive in Babylon, but for his graces of mind and body promoted to a place in the palace. Here he lived unspotted amid temptation, temperate though surrounded by drunkenness, and in communion with God while all around were idol-worshippers. At the peril of his life he was faithful to duty, and when thrown among the lions he was guarded by God's care.

*School.* "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."

*Sixth Scholar.* I speak of the three young Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. While all the other nobles bowed down before the golden image, they stood erect, for they worshiped God alone. Thrown into the fiery furnace, they were preserved alive, and the form of the Son of God was seen walking in the fire by their side. From them we learn the lesson of fidelity to conscience.

*School.* "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace."

*Seventh Scholar.* I speak of Belshazzar, the youth who sat upon the throne of Babylon when it fell. As if to ridicule the enemies who were besieging his capital, he held a great feast in his palace; and as if to cast contempt upon the God of the Jews, he brought the holy vessels from the temple to his banqueting hall, and out of them drank in honor of his gods. But in the midst of the revelry appeared the handwriting on the wall warning him of doom, and in that very night the Persian besiegers entered the palace and slew the king upon his throne. His fate warns us against the sin of irreverence toward the God of heaven.

*School.* "And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

*Eighth Scholar.* I speak of Zerubbabel, who led the Jews back from the land of their captivity. The first act of Cyrus, the Persian conqueror of Babylon, was to issue an edict permitting the Jews to return. Fifty thousand of the exiles availed themselves of the privilege, and under the leadership of Zerubbabel journeyed back to Palestine. Their first act was to rebuild the altar of God upon its old foundation, and to renew the sacrifices; but it was twenty-one years before the temple was completed. From their leader we learn the lesson of love and labor for the house of God.

*School.* "And they sang together by course in

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

*Ninth Scholar.* I speak of Nehemiah the nobleman, who left a high station in the court of the Persian king, and journeyed twelve hundred miles to unite his fortunes with his depressed people in Jerusalem. By his energy, courage, and tact the wall of the city was built, and Jerusalem arose once more as the capital of the new Jewish nation. He was earnest in prayer, self-denying in liberality, and zealous for the purity of God's people.

*School.* "Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work. . . . Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we, his servants, will arise and build."

*Tenth Scholar.* I speak of Ezra the reformer. He was a priest who came from Chaiada to Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah, to instruct the people in the law of God, in which he was a deep student. Through his labors the writings of the Old Testament were gathered together and united into one book. He read the law before a great assembly of the people, and instituted schools and synagogues for its teaching. From his great work, he has been called "the second founder of the Jewish people."

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

*Eleventh Scholar.* I speak of Esther, the beautiful queen, whose lovely face was the reflection of a more lovely character. She was the queen of Persia, but to save her people she risked her life, and offered herself to die with them if she might not save them. By her act of self-sacrifice she won for herself the love of her people and an undying renown.

*School.* "So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."

*Twelfth Scholar.* I speak of Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets. He lived in the age after Ezra and Nehemiah, when their reformation had spent its strength, and the Jews were outwardly worshippers of God, but in heart following their own ways. Boldly did he rebuke the sins of priests and people, and faithfully did he exhort to paths of righteousness. It was his mission to point toward One who should come as the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world.

*School.* "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. . . . Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

SINGING BY THE SCHOOL.