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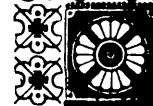
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The Teachers Monthly

Vol. V.

OCTOBER, 1899

No. 10

We shall issue a PROGRAMME OF MEMORY VERSES for 1900, to consist of complete passages—the great passages of the Word—not detached fragments.

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This will make the **TEACHERS MONTHLY** as large as the best and *one-fifth cheaper*.

The increase in bulk involves, of course, additional cost in publication. That increase we confidently expect to meet by enlarged subscription lists from schools.

Our Illustrated Papers

The demand from so many quarters for illustrated Sabbath School papers, Canadian and Presbyterian, is now to be met.

We begin with the New Year (samples ready after middle of October) two papers, each to be issued every week:

JEWELS: for the Little Ones.

The **CHILDREN'S RECORD**: for the other scholars.

Our jewels, the darling little ones, are very precious to their homes, to the Church, and to God; and it will be the Editor's care that what goes into the paper, whether picture or story, shall be jewel-like—bright, pretty and precious.

The **CHILDREN'S RECORD** is a familiar name. For fourteen years it has been coming once a month, a welcome visitor. After the first of January it will come once a week. The *Record* committee have transferred it to our

care. It will be published by us and will have a larger page and many illustrations. The missionary feature will be preserved, but we shall take a wider sweep. Nothing that will serve to make the Sabbath a holier, gladder day or to make it easier for the children to live a healthier, happier and more helpful life through the week, will be overlooked. Our country, our homes, our work and play, our Church, our Divine Lord and Master, these are the bells on which the changes will be rung.

Will ministers, superintendents and teachers please give us their help in getting **JEWELS** and the **CHILDREN'S RECORD** into every school? We shall seek to have paper, ink, pictures and reading matter of the best. Prices will be seen on page 291 of this issue, and *samples will be gladly sent on application*.

Stories Wanted

Cash prizes of FIVE DOLLARS, THREE DOLLARS and Two DOLLARS, respectively, are offered for the First, Second and Third best stories for the **CHILDREN'S RECORD**. The stories must be suitable for boys and girls of from eight or nine to fifteen years of age, and must be such as will tend to uplift the children, to make their childhood and youth holier and therefore happier.

The stories must not contain more than one thousand words, must be signed by a pseudonym or motto—the author's real name to be enclosed in a separate envelope—and must be in the hands of the Editor of the **TEACHERS MONTHLY** not later than 10th November. The Editor will be at liberty to publish any story sent in. The awards will be published in the **TEACHERS MONTHLY** for January, 1900, and the prizes paid immediately thereafter.

The Memorizing of Scripture

By A. W. Wright, Esq., B.A.

Most of the memorizing done in connection with our Sabbath Schools is fragmentary, disconnected, and anything but thorough. In an attempt at improvement in this and other matters the Bible School of the Central Presbyterian church, Galt, of which the Rev. Dr. Dickson is pastor, has devised a system which works admirably. A description of it may prove suggestive to other schools.

Certificates suitable for framing have been neatly printed. On these is a small cut of the church edifice and the following letter-press:

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72, 84, 90, 100, 103; Eccl. 12; Isaiah 11, 35, 40, 53, 55, 61; The Beatitudes; The Lord's Prayer; John 14: 15; Romans 12; 1 Cor. 13; Col. 3; Rev. 22; Paraphrase 2; Twelve Great Texts; the Books of the Bible in order.

This list may easily be extended by putting additional items under each seal, and the colors that indicate standing may also be utilized for this purpose, which would give everyone an opportunity to win seals of all colors.

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Before seals are granted for memorizing there are three tests,—by the parent or some one else in the home; by the teacher; and by one of the six superintendents. Particulars of the recitations are noted in prepared blanks, and these slips are handed to the Seals Secretary, a very important officer, who encloses the proper seals in small envelopes, distributes them the next Sabbath, and keeps a record of the work. Neatly printed slips, in the form of a book-mark, contain all the particulars thought necessary for the guidance of scholars and others.

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ORDER OF SERVICE: Fourth Quarter]

Opening

I. SILENCE.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

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

SCHOOL. For His mercy endureth forever.

SUPT. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

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

III. SINGING.

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

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Closing

I. SINGING.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

SCHOOL. And forget not all His benefits.

SUPT. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.

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

SUPT. As the heaven is high above the earth.

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

SUPT. Glory ye in His holy name.

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

III. CLOSING HYMN OR DOXOLOGY.

IV. BENEDICTION OR CLOSING PRAYER.

**Bible Dictionary for Fourth Quarter,
1899**

Ad-dar. The twelfth month in the later Jewish calendar.

Ad-gag-ite. A term of reproach used to designate Haman. Its origin is not known.

Ahas-u-e-rus. Opinion divided between Cambyses, successor to Cyrus, and Xerxes (485-465), the King of Persia during the period of Esther.

Ah-a'-va. A tributary of the Euphrates on which Ezra encamped when setting out for Jerusalem.

Am'-mon-ites. Inhabitants of the district east of the Jordan between Arnon on the south and Jabbok on the north; the perpetual enemies of Israel.

Ash'-dod-ites. Inhabitants of Ashdod, one of the seven great Philistine strongholds. After the restoration enemies of the Jews.

Ar-a'-bians. The wandering inhabitants of the great desert peninsula of Arabia.

Chis'-leu. The ninth Hebrew month.

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

El-i'-jah. The greatest of the early prophets, called out of Gilad to stem the rising tide of heathenism in Israel.

Esth'-er. See Mordecai.

Es'-ra. A priest and scribe who led a colony of exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem, instituted many reforms. He did much to collect and arrange the sacred writings.

Gen'-tiles. Nations outside of Judah, strangers to the true religion.

Hach-a-li'-ah. The father of Nehemiah.

Ha'-man. Son of Hammedatha; was chief minister of Ahasuerus. Enemy of the Jews, but defeated at court by the Jewish queen Esther, and hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

Ha-na'-ni. A brother or near kinsman of Nehemiah, who brought him tidings to Susa of the distressed condition of the Jews in Palestine. Later made a governor of Jerusalem.

Haah-a-bi'-ah. With Sherebiah, one of the twelve priests set apart by Ezra to carry and care for the holy vessels brought back from the captivity.

Ho'-reb. The mountain in the Sinaitic peninsula of which Sinai was a chief summit.

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

Ja'-cob. Son of Isaac and father of twelve sons, who became the heads of the twelve tribes. (See Israel.)

Je-ru'-sa-lem. The Holy City, capital of all Israel, and after the separation, of the kingdom of Judah.

Jeah'-u-s. and his twelve companions. Levites who assisted Ezra in expounding the

law to the assembled people.

Jews. The descendants of the Israelites. (See Israel.)

Ju'-dah. The fourth son of Jacob, whose name was given to one of the tribes. After the division of the kingdom the name was applied to the southern division, which included the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with a portion of Simeon and Dan; Jerusalem was its capital.

Le'-vites. Descendants of Levi, the third son of Jacob and Leah; set apart for the services of the sanctuary. They assisted the priests and conducted the service of praise.

Mat-tith-i'-ah, and twelve others, who stood to the right and left of Ezra as he read the law to the people.

Mi'-dian. The Midianites who inhabited northern Arabia.

Mor'-de-cal. A Benjaminite who incurred the displeasure of Haman at the Persian court. Through Queen Esther, who was his own niece, and whom he had brought up, he overthrew Haman's plot against the Jews, and secured the punishment of Haman. He became the prime minister to the Persian king.

Mo-s'es. Born an Israelite, and saved as a babe from the wrath of Pharaoh in Egypt. Taken to the Court and taught in all the learning of the Egyptians. Chose rather to be a Hebrew; and in time led Israel out of Egypt and through the desert. Died on Mount Nebo.

Ne-he-mi'-ah. The Governor of Judah under Artaxerxes at the time of the Restoration. A man of great wealth, and a strong, honest ruler; prompt in resolution, masterful in execution.

Ni'-san. The first month of the Jewish year.

Per'-sia. The great eastern kingdom conquered by Cyrus and governed by Xerxes, which overran all western Asia and long held sway over Palestine.

San-bal'-lat. Satrap of the king of Persia in Israel after the Restoration; the great opponent to the rebuilding of the Temple and city.

Shu'-shan. One of the three capitals of Persia and winter residence of its kings.

Tri-ah'-tha. The Persian title for a local or provincial governor.

To-bi'-ah. An Ammonite who united with Sanballat to oppose the Jews in the restoration of the city and Temple.

Tyre. A chief city of the Phœnicians on the Mediterranean, celebrated for its traffic, and very rich.

Vaah'-ti. The first queen of Ahasuerus, divorced for disobedience.

Zi'-on. The mountain captured by David. Later the name was applied to the city of Jerusalem and to the dwelling place of Jehovah therein.

International Bible Lessons

Studies in the Old Testament

LESSON CALENDAR: FOURTH QUARTER.

1. October 1..... Joy in God's House. Psalm 122.
2. October 8..... Haman's Plot against the Jews. Esther 3: 1-11.
3. October 15..... Esther Pleading for Her People. Esther 8: 3-8 and 15-17.
4. October 22..... Ezra's Journey to Jerusalem. Ezra 8: 21-32.
5. October 29..... Psalms of Deliverance. Psalms 85 and 126.
6. November 5..... Nehemiah's Prayer. Nehemiah 1: 1-11.
7. November 12..... Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah 3: 7-18.
8. November 19..... Public Reading of the Scriptures. Nehemiah 8: 1-12.
9. November 26..... Woes of Intemperance, Proverbs 23: 29-25.
10. December 3..... Keeping the Sabbath. Nehemiah 13: 15-22.
11. December 10..... Lessons in Giving. Malachi 1: 6-11; 3: 8-12.
12. December 17..... Fruits of Right and Wrong Doing. Malachi 3: 13-4: 6.
13. December 24..... Christ's Coming Foretold. Isaiah 9: 2-7.
14. December 31..... Review.

LESSON I.

JOY IN GOD'S HOUSE

(October 1, 1899)

Psalm 122. Commit to memory vs. 6-9. Read Psalm 84

1 I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.

2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:

4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.

5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.

Revised Version—1 Unto; 2 Are standing; 3 That art builded; 4 Even the tribes; 5 For a testimony unto Israel; 6 For; 7 For the sake of.

GOLDEN TEXT

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." Ps. 122: 1.

DAILY READINGS

M.—Psalm 122. Joy in God's House.

T.—2 Chron. 29: 25-31. Songs of gladness.

W.—Psalm 84.—Longed for.

Th.—Psalm 92. A good thing.

F.—Isa. 2: 1-5. Come ye!

S.—Luke 4: 14-22. Christ's example.

S.—Rev. 7: 9-17. Heavenly worship.

TIME

The Psalms belong, most likely to David's or Solomon's time.

PLACE

One of a series—"The Songs of Degrees,"—sung by the people on their way to the Holy Feasts.

CATECHISM

Q. 78. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.

LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise—57 (Ps.), 7, 387, 386.

LESSON PLAN

I. On the Way, 1.

And already glad in the prospect of being in God's House.

II. In the City, 2-5.

The city of Jerusalem, "the joy of the whole earth," great and strong, where the tribes of Israel meet, where God is praised, and where David's line rules in justice.

III. A Prayer for Peace, 6-9.

For the peace of the Holy City, that her people may prosper and God's House may abide.

CONNECTING LINKS

The one hundred and twenty second psalm is one of a group of fifteen (Ps. 120-134), each of which bears the title, "A Song of Degrees," or "Goings Up." Some of them are hymns that were sung by the pilgrims going up to the great feasts at Jerusalem. Hence the title. Others seem to refer to the return of the exiles. This psalm is distinctly a pilgrim psalm. But the joy of the pilgrims may well express the joy of the returning exiles; and thus the psalm fittingly introduces the lessons of the quarter.

EXPOSITION

I. On the Way, 1.

V. 1. I was glad when they said unto me. The Jews were accustomed to make pilgrim-

ages from all parts of the country to the great feasts held at Jerusalem three times a year. To cheer the loneliness of the way they used

Rev. C. B. McLeod.
Lessons I - III inclusive

to sing together their familiar sacred songs. This psalm, doubtless much used on such occasions, recalls in the opening verse the joy of the pilgrims as they started out upon the march. *Let us go into the house of the Lord; the Temple of God, the centre of religious worship and the glory of the nation, because God manifested Himself in it (1 Kings, 8: 10, 11).*

II. In the City, 2-5.

V. 2. *Our feet are standing.* (Rev. Ver.) The long journey is at an end; and there is a feeling of intense satisfaction "as the pilgrim finds the feet which have traversed many a mile planted at last within the city." He is glad as he mingles with the worshippers, takes part in the solemn services, and shares in the religious privileges of Zion.

V. 3. *Jerusalem.* The psalmist now describes the city that had so gladdened the hearts of the pilgrims. *As a city that is compact together.* Its walls were strongly built for defence; and the houses were not scattered as were the houses of country villages but crowded on the narrow rocky site of the city. If the psalm, as some think, belongs to the period of the return from the exile, the psalmist may here refer to the building of the city and its wall upon the ruins of many years.

V. 4. *Whither the tribes go up.* It was divinely appointed that the twelve tribes should worship at Jerusalem (Ex. 23: 17). But this unity of worship was destroyed by the revolt of the ten tribes and the subsequent action of Jeroboam (1 Kings 12: 26-29). If the tribes were still one kingdom when the psalm was written, it would show that it is of an early date, probably composed by David or by Solomon. Hebrew tenses are indefinite, and Dr. Alexander McLaren here translates "Whither went up the tribes," representing the psalmist (perhaps at the time of the return of the exiles) as looking back upon the vanished glory of the past. *For a testimony unto Israel;* which may mean a law enjoined upon Israel; that is, they were acting in accordance with divine command (Ex. 23: 17). Or it may mean the testimony to God

borne to the whole nation by those going up to worship. *To give thanks unto the name of the Lord.* Thanksgiving is an element of all true worship (Phil. 4: 6). The devout Jew was conscious of his guilt and unworthiness, but was also conscious that all the favors he enjoyed politically and religiously were from God; and for these he gave thanks.

V. 5. *For there; in Jerusalem.* *Thrones of judgment;* for the administration of justice. Jerusalem was the centre of the civil as well as the religious life of the nation. There, in the days of the monarchy, all controversies were settled by the king (1 Kings 7: 7). In accordance with the view stated in v. 4, Dr. McLaren translates the verb by a past tense, making the sense "there thrones of judgment were set" in the good days gone by.

III. A Prayer for Peace, 6-9.

V. 6. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.* The word "peace" is used in a broad sense as implying all the blessings of life. There is a fine play on the word. The psalmist calls upon the pilgrims to pray for the peace of the "City of Peace" which is the meaning of the word Jerusalem. The Psalmist's beautiful prayer is a prayer that the hope that moved in the hearts that had so long ago, and in the midst of wars, given so fair a designation to their abode, may be fulfilled now at last. *They shall prosper that love thee.* To love Jerusalem was to love all that Jerusalem stood for, the name, the house, the worship and the rule of God. And to love God was, and is, to realize the highest good in life (Ps. 1: 2, 3; Matt. 6: 33).

V. 7. *Peace be within thy walls;* upon all those who loved Jerusalem and shared in her privileges. *Prosperity within thy palaces;* within the homes of the people, many of which were doubtless splendid in appearance, for the nobles were rich.

V. 8. *For my brethren and companions' sakes.* The psalmist was not actuated by selfish motives. He had at heart the interest of his brethren, who shared in a common faith and worship.

V. 9. *Because of the house of the Lord our God.* "The glory of the city was the Temple, and the glory of the Temple was God. That

house hallowed every stone in the city. To wish for the prosperity of Jerusalem, forgetting that the Temple was in it, would have been mere earthly patriotism." (McLaren.) The psalmist is thus actuated by a two-fold

motive. On the one hand he is interested in the welfare of his brethren; on the other hand he is moved by the deepest reverence for the things of God. His was a lofty patriotism, a loving altruism, a pure religion.

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

Rev. G. C. Hume
Montreal.

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord, v. 1. We can but faintly imagine the thoughts and feelings of a godly Hebrew, as the time approached for him to go up to Jerusalem. The privilege of belonging to the people of God, the security of himself and of his family, during his absence, under the promised care of God (Gen. 35 : 5 ; Ex. 34 : 24), the pleasures of pure and ennobling fellowship, the prospect of beholding the city and the Temple sacred in the eyes, and dear to the heart, of every true Israelite because of the appointment and presence of God there, and the celebration of His worship, would fill his heart with unspeakable joy. The little boys of the home would talk of it, eagerly enquire when they could accompany their father,—at twelve years of age every boy was taken up to the Feasts,—desire him to bring them some memento from Jerusalem, and ask a hundred questions about the journey. Neighbors would say one to another, "Let us go up, let us go together, on such a day, in such a company," each one inspiring the other.

Our sanctuary, with its worship on the Lord's day, and more especially its communion seasons, three or four times a year, when all members are expected to appear before the Lord, are our holy place and temple. How glad all true Christians are when the Sabbath comes round, and the communion season. Their thoughts, their acts, their words unite in saying, "Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Our feet shall stand, v. 2. Rather, "our feet stand." The pilgrim worshippers are now in procession, marching through the streets of Jerusalem toward the Temple. As they go they sing, "Our feet stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!" National songs, sung by a large concourse of people, thrill the heart of the patriot. What must have

been the inspiration of such a moment to every true Israelite! God's people sing the same psalm in the sanctuary still. Their hearts are stirred by the same holy sentiments and are sanctified by the favor of the same Holy One of Israel.

Jerusalem is builded, v. 3. The Holy City, built more than two thousand feet above sea level, inaccessible on every side but the north, surrounded by massive walls of stone, supported by many towers, represented an ideal of strength and glory, justifying the exultant note of Ps. 48 : 2, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the side of the north, the city of the great King." (See also vs. 12, 13.) Every Jew was proud of Jerusalem. And when to this is added the thought of the sanctuary within the city, and the chosen people, we can easily see how Jerusalem was more to the Jew than any city of the world has ever been to any other people.

We can have no such feeling for any city; but surely we should have as stout a loyalty for the church of our fathers, with her hallowed associations and her glorious history—for marvellously has she been owned and blessed of God—as the Jew had for his sacred city and shrine.

Other things being equal, a strong churchman will be a strong Christian, but he who has no attachment for any church, who says one church is as good as another, will be found to have but a weak hold, if any, upon Christ. While we rejoice in the prosperity of all branches of Christ's church, and honor them for all good work done for the Master, too much importance cannot be given to making our children acquainted with the history of their own church, its distinctive principles, its ancient origin, its heroic memories. No worthy son is ever ashamed of his mother, nor is any well-

instructed Presbyterian child likely ever to forsake his church.

Whither the tribes go up, v. 4. How happy the time in Israel's history, when every man was found, three times a year, at Jerusalem according to God's command, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord; when the hills and dales of the Holy Land echoed the holy songs of the pilgrim bands ascending to the Holy City: That was the best period of their national history. Israel was strongest and most formidable to its heathen enemies, because the people obeyed and served God. So when individuals and families go up regularly to the sanctuary to worship and honor God, parents and children together, He honors (1 Sam. 2: 30) and blesses them. All moral and spiritual strength lie along this line. Worship fortifies for duty. Oh that parents were only convinced of this! Every Christian worker should press for and practise the utmost regularity in public worship. It should be established as a habit in every young life (Ps. 84: 1, 2, 4, 10, 11; Heb. 10: 25).

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, v. 6. A great privilege, and the bounden duty of every son of Israel. Says Dr. Henry Van-Dyke, in "The Story of the Psalms": "The striking feature of modern history is the rapid growth of great cities. The city gets the best and the worst of mankind. We who live in the city are living on the edge of a volcano. There are forces of evil beneath us strong enough to shatter our civilization into fragments. But, at the same time, there are other forces which restrain and prevent the calamity. And I do not hesitate to affirm that the strongest of these is the grace of God and the power of religion. They give dignity to law, and sanctity to government, and value to human life. If they were taken away, chaos would come. The fear of God is the bulwark of society: And so the Jew prayed that Jerusalem might be holy, and, because holy, strong."

In like manner does the Christian pray also for the peace of the church. Its spiritual prosperity, its effective service, means the

greatest good to the Christian. Not one church member in ten fulfils this so plain duty; for are they not exhorted to pray one for the other (Eph. 6: 18); to pray for their pastors (v. 19); for Christ their Lord and the spread of His kingdom (Ps. 72: 15); and for laborers for His harvest (Matt. 9: 37, 38)? Christ pressed this duty upon His disciples. Let us encourage one another in it.

For peace amongst the nations, too, we must ever pray. Peace Conferences, even if made up of the delegates of the most powerful nations, and these delegates of one mind, can be effective only as the spirit of Christ prevails amongst the peoples. It seems slow in coming, but it is on the way; the poet's vision will yet be realized:—

"Down the dark future, through long generations

The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease.

And like a bell with solemn, sweet vibrations
I once more hear the voice of Christ say,—
'Peace!'

Peace! and no longer from its brazen portals
The blast of war's great organ shakes the skies!

But beautiful as songs of the immortals
The holy melodies of peace arise."

For my brethren and companions' sakes, v. 8. The psalmist on behalf of his brethren and friends, desired the peace of Jerusalem. Being God's people, the Jews were bound together and united in one common desire for the welfare of the Holy City. What a sacred bond! All believers are one in Christ, and fellow-heirs of the same glorious promises. We should therefore desire, on our own behalf and on behalf of our fellow-believers, the church's prosperity; for it is necessary to spiritual growth and usefulness. And, as the more the church prospers, the more is God honored, the psalmist desires its prosperity for God's sake, too. We believe in Christ's church; we love it. Let us earnestly pray for its prosperity.

TEACHING HINTS

After a Sabbath's pause for Review we take up again the thrilling period of the Restoration.

Show how the Psalms—like the folklore of any country, or the great national odes—were not made to order, but sprang out of the life of the people, God's own people. (Take as samples Psalms 23, 51, 100, 133, 150.)

This Psalm, closely connected with the annual pilgrimages Jerusalemward, was evidently a psalm for the march of the captives home from Babylon and their first days in the Holy City. It has never worn out, will never wear out; for it puts into triumphant strains the emotions of true and loyal worshippers of the living, loving God.

Try such a line of treatment as this. It is one of several that readily suggest themselves.

GLAD—

1. *I*—(v. 1)—an Israelite, a citizen of God's kingdom, a child of God's household, an heir of God's promises.

2. *And my fellow-Israelites*, "Let us go" (v. 1)—The joy of brotherhood, of the communion of saints.

3. *Glad—on the way to God's House* (v. 1).

The very thought of going thitherward thrills and rejoices.

4. *Glad—in the Holy City* (v. 2). Oh, the memories of it, the privileges of it, the glory of it!

5. *Glad—for its compactness* (v. 3). The magnitude and stability of God's kingdom, is a source of rejoicing.

6. *Glad—for its stirring life*; the meeting-place of the tribes (v. 4), and where the tribes met with God.

7. *Glad—in its opportunity for worship and thanksgiving and testimony to the grace of Jehovah* (v. 5).

8. *Glad—for the righteousness of its rule* (v. 5).

9. *Glad—in the privilege of praying for Jerusalem's prosperity* (v. 6).

10. *Glad—in the enjoyment of its blessings*; which are all summed up in the one heavenly word, "peace" (vs. 6, 7).

11. *Glad—in the good estate of his companions and brethren* (v. 8).

12. *Glad—because God's Temple is there and God within it* (v. 9).

And BECAUSE GLAD, set upon seeking the good of the Holy City.

TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

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

1. The Temple at Jerusalem.
2. Joy in the Lord's worship and work.
3. "They shall prosper that love thee" (v. 6).

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

BE GLAD

IN THE LORD'S HOUSE
IN THE LORD'S PEOPLE
IN THE LORD'S WORK

LESSON II.

HAMAN'S PLOT AGAINST THE JEWS

October 8, 1899.

Esther 3: 1-11. Commit to memory vs. 5-6. Read chaps. 1-3

1 After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

2 And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

3 Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgress thou the king's commandment?

4 Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.

5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

6 And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of

Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

7 In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.

8 And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.

9 If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasures.

10 And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

11 And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

Revised Version.—1 Bowed down and did reverence to; 2 Bowed not down; 3 Peoples; 4 From those of every people; 5 Omit may; 6 Into; 7 King's business

GOLDEN TEXT

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. 8: 31.

DAILY READINGS

M.—Esther 2: 15-23. Esther made queen.

T.—Esther 3: 1-11. Haman's plot against the Jews.

W.—Esther 3: 12 to 4: 3. The decree of death.

Th.—Esther 4: 4-17. Sorrow in the palace.

F.—Esther 6: 1-11. Pride discomfited.

S.—Esther 7. The enemy punished.

S.—Prov. 16: 5-19. Danger of pride.

TIME

B.C. 473. The thirteenth year of the reign of Xerxes (Ahasuerus). (For dates see chs. 1, 3; 2: 16, 8; 7: 12.) Some 60 years after the first return from captivity.

PLACE

Shushan (Susa), the winter capital of the Persian Empire.

CATECHISM

Q. 74. What is required in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

LESSON PLAN

I. A Misplaced Honor, 1, 2 a.

Haman given first place by the king.

II. A Sturdy Refusal, 3 (b)-4.

Mordecai the Jew will do him no reverence.

III. A Bloody Resolve, 5, 6.

On Haman's part—that all the Jews must die.

IV. A Wicked Decree, 7-11.

By the king—that it should be even as Haman desired.

LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise—34 (Ps.), 265, 569, 133, 263.

CONNECTING LINKS

This lesson records an incident in Jewish history that occurred at the Persian court of Shushan about sixty years after the return of the exiles under Zerubbabel. Mordecai, a Jew, whose niece Esther had been made queen (2; 7-17) and who held some office in the palace, aroused the anger of the king's favorite minister by refusing to prostrate himself before him. The latter sought revenge by an attempt to destroy all the Jews in the empire.

EXPOSITION

I. A Misplaced Honor, 1, 2 (a).

V. 1. *After these things*; the events recorded in the preceding chapter. *Haman*... the Agagite. Nothing further is known of him. Geikie thinks that the term Agagite implies that he was of the royal race of the Amalekites, whose king Agag is spoken of in 1 Sam. 15: 8. He would thus belong to a race whose enmity to the Jews was extremely bitter. But Prof. Sayce says the term has nothing to do with Agag, King of Amalek. *Set his seat above all the princes*. He was made

the grand vizier or prime minister of the empire. All the other officers were under his direction.

V. 2. *All the king's servants*... in the king's gate. The entrance to Eastern palaces is by a spacious gateway. In an open space before this gateway the officers of the court waited for the king's commands. Except the seven princes, who "saw the king's face" (1: 14), no one could approach the king without being introduced by an usher. Mordecai held, as an officer of the palace, a seat in the gate.

Bowed down and did reverence to Haman (Rev. Ver.); as he went in and out of the palace gate. The word translated "reverence" means to prostrate oneself before another in order to do him honor.

II. A Sturdy Refusal, 2 (b)-4.

V. 2. *But Mordecai bowed not.* This act of prostration was evidently more than a respectful salutation. The Persian kings claimed divine honors, and Haman, as the representative of the king, evidently expected the same. But Mordecai, true to his religion, would bow to none but God.

V. 3. *Then the king's servants.* See notes on v. 2. *Why transgressed thou?* They could not appreciate his religious motives. They acted from prudence, not from principle; though they may have been influenced by the tradition that divine honors should be paid to the king, and, therefore, to the king's representative.

V. 4. *They spake daily unto him;* about his refusal to obey the king's command to prostrate himself before Haman (v. 2). They were anxious that he should come to no trouble through his non-refusal. *He hearkened not.* He could not be persuaded to do that which his conscience condemned. *To see whether Mordecai's matters would stand;* whether his excuse would be considered valid. *He had told them that he was a Jew;* so that they might understand his motive for not paying religious homage to man.

III. A Bloody Resolve, 5, 6.

V. 5. *Then was Haman full of wrath.* His proud and vain nature would not allow him to pass by the supposed offence in any case; but that the offender should be a foreigner and a Jew—one of the captive nation—made him furious with rage.

V. 6. *Thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone.* The rage of the man defeated itself. If he had gone to the king and lodged a complaint against a servant who had disobeyed the royal command, the king would have doubtless given orders for his execution, which would have been immediately accomplished. But his revenge was not satisfied with crushing Mordecai. "At one sweep he would avenge his own personal grudge, and

crush the hereditary feud of his race in the blood of the whole brood of the hated race of the Jews." (*Gikhr.*) Such general massacres were not unknown in the East and they are paralleled in our own day by the Armenian atrocities. *Had showed him the people of Mordecai;* that they were Jews.

IV. A Wicked Decree, 7-11.

V. 7. *In the first month;* of the Jewish civil year. *The month Nisan;* answering to a part of our March and April. *They cast Pur.* They cast lots, or used some sort of divination. Purim was the name of the feast which commemorated the deliverance of the Jews: so named from this word. *From day to day and from month to month.* This does not mean that they cast lots daily up to the twelfth month; but they cast lots to ascertain the most favorable date for the execution of the plot, trying each day until they came to the lucky one. The lot fell on the 13th day of the 12th month (v. 13). The fatal day was eleven months away.

V. 8. *And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus.* He craftily represents them as clinging to their own customs and habits, while paying no attention to the king's laws, and as being, therefore, dangerous to the highest interests of his kingdom.

V. 9. *Let it be written.* The king's decree was necessary to the execution of the murderous plot. *I will pay ten thousand talents of silver;* from ten to twenty millions of dollars. He must have had an immense private fortune. But there are not wanting instances of men in the East who were fabulously wealthy. Perhaps, as Ellicott thinks, Haman may have hoped to draw the money from the spoils of the Jews. His offer to the king was an appeal to his avarice to secure his consent to the infamous plot.

V. 10. *The king took his ring from his hand.* The ring contained the seal with which Haman was to seal the decree, and thus give it royal sanction.

V. 11. *The silver is given to thee.* The king refuses the money offered by Haman. Or perhaps the words refer to the spoils of the Jews. He might take all he could from them. It would pay both him and the king.

The people also. Thus the Jewish people with their property were handed over in the most cold-blooded way to the horror of massacre and of pillage. ✓

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

Rev a Laird
Part Hope

After these things did King Ahasuerus promote Haman, v. 1. No reason is put forward in support of Haman's promotion. He became prime minister of Persia, not by merit, but apparently by favor. He may have bought the place. At any rate he was an expert in bribery (v. 9). Such men always carry a blight with them. The office is greater than the man and when the man seeks the office, not the office the man, there is danger to the State.

Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, v. 2. The officials of the court hasten to pay their regards to the new dignitary, and show Haman the customary respect which his rank demanded. But Mordecai bowed not down. Why not? Likely, because to do reverence to Haman would count as reverence done to Haman's God, and this no power on earth could wring from Mordecai. Perhaps, too, it was because he saw in Haman, the Agagite, an enemy of his people. There was no safety to Israel when a son of Amalek was prime minister. Either Mordecai or Haman must be a vanishing quantity. "We have to fight it out: and the sooner the better," said Mordecai.

So now, between sin and holiness, between truth and falsehood, there can be no truce. The sooner we make a definite stand, the better for us. We cannot ultimately shirk the contest, we can only postpone it; and the longer we hold back, so much the stronger grows the foe.

Our Sunday-School boys should remember Mordecai, and make a firm stand. There is a temptation to go with the crowd. Far better be alone in one's integrity like Mordecai, than going with a multitude to do evil. The boy who bows not down but stems the tide that would carry him off, is the one most respected in the end.

He told them that he was a Jew, v. 4. Mordecai declined to be interviewed and showed

an admirable reticence. But he plainly stated the great fact that he belonged to the despised and hated nation. "I am a Jew," he said proudly, "and not all Haman's rage can move me." We never think less, but always more of the man who is not ashamed of his religion. The man who denies his God or his creed ranks with the one who denies his name and thinks scorn of the mother that bore him. Little Paul seems to expand before our very eyes, as he exclaims "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."

Then was Haman full of wrath . . . wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, vs. 5, 6. Haman's wrath is, in the first place, contemptible; the cause of it was so petty. But it is also tragic; for it rushed him into a plot of wholesale murder. We learn how silly it is to nurse our pride, or to fly into a passion. We learn too how merciless are the dogs of wrath when once let loose. They turn upon him who should have held them in check. How often do we see wickedness overreaching itself, the plotter caught in the whirl of his own malice.

The king took his ring . . . and gave it unto Haman, v. 10. The sheen of the silver had blinded him to all sense of justice or humanity. Haman paid well and therefore he must have what he wants, even if it be blood. Bribery is perhaps the sorest spot in our body politic. No man of honor will touch a bribe. It is something to be profoundly grateful for that so many of our men in highest positions have been proof against the glitter of gold. The two Sir John's who have passed away were comparatively poor men. Sir Oliver and Sir Wilfrid who are still here are in the same list. If ever it should come to be the rule that our voters, and especially the leaders in public affairs, should be for sale, then farewell to national honor and national prosperity! May God forefend!

TEACHING HINTS.

Have the class notice these things in regard to the Book of Esther.

(a) It gives a vivid picture of life in an Eastern court,—king, queens, courtiers, banquets, the gallows, favorites clad in gorgeous array,—all are sketched in strong colors.

(b) It affords a glimpse of the methods of rule, and the ways of communication-between different parts of the empire—the sudden advancement and as sudden fall of Haman; the influence of Mordecai and Esther in the court; the decree signed with the king's signet; the swift "posts" on mule and camel-back carrying the decree to the distant provinces.

(c) There is no mention of the name of God, and yet it is all a most striking illustration of God's care of His people.

There are two lessons from this charming old book. That of to-day describes

THE HATCHING OF A DASTARDLY PLOT

We have

1. *The Chief Plotter*, Haman, contemptuously styled "the Agagite," suddenly advanced to honor, a veritable "beggar on horseback." The teacher will do well to make Haman, the prince, quite real. To this end, study closely vs. 1, 2; also, for the setting of the picture, ch. 1: 1-7.

2. *The Stout-hearted Non-conformist*. No!

Mordecai would do no reverence, when doing reverence meant compromising his religion (vs. 2-4). He feared God, and because he feared God, he feared none else.

3. *The Plotter and his Victims*. An angry man was Haman, because his race prejudice and his pride were touched. This beggarly foreigner, who was he, that he should not do reverence to Haman? Haman was "full of wrath" (v. 5); so full, that he will crush every Jew, as well as the wretched Mordecai himself (v. 6).

Very superstitious,—the heathen are all and always superstitious, because they live in the dark and not in the light—Haman casts lots for the right day for the slaughter (v. 7).

Then he victimizes the king. The arguments of vs. 8, 9 are worthy of a Machiavelli or of a Mephistopheles, for that matter,—an appeal to the race prejudice; an accusation against the Jews of disloyalty; and then the bribe direct.

It is pitiful to see how the king's kingliness dissolves under Haman's necromancy. The father of all his people, as a king should be, yields up his children to be destroyed.

Wrong is apparently triumphant; as so often befalls.

But STANDETH GOD WITHIN THE SHADOW; as the next lesson will reveal.

TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

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

1. How Esther became Queen.
2. Revenge, its terrible nature—as illustrated in Haman.
3. Bribery, its odiousness, its peril to the state.

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

God's People in Peril

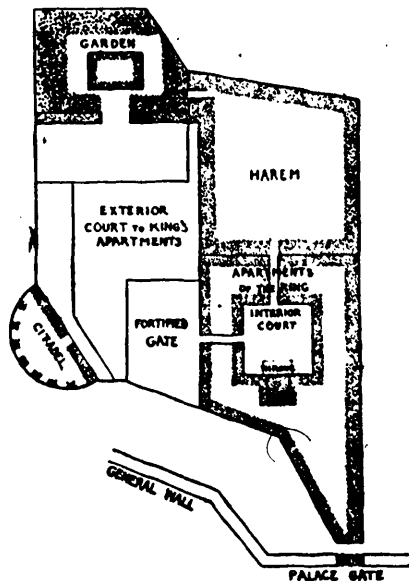
A WRATHFUL PRINCE

AN ALL-POWERFUL MONARCH

A BLOODY DECREE

But God Guards His Own

Reverse the letters devised by Haman. This was not possible according to the laws of the Medes and Persians (Dan. 6:15). But the king found a way of practically annulling the decree by issuing another. It has been urged against the credibility of the book of Esther that it is not probable the king would allow edicts to be issued that in one case planned the slaughter of a whole nation, and in the other virtually brought on a civil war. But the explanation is found in the character



PLAN OF XERXES' PALACE

Discovered at Susa, and excavated by M. Dieulafoy. The feast was held in the Gardens. Esther's home was in the Harem. Xerxes sat on the Throne in the Interior Court when Esther approached him. Mordecai's place was by the Palace Gate.—Pelouet.

of the king. "Born in the purple, the weak and irresponsible Xerxes was accustomed to act like a spoilt child who never realizes the results of its wishes and commands." (Sayce.)

V. 6. *How can I endure to see the evil?* It does not appear that the king, although Esther had been queen for about four years, knew that she was a Jewess. Perhaps she was afraid to make known the fact that she belonged to a captive race. But this incident gave her an opportunity of doing so

with perfect security; and she pleads for her kindred. (See chs. 1:20; 7:3, 4.)

II. The King's Consent, 7, 8, etc.

V. 7. *To Mordecai the Jew.* Mordecai had been made prime minister in Haman's place (8:2) and it is in his official capacity that the king now addresses him. *The house of Haman.* His property had been confiscated and given to the queen (8:1). *Hanged upon the gallows.* The mode of execution was not by hanging as we understand it. The word translated gallows means simply wood, a tree or pole. It was a sharpened pole 75 ft. high (5:15) on which the victim was impaled. The height of the pole seems excessive; there may have come some error in copying which has increased the number.

V. 8. *Write ye also . . . as it liketh you.* Since the decree could not be rescinded, permission was granted Mordecai and the queen to issue another edict, sealed with the king's seal, allowing the Jews in every province to defend themselves by force. (v. 11.) Royal posts throughout the whole of the empire had been established by Cyrus the Great. At every station the postman carrying the mails found a second ready to start on with a mule or camel (v. 11) on which, after receiving the mail bag, he sprang like the wind, to hand his charge to a third postman at the next station. These couriers were called Angoroi, and were believed to be the swiftest riders in the world. By this means copies of the decree, prepared by the government clerks, were sent through all the provinces (8:9, 10). *Sealed it with the king's seal.* The seal was set in the ring and gave royal sanction to any document to which it was affixed.

III. The Great Deliverance, 15-17.

V. 15. *And Mordecai went out . . . in royal apparel.* He was no longer the petty official at the king's gate (2:21). He held the position of grand vizier, or prime minister, which had been formerly occupied by Haman (8:2). He was dressed in the royal robe of state, which was rich and costly. "The royal dress of Xerxes was reckoned by the Greeks as worth 12,000 talents (millions of dollars)" (Gieble); and Mordecai as the representative

of the king would also be very richly attired. *A great crown of gold.* A large turban ornamented with gold and jewels. *The city of Shushan rejoiced.* The Rev. Ver. reads "shouted." The people could not control their feelings of joy.

Vs. 16, 17. It was *light* out of darkness to the Jews, *joy* out of sorrow; and it was a very

great honor that two of their number should hold the highest positions in the kingdom next to the king. *And many . . . became Jews.* The Jews were backed by the Persian officials (9: 3) and many of their enemies became Jews to escape the slaughter that followed. On the fatal day the Jews slew 300 in the city of Shushan and 75,000 in the provinces.

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

Mirra Laid out Hope

And *Esther spake yet again before the king* (v. 3). At this crisis in the history of her nation, Esther chooses her times for speaking. She had laid her plans skilfully, and the result proved that her plans were the best possible. There is a time to speak and a time to keep silence. We are not to let slip any opportunity of saying a word for the truth; but, on the other hand, such a word spoken unadvisedly may bring reproach upon the name we would keep sacred. We must learn, too, that we are bound always to take the best plan of life, not only the whole of life, but in every detail of the daily round and common task. It is true that Esther acted throughout under the guidance of God. But we can act thus only in so far as we are ready to receive and obey this instruction. Notice the perfect balance in the character of Esther, how fearlessly and resolutely she adheres to her plan and carries it out. In the spirit of her behavior in these trying circumstances we have an ideal well worthy of imitation. *Fell down at his feet and brought him with tears.* This is more than a woman's tact, although a woman's tears are irresistible. It is a woman's heart bursting with grief passionately patriotic for her people. "We may surmise that her beautiful countenance was lit up with a new, rare radiance when all self-seeking was banished from her mind and an intense, noble aim fired her soul; and thus, it may be, her very loftiness of purpose helped to secure its success. Beauty is a gift, a talent, to be used for good, like any other divine endowment; the highest beauty is the splendor of soul that sometimes irradiates the most commonplace countenance, so that, like Stephen's, it shines as the face of an angel. Instead of degrading her beauty

with foolish vanity, Esther consecrated it to a noble service, and thereby it was glorified." (Professor Adeney.)

Held out the golden sceptre toward Esther, v. 4. When Esther was permitted to touch the golden sceptre she knew that her life was safe. But touching the sceptre meant not only safety, it meant also submission. No, too, when we approach the Throne and are touched by the golden sceptre of the grace of God, we not only obtain protection and salvation, but we must yield submission. *If it please the king.* As Esther puts her case it cannot fail to appeal to the king. At first she says, "If it please the king": nothing can be done without the king's consent. Then "If I have found favour in his sight": she humbles herself again. "And the thing seems right before the king": she takes for granted that the king will do only what is right. Let others know that you expect only the best from them, and consciously or unconsciously they will strive to reach the standard you have set for them.

For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? v. 6. This is the climax of the pleading. Esther says: "I cannot endure to see my people suffer. If they must die, I must die with them." This is the heroism of utter self-sacrifice. Esther, who has but now received from the king her own life (when he held out to her the golden sceptre), is ready to give it again for the safety of her beloved people. Never was Queen Esther so near the perfect Christ-life as at this moment, and surely the love of Esther for her kindred is not unlike the love of Christ for human souls. But Christ's love is as wide as humanity, and His was not only the spirit of self-sacrifice. He actually gave His life for our life, the just for the un-

just. We are not likely to be placed in such circumstances as those of Esther, but the principles of noble action are the same to us as they were to her, and we, too, are likest God when, in loving self-sacrifice, we say by our lives: "None of self, and all of Thee."

Write ye also for the Jews as it liketh you, vs. 7, 8. Esther's pleading has not been in vain, and her request is granted. The great king is vanquished, not only by Esther's beauty, though it has been said that "the beauty of the Lord her God was upon her," but by her moral earnestness, her self-sacrificing patriotism and love. Such qualities must and will conquer. "There is only one kind of pure kingship—the kingship, namely, which consists in a stronger moral state, and a truer thoughtful state, than that of others; enabling you, therefore, to guide or to raise them."

And Mordecai went out in royal apparel, and with a great crown of gold, v. 15. The faithful servant, the honest, God-fearing man, was called to friendship, to honor, to coronation. In his time of darkness Mordecai had doubtless remembered the Golden Text of the lesson of to-day, for as a Jew it was familiar to him: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." When his own life was in peril, when his nation was about to be blotted out, he still waited, worked, and hoped. Now he is rewarded with high honors, and receives the golden crown. And rightly was he crowned; for his kingdom, as his character, rested upon the eternal law of God, which nothing could alter nor remove. God never deserts those who hold to Him.

An earnest Christian woman writes:

This lesson is, perhaps, pre-eminently a woman's lesson, and in it we have glimpses of a woman's power. The power of Esther is a power given to every woman who will have it. It is the power to guard, to guide, to serve. Do you remember what Ruskin says, in addressing the women of England? "There is no suffering, no injustice, no misery on the earth, but the guilt of it lies lastly with you. Men can bear the sight of it, but you should not be able to bear it. Men may tread it down without sympathy in their own struggle. But men are feeble in sympathy and contracted in hope. It is you only who can feel the depths of pain, and conceive the way of its healing. Instead of trying to do this, you turn away from it."

Are these words true of the women of Canada? Are they true of us? Are we so engrossed with self, so engrossed with the little circle of our nearest and dearest, that we have no time and no thought for the misery in the world about us? We spend our time in attending to our homes and in watching over the sweet flowers of childhood God has committed to our care. We are so far right, but is this all of a woman's work? Is there not a public duty, which is the expansion of the home life? Are there not flowers of humanity in our towns and in our cities which no one will love, if we do not love them, which no one will guard from sin and suffering, if we do not care for them? God grant that we all may, not only have, but use, this royal power to heal, to redeem, to guide, and to guard!

TEACHING HINTS

"And Esther spake yet again before the king," suggests a starting point for the lesson; for great as the deliverance of the Jews from slaughter was, the eye is still more drawn to the queenly Esther taking her life in her hand that she may snatch her people from the jaws of death.

Have a care not to dwell too long upon the details, but bring out clearly these points between the last lesson and this:

(a) The posting of the king's decree for

the extermination of the Jews (3: 12-15); (b) The consternation in Shushan and throughout the provinces (3: 15; 4: 3); (c) Mordecai's grief and Esther's concern for him (4: 1, 4, 5); (d) Esther, after some hesitation, undertaking to plead with the king (4, 6-17); (e) Esther's venture (5: 1-3); (f) The banquets (5: 4-9; 7: 1-10).

Now comes the final venture. It is not enough that she and Mordecai are safe and in honor; Esther's people are still in peril.

She will risk all for them. We have :

I. Esther,—star-like (for that is the meaning of her name) in beauty ; at the king's feet ; convulsed with sobs (v. 3).

II. The king holding out the golden sceptre, and Esther rising radiant, her eyes like the bright sun through the rain-cloud of her tears. She stands before the king ready to speak (v. 4).

III. The petition so skilfully framed, and so tactfully presented (see ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION), and with a fine touch of patriotic fervor (vs. 5, 6).

IV. The ready consent of the king, who sees what a fool Haman has made of him, and who is glad to find a way out (vs. 7, 8).

V. Mordecai's triumph (v. 15).

VI. The joy of the Jews (vs. 15-17).

VII. The terror of their enemies (v. 17), many of whom become Jews to escape destruction.

Shew how the Jews would profit by this incident, the peril of the king's terrible

edict and their happy escape. Says Peloubet in his "Select Notes" :

Great crises, great trials, great dangers, have a mission in the building up of every nation. They awaken from spiritual lethargy? they cultivate a spirit of prayer, they lead to trust in God, they arouse heroism and courage. Out of "the nettle danger" we pluck not merely "the flower safety," but the more beautiful and fragrant flowers of heroism, courage, and faith.

"We are living, we are dwelling

In a grand and awful time ;

In an age on ages telling—

To be living is sublime."

Try to show the scholars the very heart of Esther. *Whence her courage?* Chapter 4 : 16 supplies the answer. She had committed her way unto the Lord, and shared Paul's exalted frame of mind when he said : "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4 : 13).

The class will now be ready to understand the Golden Text.

TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

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

1. How Esther became Queen.
2. How it happened that only Esther could save her people.
3. How she accomplished her task.

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

QUEEN ESTHER

BRAVE

WISE

SAFE

BECAUSE SHE TRUSTED IN GOD

LESSON IV.

EZRA'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

October 22, 1899

Ezra 8:21-32. Commit to memory vs. 21-23. Read chaps. 7 and 8: 15-36

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

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

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

24 Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests: Shereb'iah, Hahab'iah, and ten of theirs brethren with them.

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

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

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

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

29 Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the Lord.

30 So I took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

31 Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem; and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.

32 And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

Revised Version.—1 Humble; 2 Ask; 3 Straight; 4 Chiefs; 5 Add even; 6 For; 7 Princes; 8 Into; 9 Bowls; 10 Daries; 11 Bright brass; 12 Lord the God; 13 Princes of the fathers' houses of Israel; 14 Received put after Levites; 15 And the lie in wait.

GOLDEN TEXT

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

DAILY READINGS

M.—Ezra 7: 6-20. The king's decree.
T.—Ezra 7: 21-23. The king's gifts.
W.—Ezra 8: 21-32. Ezra's journey to Jerusalem.
Th.—Ezra 9: 1-9. Ezra's prayer.
F.—Ezra 9: 10-15. The prayer continued.
S.—Psalm 46. God our refuge.
S.—2 Cor. 6: 11-18. Be separate.

TIME

B.C. 458; seventy-eight years after Zerubbabel's first return, and fifteen years after the deliverance through Queen Esther.

PLACE

Babylonia, on the way and at Jerusalem.

CATECHISM

Q. 76. Which is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

LESSON PLAN

I. The Fast, 21-23.

At the river of Ahava, and with earnest prayer to God for His help.

II. The Trust, 24-30.

The offering for the house of God, given into the hands of twelve of the priests for safe-keeping and safe carriage.

II. The Journey, 31, 32.

Accomplished in peace.

LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise—1, 19 (Ps.), 271, 275, 308.

CONNECTING LINKS

The exiles who had returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel had rebuilt and dedicated the Temple (6: 15, 16). But the walls of the city were still in ruins; and many abuses had crept in among the people. A young reformer arose in Babylon in the person of Ezra. He was desirous of leading up a second colony to Jerusalem and of instituting reforms among the people. The king gave him permission to do so, and appointed him Governor of Judah. This lesson gives an account of his journey.

EXPOSITION

I. The Fast, 21-23.

V. 21. Then I proclaimed a fast at the river of Ahava. A comparison of 7: 9; 8: 15, 31, would seem to show that Ezra had marched nine days. Rawlinson therefore thinks that the place of rally (8: 15) was about 140 miles from Babylon up the valley of the Euphrates, at or near the modern Hit. Others think that the rally would not be held so far away, that 7: 9 refers to the beginning of his preparations for the journey,

and that Ezra halted on the banks of one of the many canals near Babylon. That we might humble ourselves (Rev. Ver.); in a spirit of submission to the divine will and of repentance from sin. To seek of him a straight way for us (Rev. Ver.). "Both a direct road, that they might not have to turn aside on account of attacks and dangers from robbers and enemies, and a level road, without obstacles and inequalities (Isaiah 40: 3)." (Camb. Bible.) Our substance; probably household

effects. The same word is rendered "goods" in ch. 1 : 6.

V. 22. *For I was ashamed to require . . . soldiers.* It was customary to guard caravans from plundering Arabs by an armed escort (Neh. 2 : 9). Ezra's caravan carried much wealth and would, therefore, be a special object of attack (8 : 25-27). But he had professed his faith in God as the protector of His people and would not, by accepting an escort, give the heathen cause to think it was only an idle boast. He, therefore, resolved to throw himself upon God's protection by fasting and prayer.

V. 23. *He was entreated of us.* God gave the protection prayed for, and the four months' journey was finished in safety (8 : 31).

II. The Trust, 24-30.

V. 24. *Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests ; to take charge of the treasure until safely deposited in the Temple (7 : 15, 16).*

V. 25. *And weighed unto them the silver and the gold.* The poverty-stricken colony at Jerusalem could afford Ezra but little help financially. Many of them were hopelessly in debt, and had sunk into a state of serfdom to the richer nobles (Neh. 5 : 3-5). The king came to his aid with a subscription of gold and silver (7 : 15), a present of gold and silver vessels for the Temple (8 : 26) and a subscription throughout the empire (7 : 16). This treasure was now weighed out to the appointed treasurers. *The offering of the house of our God.* It was to beautify the temple that the king provided the money (7 : 27).

V. 26. *Six hundred and fifty talents of silver.* The silver talent was worth about \$1,600. The whole amount would therefore be worth more than a million dollars. *Silver vessels an hundred talents ; that is worth an hundred talents, about \$160,000. Of gold an hundred talents.* The gold talent is variously

estimated at from four to eighteen times the value of the silver talent.

V. 27. *A thousand drams.* The dram, or daric, was worth about \$5.00. *Fine copper precious as gold ;* probably some rare alloy of copper. Rev. Ver. gives "bright brass."

The whole formed an immense treasure ; variously estimated at from two to five millions of dollars in value.

Vs. 28, 29. *Holy unto the Lord ; consecrated, set apart for the service of God. A free-will offering ;* a voluntary contribution towards the Temple fund (7 : 15). It was to aid God's cause, and was therefore an offering to God. *Watch ye and keep them.* They were to guard the treasure zealously until it was delivered to the officials at the Temple. *In the chambers ;* rooms on each side of the main building set apart for the residence of the priests (1 Kings 6 : 5) and also for store rooms (Neh. 13 : 5).

III. The Journey, 31, 32.

V. 31. *On the twelfth day of the first month ;* the month Nisan, corresponding with the latter part of March and the first part of April. There were more than 5,000 people and a great many baggage animals. *The hand of our God was upon us.* Again and again these words are used. See 7 : 6 ; 8 : 22. They show how real God was to Ezra. "It is as though he felt the reviving touch of those invisible fingers at every stage of the journey." (Stanley.) *From the hand of the enemy ;* from the Bedouins of the desert. The form of divine deliverance is not stated. It may have been in preventing the enemy from making an attack, or in enabling Ezra to repel the attacks made upon them.

V. 32. *And we came to Jerusalem.* The journey occupied four months (7 : 9) at Jerusalem Ezra rested three days before proceeding to carry out his great work of reform as the Governor of Judah.

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

Then I proclaimed a fast . . . to seek of him a right way, v. 1. Well begun is half done. So declares the old proverb ; and when we read of Ezra and the people seeking God at the outset of their journey, we feel sure of a

prosperous ending to it. It took a little time, of course ; just as it takes time to pray in one's room, or to have family worship. But such time is well spent. It is no waste. Another well-worn proverb says that

"prayers and provender hinder no man's journey." After a season of prayer, one goes forth to his task with a clearer brain, a quieter heart, a loftier purpose, and with the strength that comes from the firm confidence that, having committed his way unto the Lord, the Lord will bring it to pass (Ps. 37:5).

It was, moreover, well done to begin the season of seeking God with a fast. There is no merit in doing without food. A man may starve himself and be none the more Godlike for it. But fasting was a sign of the penitent spirit, without which it is vain to seek God. It was also a reminder that "man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord." (Deut. 8:3.) If we are to have anything from God, it can only be when we feel the need of God. A heart already full of self has no room for anything or any one else; and God does not force Himself into any man's heart or life.

I was ashamed to require . . . soldiers . . . because we had spoken, v. 22. A sample, this, of the tonic effect of taking a high stand. They had said to the king: "We are the servants of God; God will care for us." And, now, when the temptation is upon them to take lower ground, and ask the king for soldiers to defend them, the remembrance of their brave words upholds them. As self-respecting men, they must be consistent with themselves. As declared servants of the living God, they must allow no slur to be cast on Him. We may not always be able to live up to high ideals. Our poor little spirits may not always be large enough for the free play of the vaster motives; but we shall reach higher with lofty ideals than with lesser ones, and something of the spell of the larger motives will rest upon us even in our meanest hours.

He was intreated of us, v. 23. There is the throbb of a swelling gratitude in this sentence. They trusted God. They ventured all on

their confidence that He would hear and help; and they were not disappointed. God loves to be trusted. He rejoices when we ask great things of Him. He gives beyond our asking. And when we get from Him, we become the steadier in our faith, and therefore the stronger for new tasks. A good Christian woman had marked her Bible in many places "T. P." "TRIED AND PROVED" she explained it; for the letters were put opposite the promises of the Word which she had herself tested. With every fresh "T. and P." her confidence would increase. Hers, with such discipline, might well soon become the faith that removes mountains. So shall ours.

Then I separated twelve . . . and weighed unto them and said unto them . . . watch ye and keep, vs. 24, 25, 29. Ezra did not neglect the temporalities. It was not enough that they had worshipped and that they were conscious of God's presence and favor. They must look sharply after the every-day work of God's kingdom, must see to the care and carriage of the silver and gold and vessels for God's house. Fervor in song or prayer or speech can never take the place of good business methods in the Lord's work. Those who do the financing of a congregation or of the great Schemes of the Church after a right fashion are serving God no less acceptably than those who preach and pray. Good financing makes preaching and praying easier.

The hand of our God was upon us, v. 31. A heavy hand it is for sinners. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. 10:31.) But a hand gracious, bountiful, tender, compassionate to those who fear Him. "I will turn mine hand upon the little ones," is His own assurance. (Zech. 13:7.) With God's hand upon him, the feeblest is strong, and the most timorous content.

TEACHING HINTS

Seventy-eight years had elapsed since Zerubbabel's first return to Jerusalem with his chosen band of loyal Jews. Recall some of the details of those stirring times. (See

lessons 9, 10, 11, 12, of last Quarter.) Zerubbabel, the prince, Jeshua, the priest, Haggai and Zechariah, the prophets, were chief figures in those days. There was great zeal, in

spurts; and again, strange apathy; and over them all and all the time, the patient guidance of Jehovah, whom no wrong-doing or ingratitude of His people could utterly turn away from blessing them.

The Temple had been rebuilt, but the walls were still in ruins. Many abuses had crept in. There was need of some whole-souled, fiery-hearted reformer to set the wrongs right and to awake the dormant patriotism and religious zeal of the people.

Ezra appeared; a personality, close after Moses in grandeur, a priest, a scribe, a diplomat, a born leader, a patient, devout servant of God (Ezra 7: 1-6). His advent was the beginning of better days for Jerusalem; and to him God's people in all the ages are profoundly indebted for his work in gathering together and arranging and handing down the Holy Scriptures.

The lesson of to-day displays:

I. *Ezra's Preparation.* Go back to v. 10, which is really the door into the lesson. Ezra is making ready for his great work.

Mark four points, (a) Preparation of

heart; (b) Searching of the Scriptures; (c) Willingness to obey; (d) Eagerness to teach God's law to others. What better preparation, what other preparation, indeed, can anyone make for large service of God?

II. *Ezra's Piety*, 21-23. Note (a) His proper pride. He had told the king that God would guard them. Therefore he will ask no guard from the king. See Psalm 20: 7. (b) His devout spirit; which leads him to fast (indicating humility and penitence) and to pray. (James 5: 16.) (c) His sense of the fellowship of believers. He summons all to join with him and with one another in the fastings and supplications.

III. *Ezra's Prudence*, 24-30. We remark, (a) A careful choice for a responsible service, vs. 24; (b) A shrewd division of responsibility, vs. 25-27; (c) A fervent appeal to highest motives, vs. 28, 30.

IV. *Ezra's Prosperity*, 31, 32. By God's good hand upon him and the people they escaped the perils of the way and reached the end of their journey in peace.

Now emphasize the Golden Text.

TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

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

1. Ezra as a leader.
2. What the lesson teaches on church finance.
3. How to make sure of God's help.

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

GOD'S HELP SOUGHT—in penitence
 GUIDANCE FOLLOWED—with courage
 CARE PROVED—by success

LESSON V.

PSALMS OF DELIVERANCE

October 29, 1899

Psalms 85 and 126. Commit to memory Psalm 126. Read Jeremiah 31

1 LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.
 2 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.
 3 Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned *away* from the fierceness of thine anger.
 4 Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.
 5 Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?
 6 Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?
 7 Show us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation.
 8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.
 9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.
 10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteous-

ness and peace have kissed each other.
 11 Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
 12 Yes, the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase.
 13 Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.
 Ps. 126: 1 When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like unto them that dream.
 2 They were as our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue as singing; then said they among the heathen, *What* hath the LORD done great things for them.
 3 The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.
 4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.
 5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
 6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Revised Version.—1 Indignation; 2 Quicken; 3 Springeth; 4 Hath looked down; 5 Make his footsteps a way to walk in; 6 Unto them; 7 Nations; 8 South (a capital S); 9 Though he goeth on his way weeping, bearing forth the seed; He shall come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

GOLDEN TEXT

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Ps. 126: 5.

DAILY READINGS

M.—Psalm 85. Psalms of deliverance.
 T.—Psalm 126. Psalms of deliverance.
 W.—Jer. 30: 18-24. Promise of deliverance.
 Th.—Jer. 31: 1-12. A joyful prospect.
 F.—Jer. 33: 1-14. Pardon and restoration.
 S.—Zech. 8: 1-8. A joyful city.
 S.—Psalm 124. The Great Deliverer.

TIME AND PLACE

Precise date unknown, but the Psalms have the tone of the period of the return of the exiles from Babylon.

CATECHISM

Q. 77. What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbour's good name, especially in witness bearing.

LESSON PLAN

I. The Prelude, Psalm 85.
 Remembrance, 1-3; Petition, 4-7; Confidence, 8-13.

II. The Anthem, Psalm 126.

Joy; thanksgiving; hope.

LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praises—389, 11 (Ps.), 189, 17, 455.

CONNECTING LINKS

The two psalms which we study to-day show us how glad and grateful God's people were for deliverance and restoration to their own land.

EXPOSITION

I. The Prelude, Psalm 85.

V. 1. *Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land; literally, "well pleased with Thy land."* His pleasure was shown in that He had brought back the captivity of Jacob, that is, had brought back to their own land the captive Jews. It was indeed a signal manifestation of His favor, for the event seemed all but impossible, being opposed to the settled policy of the Babylonian kings.

Vs. 2, 3. *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people.* Sin was the cause of their captivity, especially the sin of idolatry (2 Chron. 36: 14-17). Their deliverance was a proof that their sin had been forgiven. *Thou hast covered all their sin.* Here sin is regarded as something offensive that must be covered up

from sight. *Thou hast taken away all thy wrath.* The wrath of God is not blind passion. It is His holy will taking action against anything that comes between Him and the affections of His people. When the offensive thing is put away, then God's anger is put away. *The fierceness of thine anger; as seen in the desolation of the country, the ruin of the Temple, and the horrors of the long captivity.*

V. 4. *Turn us, O God of our salvation.* Turn us to Thyself and complete the salvation already begun. Only a small portion of the exiles had come back. The rest were still scattered throughout the Persian Empire. Sin, too, was manifesting itself among those that had returned. The psalmist

prays, therefore, for God's continued favor.

Vs. 5-7. *Will thou be angry with us forever?* The petition implies an appeal to the loving nature and the promises of God (Hos. 14 : 4). *Will thou not revive us again?* The returned exiles were by no means in a flourishing condition (Neh. 5 : 3-5). Only the favor of God could revive their national and religious life, as the sunshine and the rain alone can revive the parched meadows. *Show us thy mercy*; the manifestation of God's loving kindness to the sinner in his guilt. *And grant us thy salvation*; from the guilt of sin and the oppression of man.

Vs. 8, 9. *I will hear.* Having offered his prayer, the psalmist will listen attentively for the answer (Hab. 2 : 1). *He will speak peace.* His answer is one of peace, which, as in Psalm 122, implies all the blessings that God can give. *But let them not turn again to folly.* It was their foolish, sinful conduct in the past that had brought them so much misery. God forgives, but not that we may be free to sin again. *His salvation is nigh them that fear him.* The holy fear of God's wrath which leads to obedience of His laws reaps its reward in a fuller outflow of His saving grace.

That glory may dwell in our land; the greatest glory of any land is the glory of God's presence as shown in God-like lives.

Vs. 10, 11. *Mercy*; kindness shown to those in distress. *Truth*; fidelity to all that is right. *Peace*; implying all the blessings of life. *Righteousness*; all the moral good in life, without which life's blessings cannot be enjoyed. *Met together...kissed each other*; denoting the harmony that exists where these four virtues reign. It is an ideal picture realized once in the life of Jesus Christ and

which shall yet be realized in the life of His people. *Truth shall spring out of the earth.* The fidelity of man shall yet respond to the loving kindness of God, as the seed responds to the sunshine and the rain. *Righteousness shall look down from heaven; bestowing her blessings, and smiling with approval upon the beautiful picture just described.*

II. The Anthem, Ps. 126.

Vs. 12, 13. *Shall yield her increase*; in response to the blessings of God so freely bestowed (Hag. 1 : 9-11). *Righteousness shall go before him*; as a herald before a king. *And shall set*; literally, "righteousness sets upon the way of His steps," that is, "follows closely in His footsteps."

Ps. 126 : 1, 2. *Turned again the captivity of Zion*; that is, as in Ps. 85 : 1, brought back the captive Jews to Zion. *Like them that dream.* The news seemed too good to be true. *With laughter.* Their hearts overflowed with joy at the great deliverance and that joy found expression in laughter and song. *Then said they among the nations.* Even the heathen acknowledged that there had been divine intervention in their behalf.

V. 4. *Turn again our captivity*; bring back the rest of the exiles; and give prosperity to those who have returned. *As the streams in the south.* The psalmist would fain see his brethren coming back in large numbers, bringing growth and vigor to the nation as the full-rushing streams bring their blessings to the dry valleys of Southern Palestine.

Vs. 5, 6. *They that sow in tears.* The first exiles to return were indeed sowing in tears, for they had many difficulties to meet; but the seed of patient effort would by and by yield a harvest of joy.

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

Thou hast brought back, v. 1. The words may be applied to the rescue of the sinner. "The captivity mentioned is bondage under sin. In this captivity Satan is the gaoler, the flesh is our prison, ungodly lusts are the manacles, a bad conscience is the tormentor, all of them against us; only Christ is 'Immanuel,' God with us; he turneth the captivity of Jacob in forgiving all his offences.

and in covering his sins." (Abraham Wright.)

Or the words may describe the happy case of the backslider whom God has not suffered utterly to fall away. Like the psalmist, he sings with joy. As there is none whose way is more sorrowful than his who resolutely turns his back on the Savior whom he loves and the sweetness of whose love he has felt; so he is on the edge of the keenest joy, on

whose lips tremble the words :

"O Jesus, full of pardoning grace,
More full of grace than I of sin,
Yet once again I seek Thy face,
Open Thine arms and take me in,
And freely my backslidings heal,
And love the faithless sinner still."

Thou hast covered all their sin, v. 2; covered, as only a gracious God would or can cover. This is from a ripe experience. The psalmist sings with grateful wonder; for God does no more wonderful thing than to cover up the sin and all the sin of the penitent. "And especially," every saint of God will add, "my sin." "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," the psalmist elsewhere exclaims (Ps. 103: 2); and which of those "benefits," think you, comes first and bulks most largely? Follow on; "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." (v. 3.) As the Christian's experience ripens and he comes to see more deeply into the awful depths of the sin that is within him, the more of awe and wonder will go into his exclamation, "Thou hast covered all my sin."

Thou hast taken away all Thy wrath, v. 3.

"My God is reconciled:
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child,
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba, Father, cry."

But let them not turn again to folly, v. 8. A much needed caution; for is there not a subtle temptation to rely upon the forgiving grace of God, when we want to sin? One stands on perilous ground who so reasons. God forgives. True! but to "bank" on that fact, and rush into known transgressions, adds the sin of horrible presumption to our other sins. It is what the apostle styles turning the grace of God into licence (Jude 4). The only rational ground of expecting further forgiveness is to set one's face like a flint to-

wards obedience. Right-doing can win no favor of its own merit; but wrong-doing deliberately entered upon because of our knowledge of God's readiness to forgive, is the sort of presumption that brings down quickly and sharply the just judgment of the Almighty.

Then said they among the heathen, Ps. 126: 6. It is a grand testimony when unbelievers are forced to say of Christians,—"*The Lord hath done great things for them.*" It is often this good estate of Christians that is the first thing to tell on the surrounding heathen in our mission fields. It has its effect, too, in our home land. "I don't know how it is," said an obdurate old unbeliever to the writer, "that Mr. — is always giving, giving, giving, and yet, although his family is larger than mine and his farm not so good, everything seems to prosper with him." He was edging pretty close to the kingdom of God, this unbelieving man, in so saying. If he had looked a little closer into the reason why, he might have sought to enter in.

They that sow in tears, v. 5. It was a task of reconstruction to which God's people had set themselves, to restore city and Temple to their former state and to build up a nation out of the scattered tribes again brought home. A heart-breaking enterprise, this of reconstruction, whether in the case of others or of ourselves. The powers of evil are so incredibly strong, the powers of recuperation so feeble and slow. *Shall reap in joy*. The gladness of the reaping atones for the sadness of the sowing. "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not," is God's own word (Gal. 6: 9). Even here, in this world, there is a certainty of a joyous reaping time to everyone who honestly and steadfastly turns from sin to God and holiness of life.

TEACHING HINTS

Possibly those who set the lessons had better have given one or other of these psalms, not both. To take the two is like overcrowding a bouquet of flowers. In any case there is such a wealth of beauty and of instruction that it will be impossible in the short teaching time to bring it all out. The

teacher will be wise not to attempt to do so, but to pick out a few of the flowers—he may take them almost at random, they are all so perfect—and hold them up to the admiration of the scholars. Let the lesson, therefore, be

A FEW FLOWERS FROM GOD'S GARDEN :

1. *Favorable*, 1,—the sweet shining of God's countenance on an erring, perverse people, whose transgressions cannot quench His love.

2. *Forgiven—covered—taken away—turned thyself*, 2, 3. Notice how, by multiplication of metaphors, the psalmist tries to express the vast and varied *grace* of Jehovah in the removal of sin. Paul Gerhardt catches the spirit of it:

"Jesus, Thy boundless love to me
No thought can reach, no tongue declare."

3. *Revive*, 6. "Bring to life again"; the image of parched fields and gardens after the long looked for rain has at last come.

4. *Thy salvation*, 7. One of the greatest of the great words of Scripture. God's salvation leaves nothing more to be said or done. To be saved is to be enfolded in His arms now, safe and satisfied; to be admitted into His presence in the eternal glory beyond.

5. *Laughter and singing*, Ps. 126 : 1. A "double" flower; alas, too rare! The Christian life, especially in these days, is apt to be pitched in a minor key. The struggle against prevailing evil is so strenuous, or we so weakly yield to evil, that there seems to be no heart left for honest, hearty rejoicing. Phil. 4 : 4 is a right good motto. Show the scholars that out-and-out devotion to God should lead to gladness and not to sadness.

6. *Sow in tears*, 5. A night flower, this patient scattering of the precious seed of faithful endeavor in God's cause, whether to perfect our own character or to save and help others.

7. *Reap in joy*, 5.

"By-and-by the harvest, and the labor ended,

We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves."

TOPICS FOR BRIEF PAPERS

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

1. How completely God forgives sin.
2. How glad those forgiven should be.
3. How richly those shall reap who patiently sow.

BLACKBOARD REVIEW

God's Favor Brings Fourfold Blessing

FORGIVENESS, v. 2

REVIVAL, v. 6

BOUNTY, v. 12

GLADNESS, Ps. 126

Primary Department

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

FOURTH QUARTER

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Preview

The lessons of this quarter close the six years' course of studies in the Holy Scriptures. They belong to the period of the Restoration, when God "turned again the captivity" of His people, and brought them once more into their own land. It was a period of countless blessings, and therefore a time for abundant and joyous thanksgivings. The memory of those bright days was to be an inspiration and uplift to the faithful souls who still kept heart and hope through the long, weary centuries, when wave after wave of calamity broke over the nation and it seemed as if the promised Messiah would never come. The Golden

Text for the Quarter strikes the key-note of the lessons:

"BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL, AND FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS."

On each Sabbath of the thirteen we are to consider one of GOD'S BENEFITS. 1. His House. 2. Help in trouble. 3. His presence in peril. 4. Guidance in perplexity. 5. Deliverance from bondage. 6. The privilege of prayer. 7. Protection from enemies. 8. His holy Word. 9. Warnings against sin. 10. The Sabbath Day. 11. The opportunity to give. 12. Promises of good. 13. The Wonderful Savior.

LESSON I.—October 1, 1899

JOY IN GOD'S HOUSE, Pa. 122

PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER: **God daily loadeth us with benefits**

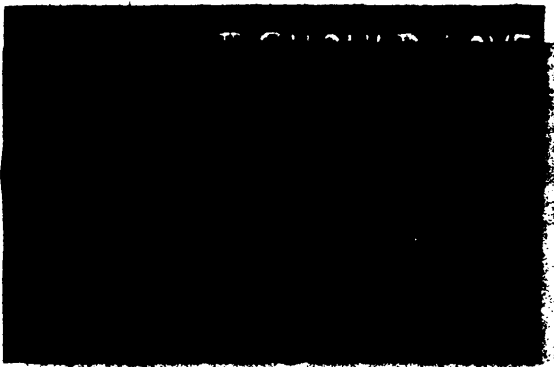
Golden Text—I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.—Pa. 122 : 1.

To-Day's Lesson Thought—I should love God's house.

Connection—For a number of Sundays we have been hearing about our Heavenly Father's care for us. (Recall Golden Text for last quarter—"The angel of the Lord encampeth," etc.) We are now to hear for twelve Sundays about some of the good things God has given us (benefits). I wonder how many of you little ones have ever given a gift to anyone? I think you have all received gifts very often. (Let them tell of some of their gifts.) When people get

things that help them and do them good, these things are called *benefits* or "good things." Ask the children to think of some

of the good things God gives us—(food, clothing, pure water, fresh air and bright sunshine, refreshing showers, home, friends, schools, etc.).



The Lesson—See what I am drawing (a church). Whose house is it? The place where we go to worship God and sing praises

to Him and hear the minister speak about God and Jesus Christ. God's house is a great benefit. In places where there are no churches the people do not hear about God and they do many wicked things. They are often cruel to their little children. How thankful we should be that we have God's house! It is because God sent us that great gift, His Son Jesus Christ, that we have so many churches built in which to worship Him, and to learn what He wants us to do.

What did the children of Israel call their beautiful church built on the hills at Jerusalem? They loved it more than their own homes. They were so glad when God set them free and let them go back to their own land and they were full of thanksgiving to him. (Describe the Eastern custom of parties of travellers journeying through the country, singing to cheer themselves on their way. Picture the children of Israel returning to their beloved city, singing as they went.)

Do the children remember about the shepherd boy David, the sweetsinger, who wrote

the beautiful songs (Psalms) we sing in our churches? We are going to hear the words of one of these beautiful songs which the people of Israel sang as they climbed the hills towards Jerusalem, thinking of their Temple and beautiful city. Read the lesson and explain. Repeat Golden Text. (This song was also sung when they were going up to worship at the Temple at their great feasts three times every year.)

Practical Thoughts—Love God's house. Be glad and thankful to go to church and Sunday-school. Be quiet and reverent when there. Listen to all minister and teachers say. Work for our church and Sunday-school. Pray God to bless the work. Give all the time and money you can for God's work. Help to build churches in heathen countries.

Prepare an oblong card on which is written the "benefit" we have been talking about, "His House." Each Sunday a block may be added, till a pyramid is formed which may be used for Review Sunday. (Pin the blocks on a corner of the board.)

LESSON II.—October 8, 1899

HAMAN'S PLOT AGAINST THE JEWS, Esther 3: 1-11

PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER: **God daily loadeth us with benefits**

Golden Text—If God be for us who can be against us.—Rom. 8: 31.

Connection—Reference to the "benefit" block will recall the fact that God has given us His House. Recall Practical Thoughts.

The Lesson. — (Teachers should be familiar with the whole Book of Esther in order to place the dramatic scenes vividly before the children.)

In the beautiful palace at Shushan, in Persia, the country where the children of Israel had been living for so many years, there dwelt a great king with a strange name, *Ahasuerus*, and his beautiful queen, Esther. They had beautiful things all around them. Lovely flowers grew around the palace, the name Shushan

To-day's Lesson Thought—God is our shield.

means "a lily", so called because of the number of beautiful lilies which grew there. Ahasuerus was not a good man. He loved strong drink and did many wrong things, but Esther was a good woman. She was one of the children of Israel (or Jews). They had not all returned to Jerusalem. Some still stayed in Babylon, and among them were Mordecai and his niece, Esther. The king saw this beautiful Jewish girl and loved her and made her his queen.

There was a man named Haman, whom the king had made a great man. The king said everybody must bow down to Haman. Mordecai said he would not bow down and worship any man. He would bow down only to his God. (Do you remember somebody else who would not bow down to a king and was put in a place of great danger and God took care of him?) Haman was very angry and got the king to promise that all the children of Israel who had stayed in that country should be killed. Ahasuerus drank strong drink and that made him do many wrong things, for he sometimes did not know what he was saying. Haman did not love our God and wanted to kill all God's people.

He was getting ready to do this, but God did not forget His people in their trouble. The wicked Haman was himself put to death and Mordecai and the rest of the Jews saved. We shall hear more about the story next Sunday. God always sends help in trouble, if we tell Him our troubles. (Repeat Golden Text.)

God always took care of the children of Israel, because they were His own chosen people who were to go to the different parts of the world and tell others of God. Explain the use of a shield. In time of danger we like to hide behind something. (Don't you often hide behind mother's skirts when you are afraid?) God is just like a shield for us. We need fear no danger when He is fighting for us and going before us.

Practical Thoughts—God is my shield. I need fear no evil.

Add another "benefit" block "Help in Trouble."

"Do you think how many children go to little beds at night, And without a care or sorrow, wake up in the morning light? God in heaven each name can tell, knows us all and loves us well."

LESSON III.—October 15, 1899

ESTHER PLEADING FOR HER PEOPLE, Esther 8: 3-8, 15-17

PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER: **God daily loadeth us with benefits**

Golden Text—Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.—Ps. 37: 5.

To-day's Lesson Thought—We should tell everything to God.

Connection—Pin on the board the name "ESTHER," cut out of silver paper (or white. Underneath this may be a golden crown. The name Esther means "a star.") Do you remember the beautiful young queen of whom we spoke last Sunday? And her uncle, who would not bow down to the wicked Haman? We are to hear more about this good Queen Esther—for she was good as well as beautiful.

The Lesson—When God's people heard

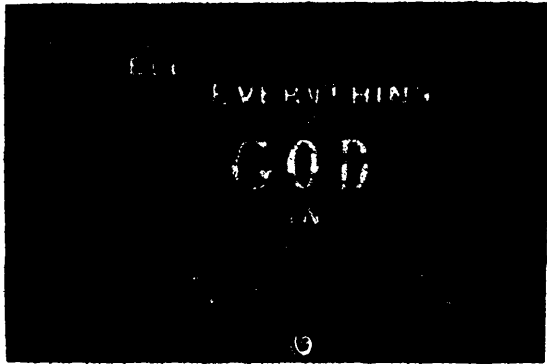
that the king was going to let them all be killed, they were in great trouble, and went about the streets weeping and wailing. Queen Esther's servants heard about it and went and told the queen. She was very sorry for her people, and sent to try to comfort her uncle Mordecai. He sent her a copy of the king's letter saying that all the Jews should be killed, and he told the servants to tell Esther that she must go to King Ahasuerus and beg him to let her people live. Explain the great difficulty of getting into the king's presence. (The queen lived in another part of the great palace. See diagram, page 305.) Explain the ceremony of holding out the golden sceptre as a sign

that the king would speak with the person to whom it was held out.

Before Esther went to the king she asked her friends to fast. (Explain.) This implies prayer, confession of sin and belief in God. They fasted for three days, and told God all their trouble, and asked Him to help them. Then the queen went bravely to the king to plead for her people. She put

When we really trust God, our prayers are answered and we have peace and joy and honor. Repeat Golden Text.

Queen Esther loved her country and her people, and was willing to do anything for them, even to suffering the king's anger and being cast off by him. She was unselfish and brave, and trusted in God for help. Teach Golden Text.



on a beautiful dress, and her face was very beautiful, full of love for her people and a determination, by God's help, to save them.

Tell the story as given in the lesson. The children will be interested in all the details of Esther's reception by the king. Impress the thought in verses 7, 15, 16, 17. God always punishes the wicked in some way.

—ready to help others in need. We should tell everything to God in prayer. He will be with us in all danger and trouble. Tell a story of a child's faith in prayer and the answer received.

Another "benefit" block, "His presence in danger."

LESSON IV.—October 22, 1890

EZRA'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM, EZRA 8 : 21-32

PREVIEW THOUGHT FOR THE QUARTER : God daily loadeth us with benefits

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

To-day's Lesson Thought—God is our guide.

Connection—Six of the little ones may stand before the class, each holding up one of the silver letters of the name "Esther." Ask different children to tell something they remember about Esther. Recall the story and the thoughts gained from it.

The Lesson—I wonder how many of you

went on a journey any place this summer? Did you go with father and mother on the boat or train? We are going to hear to-day about a man who went on a journey. But it was a very long journey, and he had no train or boat to go on. He had to go on the back of a horse or mule or walk all the way.

Have ready a roll representing the parchment roll or book of Bible times—(A long strip of brown paper, about half a yard wide, rolled on a round stick will answer the pur-

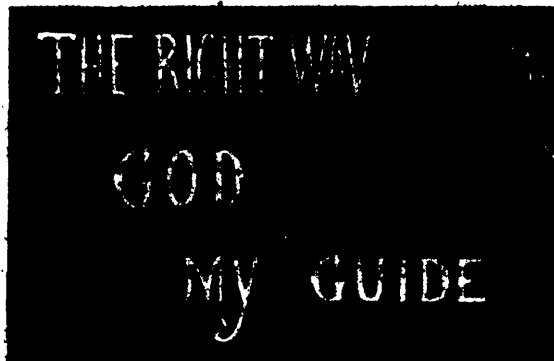
pose). Show this to the children and tell them this was the way all books were made then. There was no printing; there were no books like ours. Everything was written on parchment rolls by men called scribes. We are going to hear about one of these scribes. His name was Ezra. (Write it). He is the man who told us about the children of Israel going home to Jerusalem. He was a very good man and loved and trusted God. He lived in Babylon. (Draw a square). He was one of the children of Israel who had stayed in Babylon. He was a teacher.

This story I am going to tell you happened 15 years (ten fingers and five more) after Queen Esther saved her people.

You remember a great many of the children of Israel went back to Jerusalem — (another square). They got very careless after a while and forgot God, after all His care over them. Ezra knew that they were not keeping God's laws, not doing what was pleasing to God. So he asked the king to give him men and money to go to Jerusalem to teach the people and lead them to serve God again. He got a great many people to go with him—fathers and mothers and little children, too. They all gathered on the banks of the river Ahava, and fasted and prayed to God that He would show them the right way for themselves and for their little ones before they set out on their journey.

There were enemies along the road, but Ezra would not ask the king to send soldiers to guard them from these enemies, because he had told the king (Golden Text), and he wanted the king and everybody else to know, that God would take care of the people who loved Him and would show them the safe and right way to go.

Tell the lesson story simply, impressing the



thought of the guiding hand of God, when we do not know what is the right thing to do. Illustrate the meaning of a "guide." Speak of the "still, small voice" of conscience. If we listen to it, we shall always be guided aright. That is the way God speaks to us now.

Practical Thoughts—God is my guide. I shall pray to Him at all times. He will show me the right way to do in everything.

The "benefit" block is "His guiding hand."

NOTE BY EDITOR.—The lesson for October 29, PSALMS OF DELIVERANCE, is held over for want of space. It will be found in the November TEACHERS MONTHLY, which will be sent out in good time for the last Sabbath of October.



THE BOOK PAGE

Books for review to be sent to Editor, **TEACHERS MONTHLY**, Room 87, Confederation Life Building, Toronto.

PIONEER LIFE IN ZORRA, by Rev. W. A. MacKay, B.A., D.D.; introduction by Hon. G. W. Ross, LL.D., Minister of Education for Ontario; with portraits and illustrations, bound in targa; price, \$1.75; William Briggs, Toronto.

"No better stuff stood beside Nelson on board the *Victory*; no better stuff climbed the heights of Alina or charged the dervishes at Khartoum," says the Minister of Education in his preface to Dr. MacKay's picture of the pioneers of Zorra. Picked men the early settlers of the Province of Ontario were and valiant was their struggle to make a home for themselves and their children in the forest. How splendidly they succeeded, and what a heritage they have left, not only of smiling fields and orchards and growing towns, but of the appliances of a free civic government, of education and of religion! The story of those heroic days every Canadian child should know.

Zorra was specially notable for the sturdy religious type of its first settlers, and Dr. MacKay's foot is on his native heath when he describes these men and their ways. The description is at once vivid, instructive and entertaining. "The Pioneer and the Sabbath," "The Men's Day," "An Old Communion Sabbath," "Pioneer Songs," "Ghosts, Witches and Goblins," "Zorra's Famous Missionary," are some of the headings. There is a fine admixture of the grave and the gay. The description of the old-fashioned catechizing, for example, is enlivened by such incidents as the following: "A boy, who had been specially trained by his mother in good manners, was being examined on the passage, 'All have sinned.' 'Now, my boy,' said the minister, 'does that mean that every one of us has sinned?' putting emphasis on 'every one.' The boy, hesitated, fearing an affirmative answer, lest he might cast a reflection on the character of the pastor. But on a repetition of the question the lad replied: 'Everyone has sinned except yourself' and the elders.' He saved his manners at the expense of his theology."

The book is slightly higher in price than the usual run of books for Sabbath School libraries. This will not deter schools from purchasing, as it is good value for the money. It will stimulate both the religious life and the patriotism of old and young.

The tragedy of the Huguenots never loses its sad charm. True to France and her monarchs, long after these hunted them like partridges on the mountains, and leaving their country only as a last resort, they were

citizens whom France could ill afford to lose, her best blood, indeed, whose loss she sorely feels even to this day. **HOW THEY KEPT THE FAITH**, by Grace Raymond (Presbyterian Board of Publication, Richmond, Va.; pp. 389, price \$1.00), gives a glimpse of those heroic days. The interest of the book turns on the struggle between love of kindred and faithfulness to God and conscience. The story is somewhat long drawn out; a hundred pages less would have been better. But the plot is well conceived, and one feels grateful, as he reads, for two things, that we have come upon happier days, and that, when evil days do befall the Church of God, His grace suffices; yea, is magnified, for it is the heroism of such times that puts iron into the blood of God's servants in the softer ages that follow.

THE ABIDING LAW. Twelve addresses on the Ten Commandments. By the Rev. James Aitken, M.A. Pages 191. Price 75 cts. O'Plant, Anderson & Ferrie, Edinburgh and London. An old topic, but the book has a breath of freshness. The prevailing note is the positive side rather than the negative side of the Commandments, what we should do, rather than what we should not do. The very titles of the chapters will suggest to ministers and teachers an original treatment of the commandments; for example, Exclusive Worship (First Commandment), The Soul of Reverence (Third Commandment), The Hallowing of the Home (Seventh Commandment), The Grace of Contentment (Tenth Commandment).

THE OLDEST TRADE IN THE WORLD. By the Rev. George H. Morrison, M.A. 183 pages. Price 50 cts. Same publishers; the tenth and concluding volume of the "Golden Nails" series of addresses to the young. The addresses are such as children will read, which is a great thing to say of books of this sort intended for children. The "Golden Nails" series is a good one for Sabbath School libraries.

HANDEL'S MESSIAH; Gem Edition. 181 pages, 35 cents. S. Bagster & Sons, London. An exquisite little book bound in green. A complete and quite legible, although minute transcript of the Messiah, words and music. Music lovers will like to have it.

DANGERS OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE. By Rev. S. K. Winn, D.D.; 20 pages, price 2 cents. Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Va. However foolish and fantastic the claims of Christian Science may seem to sober-minded people to be, it is important that they should be met. Dr. Winn has fairly done this from Scripture and common sense. Where Mrs. Eddy's doctrines are being promulgated, it might be good policy to supply the antidote in this convenient form.

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