

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

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JANUARY, 1893.

[No. 1.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL BARRER

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VOL. XXVII.]

JANUARY, 1893.

[No. 1.

Examinations on the Inductive Study of the Bible.

Many Bible students will be glad to learn that arrangements have been going on for some time for having a series of written examinations on Bible topics. It was contemplated at first to have these in connection with the American Institute of Biblical Study, which, for some time, has conducted such examinations, and which we believe a large number of persons in the Presbyterian and Baptist Churches have, to a considerable extent, adopted. It was felt, however, that it would be much better to have these examinations conducted upon an entirely Canadian plan.

We have no narrow jealousy of any international study of the Bible or of general literature as carried out by our Chautauqua and Sunday-school system, but it was felt that our people rally more enthusiastically and patriotically around examinations conducted in one of our own intellectual centres. Such a centre is the new Victoria, so successfully inaugurated in Toronto. The learned Chancellor, Dr. Burwash, has kindly consented to prepare examination papers on the Book of Acts and the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which will form the topics of Sunday-school study for the latter part of this year and the beginning of next. These written examinations for the city of Toronto will take place on two evenings in the latter part of April, at Victoria College. Two papers, requiring about two hours each, will be prepared.

LOCAL EXAMINATIONS.

In order to make the advantage of these examinations as widespread as possible, it is arranged that local examinations be held wherever a number of persons desire to take up the systematic and inductive study of the

Books of Acts, Ezra, and Nehemiah. It is hoped that the ministers in charge or Sunday-school superintendents will kindly act as examiners, to whom papers will be sent in sealed packets; examinations to be held simultaneously throughout the country. If pastors or superintendents can undertake to give aid in the study of these books in the way of weekly Bible classes, it will be, we are sure, of great advantage to both teacher and taught.

Rev. A. M. Phillips, B.D., who has given special attention to the promotion of Bible study, has consented to act as secretary and treasurer, to whom applications shall be made for enrolment in the plan for examination, and to whom the fee of twenty-five cents, for examination papers, cost of postage, and the like, should be sent. We hope that Sunday-school teachers, superintendents, and senior scholars will take note of this fact, and write to Rev. A. M. Phillips, 29 Laclid Ave., Toronto, for information, and at once enter upon the course of study. For each examination a certificate will be issued, and after a three or four years' course of study, a handsome diploma will be presented. We hope that very many of our readers will endeavor to procure such certificates and diploma. They will be an evidence of thorough and systematic Bible study under the inspiration of a definite, prescribed course, and in association with a large number of earnest students engaged in the same work. We predict great advantage to our Sunday-schools and to the whole Church from the general adoption of this course of study.

Chief among the text books recommended are the Cambridge Bible Text Book on Acts, advanced series, price \$1.35; smaller series, price 35 cents; and Dr. Burwash's *Notes on Acts*, in recent numbers of the *Methodist Quarterly*, price 50 cents.

Archdeacon Farrar's "Life of St. Paul" will also be helpful, price \$2.25. This may be procured in a very cheap edition, bound with his noble "Life of Christ," for \$1.50.

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Sunday School Banner.

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

TORONTO, JANUARY, 1893.

New Year.

There have been so many new years and so many old ones, that it would seem we might cease speaking of them. But, as a matter of fact, there is some almost intangible charm about the sudden turn of the year and the writing of another number. We seem to be under a spell of thought and feeling. We are impressed that life is going, that time is doing its steady work. Babes are born, children are growing into youths, youths into men and women, men and women into old people, and the dead are increasing in number. The touch of the bell-rope tolls the death of the old year, and suddenly the twelve o'clock stroke is changed into a glad and clanging peal, as the notes ring out on the air and rouse the sleepers, to let them know that another year is born.

Each sensitive heart responds to the sentiment of joy, or sociability, or piety, and the response is something a little brighter, or more serious, or deeper in meaning than the words of some previous days, when time was going at its old regular gait. Why should we not call the New Year a mile-stone, and count the number on the marble post to see how far we have come? It may help us to review a little, and ascertain whether our wisdom has grown with our experience and opportunities. We may be a little more observant of the responsibility that life brings, and feel a little more keenly the loss of golden hours we have spent.

This may be all seriously done, and yet the New Year may be cheerfully greeted, as it ought to be, because it has actually come to us with a new face and a new impulse of life. If we can sing the cheerful Christmas songs, and rejoice with the angels and the little children over the Babe of Bethlehem, so can we greet the New Year hopefully, and sing with the old poet:

"Come, let us anew
Our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear."
—Selected.

Lesson Helps for 1893.

ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES. A guide to the study of the Sunday-school lessons for 1893, including original and selected expositions, plans of instruction, illustrative anecdotes, practical applications, archaeological notes, library references, maps, pictures, diagrams. By JESSE L. HURLBUT, D.D., and ROBERT R. DOHERTY, Ph.D. New York: Hunt & Eaton. Cincinnati: Cranston & Curtis. Toronto: William Briggs. Octavo, pp. 387. Price \$1.25.

For several years we have made practical use of the admirable lesson notes prepared by Drs. Hurlbut and Doherty. We find none better. Everything that is helpful for the comprehension of the lesson is sedulously furnished. Among these are a large number of excellent colored maps, charts, plans, and diagrams, together with a still larger number of admirable engravings, many of them full-page pictures of sacred sites and scenes, which, at a glance, give more information than pages of description.

Some idea of the amount of labor and research expended in the preparation of these volumes, may be given in the fact that they include lessons in twenty-one different books in the Bible, and embrace almost every department of Biblical literature. It is only by division of labor that this task can be accomplished. Dr. Hurlbut, who has contributed to almost every International lesson in the last twenty years, has prepared the outlines and hints for teachers. That accomplished scholar, Dr. Doherty, has written the expositions and practical thoughts, and selected the illustrations from over five hundred authors. How light from every possible source is focused upon the sacred page! With this comprehensive commentary, for such it is, to supplement his Bible study, and the BANNER notes, the Sunday-school teacher will be amply furnished for his work. The temperance notes and illustrations strike us as especially vivid and strong.

The creation of such literature as this is one of the most striking results of the International lesson system. Of course, this is a system in which 10,000,000 scholars and

teachers on this continent take part, and cannot escape criticism. No one asserts that it has no defects. This it is the easiest thing in the world to point out, but it is not so easy to improve. Dr. Hurlbut justly remarks: "To find suitable passages for all the departments of all schools of all the world to study all the time, is a task that would tax the ablest and most ingenious minds. Yet, this is the task which has been set before the Lesson Committee which has chosen the lessons for this, the twenty-first successive year, and it must be admitted that, upon the whole, it has been well accomplished. While no person might approve all the selections made, yet it is doubtful whether any Bible scholar, or any committee, could have given a better series of lessons, especially when the limitations and necessities of the plan are considered.

"The International lesson system has concentrated the studies of many millions upon the Bible; has given to the most remote teachers the researches of the ablest Bible scholars; has awakened an interest in the Bible, and particularly in the Old Testament, greater, deeper, and more widespread than the world has ever before seen; it has promoted a vast circulation of Bibles, of helps for Bible study, and of works upon the Bible; has brought to the general Church the investigation of questions concerning the Bible which, whatever the immediate effect, is destined only to make the foundations of the faith more impregnable, and to cause the bulwarks and towers of holy writ to stand more strongly before the world. The Sunday-school—and not only the Sunday-school, but also the Church—has therefore abundant reason to be grateful for the Lesson System of the last twenty years. The Sunday-schools will be slow to turn aside from the plan which has wrought so well for another and a different system of lessons, however sharp may be the criticisms upon the old, and however strong the recommendations of the new."

THERE was an old well in Virginia of whose waters many soldiers drank with avidity during the war. It was so popular that at night it would be dry. All the little springs, though, would promptly go to work, each pouring a little stream into the well, and no thirsty soldier found an empty well in the morning. Now, it would gratify this ease-loving nature if one's stock of knowledge would supply itself, if a teacher going into a class could be sure of a foundation of knowledge only needing a vent at once to bubble forth. But as yet there have been no such self-acting knowledge springs. We are not wells; we are reservoirs, and they must be filled up. There must be a pumping of information into the reservoir to-day and tomorrow and steadily through the week, if there is to be an easy, animated sparkling delivery on Sunday.

Opening and Closing Services

FIRST QUARTER.

OPENING SERVICE.

- I. Silence.
- II. The Doxology.
- III. The Lord's Prayer.
- IV. Responsive Sentences. [Psalm 119. 9-16.]
Supt. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way.
School. By taking heed thereto according to thy word.
Supt. With my whole heart have I sought thee.
School. O let me not wander from thy commandments.
Supt. Thy word have I hid in mine heart.
School. That I might not sin against thee.
Supt. Blessed art thou, O Lord.
School. Teach me thy statutes.
Supt. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.
School. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.
Supt. I will meditate in thy precepts.
School. And have respect unto thy ways.
Supt. I will delight myself in thy statutes.
School. I will not forget thy word.
- V. Singing.
- VI. Prayer.
- VII. Responsive Reading of a Scripture Lesson.

LESSON SERVICE.

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

CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. Singing.
- II. Responsive Sentences.
Supt. Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.
School. Unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.
- III. Dismissal.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER.

About B. C. 538.] **LESSON I. RETURNING FROM THE CAPTIVITY.** [Jan. 1.]
GOLDEN TEXT. The Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee. Deut. 30. 3.

Authorized Version.

Ezra 1. 1-11. [*Commit to memory verses 5, 6.*]

1 Now in the first year of Cy'rus king of Per'si-a, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jer-e-mi'ah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cy'rus king of Per'si-a, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

2 Thus saith Cy'rus king of Per'si-a, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Je-ru'sa-lem, which is in Ju'dah.

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

4. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Je-ru'sa-lem.

5 Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Ju'dah and Ben'ja-min, and the priests, and the Le'vites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Je-ru'sa-lem.

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

7 Also Cy'rus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Neb-u-chad-nez'zar had brought forth out of Je-ru'sa-lem, and had put them in the house of his gods;

8 Even those did Cy'rus king of Per'si-a bring forth by the hand of Mith're-dath the treasurer, and number them unto Shesh-baz'zar, the prince of Ju'dah.

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

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

11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Shesh-baz'zar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Bab'y-lon unto Je-ru'sa-lem.

Revised Version.

- 1 Now in the first year of Cy'rus king of Per'si-a, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jer-e-mi'ah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cy'rus king of Per'si-a, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cy'rus king of Per'si-a, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Je-ru'sa-lem, which is in Ju'dah. Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Je-ru'sa-lem, which is in Ju'dah, and build the house of the Lord, the God of Is'ra-el, (he is God,) which is in Je-ru'sa-lem. And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God which is in Je-ru'sa-lem. Then rose up the heads of fathers' houses of Ju'dah and Ben'ja-min, and the priests, and the Le'vites, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Je-ru'sa-lem. And all they that were round about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered.
- 7 Also Cy'rus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Neb-u-chad-nez'zar had brought forth out of Je-ru'sa-lem, and had put them in the house of the gods; even those did Cy'rus king of Per'si-a bring forth by the hand of Mith're-dath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Shesh-baz'zar, the prince of Ju'dah. And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives; 10 thirty bowls of gold, silver bowls of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels 11 a thousand. All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Shesh-baz'zar bring up, when they of the captivity were brought up from Bab'y-lon unto Je-ru'sa-lem.

TIME.—Either B. C. 538 or 536; authorities differ. The first year of Cyrus alone. Captivity ended. **PLACES.**—1. Persia; probably Babylon, possibly Susa. 2. The desert between the Eu-

phrates and the Holy Land. 3. "The house of Nebuchadnezzar's gods" was the temple of Mero-dach, or Bel, in Babylon. 4. "The house of the Lord of Israel" was Solomon's temple, which had

been long a heap of stones. **RULERS.**—1. Cyrus, King of Persia. 2. Sheshbazzar, the hereditary Prince of Judah, and by appointment of the Persian king "Tirshatha," or Pasha, of Jerusalem. He was probably at this time a very young man. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The existence of God. (Verses 2, 3.)

HOME READINGS.

- M.** Returning from captivity. Ezra 1.
Tv. Prophecy of Jeremiah. Jer. 19, 8-14.
W. Cyrus named. Isa. 44, 21-28.
Tk. Daniel's prayer in captivity. Dan. 9, 16-25.
F. The joyful return. Isa. 51, 1-11.
S. The Lord hath done it. Psalm 126.
S. Gospel liberty. Luke 4, 14-21.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 147, New Canadian Hymnal.
 God kindly keepeth those he loves.
 No. 152, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Once I wandered in the maze of error.
 No. 153, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Thou Shepherd of Israel, and mine.

DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 138, 140, 144.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.**1. The King's Proclamation, v. 1-4.**

Who was King of Persia?
 What prophet had foretold the call of Cyrus to a work for God?

Whose downfall had Jeremiah prophesied? (Jer. 25, 12.)

Whose deliverance had he promised? (Jer. 29, 4, 10.)

How did the Lord bring about the fulfillment?

Who was there in the court of Cyrus that was very familiar with these prophecies?

What charge had Cyrus received?

How general a permission did Cyrus give to Israel?

What were those to do who went?

What were those to do who remained?

How many answered this call, and went back to Jerusalem? (Ezra 2, 64.)

What beautiful story—which makes a book of the Bible—would never have been told if everyone had gone back to Jerusalem?

2. The Captives' Response, v. 5-11.

Who were the "chief of the fathers"?

Whence came the desire to return to Jerusalem?

What was the central purpose of their return? (Verse 5.)

Was Cyrus's proclamation needed by those that remained behind?

What example did Cyrus set?

Who was Sheshbazzar, or Zerubbabel?

For what part of the service were the "chargers," "basins," and "knives" used?

Toward what point of the compass did the captives journey on their return?

How far was Jerusalem from Babylon?

What was the character of the country through which the pilgrims passed?

Practical Teachings.

- Where in this lesson do we learn—
1. That God moves men's hearts to do his will?
 2. That God remembers his people in their trouble?
 3. That the prosperity of God's house is a joy to his people?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Find the names of two high priests from whom Ezra the scribe was descended?
2. Find Sheshbazzar's relationship to King Zedekiah.
3. Find the name of the chief priest who returned with these men.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**1. The King's Proclamation, v. 1-4.**

What king is here referred to?

Who induced the king to make a proclamation?

In what year of his reign did this occur?

Who had given to Cyrus his kingdom?

What charge had the Lord given him?

To what people was the proclamation addressed?

What did the king bid these people to do?

What command was given about those who remained?

Whose prophecy was thus fulfilled? (See Jer. 29, 10-14.)

What is the promise of the GOLDEN TEXT?

2. The Captives' Response, v. 5-11.

What three classes were the first to respond?

Who joined these leaders?

How did the people of the land help them?

What offering did King Cyrus make?

Where had these vessels been kept?

How long had they been in Babylon? (2 Chron. 35, 21.)

Into whose charge were the vessels given?

How many vessels of gold are named?

How many of silver?

What was the number of all kinds?

To what city were these vessels taken?

Teachings of the Lesson.

- Where in this lesson are we taught—
1. That God is to be honored above all earthly rulers?
 2. That the kings of the earth should serve him?
 3. That all people should serve him?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find the name of the king who furnished the temple of God with golden vessels.

The king who replenished the temple of God with brazen vessels.

The king who bought peace by giving the vessels of the temple to his nation's enemy.

The king in whose reign the vessels here mentioned were taken from Jerusalem to Babylon.

The king who sacrilegiously used these vessels at a banquet.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was Cyrus? **The King of Persia.**

Who were captives in Babylon? **The Jews.**

How long had they been there? **Seventy years.**

What had God promised by Jeremiah? **Their return to Jerusalem.**

Who taught Cyrus to be kind to the Jews? **The Lord.**

What did Cyrus send through all his kingdom?

A proclamation.

What did he tell the Jews in this way? **That they might go back to Jerusalem.**

What did he say the Lord had told him to build? **A house for the Lord.**

Where? **In Jerusalem.**

Who put it into the heart of Cyrus to do this?

The Lord.

Were the captives glad to go? **Yes, glad and thankful.**

What did their neighbors give them? **Much gold and silver.**

What for? **To help build the Lord's house.**

What did the king give them? **The vessels of the Lord's house.**

Who had carried these away? **Nebuchadnezzar.**

How many were there? **Five thousand four hundred.**

Words with Little People.

HAPPY THOUGHTS.

God thinks about me when I am in trouble.

He makes others think about me too.

He sends help to me just in the right time and way.

A Lesson Verse.

With God all things are possible.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY, PH.D.

General Statement.

The Book of Ezra, from which our lesson is taken, is a continuation of the "Chronicles," the introductory sentences of the one book being a repetition of the closing words of the other. Its author, Ezra, was a priest of noble descent. He was also a "scribe," that is, one of a class of men who, originally official registrars or public clerks, afterward became royal secretaries, chroniclers, or amanuenses to the prophets, and, gradually, recognized exponents of the prophetic writings. By his editing of the sacred Scriptures and by his strong, simple, devout character Ezra made a deeper impression on the Jewish people than any other man who lived after Moses. Our lesson tells of the earliest "return" of captive Jews to their native land. It took place under the authority of King Cyrus, about eight years before that other "return" in which Ezra himself was engaged. The period of captivity for Judah was seventy years from the time when, in the reign of Jehoiakin, the land fell under the Chaldean yoke and its nobles were taken to Babylon, and fifty years from the destruction of the temple and the city by Nebuchadnezzar. Severe as were the trials of the exiles, the captivity proved to be a greater benefit than any other event of Jewish history. The Jews went into exile weak and feeble, prone to wander from God and fall into idolatry. They returned thoroughly changed, with such intense devotion to their religion and their national traits that all the power of the world during the centuries since has not caused them to waver.

Verse 1. In the first year. Not the first year of Cyrus's reign over the Persians, but the first year of his reign at Babylon. **Cyrus king of Persia.** He was born King of Elam, which had sunk from its ancient glory into a Persian province. Cyrus revolted, reversed the relations of the nations, and added the kingdom of Persia to his empire between 549 and 546 B. C. He then conquered all the lands from India to the Mediterranean, including Asia Minor, and founded the most extensive empire of the ancient world. It was his mission to consolidate the kingdoms of the East, and to break up the corrupt Asiatic forms

of idolatry, and although he was not, as was long supposed, himself a worshiper of the true God, like the Persians whom he governed, he incidentally did much to open the path for the true faith. He was doubtless powerfully affected by the ancient prophecies concerning him, and, being a marvelously astute statesman and general, he could readily see the value of Judah to him as a base of military operations against Egypt. **The word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah.** Though unconscious of his destiny, Cyrus was the hammer of God, breaking the chains of his people and the idols of the Gentile world. The prophecy

of the "seventy years of captivity" was given in a letter (Jer. 29) to the captives in Babylon before the final destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

The Lord stirred up. Josephus says that the aged Daniel was God's agent in "stirring up" the young conqueror to this act of mercy and justice.

(1) *How noble is the work of leading the thoughts of men to God's word!* **Made a proclamation.** This proclamation of Cyrus has left results in history larger than all his conquests. (2) *Deeds for self die, but those for God abide forever.*

2. The Lord God of heaven. This is the Jewish translation of the proclamation. **Given me all the kingdoms of the earth.** This was scarcely an exaggeration. **He hath charged me.** See Isa. 44, 28. (3) *Let us not sink below the intelligence of this heathen by forgetting him who gives us all things.* **To build him a house.** That is, to rebuild the temple which had been destroyed fifty years before. (4) *What dwelling place for God can we build to-day?*

3. The proclamation was addressed to the descendants of all the Hebrew captives, who were already settled far and wide throughout the Persian Empire. **Let him go up to Jerusalem.** As the carrying away of the Hebrews had taken place at intervals of from seventy to fifty years before, there were but few of the original exiles remaining; and it is somewhat remarkable that so many of their descendants, nearly fifty thousand in all, should be willing to go to a country which they had never seen. **Build the house.** This was their great errand, not to build their own houses, but the house of God. (5) *Let us have the noble purpose to share in some work for God which shall endure when we have passed away.* **He is the God.** We can understand this great truth far more clearly than could Cyrus. (6) *Let us see that we live out the knowledge which we possess.*

4. Whosoever remaineth in any place. Not whoever declines to return, but whoever remains alive. In the wholesale butcheries of that age of conscienceless conquests entire communities were destroyed; and that so many of the Jews "remained" was a wonder. **The men of his place.** The Hebrews who preferred to continue in Assyria and Babylon. They were ten times the number of those who returned. **Help him.** Those who cannot work for God's house should give all the more toward it, but the working is as useful as the giving. **Besides the freewill offering.** Probably Cyrus's gift from the royal treasury.

5. The chief of the fathers. The Hebrews not only emphasized their tribal distinctions, but also preserved the ancient division of the nation into families. There was a much deeper distinction between the tribes of Issachar and Dan, for instance, than ever existed between the States of New York and New Jersey. This latter is simply

a division of territory and of government, but their tribal relations were hereditary. The "clans," or "families," into which these tribes were subdivided had hereditary chieftains, who were the "chief of the fathers." **Judah and Benjamin.** "It was natural," says Dr. Terry, "that these two tribes, the last in exile, in whose minds the memory of Jerusalem and the fatherland was freshest, were the first to respond." But that there were many from the other tribes, also, who returned appears from 1 Chron. 3, 3, and other passages. **The priests and Levites.** There were twenty-four priestly "courses," of which four joined in the return. The entire number of priests who returned was four thousand, very large in proportion to the entire procession. The number of Levites seems to have been less than four hundred. **All them whose spirit God had raised.** Common people. The civil authorities, "chief of the fathers," and the ministers of God, "priests and Levites," would have been of little service to the projected restoration of the temple and nation without the common people.

6. They that were about. Neighbors. **Strengthened their hands.** Helped them. **Vessels of silver, with gold.** Money was doubtless coined as early as this, but most of the wealth of the people was in uncoined treasures. **All that was willingly offered.** That is, direct contributions to the temple, made, doubtless, by reverential Gentiles as well as by Jews.

7, 8. Vessels of the house of the Lord. These vessels had been captured from Zedekiah by Nebuchadnezzar, and from Nebuchadnezzar's successor by Cyrus. **Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth.** In their worst crimes the ancients were religious. When one province captured another it assumed that the struggle was between the gods of the two nations, and the captors triumphantly stole the sacred vessels of the vanquished. **The house of his gods.** Better, "his god," whom the Greeks called Bel. **Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.** The same as Zerubbabel. He was the grandson of the beloved and lamented Jehoiakim, and the last direct heir of the house of David and Josiah. He was probably an adopted son, but was himself of near royal blood, and was the acknowledged head of the alien Hebrew community. He was probably at this time a very young man. Cyrus did a wise thing in acknowledging him as the head of the Israelites and appointing him governor of this new province which was about to be made.

9, 10, 11. This is the number. It has been observed that Ezra, more than any other sacred writer, tends to exactness in details. **Chargers.** Bowls or basins. **Knives.** Used to prepare victims for the sacrifice. **Basins.** Goblets with covers. **Of a second sort.** Of an inferior quality.

CRITICAL NOTES.

BY PROFESSOR MILTON S. TERRY, D.D.

In entering upon the study of the Book of Ezra the critical student may well notice the composite character of the work before him. At a time when so much is said about "Higher Criticism," it is well to know precisely what such criticism may legitimately claim. Here we find a short book of ten chapters. In the first chapter is a proclamation of Cyrus and a list of sacred vessels; in the second is a list of exiles who returned from Babylon. Chapters four to seven embody a number of documents and proclamations written in a different dialect from that of the rest of the book. The eighth chapter and also the tenth contain a list of distinguished names; and portions of the seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters, in which the writer speaks of himself in the first person, appear to be part of a diary of Ezra himself. It is obvious, therefore, that the Book of Ezra is a compilation, and the question of its date and authorship may be an open one without in the least affecting the integrity and historical accuracy of the book itself. It is the province of criticism to ask, Who was the compiler? Some say, Ezra himself, who used portions of his own personal diary, and added what other matter he saw fit from the documents which were accessible to him at the time. Others, however, argue that Ezra's diary, which is incorporated only in a fragmentary way in chaps. 7-9, is, like the other documents, merely one source from which the author of the book drew his material. It is clear that more than one hypothesis of the authorship is possible, and different opinions on that point may be held without in the least detracting from the value of the work. The character of the contents shows that we have a trustworthy record of most important facts in the history of the chosen people. Without the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah we should be lamentably deficient in the means of studying one of the most significant epochs in the history of Hebrew life and religious training.

Verse 1. First year. The Hebrew writers do not always follow the chronology of other nations, but often reckon from dates which had for Israel some peculiar significance. The first year of Cyrus's rule in Persia was previous to that of his dominion over Babylon, which he subsequently conquered. But a Jewish writer, having his own people's interests in view, was not concerned to record details unimportant for himself. It appears from Dan. 5:31; 9:1; 11:1; 6:28, that upon the conquest of Babylon a certain Darius, the Mede, became ruler of that city and province, and continued there some time before Cyrus, the Persian, began to reign as the lord of all western Asia. Our author accordingly reckoned Cyrus's first year as

that when he became actual ruler of Babylon. **That . . . might be fulfilled.** The form of expression points to a divine purpose running all through history. God Almighty foresees, forearranges, and brings to pass. **Stirred up the spirit of Cyrus.** Brought a divine influence over his mind that prompted the action described. Comp. Isa. 44:28. **Made a proclamation.** Literally, "caused a voice to pass in all his kingdom." The proclamation seems to have been announced orally by a public herald, as well as put in the form of a written document. It was intended that others besides the Jews should know its purport.

2. Thus saith Cyrus. The remarkable religious tone of this proclamation accords with that of the Persian kings as found on the monuments. In the great Behistun inscription King Darius says: "By the grace of Ormazd I am king. Ormazd has granted me the empire. Ormazd brought help to me so that I gained this empire. By the grace of Ormazd I hold this empire." It is probable that the language of Cyrus's proclamation is here modified and cast into more Hebraic style by the writer of the Book of Ezra. But Schrader maintains that, "though the words placed in the mouth of the Persian king are spoken from a Jewish point of view, yet they may be justified historically from the fact that they completely accord with the policy of toleration that characterized the reign of the founder of the Persian monarchy. We learn from the recently discovered annals of Nabonahid that Cyrus left the worship of the Babylonian deities inviolate; indeed, he caused the divinities whom the last Babylonian king had removed from their former shrines to be restored to their places." *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, vol. ii, page 60.

4. In any place where he sojourneth. Or, "from all the places where he has been wont to sojourn;" that is, where he has had his temporary dwelling. **Help him.** Literally, "lift him up;" a figure which implies the assistance of one who has fallen down, and needs help to get up again.

5. Whose spirit God had raised. The word translated "raised" here is identical with that translated "stirred up" in verse one, and has the same significance here as there.

6. Strengthened their hands. An idiomatic phrase, naturally suggested by the help one may give another by taking hold of his hand to give him support, or render him any assistance.

8. Mithredath . . . Sheshbazzar. These names, like those given to Daniel and his three companions (Dan. 1:7), were the ones current among the Babylonians, and are perhaps of Per-

sian origin. According to Josephus, Joseph and Moses had Egyptian names. **Sheshbazzar** was evidently the same person as Zerubbabel, as appears from comparing the contents of chap. 3 with the statement of chap. 5. 16.

9. Chargers. The exact meaning of the word so rendered here is quite uncertain. The Septuagint version translates it by a word which means "wine coolers." The Hebrew word sounds somewhat like the Greek *Kartallos*, which means a basket with a pointed bottom. It is noticeable that the names of these vessels, so far as given, are quite different from those mentioned in 1 Kings 7. 45-50, and perhaps it was the writer's purpose to mention only a few of the more exceptional ones, for the sum of five thousand four hundred, which he gives in verse 11, is much in excess of the sum of the numbers given in verses 9 and 10. The corresponding passage in the apocryphal Book of Esdras affords no real help to solve the discrepancy. The probability is that here, as elsewhere in the record of numbers, the original text has suffered some corruption.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. *What motives—personal, religious, or political—may have influenced Cyrus in permitting the return of the exiled Jews?*

Many motives, doubtless, were back of the royal decree which emancipated the exiles. Better to have a friendly nation contiguous to Egypt than a people politically and religiously in sympathy with the Babylonian power. Daniel the prophet, whom the enmity of the Persian satraps failed to destroy, in all probability profoundly influenced the king's mind by showing to him the prophecy of Isa. 44. 28; 45. 1-4, in which, some two hundred years before he was born, his name and deeds are mentioned. The theism of the Persians, as shown by the cuneiform inscriptions of Behistun, was not without its influence in strengthening the conviction which would arise from a reading of the astounding prophecy.—*R. J. Cooke, D.D., Grant*

Question 2. *Was Cyrus conscious that he was acting under a divine impulse?*

In a certain sense he was. Oriental like, he was superstitious and reverent. Through Daniel he learned he was in Jewish prophecy. As the result, his superstition and political sagacity moved him to obey this unknown God, inasmuch as the plan only meant more glory for him. When he fulfilled that strange prophecy he was not conscious that he was sowing the seed of a universal faith in the only soil in which it could grow. Had the conscious impulse which moved him been more than superstition or gain, his character would have corresponded. But moral virtue is nowhere ascribed to him. God used his sword, rather than

his character.—*James M. Thoburn, Jr., D.D.*

Question 3. *Wherein were the Jews after the restoration different from their ancestors before the captivity?*

They became clear of idolatry, and their bent thereto was forever cured. They learned to be devout and prayerful without visible ordinances and sacrifices. Chiefly, they came to prize the sacred word, and the synagogue was established for its reading. Thus the captivity made the Jews non-idolatrous, spiritual, and scriptural. It also gave them broader views of mankind.
Hyde, D.D.

Question 4. *How is the change in Jewish character after the return from captivity to be accounted for?*

1. From Neh. 8. 8, it may be inferred that their vernacular language had become corrupted and mixed with the Babylonian and Chaldean languages, and this fact brought about a deterioration of mind and character. 2. The closeness of the intercourse between the captive Jews and their captors exerted, no doubt, a strong influence upon the former in gradually estranging them from their religion. 3. The Jews, being very impressionable, were greatly influenced by the elaborate institutions and religion of their powerful captors in their favor and against their own ancestral religion.—*Rev. M. J. Cramer, D.D., Associate Editor of German Theological Quarterly Review.*

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

Elements in Building God's House.

I. THE DIVINE PURPOSE.

The Lord stirred up. v. 1.

"Comfort ye my people." Isa. 40. 1, 2.

"I am with thee." Isa. 43. 5.

II. THE PROPHETIC WORD.

The mouth of Jeremiah. v. 1.

"When seventy years." Jer. 25. 12.

"I will visit you." Jer. 29. 10.

III. THE ROYAL COMMAND.

Thus saith Cyrus. v. 2, 3, 4.

"He is my Shepherd." Isa. 44. 28.

"Kings shall minister." Isa. 60. 10.

IV. THE EARNEST LEADERS.

Then rose up the chief. v. 5.

"I have planted." 1 Cor. 3. 6.

"Know them which labor." 1 Thess. 5. 12, 18.

V. THE WILLING PEOPLE.

All whose spirit God . . . raised. v. 5.

"With thy might." Eccles. 9. 10.

"Laborers . . . with God." 1 Cor. 3. 9.

VI. THE LIBERAL GIFTS.

All . . . willingly offered. v. 6-11.

"One another's burdens." Gal. 6. 2.

"A cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9. 7.

Thoughts for Young People.

The Work of God.

1. *The work of God requires first of all that somebody's spirit be stirred up.* (Verse 1.) Every revival begins in some one heart; every plan for the upbuilding of the kingdom comes from some one who has been quickened in his spiritual nature.

2. *The work of God requires self-denial.* (Verses 2-4.) Some must give, and some must work; and all must make sacrifices for God's cause. You may not be able to work, then give. You may not be able to give, then work; and show your interest in the cause.

3. *The work of God requires effort quite as much as faith.* Enthusiasm and liberal gifts would not have availed to erect the temple; some one had to go.

4. *The work of God requires common people as well as ministers and distinguished laymen.* Joshua and Sheshbazzar and their associates could not have done the work without the assistance of the unnamed members of the rank and file.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

Who is that walking so mournfully in the streets of Babylon? It is some unhappy stranger. By the look of his face, by some peculiarity of dress, you can tell that he is a stranger in a strange land. Besides, when others bow to the idols of Babylon he turns away. Even now he is stepping aside from the circle of idolaters. He must worship, but he seeks the seclusion of his home. He bows in some upper room, but he always turns to the south. He often moans when he prays. He may glance out of some window open toward the south, but it is to renew his supplication, and he repeats his moans. But why toward the south does he kneel? and why in tears? If you were to travel whither he looks, you would come to a heap of ruins in Judea. You would see broken, charred gates, prostrate walls, humbled towers. You would find a house of God down in the dust, altars overthrown, courts deserted, save as the lean, hungry dogs prowl there by day and the jackal steals along in the white moonlight. O Zerubbabel, head of Judah, prince among the people of God, what wonder that you sigh as you pray toward Jerusalem, that you walk Babylon's streets an unhappy exile, that you hang your harp on Babylon's willows and refuse to sing the Lord's song in a strange land! Unhappy, tearful exile, with bowed head and sorrowing face!

But one day there comes from Babylon's throne an important message for Jerusalem's exiles. The soul of Cyrus is stirred within him. It is the first year of his reign. It is the New Year of his coronation. He may have gone to look at his treas-

ures, and, seeing the sacred vessels that came from the ruined, forsaken temple at Jerusalem, his soul may have been stirred within him as the sea by a mighty wind. He may have caught, in some old scroll of Hebrew prophecy he was examining, that "Cyrus" is the name of the Lord's instrument for Zion's good; yes, "Cyrus," starting up out of the fading scroll and staring at him. And he may have seen Zerubbabel leader of his people, but walking Babylon's beautiful gardens disconsolate as any slave. And Cyrus, stirred within his soul, listens and hears the word of the Lord, to send, build him a house at Jerusalem!

And now the proclamation goes out from Babylon's king. Take it, O couriers! Ride on fleet horses, faster, faster! Take it to ruler and people! Take it, above all, to God's people in exile! Sound it as through trumpets! The New Year has come, Jerusalem's temple is to be rebuilt! Faster, faster, harder ride, O heralds, for the New Year has come! And now who will go up to Jerusalem? And O, what an uprising of the humbled people of God! Here they come, harps in their hands now, singing pilgrims, priest and Levite, master and servant—everybody! O, what a train, loaded, too, with gifts from the people of Cyrus! And, Cyrus, bow your head, turn your ear to the Spirit's breathing! Those vessels of the house of the Lord, give those. Yes, he will give. He throws back the doors of his treasure house. And who comes forward to receive them? What happy prince, his head erect, his eyes flashing, a smile irradiating his face? Have you seen him before? Never. Sheshbazzar, do the Persians call him! Why, the Jews salute him as their Zerubbabel. Ah, it is Judah's now happy, exultant prince, to whom Mithredath, the treasurer, "numbers" the thousands of vessels. And soon these are on the way to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem.

O happy days! The old year has gone. Let it pass—its fears, its tears, its sighs. Ring, O happy harps! Echo, rejoicing trumpets! The glad New Year of Zion has come—year of joy and jubilee!

By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

The captivity cleansed the nation of idolatry, took away hopes of an earthly kingdom, and raised spiritual aspirations. "He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." Too many think that God is cutting down the tree when he is but lopping off its luxuriant branches. He is not nipping the flowers, but plucking up the weeds; he is not laying your land fallow, but plowing the field; he is not putting out the light, but snuffing the candle. Providence has a beautiful face under a bleak mask. The sheep may be dipped in water to wash it when there is no design in the good shepherd to drown it.—William Secker.

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Verses 1. "Word of the Lord." The empire of Cæsar is gone; the legions of Rome are moldering in the dust; the avalanches that Napoleon hurled upon Europe have melted away; the pride of the Pharaohs is fallen; the pyramids they raised to be their tombs are sinking every day in the desert sands; Tyre is a rock for bleaching fishermen's nets; Sidon has scarcely left a rock behind; but the word of God still survives. All things that threatened to extinguish it have only aided it; and it proves every day how transient is the noblest monument that man can build, how enduring is the least word that God has spoken. Tradition has dug for it a grave; intolerance has lighted for it many a fagot; many a Judas has betrayed it with a kiss; many a Peter has denied it with an oath; many a Demas has forsaken it; but the word of God still endures.—*John Cummings, D. D.*

"The Lord God hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem." The Bible has sometimes been compared to a telescope. If we look through it, we see things otherwise invisible. Simply to look at it will not secure the result. We must look through it, and the way to do this is to read it and believe what it says.

Verses 6 and 7. In the work of God's kingdom we must either go or send. Says missionary Wilder, "Our cry is the highwayman's: 'Your money or your life!'"

There is a lady in Scotland, a teacher in one of the public schools, who receives a salary of \$1,000 a year, and lives on \$500, and with the other \$500 supports a missionary substitute in China. She would like to go in person, but she cannot; so she sends a substitute.

There are three sisters in Edinburgh who said, "All of us should not stay at home. One of us can go to the foreign field, and the two who stay at home will support her." So one went as a missionary to Africa, and the two at home supported her. I think that in God's sight the three are missionaries.

Have you heard of Sarah Hosmer of Lowell? She heard that a young man might be educated in the Nestorian Mission Seminary in Persia for fifty dollars. Working in a factory she saved this amount and sent it to Persia, and a Christian young man was educated and went out as a preacher of Christ to his own people. She thought she would like to do it again. She did it five times, and five young men whom she educated went out to preach Christ in Nestoria. When more than sixty years of age she desired to send out one more preacher, and, living in an attic, she took in sewing until she had accomplished her purpose and sent out the sixth preacher. I think she was a missionary.—*Margaret W. Leitch, missionary from Ceylon.*

The Teachers' Meeting.

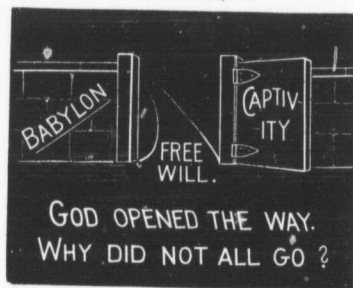
It is best to treat this lesson as a simple and entertaining narrative, and draw forth its evident moral and spiritual lessons. But first glance at the captivity: (1) Its causes—moral, political; (2) Its character—the downfall of Judah, the condition of the captives in Babylon, the psalms of captivity; (3) Its prophecies—of the overthrow, of the duration of captivity, of restoration; (4) Its effects on the moral and national sense of the Jews.... Next consider the persons of the lesson: (1) Cyrus; (2) Jeremiah; (3) Sheshbazzar; (4) "Chief of the fathers," priests, Levites.... Third: The king's proclamation and the return of the people.... Lessons to be drawn: I. The work of God. See "Thoughts for Young People".... II. Show how this lesson teaches the inevitable fulfillment of God's word.... III. Take the return of the Jews as a type of the return of our souls to the promised land of rich religious experience.

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FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Poetical, 489, 1617. Ver. 3: Prose, 6034. Ver. 4: Prose, 311, 316, 318. Ver. 6: Prose, 2457-2464, 3546-3548; Poetical, 1466-1472; Prose, 8964-8974.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



REVIEW.—On the board is represented an open gate and a roadway leading far away. What is written on the walls? Babylon. What is written on the roadway? Free will. What is the topic of to-day's lesson? Returning from the captivity. Where were the Jews held captive? In Babylon. Who opened the way to freedom? God. Who was his instrument? Cyrus, King of Persia. To what place were they permitted to return? Jerusalem. Did all go? Why not? The one who reviews the lesson may now talk briefly on the reasons why many did not avail themselves of the privilege of returning to their native land, and close by making an application of the lesson to

God's invitation for all men to leave the captivity of sin and be free. He does not compel men to do so; the way is the roadway of free will. Why do not all go? Have you started?

Primary and Intermediate.

BY MARTHA VAN METER.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God Keeps His Promises.*

The new year opens with a song of gladness. Captives set free, hearts rejoicing, God's promises coming true!

Let the joy bells ring on through all the year. God is true! He has promised to water the seed we sow, and he will do it. We may go to our work many times in pain and weariness; we may see so little fruit of our labors that we may often be tempted to question if the results will justify the outlay.

Send the dark thought back whence it came! God is true, and our labor of love he will reward for his own love's sake!

The Captivity. [Make on the board a little outline of the Jews' country, with a square marked "Jerusalem." Make another outline of Persia, with "Babylon" in the midst. Connect Jerusalem and Babylon with a chain, and tell the story of the carrying away of the Jews into captivity. Make "Sin" in very large letters along the route, and impress the thought that the captivity was the outcome of sin—the choosing of self before God. Read a part of Psalm 137 to show the sorrow of the captives.]

Set Free. The King of Persia was named Cyrus. Many, many years before Cyrus was born God talked about him to his prophet. He knew what Cyrus would do. He knows each one of us just as he knew this great king. Before we were born God thought of us. He sent us here to do his will, just as he sent Cyrus. Some people want to know his will, and others do not. Auntie was trying to tell Charley what mamma said about his going skating. But he did not want to hear. He said, "She didn't tell me not to, and I don't want to hear what she said." This was because he wanted to do the thing that pleased Charley! But Cyrus listened when God told him what to do with the Jews who had been slaves seventy long years. He said, "Send my people back to Jerusalem, and let them build a house there in which to worship me." And Cyrus obeyed without asking any questions. This is what we must learn to do—be glad to know what God wants us to do, and then do it right away.

Preparing to Go Home. Not all the Jews in Babylon went back to Jerusalem. But those who could not go sent gold and silver and goods and cattle, besides a freewill offering for the house of God.

A great many Jews were soon ready to go. How glad they were to start for the dear old home! The king gave them the beautiful vessels of gold and silver which Nebuchadnezzar had taken away from the Lord's house.

Do you want to know how the Jews felt when they went back to Jerusalem? [Read five verses of the 126th Psalm.]



The Captivity of Sin. Do you think that some of the captives in Babylon were children? O, yes. And do you know that there are many little captives now in this very place? They have not been carried away to a strange city, to be sure; but they have a hard master, and they are poor, miserable captives. See, I will make a chain, and we will name some of the links that bind them. [On links of the chain print "Temper," "Idleness," "Self-will," etc., etc.] Who is their master? I see you know. Yes, it is Satan, and he is a very hard master. He tries to make us think we are free, and all the time he is drawing his chains tighter and tighter about us.

The One who Sets Free. Cyrus was a great king who set many captives free. But there is a greater King who can set all captives free! You all know his name. It is Jesus. Let us sing about him. [Sing a verse of "All hail the power of Jesus' name."] Do you know any little captives? Will you tell them about Jesus, who can "break every chain?" And if you are bound even by a very little chain, will you let Jesus break it?

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

NO. 1.

Come, ye that love the Lord,
Work for the night is coming.
Give me some work to do,
I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The Church's one foundation.

NO. 2.

A mighty fortress is our God,
Art thou weary, art thou languid?
Whenever trials press my soul,
The Lord is my strength and stay.
Fear not, O troubled soul, nor yield.

The Lesson-Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who restored the Jews to their native land? **Cyrus, King of Persia.**
2. Who stirred up his spirit to do this? **The Lord.**
3. Who gladly returned to build the house of

the Lord! The people of Judah and Benjamin.

4. What did Cyrus give them? **The vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had stolen.**

5. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"The Lord thy God,"** etc.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

1. What do you mean by religion? Our whole duty to God our Creator.
2. How may you divide that duty. Into two parts: What we have to believe; and what we have to do.

B. C. 536.]

LESSON II. REBUILDING THE TEMPLE.

[Jan. 8.

GOLDEN TEXT. They praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. Ezra 3. 11.

Authorized Version.

Ezra 3. 1-13. [Commit to memory verses 10, 11.]

1 And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Is-ra-el were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Je-ru-sa-lem.

2 Then stood up Jesh'u-a the son of Joz'a-dak, and his brethren the priests, and Ze-rub'ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Is-ra-el, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Mo'ses the man of God.

3 And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries; and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord, even burnt offerings morning and evening.

4 They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required;

5 And afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the Lord that were consecrated, and of everyone that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the Lord.

6 From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord. But the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid.

7 They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zi'don, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Leb'a-non to the sea of Jop'pa, according to the grant that they had of Cy'rus king of Per'si-a.

8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Je-ru'sa-lem, in the second month, began Ze-rub'ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, and Jesh'u-a the son of Joz'a-dak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Le'vites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Je-ru'sa-lem; and appointed the Le'vites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the Lord.

9 Then stood Jesh'u-a with his sons and his brethren, Kad'mi-el and his sons, the sons of Ju'dah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Hen'a-dad, with their sons and their brethren the Le'vites.

10 And when the builders laid the foundation

Revised Version.

- 1 And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Is-ra-el were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man
- 2 to Je-ru-sa-lem. Then stood up Jesh'u-a the son of Joz'a-dak, and his brethren the priests, and Ze-rub'ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Is-ra-el, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Mo'ses the man of God.
- 3 And they set the altar upon its base; for fear was upon them because of the people of the countries; and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord, even burnt offerings morning and evening. And they kept the feast of the tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily offerings by number, according to the ordinance, as the duty of every day required;
- 5 and afterward the continual burnt offering, and the offerings of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the Lord that were consecrated, and of everyone that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the Lord. From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord: but the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid. They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zi'don, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Leb'a-non to the sea, unto Jop'pa, according to the grant that they had of Cy'rus king of Per'si-a.
- 8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Je-ru'sa-lem, in the second month, began Ze-rub'ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, and Jesh'u-a the son of Joz'a-dak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Le'vites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Je-ru'sa-lem; and appointed the Le'vites from twenty years old and upward, to have the oversight of the work of the house of the
- 9 Lord. Then stood Jesh'u-a with his sons and his brethren, Kad'mi-el and his sons, the sons of Ju'dah, together, to have the oversight of the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Hen'a-dad, with their sons and their brethren the Le'vites. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set

of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Le'vites the sons of A'saph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of Da'vid king of Is-ra-el.

11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth forever toward Is-ra-el. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

12 But many of the priests and Le'vites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

13 So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

TIME.—Probably October, B. C. 536, and May, 535. **PLACE.**—Jerusalem; a most disorderly town at this time, being half in ruins and half in process of building. **PERSONS.**—Cyrus, King of Persia. 2. Jeshua, the high priest; the Jeshua of verse 9 was an entirely different person, the head of a Levitical family. 3. Zerubbabel, the same as Sheshbazzar of the last lesson, Governor (or Pasha) of Judah. 4. Instead of Judah, in verse 9, should stand Hodevah, or Hodaviah (as in Ezra 2. 40). 5. Sons of Asaph, the choir band of the temple. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The goodness of God. (Verse 11.)

HOME READINGS.

- M.* Rebuilding the temple. Ezra 3. 1-7.
Tu. Rebuilding the temple. Ezra 3. 8-13.
W. Feast of Tabernacles. Lev. 23. 33-44.
Th. Freewill offerings. 2 Cor. 8. 1-9.
F. Enduring mercy. Psalm 118. 1-14.
S. Sorrow turned to joy. Jer. 33. 7-16.
S. Joy of the redeemed. Rev. 7. 9-17.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 27, New Canadian Hymnal.
 The Church's one foundation.
 No. 28, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Behold, a stone in Zion laid.
 No. 26, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us.

DOMINION HYMNAL. Hymns, Nos. 53, 53, 55.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **Unity in God's Worship**, v. 1-6.
 When and where were the people assembled?
 Why? (Lev. 23. 27-41; Deut. 16. 16.)
 What office had Jeshua? (Hag. 1. 1.)

the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Le'vites, the sons of A'saph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the order of Da'vid king of Is-ra-el. And they sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, saying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever toward Is-ra-el. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the priests and Le'vites and heads of fathers' houses, the old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

What was Zerubbabel? (Hag. 2. 21.)
 What altar did they repair? (2 Chron. 4. 1.)
 What sacrifice did they offer thereon?
 What "custom" is referred to? (Num. 29.)
 What offering should we make to God? (Prov. 23. 26.)

When should we make it?
2. Whole-hearted Consecration, v. 7-9.
 To whom did they give money?
 For what purpose?
 How much had the people given? (Ezra 2. 69.)
 How much was this in our money? (Ans.: About \$435,000.)

Was this much or little for them?
 How did they give it? (Ezra 2. 68.)
 Who were specially set apart?
 What were their duties? (Num. 3. 6-8.)
3. Holy Sorrow and Holy Joy, v. 10-13.
 What preparation was made after the foundation was laid?

What song of thanksgiving was sung? (Very probably Psalm 136.)
 Who joined in the thanksgiving?
 What building had many of the old men seen?
 How were they affected? (Hag. 2. 3.)
 Had these singers sung in Babylon? (Psalm 137.)
 How did God comfort these weepers? (Hag. 2. 9.)
 What temple are we to build? (1 Cor. 3. 16.)
 What is its foundation? (Eph. 2. 20-22.)

Practical Teachings.

- Where in this lesson do we learn—
 1. The value of united hearts in God's service?
 2. The effect of willing hearts in God's service?
 3. The cause of joyous hearts in God's service?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Find God's command to build the first temple.

2. Read the account of the erection of the first temple.

3. Find a distinct statement that the first temple was God's dwelling place. (See also Isa. 64, 11; Hag. 2, 3.)

4. Find God's command to build the second temple. Read the account of our Lord's visit to it.

5. Find passages in First Corinthians, Ephesians, and First Peter about the spiritual temple.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Unity in God's Worship, v. 1-6.

In what city did the people gather for sacrifice?

In what month was this gathering?

Who builded the altar?

For what purpose was it built?

In obedience to what law?

Whom did the people fear?

What offerings were made?

What feast did they observe?

How long was this feast kept? (Deut. 16, 13.)

What were the daily offerings? (See Num. 29, 12-34.)

What was the "continual burnt offering?" (See Exod. 29, 38-42.)

How much of the temple was then rebuilt?

To what sacrifice are we called? (Rom. 12, 1.)

2. Whole-hearted Consecration, v. 7-9.

What laborers were paid for service?

What service did the men of Tyre render?

What pay did they receive?

In what year and month was the work begun?

What leaders in the work are named?

To what work were the Levites appointed?

What duties were originally assigned them? (1 Chron. 23, 28-32.)

3. Holy Sorrow and Holy Joy, v. 10-13.

Who were appointed to lead in song?

What instruments did they have?

How was the singing conducted?

What was their song of praise?

How did the people respond?

Why did the people praise God? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

What exception was there to the general joy?

Between what two sounds could the people not discern?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. To make freewill offerings to the Lord?

2. To render hearty service to the Lord?

3. To offer joyful praise to the Lord?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find in Matthew how Zerubbabel was related to Christ.

How long did this second temple last?

Find in First Corinthians what Paul says about Christ as the foundation.

Find in Ephesians what Paul says about the building of a temple.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

How many Jews went back to Jerusalem? **More than forty thousand.**

In what city did they gather? **In Jerusalem.**

What were they in haste to do? **Build the**

Lord's house.

What did they build right away? **An altar.**

What did they offer upon it? **Burnt offerings.**

What did they observe? **The feasts of the**

Lord.

What did these things show? **That they wanted to obey God.**

Who was the high priest? **Joshua.**

Who was the governor? **Zerubbabel.**

What did they both try to do? **Help the people to please God.**

How soon did they begin the temple? **In about a year.**

Who were appointed to direct the work? **The Levites.**

What were all the people called to see? **The foundation laid.**

What kind of a day was this? **A joyful day.**

Who were sad in the midst of their joy? **Some of the old men.**

What was heard at the same time? **Weeping and praising the Lord.**

Words with Little People.

How can little girls and boys help build the Lord's house? By being kind, truthful, loving, obedient, serving and pleasing God.

Lesson Truth.

Ye are God's building.

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

In answer to the proclamation of King Cyrus a company of Jews journeyed from the land of captivity to the desolated homes of their fathers. They began the work of restoring the broken glories of Israel by a formal act of consecration around a new-made altar on the ancient foundation. Once again the sacrificial fires were kindled, and soon the walls of God's house arose from the ashes. Songs of gratitude and sobs of sad memory mingled in one chorus from the little company of returned exiles. As already seen, the captivity had wrought great moral changes in the Israelites. In former times they had neglected their written law to such a degree that for centuries it was lost, but henceforth they were to concentrate all their intellectual energies upon the Scriptures. They had formerly left the house of God in ruin, and built shrines to idols on every hill; but now the temple became the center of their thought,

and to strengthen their devotion the synagogue—an outgrowth of the exile—stood in every village, and was diligently attended by every family. What is still more remarkable, this great change not only affected the section of the Jews who returned to their own land, but also that portion, ten times as great, which remained by choice in foreign lands, as the Jews of the dispersion. But henceforth the history of the colonists of Judah is the history of the chosen people.

Verse 1. The seventh month. The exiles had left Babylon in the spring; their journey must have required several months; and it was late in September before they were able to enter upon the work of restoring the public worship of God. Three great services took place in the seventh month, which corresponded to parts of September and October—on the first day, “the blowing of the trumpets;” on the tenth, the day of atonement; on the fifteenth, the feast of tabernacles. **The children of Israel.** Including not only the descendants of Judah, but of the ten tribes also, for the tribal lines were partly obliterated in the captivity. **Were in the cities.** Were returned to their ancestral homes. **Gathered themselves.** They were in a strange country, desolate and waste, surrounded by jealous enemies, and with no homes as yet built for themselves; yet they began their work with a religious service, and found time for a solemn act of consecration. (1) *God's work must take precedence over man's; prayer should come before labor.* (2) *Business will suffer no loss if religion receive its due attention.* Time spent in prayer is not wasted.

2. Jeshua. The high priest of the Jews. Called elsewhere Joshua. He was the son of the titular high priest during the captivity, who, however, exercised none of the functions of his office, and the grandson of Seraiah, the high priest who was slain after the destruction of Jerusalem (Jer. 52. 24-27). **His brethren the priests.** Hebrew priests were all descendants of Aaron—therefore brethren. **Zerubbabel.** The hereditary prince of Judah, descended from King David, and also the satrap, or governor, with the title of Tirshatha, by appointment of the Persian king. He led the Jews back from captivity, re-established the state, and rebuilt the temple. See last lesson. **Son of Shealtiel.** Or, Salathiel (Luke 3. 27). In 1 Chron. 3. 17-19, Zerubbabel is named as the son of Pedaliah. Most commentators are of the opinion that he was descended from David by the line of Nathan, and adopted as the son and legal successor of Shealtiel on the failure of the royal house to provide an heir. **The altar.** Before there was time to erect the temple the Jews rebuilt the altar on its old foundations, which were regarded as peculiarly sacred. They scraped away the rubbish from the sacred inclosure, and laid bare the original rock, on which—as is generally supposed—now stands the Mosque of Omar. (3) *Let us ever seek the old foundations of doctrine when we build the altars of the Church.* (4) *If we cannot do what we would, let us do what we can in*

God's work. Though we may not build a temple, we may rear an altar.

3. Bases. Foundations. **For fear.** Surrounded by foe, they wisely considered the arm of the Lord a better protection than swords or spears. (5) *That nation is well defended which looks to God for success.* Some commentators suggest the translation of “though” instead of “for.” “Although afraid of the tribes around them, they yet failed not to begin God's worship.” (6) *Fear of man should not make us forget our duty to God.* **People of those countries.** Race prejudice, political jealousy, idolatrous enthusiasm, voluptuousness of morals, and covetousness of the Jews' ancestral domain—all combined to make the surrounding tribes regard the returned Jews with hatred. The Persian Empire had little centralizing power, and the Jews must be ready to fight for their rights. (7) *In every age God's people find themselves alone and surrounded by an opposing world.* **Morning and evening.** The daily sacrifice was renewed after fifty years of intermission.

4. Feast of tabernacles. This began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and lasted seven days, during which the people lived in booths or arbors, to commemorate the life of their ancestors in the wilderness. It was called also the feast of ingathering, because held as a thanksgiving service after the fruits of the field had been gathered.

5. All the set feasts. These had been sadly neglected, even during the reigns of the best kings. But now, taught by sorrow, the Jews begin an era of more faithful service. (8) *How blessed are the lessons learned through the discipline of trial!* **A freewill offering.** Besides the regular feasts and national offerings, there were the individual sacrifices, which were commanded in the law, though not enforced by compulsion. Men were called upon to offer their burnt offerings, but were not taxed to maintain them. (9) *So God now appeals, reasons with, commands men, but seeks a voluntary and not a compulsory service.*

7. They gave money. From the treasury of the king, from the voluntary offerings of the nobles, and from the contributions of those who, while remaining in the land of their adoption, had given liberally to assist the exiles in their return. (10) *God's work has necessary expenses which his people should meet cheerfully.* See an interesting note in Freeman's Handbook of Bible Manners and Customs, No. 374, on the character of this money. **Meat, and drink, and oil.** They

paid in the produce of Palestine for the timber of Phœnicia. **Zidon . . . Tyre.** Situated in the north of Palestine, beside the sea; convenient ports from which to float the rafts of cedar from Lebanon. **Joppa.** The port of Palestine in all ages, located thirty miles from Jerusalem, and midway between Gaza and Carmel.

8. In the second year. Probably B. C. 535. They delayed for a year to begin the building of the temple, perhaps because houses for themselves were needed, and some defenses against enemies. It may be that it was requisite also to wait for building materials from Lebanon. Still, a comparison of this record with the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah shows that there was some dereliction of duty on the part of the people and their rulers. Those of the **Levites** who had returned from captivity were placed in charge of the building of the temple. **From twenty years old.** This was in accordance with the rule established by David (1 Chron. 23. 24). **To set forward the work.** By taking charge of the contributions and directing the builders.

9. Then stood Jeshua with his sons. From chap. 2. 40, we see that this Jeshua was not the high priest Jeshua, but a Levite of the same name. **Kadmiel and his sons.** We know only the names of these men, but it is to be noticed that we should not even know their names if they had not given their hearts to God's work. **The sons of Judah.** Elsewhere called Hodaviah, another Levite (chap. 2. 40). **To set forward the workmen.** Revised Version, "to have the oversight of the workmen."

10. When the builders laid the foundation. This was the official service at beginning

the work, like our corner stone laying. **The temple of the Lord.** We know very little of this second temple, but it probably resembled the first—with a large open court in which rose the house, which had a lofty tower on the front, two principal rooms—the holy place and the holy of holies—and apartments for the priests around the building. **The priests in their apparel.** Which was a linen tunic, fastened around the waist with a girdle. **The sons of Asaph.** Asaph was a writer of psalms in David's time, and his descendants formed the choral bands of the temple. **After the ordinance of David.** One suggestive characteristic of this new period upon which the Jews entered with the restoration was the desire to fashion all their religious customs after ancient precedents and patterns.

11. They sang together by course. That is, in antiphonal choruses—one section singing the first part and the other the second of a stanza. (11) *We may always see God's goodness if we look for it. Because the foundation.* For in the foundation they recognized God's past mercies in bringing them back to their own land and the promise of his continued grace.

12. Ancient men, that had seen the first house. The first temple was destroyed about fifty-one years before the date of these events, and some who had seen it might have been present at this time. **Wept with a loud voice.** Their weeping was in mingled sorrow and joy; sorrow over the memories of the past, and joy with hope for the future. Probably, too, they contrasted the former temple in its splendor with the lack of adornment in the plans of the new one. (12) *We lie in a world where joy and sorrow are mingled.*

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. Seventh month. Called Ethanim in 1 Kings 8. 2, and Tisri in later Jewish literature. This month was notable as being the beginning of the civil year, and that in which the feast of tabernacles and the day of atonement fell. No year is mentioned, but we naturally understand the first year of the return from exile. **In the cities.** That is, settled and dwelling in the several cities of Judah in which they had obtained their new homes. **Gathered as one man.** Having been summoned, no doubt, by their great leaders.

2. Jeshua. A shortened form of the name more commonly written Joshua, as we find it in the Books of Haggai and Zechariah. His father, **Jozadak,** was one of the exiles who had been carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar (1 Chron. 6. 15). The name **Zerubbabel** means one "sown" or "born in Babylon," and we learn that he was the great leader of the first band of exiles that returned from captivity. He was called

"Sheshbazzar" at Babylon (chap. 1. 11). Here and in Haggai he is called **the son of Shealtiel**, but in 1 Chron. 3. 19, he appears as the son of Pedaiah and nephew of Salathiel (or Shealtiel). It has been plausibly supposed that Shealtiel died childless and Pedaiah married his widow, and so, according to levirate law, his children were reckoned to his brother. The association of Jeshua and Zerubbabel as priest and ruler of the new community at Jerusalem is prominent in the history of the time, and forms an interesting study in the third and fourth chapters of Zechariah. The one was a descendant of Aaron, and the other of David, and so appropriately represented the priestly and regal interests of the Jews. **As it is written.** The author recognizes a book of laws known as **the law of Moses the man of God.** That such a book had long been in existence and embodied the Mosaic legislation is obviously implied.

3. Set the altar upon his bases. Rather, "upon its foundation," for the Hebrew word

should be printed and read as singular and not plural. The reference is to the old foundation on which the altar of burnt offerings had formerly rested. The rubbish was cleared away and the old foundation restored. Observe that they restored and used the altar of burnt offerings before they rebuilt the temple, and the reason is here given. **For fear was upon them.** This gives the special reason for their setting up the altar, and so providing for offering the sacrifices. Such worship was believed to be a means of security against **the people of those countries**, who were hostile to them.

4. As the duty of every day required. Literally, "The matter of a day in its day." According to Num. 29, 12-36, the offerings of each day of the week of the feast of tabernacles were definitely prescribed, namely, thirteen bullocks the first day, twelve the second, eleven the third, and so on.

5. Afterward. After the services of the week of the feast of tabernacles. **The continual burnt offering.** Consisting of two lambs daily—one in the morning and the other in the evening (Exod. 29, 38-42).

6. From the first day of the seventh month. Some critics infer from the "afterward" of verse 5 that "the continual burnt offering" of two lambs daily was not offered before the feast of tabernacles. Others, on the contrary, think that none but this was offered until after that feast. These inferences, however, are unwarranted. The statement of this verse is that they offered burnt offerings from the first day of the month. All the burnt offerings of the seventh month required by the law were duly made from the first of the month up to the beginning of the feast of tabernacles, which, during its week, as the custom of each day required, superseded other offerings; but immediately afterward the usual burnt offerings were resumed and continued.

7. Zidon . . . Tyre . . . Lebanon . . . Joppa . . . Cyrus . . . Persia. The juxtaposition of these names is suggestive. We not only observe the care of the later Jews to obtain materials for the temple from the same region and in the same manner as was done by Solomon (comp. 1 Kings 5 and 2 Chron. 8-16), but also note with how many different lands and nations the Israelitish people came into contact first and last. They were not only to be, under God, the depositories of divine revelation, but, set in the center of the great highway of ancient commerce and afterward dispersed among all the nations, they held up to many peoples the spectacle of a monotheistic worship, and after the rebuilding of their temple their very existence became a permanent and powerful protest against idolatry.

8. Second year. It required time to negotiate and arrange for the bringing of wood by sea from

Lebanon, so that the work of rebuilding was no labor of a few months, but of years. **Twenty years old.** The Mosaic law ordained that the Levites should begin their work in the tabernacle at the age of thirty (Num. 4, 3), but after Jehovah had given rest to his people and the tabernacle was to be carried about no more, but be superseded by the temple, the Levites were permitted to serve at an earlier age; and it was expressly ordained among David's last instructions that the Levites might be numbered for service "from twenty years old and above" (1 Chron. 23, 27).

9. Jeshua and Kadmiel. Not the Jeshua of verse 2 above, but the Levites named already in chap. 2, 40, who are there called "children of Hodaviah." This is probably the true reading and should be substituted in place of the **sons of Judah** in this verse. **Together.** The Hebrew is "as one." They all stood up together as one man to push forward the glorious work of rebuilding the temple. **Sons of Henadad.** The most natural construction of these words, as the text now stands, is to regard them as in apposition with Jeshua and Kadmiel, and so designating **Henadad** as the ancestor of both. Others think that these words denote a third class or family of Levites, coordinate with the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel, but, if so, the position of the words in the verse, after the statements which intervene and without the conjunction "and," is inexplicable.

10. Had seen the first house. The Hebrew text as pointed by the Masoretes makes this passage read that these ancient fathers "saw the first house when it was founded." But the first foundation was laid some five hundred years before. The construction is best explained as a loose usage of the later Hebrew, and the Masoretic pointing should be disregarded. Maurer refers the Hebrew suffix to Zerubbabel, and so makes it read, "When he laid the foundation of this house." But, as Zerubbabel is not mentioned in the context, it is better to translate the passage impersonally, and the Common Version cannot well be improved. Some fifty-two years had elapsed since the destruction of the first house by the Chaldeans, so that exiles now seventy had been nearly eighteen years old while the temple was yet standing, and could easily remember it.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. *What people did the Jews fear after their return, and why should fear induce them to rebuild the altar?*

In addition to the idolatrous tribes who had been colonized in Palestine by Nebuchadnezzar there were the Samaritans, whom Jewish writers affirm to be Cuthites colonized by Esar-haddon, but who declared themselves to be the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, sons of Joseph. They are

the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin of chap. 4. 1, where they are first mentioned. It is not certain that the returned exiles raised the altar because they were afraid. The particle *ki* has the signification of *although, notwithstanding*. However, *for* is its usual meaning, and the people desired a sacred refuge where they would meet God in days of fear and trembling.

Question 2. *What was the design of the temple at Jerusalem?*

It was "the visible hearthstone of the invisible Church." The Israelites were children indeed, and the detailed paraphernalia of tabernacle and temple all served as an object lesson to them. It was a religious kindergarten, leading on to something higher and better. The child became a man and put away childish things, discerning more and more the temple in the heavens and the temple in the soul of man of which it was but the type. The archetype of the Jerusalem temple comprehended the throne of God yonder, and a race of spiritual beings here, in either instance, the sanctuary of Jehovah.—*James M. Thoburn, Jr., D.D.*

Question 3. *Is the Christian minister of to-day in any sense a "priest" according to the Old Testament conception?*

"They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law; they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar" (Deut. 33. 10). Of this sum of priestly duty the first clause gives the only identity between the Jewish priesthood and the Christian ministry. The latter in the rest of its character agrees more nearly with the prophetic calling.

Question 4. *Do the church buildings of our time sustain any likeness to the ancient temple? Is it proper to call a Christian church "the house of God"?*

1. If by the "ancient temple" the temple of Solomon be meant, then it may be said that the external form of the early Methodist churches in this country sustained a certain likeness to the external form of that temple, minus the latter's architectural ornaments; for it was built pretty much after the plan of the tabernacle; and that plan seems to have been generally the one followed by the builders of said churches. But if by the "ancient temple" Herod's temple be meant, then the likeness ceases, for our modern church buildings bear little resemblance to that temple. 2. The word "church" is derived from the Greek *to kuriakon*, "the thing pertaining to the Lord"; hence, the place or house set apart for the purpose of the worship of the Lord. A church building, therefore, if it be not used for any other purpose, may with perfect propriety be called "the house of God."

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Spirit of the Temple Builders.

I. THE SPIRIT OF UNITY.

Gathered... as one man. v. 1.

"With one accord." Acts 2. 1.

"Be... joined together." 1 Cor. 1. 10.

II. THE SPIRIT OF WORSHIP.

Builded the altar. v. 2.

"Worship the Lord thy God." Matt. 4. 10.

"In the beauty of holiness." Psalm 96. 9.

III. THE SPIRIT OF FAITH.

For fear was upon them. v. 3.

"What time I am afraid." Psalm 56. 3.

"Lord is my helper." Heb. 13. 6.

IV. THE SPIRIT OF CONSECRATION.

To offer burnt offerings. v. 6.

"Present your bodies." Rom. 12. 1.

"Gave their own selves." 2 Cor. 8. 5.

V. THE SPIRIT OF LIBERALITY.

They gave money. v. 7.

"More blessed to give." Acts 20. 35.

"Ability which God giveth." 1 Peter 4. 11.

VI. THE SPIRIT OF PRAISE.

They sang together. v. 11.

"Singing and making melody." Eph. 5. 19.

"Supplication with thanksgiving." Phil. 4. 6.

Thoughts for Young People.

Lessons on Work and Worship.

1. God's people need a common center of work and worship. (Verse 1.)
2. The sacred and secular leaders should labor together in the interests of God's cause. (Verse 2.)
3. The first duty of every family and people is that of worship and consecration. (Verse 2.)
4. We should follow the word of God "as it is written" in our plans for his service. (Verse 4.)
5. There is need of financial outlay and of financial skill in the work of God's house. (Verse 7.)
6. God's work is joyful, and should be begun with praises. (Verse 10.)
7. The memories of the past awaken associations both joyous and mournful. (Verse 12.)

Lesson Word-Pictures.

The seventh month is drawing nigh. Autumn winds are blowing sharp and chilling across Judea. There are travelers in the highway. They are looking away to Jerusalem as a place of refuge from the cutting blasts. From village and town, from the open country, these pilgrims are flocking to the holy city, and O, what a center of interest Jerusalem will be! Her walls may be down, her temple in ruins, but this is the month of the great feast of tabernacles, and it is good to be going up to the holy city. As they draw nigh to it, as

they anxiously look ahead, and it bursts upon their view, they break out into the stately psalms of old and jubilantly lift up the voice. But O, it is not a queen sitting on her throne they see, but such a poor, humbled ruin heap, the gates charred and broken, the towers prostrate, and no house of God to throw wide open its princely doors and welcome them. Still, it is much better to be here than at Babylon, and into loud, triumphant psalms they break forth, while faith and hope are the good angels keeping them company as they go up to Jerusalem. And within the broken walls gladly gather the once exiles, but now at home in dear, old, ruined Jerusalem.

They meet at the temple. Look about and see who are here. There is Jeshua, the son of Jozadak. His brethren, the priests, are with him. Here stands Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel. His brethren, also, keep him company. And all around, standing on the ruin heaps, looking eagerly at their leaders, are the returned exiles. And what do Jeshua, Zerubbabel, and the brethren purpose? Is it a work of rebuilding? Yes. They clear away the rubbish. They level the ground. They build the altar of Israel's God. They set the altar upon its bases. And soon, how the burnt offerings smoke heavenward! O happy season of worship. The feast of tabernacles is kept. The God of seedtime and harvest is remembered and honored. That dear old feast! As did the fathers, so do the children, bowing down to the God of earth and sky—Jehovah, Israel's God.

Soon winter darkens o'er all the land. The drenching rains smite down through the air. The winds blow drearily.

But hark! Do you not hear the blows of axes ringing out amid the forests of Lebanon? The cedar trees are falling, all for service at Jerusalem. I can also see the sailors rafting the timbers down to the Holy Land. Happy ministry to which cedar beam and joist will be exalted when the spring shall open!

It opens at last.

Warmer suns kindle their light above Olivet. The birds are again in brake and bush. The husbandman is going out into the fields. The second month is here. All amid the ruin heaps at the temple gather the appointed workmen. When the ground is cleared, when the builders are laying the foundation of God's house, what a goodly sight is witnessed! There are the priests in their robes. They lift far-echoing trumpets. There, too, are the Levites. They beat the sounding cymbals. There are the godly rows of singers. As the foundation is laid, what a triumphant outburst of music there is from trumpet and cymbal! What a rejoicing in sweet, glad psalms! What a mighty shout from all the people!

What wonder that the white-haired old priests

and Levites, bowed with age, weep as they see the foundation stones sinking in their places! Before them, in imagination, rise again in splendor the walls of the old-time temple. O, it is a wonderful hour! There is the sobbing of the ancient men. There is the shouting of the younger. Sighs and shouts all ascend before God. Faith gathers the very tears in her golden chalice, and lifts them in humble offering before Jehovah.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

Verse 7. The Sea of Joppa is still the place of landing of ships for all of Palestine, the only seaport. On September 26 last a railroad was opened and is operated from Joppa to the Joppa gate of Jerusalem, or within two miles of it. Joppa is today largely a German settlement, so many German Jews being settled there, with lager beer in the front everywhere. Tyre and Sidon were the cities of less importance, but until Cesarea was built Joppa was the chief port, and has survived all changes from the times of Genesis till now, when one boards a train under the shout, "All aboard for Jerusalem."

By Way of Illustration.

"The people gathered themselves together as one man." On the day of Pentecost the disciples were all with one accord in one place. Every great revival has been the result of united prayer. The slenderest thread, when multiplied, will form the strongest cable.

Verse 3. There was much to do, but the people took time for worship. An army is never in so good trim for battle as after a sound sleep and a square morning meal. So every servant of Christ must often recruit his spiritual strength by sitting down at the Master's feet in meditation and prayer and the reading of God's word. The disciples were not wasting their time when they sat down beside their Lord and conversed with him under the olives of Bethany or by the seashore. Those were their feeding times. Luther said he could not get on without two good hours each day for his private devotions. That busy and valiant preacher, Dr. Edward N. Kirk, set apart days for fasting and prayer, and observed them carefully amid most arduous duties.—Cayler.

"Fear was upon them." The missionaries to the Fiji Islands were threatened with destruction by the enraged natives, and had no defense but prayer. Their enemies heard them praying and fled. One gave the reason thus: "They found you praying to your God, and they knew your God is a strong God; so they are gone."

"Feast of tabernacles." Like the Thanksgiving Day. When New England was first settled so great were the hardships that the settlers often laid their distresses before heaven in days of fasting and prayer. At length, when the assembly proposed another fast, a farmer of plain sense arose and declared that since the climate was healthful, the rivers were full of fish, the earth had begun to yield an increase, and, above all, since they had civil and religious liberty, they should have a day of thanksgiving. Such is the origin of the Thanksgiving Day! In like manner these Jews were enduring hardships, but they found occasion to celebrate their Thanksgiving.

Verses 5. The burnt offering meant consecration. The freewill offering was like our little personal gifts of self-denial. Consecration and self-denial! Some one wrote Chaplain McCabe asking him to take stock in a silver mine which was to be worked in the interest of missions and church extension. He replied: "We have two mines already which we are working with great success. One of them is 'self-denial,' situated in the Valley of Humiliation. The other is 'consecration,' which is entered on the heavenly side of the Brook Peniel. These are glorious mines! Their riches are inexhaustible. There is enough in them to bring the world to Christ."

Verses 10 and 11. The word rendered "praise" sometimes signifies the irradiation of a luminous body. Christian song is the reflection of God's goodness and glory.

Mohammedanism has no hymnal, nor has Hinduism, nor Buddhism. No glorious outburst of sacred song from the hearts and lips of these people ever awoke the echoes of any heathen or Mohammedan temple, and never will, till those temples become the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.—*Dr. Butler.*

Verses 12. Even music has its minor; so does sorrow mingle with all earthly joy. The joy of heaven alone will be perfect and complete joy.

The Teachers' Meeting.

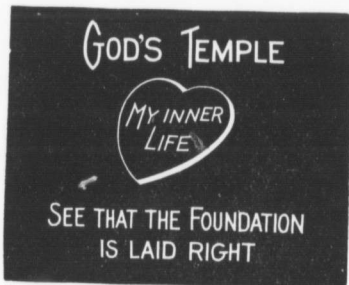
Find the facts connected with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Cyrus, "the people of those countries," "burnt-offerings," "freewill offering," "feast of tabernacles," "cymbals," etc.... Notice the time of the lesson, and the number of years after the destruction of the first temple.... Give the facts of the lesson from the outline: (1) The Altar Built; (2) The Offerings Renewed; (3) The Foundations Laid; (4) The Mingled Voices.... What duties are here suggested for church work? ... What good beginnings do we find here illustrated? ... In teaching, describe the condition and circumstances of the returned exiles, and show how

their example may encourage us.... What causes for praise had they which we also possess!.... An outline for the class or for review: Returning, Renewing, Rebuilding, Rejoicing.

References.

FREEMAN'S HANDBOOK. Ver. 7: Money tablets. 374. Ver. 11: Responsive singing, 259.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Ver. 2: Prose, 6444, 6446. Ver. 3: Prose, 6957, 10798-10800, 4254, 4255, 12300, 12301. Ver. 10: Prose, 11052-11060.

Blackboard.



REVIEW.—What did the Jews do when they re-assembled at Jerusalem? Worshipped God. How? They builded an altar, offered sacrifices, and kept the feast of tabernacles. Then what did they do? Prepared to build the temple. What was the first thing to do? Lay the foundation.

APPLICATION.—We commonly represent the heart as being the place of good or evil thoughts—so we place it here as the temple of our inner life, and call it God's temple, because it should be dedicated to his worship. The foundation of a good life is laid in childhood. See that the foundation is laid right. Now is the time to do it.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Building for God.*

Review. [Call back the last lesson, and connect with this by the story, vividly told, of the march home. Picture the joy of the people as they come in sight of Jerusalem, and their sadness as they look upon the ruins of the beloved city. Tell a story of two little boys who went with their parents to visit cousins living on the side of a mountain. While they were gone a flood swept through their valley, and when they came in sight of the dear home they saw only ruin where peace and prosperity had been! They must have felt a little as the Jews did when they came in sight of their old home.]

1. Make an altar of sacrifice on the board, and tell that the Jews built this as soon as they could. Tell that they were in a country strange to most of them, and surrounded by enemies who were watching for a chance to do them harm. Before they built homes for themselves they made this altar for the Lord. They did not wait to build his house before beginning to worship him.

Was this right? Yes; nothing should come between us and the worship of God. We cannot begin it too early, nor can we be too much in earnest about it. God wants the worship and praise of every little child. Sing "Serve him, serve him, all ye little children."

2. [Use Lesson Symbol without the words.] Now the people were ready to work. Every day they offered sacrifices on the altar they had built. Every morning and evening they sought the blessing of the Lord upon their work. They knew that if God did not help them their enemies would soon conquer them. Every day we live we ought to offer our lives to God, and ask him to keep us and use us for his own work.

[Tell how they prepared for building.] They brought the best things. They were willing to take trouble to find the best. They were willing to pay the price for the best. Some folks give to the Lord what they do not prize very much. But the Jews did not. At last the stones of the foundation were ready to lay. [See if the children understand what a foundation is, and explain that every good building and every good life must stand on a good foundation, else it will surely fall.]

3. [Sing "Praise him, praise him," etc.] The people were so glad to see the foundations of the Lord's house laid that they sang praises and made music on instruments. But while some shouted for joy, others wept aloud. Do you wonder why? Some of the old men had seen the beautiful temple which had been burned. [Show a good picture of Solomon's temple, if possible.] It made them sad to think how this house of the Lord had been destroyed because God's people would not obey and serve him! Perhaps they remembered their own sins of self-will and thoughtlessness. We cannot help but be sorry when we think of our sins, even while our hearts are glad because of God's goodness.



4. [Tell that you are going to write on the board something from God's word. Print "Ye are God's building." Ask two or three children what they think God means by this.]

Every building must have a foundation. [This may be well illustrated by blocks.] Little children lay foundations while

they are young. [Start two block houses side by side. Lay the foundations well in one, in the other let the blocks be loosely laid and the basis narrow. Let the children criticize freely. As you build, talk about two boys who are building—one for God, the other for the world. One is honest, prompt, kind, truthful. He likes to go to Sunday school and to church. He learns his lessons, and is quiet and obedient. The other is careless, rude, unloving, ill-natured. Both are laying foundations. Ask which is the foundation that will stand. You can readily see how a striking object lesson can be developed which will interest and impress the children. If the class know the building song, use it now; if not, teach it now.]

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Lord, this day thy children meet.
In thy name, O Lord, assembling.
O day of rest and gladness.
Within God's temple now we meet.
Praise, for his excellent greatness.

No. 2.

Praise the Lord! ye heavens, adore him.
Lift up your hearts to things above.
Christians, lift your voices.
Hallelujah! song of gladness.
Young men and maidens, raise.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did the returned captives do at Jerusalem? **They gathered themselves together as one man.**
2. What did they offer to God? **Burnt offerings and prayers.**
3. For what did they give money? **To build again the house of God.**
4. In what did the priests and Levites lead the people? **In singing praise to God.**
5. What did the people do? **Some wept, while others shouted for joy.**
6. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"They praised the Lord,"** etc.

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

3. Who is the great Teacher of religion?
Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Redeemer.
4. What do you call His religion?
Christianity.

About B. C. 521.] **LESSON III. ENCOURAGING THE PEOPLE.** [Jan. 15.]
GOLDEN TEXT. Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain
 that build it. Psalm 127. 1.

Authorized Version.

Hag. 2. 1-9. [Commit to memory verses 8, 9.]

1 In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Hag'ga-i, saying,

2 Speak now to Ze-rub'ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, governor of Ju'dah, and to Josh'u-a the son of Jos'e-dech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,

3 Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

4 Yet now be strong, O Ze-rub'ba-bel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Josh'u-a, son of Jos'e-dech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts:

5 According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

6 For thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

7 And I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.

9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.

Revised Version.

- 1 In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the Lord
- 2 by Hag'ga-i the prophet, saying, Speak now to Ze-rub'ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, governor of Ju'dah, and to Josh'u-a the son of Je-hoz'a-dak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the
- 3 people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes as nothing?
- 4 Yet now be strong, O Ze-rub'ba-bel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Josh'u-a, son of Je-hoz'a-dak, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work:
- 5 for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts, according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, and my spirit
- 6 abode among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth,
- 7 and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desirable things of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house
- 8 with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of
- 9 hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.

TIME.—About B. C. 521; about fifteen years after the incidents of the last lesson. **PLACE.**—Jerusalem. **RULERS.**—Cyrus, King of Persia; Zerubbabel (sometimes called Sheshbazzar), Governor of Judah; Joshua, high priest. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The presence of God.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* Encouraging the people. Hag. 2. 1-9.
Tu. The command to build. Hag. 1.
W. Obeying the command. Ezra 5. 1-5.
Th. God's covenant. Exod. 29. 38-46.
F. The glory of God. 2 Chron. 5. 11-14.
S. "I am with you." Isa. 41. 8-14.
S. God for us. Rom. 8. 24-31.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 168, New Canadian Hymnal.

There is work to do for Jesus.

No. 165, New Canadian Hymnal.

Work, for the night is coming.

No. 166, New Canadian Hymnal.

Now, the sowing and the weeping.

DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 90, 89, 96.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.**1. Past Failure, v. 1-3.**

Tell what you know about the prophet Haggai.
 To what two eminent men was he sent?
 Tell what you know about each of these men.
 How many years had passed since the destruction of Solomon's temple?

What did we learn in last Sunday's lesson concerning the bitterness of the comparison made in verse 3?

How long since the second temple had been begun?

Why was it not already finished?

2. Present Duty, v. 4, 5.

What other Hebrew leader had been urged by the Lord to "be strong?"

What reason does God give for vigor and confidence on the part of Zerubbabel and Joshua?

What covenant had God made with the Hebrews when they came out of Egypt?

Who brought them out of Egypt?

What comforting assurance is given by the Lord in verse 5?

Have we any right to take that assurance to our own hearts?

3. Future Glory, v. 6-9.

What did the Lord promise should happen in "a little while?"

What is meant by this shaking of heaven, earth, and sea?

What great military genius shook all nations after Haggai had gone to his grave?

What is the meaning of "the Desire of all nations?"

In what physical sense and in what spiritual sense was the second temple filled with glory?

Is the eighth verse really true?

If it is true, is it ever right to fret or to be discontented because we have not as much money as we may desire?

If it is true, and if we do our duty, is there any reason to be apprehensive for the financial future of ourselves, our churches, or our homes?

What great bad king added to the architectural glory of the second temple?

Did the second temple ever become a center of peace and prosperity?

In what deep spiritual sense was the glory of this latter house greater than the former?

Practical Teachings.

Where does this lesson teach us that—

1. It is wise to forget discouragements of the past and press forward?

2. One of the chief duties of Christian life is to be strong?

3. God's covenant of mercy with us is unbroken?

4. All wealth is in God's hand, and will be given in proper measure to his children?

5. The true glory of the Church of God is a spiritual glory?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Read exhortations to moral strength given by God to the man this high priest was named after.

2. Find what you can about the "shaking of nations" promised in verses 6, 7. When did it come? How? By whom? With what effect on civilization, and especially on the Hebrew religion?

3. Find which temple was really larger, Solomon's or Zerubbabel's?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Past Failure, v. 1-3.

Through what prophet is this word of the Lord?

When did he receive the message?

To whom was the message sent?

What three questions were asked?

What says the GOLDEN TEXT as to the cause of men's failures?

2. Present Duty, v. 4, 5.

What present duty was enjoined by the prophet?

To whom was this injunction given?

What reason had they for strength and zeal?

What promised presence had been with them?

What was the Lord's promise? (Exod. 29. 45, 46.)

What further promise was now made?

What security would God's people then have? (Joel 3. 16.)

3. Future Glory, v. 6-9.

What was God about to do?

What would happen to the house of the Lord?

To what treasure did the Lord lay claim?

What would the glory of this temple surpass?

What gift would the Lord there impart?

What message of peace did Christ's birth bring? (Luke 2. 14.)

How can we each have peace? (Rom. 5. 1.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That we ought to listen to God's word?

2. That we ought to obey God's command?

3. That we ought to trust God's promises?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find who projected the first temple; who built it; who first stole its treasures; who put brazen ornaments in it instead of golden ones; in the reign of what wicked queen the temple was deserted; what king repaired it; who sent its treasures to the King of Assyria; what later kings restored its worship and, so far as they could, its golden glory.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Were the Jews left in peace to build the temple?

No; they were persecuted.

By whom? **By their enemies.**

Where did their enemies live? **In Samaria and other cities.**

What did they get the new King of Persia to do?

To stop the building of the temple.

What were the Jews obliged to do? **To wait patiently.**

Who sent them cheering words? **The Lord.**

By whom did he speak? **By the prophet Haggai.**

How were some of the people feeling? **Discouraged.**

What did the Lord say? **"Be strong, and work."**

What promise did he give? **"I am with you."**

What did the Lord say he was coming to do?

To shake all nations.

When did he say would come? **The Desire of all nations.**

Whom did he mean? **The Lord Jesus Christ.**

Who owns all the silver and gold? **The Lord.**
What did he say the glory of the new temple would be? **Greater than that of the old.**

What did he promise to give in that place? **Peace.**

Words with Little People.

What the Lord wants to see in every heart—
Faith, Courage, Love.

The Lesson Promise shows who will give us
these good gifts.

Lesson Promise.

"I am with you."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

It seems strange that the fiery purpose which piled up God's altar promptly on the return to Jerusalem should burn low so soon. But these Jews were very human. It was no easy task to build so great a temple when means were limited; when the time of every builder seemed needed to erect a house for himself; when the tribes which were settled all about on the ruins of former kingdoms showed their enmity; when the central government of Persia lost all interest in the work; and when, as a climax of woe, Jerusalem found traitors when she reached out her hand for patriots. In the midst of these difficulties there came two prophets with encouraging exhortations. The older of these, Haggai, uttered the words of our lesson. He came into the presence of Zerubbabel and Jeshua about September or October, B. C. 521, and aroused their zeal. His first utterances were those of warning and reproach, for rich homes had been built by the wealthier colonists, while God's house had been neglected. Four weeks later the prophet returned with the message which we now study. His prophecies the unprecedented glory of the sacred house which was now being built amid such difficulties.

Verse 1. The seventh month. Made up of the last days of September and the first of October.

2. Zerubbabel . . . Joshua. These men, as the heads respectively of civil and ecclesiastical power, were more responsible than others for the delay in the erection of the temple. They seem to have been, in the main, good men; but both had come into the world on pedestals—one an hereditary king, the other an hereditary high priest; and it was but human for them to proceed with their duties perfunctorily. An instructive contrast may be drawn between these pious invertebrates and the moral backbone, sinew, and nerve of Ezra and Nehemiah, who eagerly took up holy tasks to which they were not born. **Residue.** Remainder.

3. Who is left among you. More than a decade has passed since the events of the last lesson, and even then the survivors who remembered the earlier temple were aged. Now, when the "seventy years" are complete, some ancient men and women still live who can recall youthful mornings when their fathers led them up to the house of the Lord which Solomon built. **This house.** To Haggai's view the two temples are one. **As nothing.** In fitness and beauty; in mere size the second temple surpassed the first.

4. Zerubbabel . . . Joshua . . . all ye people. That is, the secular ruler, the priest of God, and the common people—all classes are exhorted to be strong. See similar advice to another Joshua (Josh. 1. 6-10).

5. The word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt. God had pledged Israel that so long as they continued his people he would be their God. Verse 5 kindly

assured the returned exiles that, sinful as their history had been, God had not yet deserted them. His spirit was in the midst of them and they had no cause to fear.

6-9. Compare with this prophecy Zech. 1. 11, 14, 15, 21; 2. 7-9. **Yet once, it is a little while.** This might be turned into modern English thus: One little period, and then the revolution is to begin. **I will shake.** It is usual to regard this prophetic upheaval as being mainly political and social, the heavens, earth, sea, and dry land typifying the whole life of the busy world; and if, as is probable, this is the meaning, the "shaking" doubtless refers to the wars of Alexander the Great. What Cyrus's career began, Alexander and his generals completed—a thorough stirring around of all oriental life, so that, with a few exceptions, the old races became practically extinct, and a new world arose on the ruins of the old. Something like the same effect was produced in later times by the incursions of the barbarians on Rome, by the anarchy of centuries which followed, by the discovery of America, and by the Renaissance. **The Desire of all nations.** It has been customary to regard this as a prophecy of the coming of our Lord, but the more direct meaning of the text is to be preferred. The things which all nations have desired, the wealth and glory of the earth, will be sent as tribute to Jerusalem. Haggai's prophecy is that the poverty of the present moment is to be exchanged for a lavish wealth which, sincerely offered to God, will lift the latter house above the former. **Silver . . . gold . . . mine.** That all the worldly wealth belonged to God the Jews could readily learn from their history. On differ-

ent occasions where money was needed by the nation, as at the exodus and in the times of David, God wonderfully increased the nation's wealth; he was about to do so again. **The glory of this**

latter house. It would be better to read this "the latter glory of this house." **Peace.** Peace of soul. Everyone who contributed to the temple was to be spiritually blessed by God.

CRITICAL NOTES.

Verse 1. Seventh month. Of the second year of Darius, son of Hystaspes. Comp. verse 10 and chap. 1. 1. This was about seventeen years after Cyrus had issued his proclamation for the return of the Jews from exile. These years comprised the six years of Cyrus, eight of his son Cambyses, the Ahasuerus of Ezra 4. 6, one of the usurper Smerdis, the Artaxerxes of Ezra 4. 7, and the two years of Darius. **One and twentieth day.** This would be on the seventh day of the feast of tabernacles, which should have been, under ordinary circumstances, a day of great festivity and rejoicing. **By Haggai.** The Hebrew reads, "By the hand of Haggai the prophet," an idiomatic phrase equivalent to "Through the agency of Haggai." The prophets were the mediums of divine revelation, and their word was recognized as the veritable word of Jehovah. The Old Testament prophets are quite unlike the diviners, soothsayers, and necromancers of the heathen nations. They occupy a unique position in the history of men, and only the Hebrew nation can boast of a prophetic literature which has exalted lessons for all time. They were carried aloft by a supernatural inspiration, and so made the means whereby heavenly counsels, admonitions, rebukes, warnings, and promises were conveyed to the people. "The prophets," says Fairbairn, "were in a peculiar sense the spiritual watchmen of Judah and Israel, the representatives of divine truth and holiness, whose part it was to keep a wakeful and jealous eye upon the manners of the times, to detect and reprove the symptoms of defection which appeared, and by every means in their power to foster and encourage the spirit of real godliness."

3. Saw this house in its former glory. Old men of seventy to eighty years of age had been young men of eighteen years and upward while the temple was yet standing. **As nothing.** Pusey suggests the rendering: "Is not such as it is, as nothing?" The reference is doubtless to the costliness and splendor of the first temple, which was most elaborately covered with gold. See the statements in 1 Kings 6. 22, 28, 30, 32, 35; 7. 48-50; 2 Chron. 3. 4-9.

4. Yet now be strong . . . for I am with you. The strength acquired by the presence and help of Jehovah is better than thousands of silver and gold.

5. The word which I covenanted with you. The grammatical construction of "the word" is quite uncertain. It stands in the Hebrew text with a particle which usually indicates the accusative case of the noun following it, and

would be most easily explained on the supposition that the word "observe" or "remember" has fallen out of the text at the beginning of this verse. The Common and Revised Versions supply the words "according to." Henderson makes it and "my spirit" the subjects of "remaineth;" but this is in violation of the usual grammar of the language, and leaves the definite particle without any satisfactory explanation. Pusey regards it as "an exclamation which cannot be forced into any grammatical relation with the preceding."

6. Yet once. Equivalent to "once again." **A little while.** That is, in the near future. Like all the apocalyptic announcements of the coming of Jehovah, the great and terrible day is conceived as near at hand. **I will shake the heavens . . . earth . . . sea . . . land.** Allusions to the previous shaking of Mount Sinai, when the Israelites "came out of Egypt," as suggested in the preceding verse. This latter shaking is to be something more wonderful than the earthquake of Sinai, and is to move "heavens" and "sea" and "dry land" also—a kind of universal shock.

7. Desire of all nations shall come. This rendering of the common version has been explained as a prophecy of the personal Messiah, and would be most properly presented to the eye of the reader by writing or printing the word with a capital letter—Desire. But the word is in the singular number, and the verb "come" is in the plural, for which no satisfactory reason can be given if the word be supposed to refer to the personal Messiah. Moreover, the context does not favor the sudden introduction here of the idea of the personal Christ. The thought is that Jehovah himself will shake all the nations, fill the temple with glory, and make its latter glory greater than the former; but the coming of the Messiah in person is not suitably expressed, or even naturally suggested, either by the context or the language employed. The Revised Version, accordingly, takes the Hebrew word translated "Desire" as a collective noun, and renders it "desirable things." This translation accords well with the context, but is open to the same grammatical objection as the other, for no reason is apparent why the singular noun should be construed with a plural verb. The word nowhere else has such a collective meaning, and ought not therefore to be so explained here, except as a sheer necessity. If the prophet intended to express the plural thought of "desirable things," why did he not employ the plural form of the same word (*hamudboth*), which is else-

where (Dan. 11, 38, 43) used in this sense? A more simple and grammatical translation is the following: "I will shake all the nations, and they shall come to the delight of all the nations." The "delight" or "desire" of all the nations is to be understood of Jerusalem and its temple, especially the glorious house of Jehovah, which forms the main subject of this prophecy. This house, like the ancient tabernacle, was a prophetic symbol of the Church and kingdom of God. Its developed New Testament picture is seen in the closing chapters of Revelation, in which God and the Lamb are the light and temple of the New Jerusalem, and where it is written, "The nations shall walk by the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it, . . . And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it" (Rev. 21, 24, 26).

As this explanation differs notably from that suggested in the common and Revised Versions, and adopted by most expositors, a few additional remarks may be made in its defense.

1. It is the most natural and the only strictly grammatical translation.

2. It accords with the context as well as that which makes the main word a collective and renders it "desirable things."

3. It expresses a grand conception of future Messianic glory, which is in perfect harmony with that of other parallel Scriptures. The passage is truly a Messianic prophecy, but not one that depicts a personal Messiah. It foretells rather the glorious kingdom, whose historical and geographical starting point was Jerusalem, and it belongs to the same kind of prophecy as Isa. 65, 18: "Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." Comp. also Isa. 60, 3, 7: "Nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. . . . And I will glorify the house of my glory;" Zech. 6, 15: "They that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lords;" Micah 4, 1, 2: "Peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go," etc.

The scope of this prophecy and the statement of verse 8 imply that the coming of the nations involved the bringing of their gifts. Comp. also Psalm 72, 10, 11. But it is, after all, not the mere bringing of silver and gold that makes the glory of Jehovah's house, but the conversion of the many nations which walk in the light of it.

This Scripture is quoted in Heb. 12, 26, and explained there of the shaking and removal of things which give place to an immovable kingdom. That immovable kingdom is shown to be the Gospel of Christ, "the kingdom of heaven," called in verse 22 of the same chapter "Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." It is now accessible to all believers in Jesus, "the Mediator of the new covenant."

9. Glory of this latter house. The Revised Version reads: "The latter glory of this house," and is to be preferred because of what is written in verse 8. For it is the glory, rather than the house, which is the subject of comparison. **In this place will I give peace.** The place referred to is to be understood of Jerusalem, where God gave his people rest from enemies awhile, but especially in the Gospel "kingdom of heaven," the peace that passeth understanding.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. *What was a "prophet" in the Jewish Church?*

The common conception is that a prophet was one who foretold the future. But the Hebrew word *nabi* has a much wider significance. The *nabi* (prophet) was not only a seer who announced future events; he was the voice, the oracle, of God to the nation; a moral and religious teacher of the people; the champion of virtue, liberty, justice, and the strict observance of the civil and religious law against the iniquities of kings and people.—

Question 2. *Does the Christian ministry of to-day have any relation to the ancient order of prophets?*

The Christian minister is the "namesake" of the ancient prophets, just as Christ was in their utterances. However, strictly speaking, pentecost was the birthday of the preacher. Now and then the Jews were apprised of the coming preacher in some of their prophets, but him they saw not till Christ fulfilled the prophets and instituted the Christian ministry. A peculiar messenger had to be provided for the new message. The old and the new still bear this relation to each other, namely, the same Spirit by which the prophets foretold Christ enables the Christian minister to foretell him.

Question 3. *Is it possible to know how the ancient Jews could distinguish between true and false prophets?*

The true prophets agreed in their utterances with the divine will as given in the law; the false prophet with the trend and temper of his time. "The wise shall understand." By his moral feeling he shall know the difference, as a young dove by instinct knows a bird of prey. Beyond this the true and the false could be distinguished by the result alone. Read Isa. 8, 20.

Question 4. *How did the glory of the second temple exceed that of the first?*

A literal fulfillment of this prediction is untenable. The temple, in its true idea, must be understood to mean the Church of God, the offerings of whose true worshipers must possess that predomi-

nantly spiritual character which constitutes the far greater glory of this second and true temple of God. Spiritual worship is in the eyes of God far more glorious than sacrifices of animals, as the eternal kingdom of God in heaven is more glorious than earthly kingdoms. The harmony of this interpretation with Isa. 60. 11; Micah 10. 13; Zech. 14. 14; Rev. 21. 24-26, is apparent, if not convincing.

Analytical and Biblical Outline. Three Voices.

I. THE VOICE OF THE PAST.

1. *This house... first glory.* v. 3.
"Exceeding magnificent." 1 Chron. 22. 5.
2. *In comparison... nothing.* v. 3.
"Ancient men... wept." Ezra 3. 12.

II. THE VOICE OF THE PRESENT.

1. *Yet now be strong.* v. 4.
"Be strong in the Lord." Eph. 6. 10.
2. *I am with you.* v. 4.
"Will bring thy seed." Isa. 43. 5.
3. *My Spirit... among you.* v. 5.
"By my Spirit." Zech. 4. 6.

III. THE VOICE OF THE FUTURE.

1. *I will shake... nations.* v. 6, 7.
"The Lord... shall roar." Joel 3. 16.
2. *The Desire... shall come.* v. 7.
"Blessed is the King." John 12. 13.
3. *Fill this house with glory.* v. 7.
"We beheld his glory." John 1. 14.
4. *Glory... shall be greater.* v. 9.
"The brightness of his glory." Heb. 1. 3.
5. *In this place... peace.* v. 9.
"He is our peace." Eph. 2. 14.

Thoughts for Young People. God's Work in the World.

1. *Comparisons are misleading.* God saw a splendid success in this temple, which was regarded as an utter failure by the men who were building it. When good people say, "The former years were better than these," remember this, that there are no data on which spiritual comparisons can be safely based.

2. *God's presence is the supreme source of strength.* If we hear him say, "I am with you," it matters little who else is absent.

3. *God's hand is felt in all social convulsions.* We talk of the forces we see—earthquakes, financial panics, armies, diseases; but there is an invisible hand which moves all forces—natural and spiritual; and prayer moves the hand which moves the world.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

O day of discouragement at Jerusalem! Come, look at the temple walls that rose from the ground, springing up out of shame and defeat like the lion

of Judah from the dust, and then forced to hold back.

O faith that is weary! O love that languishes! When will the temple walls go up into completed beauty and strength!

But a better day dawns, a day of hope and courage. And there is a word from the Lord upon this subject. It comes to Haggai. When, I know not, and where, I cannot say. Like the breath of the wind among the mulberry tops, like the voice of a bird in the night, like a cry when the heart is weary and the flesh fails, comes the word of the Lord to Haggai.

Hark!

Speak now to Zerubbabel! Speak to Joshua!

Who saw the temple in its first glory!

O that first house!

How stable the walls and massive the gates and rich the splendor of its decorations!

Poerless among temples was that house, like Lebanon's cedars among trees, like Hermon's top among mountains, like Jerusalem among cities.

But this half finished building—O, how inferior! The walls are incomplete, the gateways rough, the courts belittered, the foundations yet amid the rubbish! But O, Zerubbabel and Joshua, this is a new day. The Lord is with you! The God of Israel in the days of Egypt is here!

O how it stirs the senses, thrills the imagination, arouses hope, and strengthens faith! It all comes back in thought how the bondmen looked up for deliverance, how Pharaoh's host pressed hard after them and crowded them down to the water's edge. And then Jehovah went before his people, marching them across the Red Sea bed!

What a progress, rank upon rank, a mighty host, pressing on, looking up to their Shepherd leading his people like a flock, looking back to catch the sound of rumbling chariot wheels and the echo of Egyptian war cries.

And then God swung the flood gates back and let the water do its work upon Egypt's impious host.

And that God will be Israel's God to-day. He shook the nations once; he will shake again, and the Desire of all nations shall come. O what glory to his appearing! What justice, yet love, what holiness and power! O eyes that are weary, look up, and hands that are wasted, be lifted! The Desire of all nations shall come. This house shall be filled with glory. Yes, the temple shall be built up and it shall shine in Jehovah's splendor. The silver is God's. The gold is God's.

The glory of the latter house shall surely dawn. It shall surpass the former glory. It breaks now even. I see it coming, spreading, illuminating. It is pouring over the hilltops. It is coming down the mountain sides. It is sweeping across the plains. Glory everywhere, Israel's glory, above all, Jehovah's glory, and there in the temple descends upon his loved ones his blessing of peace.

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

Hag. 2. 8: "The gold is mine," is a prophecy which finds a strong fulfillment. The transfer of oriental wealth from heathen to Christian lands is among the marked providences of our times. India has laid its wealth down at the door of Christian Europe. That wealth built the splendid cities of Italy—Genoa, Florence, Venice. By the discovery of the passage round Good Hope it was turned to Western Europe. God gave it to the Christian nations. A single row of warehouses in London would buy up all of the city of Yeddo in Japan. The increase of wealth of Christian England is beyond all precedent in history. Its capital is \$43,750,000,000, and its annual income is \$7,000,000,000. The Protestant community of the United States adds to its stored-up capital its savings of \$500,000,000 a year. All this is a trust. It is God's silver and gold.

Verses 9. The glory of this house consisted in many things, among which was the fact that it was preserved inviolate during the terrible conflict between the Persian and the Greek Empires. This whole prediction was literally fulfilled. The external glory was possibly eclipsed by the golden house of Nero, but the internal and spiritual glory commands the attention of all men.

By Way of Illustration.

Encouraging the people. "Be strong," "Fear ye not." When Moses sent spies into the land of Canaan he said to them, "Be ye of good courage." Somebody must show courage, because the masses of men always see breakers ahead. John Randolph said of this country once, "It can never be a manufacturing country. The people cannot live in this climate." People will tell you, "You can't do it." The ears of all noble workers have heard that cry. Columbus was forbidden this new world, but he found it; Luther his right of private judgment, but he established it; Galileo his new thought that the world does move, but he held it. Men challenged the idea that a steamer could cross the Atlantic, and an English lord agreed to eat the engine that would first successfully push a boat across. The boat was a success. Men said to Napoleon, "You cannot cross the Alps;" and his response was, "There shall be no Alps." Men laughed at the inventions of George Stephenson, but every engine that goes roaring onward across continents to-day is but the lengthened shadow of the one man.—*Sabbath Reading.*

"According to the word that I covenanted with you." Have you ever been one of a party to explore a dark, deep cavern—the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky or the catacombs? The tourists all stand out in the sunlight, and the attendants, who know the journey they are going to make, put into

the hands of each a lighted candle. How useless it seems—how pale and colorless the little flame appears in the gorgeous flood of sunlight! But the procession moves along through the dark cavern's mouth; one after another loses the splendor of daylight; in the hands of one after another the feeble candlelight comes out bright in the darkness; and by and by they are all walking in the dark, holding fast to their candles as if they were their very life. That seems to me a picture of the way in which God's promises of consolation, which we attach very little meaning to at first, come out into beauty and value as we pass on into our lives.

Verses 8. So thought John Wesley. When he received thirty pounds he lived on twenty-eight pounds, and gave two pounds. The next year he received sixty pounds, and, still living on twenty-eight pounds, he gave away thirty-two pounds. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave sixty-two pounds. The fourth year he received one hundred and twenty pounds; still he lived on twenty-eight pounds and gave to the poor all the rest.

Golden Text. "When the sun is gone down all the candles in the world cannot make it day." So all church service and organization without God's presence and help is like trying to turn night into day with a candle.

When Antigonus was about to engage in a sea fight with Ptolemy's armada, and the pilot cried out, "How many more they are than we!" the king replied, "True, if you count their numbers; but for how many do you value me?"

The Teachers' Meeting.

An unusually apt outline for the teaching of this lesson is that suggested in the lesson: (1) Past Failure; (2) Present Duty; (3) Future Glory.... Draw word-picture of social and political condition of Jerusalem at time of this prophecy; governor; high priest; surrounding heathenism; character of Jewish settlers.... What the temple stood for; the impression its completion would make on morals of the little city; on the heterogeneous population of the western end of the Persian Empire.... Recount hindrances; selfishness; poverty; fear, etc.... Reasons for immediate activity.... Analyze "future glory"—what the Hebrew temple became as a spiritual light in the world apart from the coming of Christ. Down to the date of this lesson the worship of Jehovah at Jerusalem, while powerfully affected by the worship of false gods elsewhere, had had very little effect upon such worship. Henceforth Judaism became a factor in the molding of religious opinion in the remotest corners of the known world.

References.

FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Ver. 4: Prose, 8340-8341, 9517-9523, 9612-9613, 11032, 11232-11239. Ver. 5: Prose, 7593, 7594, 3915. Ver. 6: Prose, 12310-12314. Ver. 7: Poetical, 205. Ver. 9: Prose, 753, 7149, 8988; Poetical, 1556.

Blackboard.



[Draw the crown with yellow chalk, the words running through it with white.]

God said that the glory of this latter house would be greater than the temple built by Solomon. In what way was it greater? Not in silver or gold. It had not the ark, and several of the divine glories were wanting; how then did it exceed in glory the first temple? The glory of the latter house was the "Prince of Peace," the Son of God, Jesus the Christ, who was greater than Solomon, who was there as a child, and afterward as the teacher, preacher, and Lord of all.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *When Jesus Comes.*

Introductory. Do you ever begin to do something and then get tired and leave off? This is what the Jews did. They were so glad to get back to their dear home that they began very eagerly to do the work they were told to do—build the Lord's house. But by and by they grew tired and discouraged. Their enemies, the Samaritans, tried to hinder them, but the thing that really hindered was the lack of real love and zeal in their own hearts. So long as we truly want to do right and please God, just so long we can do it, even though a host of foes rise up against us.

When we get tired, what do we like to do? Yes, rest. The Jews thought they would rest awhile, and maybe their enemies would stop troubling them.

But the longer they waited the less they cared to build the Lord's house. They began to build houses for themselves. Some think they even dared to use the cedar wood that had been brought

from Lebanon for the Lord's house! Then trouble came, bad harvests, heavy losses, and they said they could not build the Lord's house now when the times were so hard!

Hearing the Lord's voice. Do you think the Jews were happy now? O, no; when we leave our work undone we are never happy. But God did not leave them alone. One day a visitor came to Jerusalem. His name was Haggai. He was the Lord's prophet. He came to give them a message from the Lord.

It was on a feast day that the prophet came. The Jews had gathered around their altar, where the new temple was to stand, to worship God. Standing there, with the ruins of the old temple all around, Haggai told the people how wrong and selfish their conduct had been, and showed them why such trouble had come upon them.

This was the Lord's voice to the Jews, and they heard and obeyed. They began to work again on the temple, and about a month afterward the Lord sent Haggai to visit them again.

Doing the Lord's work. [Show the picture of Solomon's temple, and talk a little about its exceeding beauty. Tell how some of the old men had discouraged the younger ones by saying the new temple was so poor and mean, compared with the old one, that the Lord would not care for it.] They did not remember that the Lord does not look on the outside. He looks for the hidden beauty. The prophet came the second time to tell the people not to be discouraged, but to do the Lord's work with joyful hearts, trusting in him for success.



For whom do we build?

The Lord told Haggai to tell the people that a mighty One was coming to the new temple. He said that the glory of the new temple would be greater than that of the old. Why? Because Jesus would be there!

Where he is, is glory and beauty and peace. Do you think the Jews would have stopped building if they had known who was coming to dwell in their temple?

What are we building for the Lord? A work is given to each child—to build a house for the Lord! [Make a heart.] What does God want your heart to be? Yes, his temple. Are you building it for him to live in? Do you send all evil things away? They will come, asking to be let in. But if Sin comes in, Jesus must go out!

[Print "God's Temple" in the heart, and below, "My feet, my hands, my head, my heart, are of God's temple each a part."]

Shall we carry this thought home with us? [Tell how beautiful the plainest temple will be

when Jesus comes into it, and help children to remember the couplet by drilling them on it with the appropriate motions.]

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

NO. 1.

In thy name, O Lord, assemble,
How good thou art to me.
The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;
Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire.

NO. 2.

Lord of the worlds above.
Hear thou my prayer in heaven.
Tenderly our Father.
How gentle God's commands.
O glorious promises of God.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. How did the second temple seem when compared with the first? **As nothing.**

2. How did the prophet exhort Zerubbabel and Joshua and the people? **Be strong. Fear ye not.**

3. What cause of encouragement did God say they had? **My Spirit remaineth among you.**

4. Whom did he promise would come? **The Desire of all nations.**

5. What did he promise about this new temple? **The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former.**

6. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"Except the Lord,"** etc.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

5. Are there any other religions in the world?

There is only one Divine Teacher, and only one true religion; but there have been many false teachers, and there are many false religions.

About B. C. 519.]

LESSON IV. JOSHUA THE HIGH PRIEST.

[Jan. 22.]

GOLDEN TEXT. We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. Heb. 4, 14.

Authorized Version.

Zech. 3. 1-10. [Commit to memory verses 7, 8.]

1 And he showed me Josh'u-a the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Sa'tan standing at his right hand to resist him.

2 And the Lord said unto Sa'tan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Sa'tan; even the Lord that hath chosen Je-r'u-sa-lem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

3 Now Josh'u-a was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

5 And I said, Let them set a fair miter upon his head. So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by.

6 And the angel of the Lord protested unto Josh'u-a, saying,

7 Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.

8 Hear now, O Josh'u-a the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at; for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

9 For behold the stone that I have laid before Josh'u-a; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: be-

Revised Version.

1 And he showed me Josh'u-a the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Sa'tan standing at his right hand to be his adversary.

2 And the Lord said unto Sa'tan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Sa'tan; yea, the Lord that hath chosen Je-r'u-sa-lem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

3 Now Josh'u-a was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take the filthy garments from off him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich apparel.

5 And I said, Let them set a fair miter upon his head. So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments; and the angel of the Lord stood by.

6 And the angel of the Lord protested unto Josh'u-a, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee a place of access among these that stand by.

7 Hear now, O Josh'u-a the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men which are a sign: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the

8 Branch. For behold, the stone which I have set before Josh'u-a; upon one stone are seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving

hold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

10 In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree.

TIME.—About B. C. 519; two years after the last lesson. **PERSONS.**—1. The angel of the Lord—the same as Jehovah. 2. Satan. 3. An angel guide. 4. Joshua (sometimes called Jeshua) the high priest. **RULERS.**—Same as before. **PLACE.**—The altar of burnt offering within the temple inclosure, Jerusalem. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The priesthood of Christ.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* Joshua the high priest. Zech. 3. 1-10.
Tu. The accuser. Job 1. 6-12.
W. Filthy garments. Isa. 64. 1-8.
Th. "Out of the fire." Eph. 2. 1-13.
F. Sin removed. Psalm 103. 1-12.
S. New clothing. Rev. 19. 5-9.
S. White raiment. Rev. 3. 14-22.

LESSON HYMNS.

- No. 54, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Come, every soul by sin oppressed.
 No. 57, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Saviour, more than life to me.
 No. 67, New Canadian Hymnal.
 Not all the blood of beasts.

DOMINION HYMNAL

Hymns, Nos. 74, 78, 79.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **The Adversary Rebuked**, v. 1, 2.
 Did the events of this lesson actually occur?
 Who is the "angel of the Lord"?
 What does "Satan" here represent?
 Of whom was Joshua the representative?
 Did the Lord receive the accusations against Joshua with pleasure?
 What reasons does God give in the second verse for justifying Jerusalem?
 2. **The High Priest Encouraged**, v. 3-7.
 What do Joshua's filthy garments typify?
 What in verse 4 does God command concerning these filthy garments?
 What deeper, more radical change had God wrought in Joshua and in the Hebrew nation?
 What was placed upon Joshua's head?
 What promise is made in verse 7?
 On what does this promise hinge?

thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.
 10 In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree.

Is anybody ever saved without moral faithfulness?

3. Prosperity Promised, v. 8-10.

What is meant by "men wondered at?" [Typical men.]

Who is meant by "my servant the BRANCH?"
 What other three prophets spoke of him under this title?

Whom does God say really laid the foundation of the temple?

Who will complete its ornamental details by "engraving the graving?"

Who will remove the iniquity of the Hebrew nation?

Who stands ready to remove our iniquity?
 Can anyone remove our iniquity but God?

Practical Teachings.

Where does this lesson intimate that—

1. True worshipers stand in the presence of God?
2. Where the sons of God present themselves Satan comes also?
3. The prime reason for our salvation is God's choice? It is God that justifieth.
4. With the inner and spiritual grace God expects the outward and visible sign?
5. Permanent salvation depends on permanent faithfulness?
6. He who never slumbers nor sleeps watches his Church with eyes of love?
7. God's ideal for his people is perfect purity and perfect peace?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Find and read another Old Testament passage which describes "Satan" as moral accuser or prosecutor before God.
2. Find and read the description of the high priest's garments, and be ready to explain their typical meaning.
3. Find and carefully study other prophetic passages referring to the Messiah as the Branch.
4. In what sense does Christianity bring peace?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. **The Adversary Rebuked**, v. 1, 2.
 Where did the prophet see Joshua standing?
 What adversary was near at hand?
 Who rebuked Satan?
 What were the words of the rebuke?
 With what question did the rebuke close?
 What other prophet thus speaks of Israel?
 (Amos 4. 11.)

2. The High Priest Encouraged, v. 3-7.

How was the high priest clothed?
 What command did the Lord give?
 What did the Lord say to Joshua?
 What was then done to him?
 Who stood by as a witness?
 In whose name did the angel speak?
 What did he name as conditions of the Lord's favor?

What then was promised to Joshua?
 Who is our high priest? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

3. Prosperity Promised, v. 8-10.

Who were summoned to hear the Lord's message?
 Whose coming was promised?
 Whence was the Branch to spring? (Isa. 11. 1.)
 What had been laid before Joshua?
 What was upon the stone?
 What did these eyes represent? (Chap. 4. 10.)
 What would occur in that day?
 Of what blessedness is this a promise? (See Micah 4. 4.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That good people may expect opposition?
2. That the Lord is the defender of his people?
3. That the coming of the Saviour meant peace to the world?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find the names and stories of certain priests who were ejected from their holy office because of moral unworthiness.

Read the story of how Satan accused Job before God.

Who is said by one of the apostles to be the chief corner stone of God's true spiritual temple?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was Zechariah? **A prophet of the Lord.**
 Who was Joshua? **A high priest.**
 How did he serve the Lord? **Faithfully.**
 Who showed Zechariah many things? **The Lord.**

Whom did he see standing before the angel of the Lord? **Joshua.**

Who was close by to resist him? **Satan.**
 Who is always ready to hinder good work? **Satan.**

Whom did the angel say had chosen Jerusalem? **The Lord.**

How did Joshua look as he stood before the angel? **Unclean.**

What was caused to pass from him? **His sin.**
 In what was he clothed? **Clean garments.**

What was placed upon his head? **A fair miter.**
 For what was he thus prepared? **His work as high priest.**

What did the Lord tell him to do? **Walk in his ways.**

Whom did he say he would bring forth? **The Branch.**

Who is the Branch? **Jesus Christ.**
 What is he to us? **Our spotless High Priest.**

Words with Little People.

Satan is always near, ready to keep children as well as grown people from being good. Shall we be afraid of him? No; for we have a holy High Priest, Jesus, our dear Saviour, ready to atone for our sins.

Whisper Motto.

"He ever liveth."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.**General Statement.**

Zechariah, a comparatively young man, allied himself with Haggai in the good work of encouraging the builders of the temple. Both men came to the rulers and people fresh from God with direct messages, but Zechariah's were much less simple than those of Haggai. He saw a succession of symbolical images, of which this is one. Zechariah was born in captivity, of priestly family, and succeeded his father, Iddo (probably), in the headship of the Davidic priestly course, which Iddo held in the earlier days of Zerubbabel and Joshua. The present vision sees the high priest confronted by a spiritual accuser who waits to urge the condemnation and overthrow of the high priest and his people because of their sins. But God, having chosen Jerusalem, dismisses the complaint and makes rich, but conditional, promises.

Verse 1. He. An angel guide, who attended Zechariah in his supernatural visions, and explained them. **Joshua the high priest** stands, evidently, not for himself, but typically as representative of Jerusalem and the whole nation. **Standing.** Most of the ceremonial duties of the high priest were performed in this position, only usually it was an altar before which he stood; now he fronts the **angel of the Lord**, and "stands"

on trial. Throughout the vision (as elsewhere) this "angel of the Lord" and the Lord (Jehovah) seem identical. **Satan.** This is literally "The Accuser," a title which has since been applied to the great enemy of our souls. There are proof texts in plenty for a personal devil; but it will hardly do to use this as one. Satan here is the typical spiritual prosecutor; nevertheless, his hostile presence during the hour of worship, and his endeavor

to nullify the worshiper's prayers and sacrifices, are typical of the attitude of the enemy of souls.

2. The Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. The answer to the accuser is not that Jerusalem is pure, but that God has chosen it. There were many at this time who had desire to engage with the Jews in rebuilding the temple (see Ezra 4. 2), but their true spirit was selfish and hostile, and now, like Satan, they had turned into accusers. **A brand plucked out of the fire.** This was a proverbial expression (see Amos 4. 11). God, having rescued the Jews so far, would not allow them now to come to grief. (1) *Our salvation is based on God's choice.*

3. Filthy garments. Here are entwined together two beautiful symbols. In the first place, the high priest's garments were typical of purity. They were to be made of peculiar material in a peculiar way, and their ceremonial purity symbolized lofty moral life in contrast with sin. To have a high priest clothed with filthy garments would be shocking to every Jew. But there is another symbol there. Zechariah was born, probably, in Persia, and knew well the custom of Persian courts to present accused persons to justice in rags and dirt. As soon as innocence was established the prisoner was not only liberated, but officially robed in white. Joshua still stood before the angel, on his trial.

4. Those that stood before him. The servants of the angelic court. **Take away.** This was a formal acquittal. **I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee.** In the oriental mind fact and symbol always go together. The angel of the Lord first states the spiritual pardon, and then its emblem. **Change of raiment.** Fresh, clean, festal robes. **I said.** This may mean either the prophet or the angel of Jehovah, probably the latter. **A fair miter.** Or, turban. This was part of the high priest's uniform. **The angel of the Lord stood by.** Not as a spectator; but, having sat as a judge, he now arises and gives this benign command.

6. Protested. Made affirmation on oath.

Verse 1. He showed me. The revealer was the mediating angel so frequently referred to by the prophet as "the angel that talked with me." Comp. chap. 1. 9, 13, 19; 2. 3; 4. 1, 4. There is no very clear distinction between Jehovah and the angel of Jehovah and the angel who talked with the prophet. Jehovah himself is the source of all the revelations, and whatever he does by an angel he truly does himself. What the prophet saw was but a vision, and is to be understood and interpreted as such. Hence it is out of place to suppose, as some have done, that the high priest was actually guilty of appearing in the holy place in filthy garments. The entire picture is ideal,

7. If. (2) *All God's blessings swing on "if's" as doors swing on hinges.* Heaven hereafter is pivoted on faithfulness here. **Keep my charge.** Obey my ordinances. **Judge my house.** The immediate meaning is that Joshua shall rule God's temple, preside as high priest over the sacred ceremonies, for many years. But, as has been wisely said, God's people are a royal priesthood, and the whole passage teaches that as a reward of faithfulness here we shall exercise judgment hereafter. **Keep my courts.** From profanation. **Places to walk among those that stand.** That is, Jehovah was surrounded by a throng of angel courtiers, and if Joshua were faithful he would be given the privilege of walking straight through the angelic court into the presence of God.

8, 9, 10. Hear now. For what is next to be said is startling. **Fellows.** In the priesthood. **Men wondered at.** Better, men of type, symbolical men. They and their ceremonies all point to Christ. **My servant the BRANCH.** This is a direct promise of the coming Messiah—who was to spring in vigor from the almost extinct root of David. See Zech. 6. 12; Isa. 4. 2; 11. 1; Jer. 23. 5; 33. 15. **Behold the stone that I have laid.** Surely these men should not hesitate to complete the temple if Jehovah laid the corner stone. **Seven eyes.** The eyes of the Lord. Here we sink deep into Hebraic symbolism. The figures press so closely against each other as to almost coalesce a Western thinker. But everything was a symbol to the Hebrew, and he did not feel himself compelled, as we do, to make a completed picture on each occasion, but directly interpreted each symbol as it was mentioned. This means the omniscience of God. **Engrave the graving.** That is, God not only himself lays the corner stone and designs the architecture, but, as the infinite Contractor, he becomes responsible for the completion of every ornamental detail of the entire edifice. **In one day.** Once for all. **Under the vine and under the fig tree.** Emblems of tranquil prosperity. (3) *Every Christian should seek to win others to Jesus.*

CRITICAL NOTES.

designed to teach a symbolical lesson, and need not be supposed to have had any external reality, any more than the symbols of the candlestick and the olive trees mentioned in the visions of the next chapter had external reality. But the vision itself was profoundly real to the prophet, and wrought upon his soul by the agency of the angel of Jehovah. **Joshua standing . . . Satan standing.** The partiple in each denotes continued action or condition. The high priest was standing as if about to perform the work of his office; "the adversary" (for such is the meaning of the word "Satan") was standing as an accuser and opposer.

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ing deserved reproof, and whatever judgment and condemnation such reproof might involve. Here it involved a triumphant vindication of Joshua from the accusations of Satan, a gracious removal of the marks of humiliation seen in his filthy garments, and a corresponding rebuke of Satan's attacks upon him. We naturally infer that the rebuke was uttered by the angel of Jehovah who was standing by. Comp. verse 5. **Brand . . . out of the fire.** Allusion to the fires of chastening judgment felt by Israel in exile. Comp. Amos 4. 11.

3. Filthy garments. These symbolized the fallen and disgraced condition of the priesthood during the time of Babylonian exile. How changed, how fallen from that holy position and attire which the sacred office of high priest required, and his Levitical consecration implied! See Lev. 8. 1-10. How could he stand **before the angel** in such disgraceful attire, and not be the sport of every adversary!

4. Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass. So the filthy garments represented the iniquity of the priesthood as well as the humiliating judgments consequent upon their sins. **Change of raiment.** Revised Version, "rich apparel." Costly attire, and as beautiful as the filthy garments were disgraceful.

5. I said. While we may suppose that the prophet himself at this point uttered the words which this reading ascribes to him, it is much more natural, and accords with the Septuagint and Vulgate versions, to read "he said," and so understand the same speaker as in the preceding verse. Joshua is not an actor in these scenes, but a passive recipient, at the most only asking after the significance of the visions. Comp. 1. 9, 19, 21; 2. 1; 4. 4; 5. 6; 6. 4. **Fair miter.** Or, "a pure tiara." Some pure and costly headdress is denoted, such as a person of royal dignity might wear. It is not the technical word which is used in Exod. 28. 4, to denote the miter or turban of the high priest. It suggests royal as well as priestly splendor, and probably for the reason suggested in chap. 6. 11-13, that Joshua was to be a type of him who is both king and priest upon his throne. **Clothed him with garments.** Such as were contemplated in the language of verse 4.

6. Protested unto Joshua. Or, rather, "testified unto Joshua;" that is, as the following verses show, he made known to the high priest the testimony and pledge of Jehovah to him.

7. Judge my house. Administer the laws and judgments which pertained to the priest's office and the services of the temple. **Give thee places to walk.** Revised Version, "a place of access." Others prefer the rendering "walks," which appears in the margin of the common version; some few translate it "walkers," and others "leaders." The word, so variously explained, is

either the Hiphil participle of the very common Hebrew verb which means "to walk," or a noun derived from the same verbal root. This particular form of the verb, however, occurs nowhere else, and therefore the precise meaning of it here will probably always be open to question. The most obvious import is that of some kind of fellowship with the angels in ministering before Jehovah. The priest is assured that, if he will carefully observe the holy charge committed to him, he shall be honored with a free access into the presence of the Holy One, and "walk before Jehovah" in holy ministrations, like the angels of light who stand and minister before God. There is some play on the word "walk" as used in the first part of the verse. "If thou wilt walk in my ways, I will let thee walk among these angels." Comp. Rev. 8. 4, where those who keep their garments undefiled "shall walk with me in white."

8. Men which are a sign. Not "to be wondered at," as the common version most unhappily renders the word. The word "sign" is used here as in Isa. 8. 18, in the sense of a symbolical person, and so also a type of something yet to be. Joshua's associates in the priestly office, as well as the high priest himself, are assured that they are typical characters, significant of one to come who is here designated as **my servant the BRANCH.** The same word is used to designate the Messiah in Isa. 4. 2, and another but synonymous term in Isa. 11. 1.

9. The stone which I have set before Joshua. The reference is so specific that we most naturally suppose some stone actually seen by the prophet in his vision. Perhaps it was suggested by the vivid recollection of some notable foundation stone used on the occasion described in Ezra 3. 9, 10. But interpreters differ as to the symbolical import of the stone. Was it a symbol of the covenant people, the household of God, who are to be "built up as lively stones into a spiritual house;" or another symbol of the Messiah, like the figure employed in Isa. 28. 16; Psalm 118. 22? Either view is possible, and each has had the support of distinguished scholars. We prefer, on the whole, to regard it as another symbol of Messiah. As the servant of Jehovah, he is to be not only a living "Branch," but also a living "Stone." Comp. the figure in 1 Peter 2. 5. **Upon one stone are seven eyes.** The word "one" suggests a separate and exceptional stone, "elect and precious" in some noticeable degree. The words may mean either that the eyes were directed upon the stone, and so suggestive of infinite care and providential oversight; or that the eyes were engraved on the stone, and, as in Rev. 5. 6, emblems of divine wisdom in him whom the stone itself symbolized. Comp. chap. 4. 10. The composite symbol of stone and eyes is best understood when explained in the latter sense. It is through the

divine mediation of the Messiah, the Servant, on whom Jehovah lays the iniquity of his people, and by whose stripes they are healed (Isa. 53. 5, 6), that Jehovah may remove the iniquity of that land in one day. Hence we recognize in this symbolic vision of the Branch and the Stone a twofold prophecy of Christ. It finds a complement in the additional suggestions of the "word of Jehovah" as written in Zech. 6. 10-15. The one day is best explained as a phrase equivalent to "speedily, and once for all."

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. *Is there a personal devil? If there is, did God create him evil, or did he become evil?*

The Bible clearly teaches the personal existence of an original adversary of God and man. He is not ubiquitous, but the evil engendered by him in human nature at the beginning is his universal and eternal proxy. God did not create him evil, for he cannot create anything contrary to his nature, except for the purposes of justice and the accomplishment of his plans. But when Satan was created there had been no call for the exercise of justice, and the devil's work in human history was not necessarily involved in God's plan; for God desired man to resist that work; therefore, Satan exists as such not by an act of God. He became evil by the misuse of free will just as man did.

Question 2. *What (or whom) does Joshua the high priest represent in this lesson?*

The entire representation is undoubtedly symbolical. The word "Joshua" is the Hebrew for "Jesus." Just as Captain Joshua, leading his people into Canaan, was a type of Christ, so this priestly Joshua represented him who was vicariously atone for human sin. The Jews were guilty of the grossest immoralities. The placing of the filthy garments upon Joshua was simply "numbering him with the transgressors;" they indicated the sins of the people and his personal assumption of their guilt. He stands before the Lord, the innocent, the suffering, and yet pleading for the guilty. In type he did for the Jews what Jesus in reality did for mankind.

Question 3. *What is meant by "the angel of the Lord?"*

The Jews held that the Deity is always attended by angels, and "the angels of the Presence" came to be a reverent synonym for the divine Presence itself. Thus "the angel of the Lord" is here used interchangeably with "the Lord," and designates the same person. See Eccles. 5. 5, *Whedon's Commentary*.

Question 4. *Is there any reason for the conventional picturing of wings on angels?*

There is no scriptural reason for picturing wings

on angels. In Heb. 1. 14, they are called "ministering spirits," etc.; hence as such they can have no wings. Whenever they appeared unto Abraham and Lot (Gen. 18. 1-16; 19. 1-12) they appeared in the form of human beings—"men"—hence could have had no wings on them. "Cherubim" (Gen. 3. 24; Exod. 25. 20) have wings, but they are not angels; they are symbolical figures of composite creature-forms. When in Rev. 14. 6, an angel is represented as "flying," it simply denotes the swiftness with which he, as a "messenger," is carrying out Christ's behests, and does not at all indicate that he had wings.

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

Joshua and Jesus.

I. OPPOSED.

Satan standing . . . to resist. v. 1.

"Tempted of the devil." Matt. 4. 1.

"Like as we are." Heb. 4. 15.

II. DESPISED.

Clothed with filthy garments. v. 3.

"Despised and rejected." Isa. 53. 3.

"Of no reputation." Phil. 2. 7.

III. VINDICATED.

The Lord rebuke thee. v. 2.

"My beloved Son." Matt. 3. 17.

"Declared . . . Son of God." Rom. 1. 4.

IV. TRANSFORMED.

Clothed him with garments. v. 4. 5.

"Passed into the heavens." Heb. 4. 14.

"Above every name." Phil. 2. 9.

V. EXALTED.

Thou shalt judge. v. 7.

"Every knee should bow." Phil. 2. 10.

"Prince and Saviour." Acts 5. 31.

Thoughts for Young People.

1. An accused soul. Everyone has to meet accusations which he himself cannot set aside. While, so weak is human nature, there are to be found men and women in this world who will defend almost every sin, it is a question whether there is to be found a single man or woman anywhere who, with full sincerity of heart, feels that he is as good as he ought to be. Satan opposes us, our consciences write against us bitter things, the world discounts our purposes. At the right hand of everyone of us stands the Accuser.

2. God is our Judge. Not ourselves; most of us pendulate from too much self-indulgence to too severe criticism. Not our neighbors; they cannot peep over the fence of our personality and see what sort of people we really are. But God sees through all disguises, and, like our Saviour, enters bolted doors.

3. God has chosen us. That is why we are

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saved. Do not let theological problems confuse you. God loves every human soul, and they who depend on that love are like Joshua, chosen by him and plucked as brands out of the fire.

4. *If we are God's servants, we should wear God's liercy.* It is worse than useless to try to be a Christian outside of the Church. What would you have thought of Joshua if, after the Lord had acquitted him, he had refused to put the "fair miter" on his head?

5. *If we are faithful to God, God will be more than faithful to us.*

6. *He who never slumbers nor sleeps watches us every day.*

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Lesson Word-Pictures.

O, vision of the prophet! It may have been in the stillness of the early morning hour, or at noon in the seclusion of prayer, or in the depths of the midnight hour, when others slept. It was as if he had felt the touch of a hand laid upon his eyes, and he saw! What a vision! Joshua, the high priest, rose up out of the emptiness, standing before the angel of the Lord! But who also was there with envious, hateful, remorseless eyes, his voice ready to cry out against the high priest, his hands quick to hinder, his feet swift to go on any errand of destruction? Satan!

And his accusations may have seemed well-grounded, for how mean is the condition, how filthy is the clothing, of Joshua! A high priest, and in such sorry, shameful garb! In the bright, golden presence of the Jehovah-angel, O, how meanly, disgracefully clad is the successor of Aaron in the old sacerdotal splendor, or in the stainless, snowlike robes the high priest wore on the solemn day of atonement!

How Satan rejoices as he leers at this dirty-robed son of Aaron!

Who is it but Joshua that would revive Jehovah's worship in this half ruined temple? Satan seems to cry. But O, voice of the Lord, that prompt, deep-searching, awful voice! It rebukes the adversary of souls! And is Joshua clad in filthy garments? Wondrous the change that the Lord now orders. They are taking away the garments mean and soiled and servile. They array him in garments clean and glorious and royal. They set a shining miter on his brow. Is that all? I seem to hear the soft, sweet clash of bells hung upon the hem of the robe of the priestly ephod. O, beautiful investiture of Joshua with Aaron's garments! How great the change! Let Joshua walk in God's ways, he is told, and how great will be Joshua's blessing! And now solemn announcement! One shall come, God's servant, and his name is the Branch! Broad, ample, enduring is the foundation stone the prophet sees, and how keen and searching are the seven eyes deep set in this tried

stone. And the name of this wonderful one shall be the Branch! How rich the foliage, how precious the fruit clusters! I look forward and I see the reign of this budding, blossoming, fruitful Branch! I see that coming One on the shores of Galilee, on Olivet's top, in Jerusalem's crowded streets. I see him upon the cross, the great High Priest, his hands outstretched as if still to bless the world that refused him.

O how great the blessing he leaves behind him! What peace during his ministry, what justice during his administration, and what homes of comfort spring up!

I see vines heavy with clusters. I see fig trees with pulpy fruit. And then, under vine and fig tree, what scenes of fellowship, what gatherings of amity and covenants of love!

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

Verses 2. Satan, the Adversary, stood at the right hand of the high priest. The accuser of a criminal in Jewish courts stood at the right hand of the plaintiff. The two words by which Satan is translated in the New Testament are both borrowed from oriental law courts. The oriental world is full of the old Persian idea of a good and a bad spirit, each controlling a realm of light and darkness, as Ahriman and Ormuzd among the Persians. If the good god sent cattle, the bad god sent murrain among them. But in the Scriptures Satan, the evil power, is always subordinate to the good power, God.

Verses 8. "Thy fellows that sit before thee," is a graphic Orientalism for the "council of the temple," which regulated everything connected with the affairs of the sanctuary; the fourteen members sat before the high priest and his suffragan, two chief treasurers, three subordinate treasurers, and seven "Anmarcalim" in charge of the gates.

By Way of Illustration.

"The Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem." God draws his people not with force, but "with the bands of love." How was it that Jacob was drawn into Egypt? He was made to feel the pressure of a grievous famine; he was informed that there was plenty of corn in Egypt and that his dearly-beloved Joseph was lord of that land. He was told that Joseph had expressly invited him and provided wagons for his conveyance, and that at the end of the journey all the good of the land of Egypt should be his. Did he need, after this, to have a chain fastened around him to be dragged into Egypt? No; all that was needed was faith to believe the tidings. Thus God draws sinners.—*Simeon.*

"Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment."

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I heard of a man who carried about with him a book containing three blank leaves. The first was a leaf of jet black paper, the next of scarlet, and the third of white without spot. He said, "The black leaf represents my sin—as I look it seems not black enough to represent my guilt; the red leaf reminds me of the atoning sacrifice; and the white represents my soul washed and made whiter than snow."—*Spurgeon*.

A man at Malabar started to walk on spiked sandals four hundred and eighty miles to obtain peace. One day he halted under a shady tree and heard a missionary preach from the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." He heard with excited interest, and finally threw off his sandals, crying aloud, "That is what I want." Only God can remove the filthy garment of sin and make pure.

"I will bring forth my servant the Branch."

Every page of Scripture points to Christ. Philosophers tell us that without the outer world of nature to draw a language from, we could not have expressed a single thought. What the world of nature is to the soul of man, the Old Testament is to the New. God first made his creation, and then he made a living soul to use it and interpret it; he first made the old world of type and symbol and history, and then he sent his Son to fill it with spiritual truth, and use it for a language to tell us about divine and eternal things.

Verses 10. "Thy kingdom come!" That prayer includes all others. The answer to that prayer for the disciple himself is pardon, rest, sustenance, holiness, and heaven at last; and to the world it is the millennium.

At a meeting in London to do honor to Browning, some of the speakers aired their skepticism. Mr. Lowell, who was then American Minister to England, said, "When the microscopic search of skepticism, which has hunted the heavens and sounded the seas to disprove the existence of a Creator, has turned its attention to human society, and has found a place on this planet ten miles square where a decent man can live in decency, comfort, and security, supporting and educating his children, unspoiled and unpopulated; a place where age is revered, infancy protected, manhood respected, womanhood honored, and human life held in due regard—when skeptics can find such a place ten miles square on this globe where the Gospel of Christ has not gone first, and made decency and security possible, it will then be in order for the skeptical *literati* to move thither and there ventilate their views."

The Teachers' Meeting.

The outline suggested in the *Illustrative Notes* is good; I. The Prophet. II. The Vision. III. The

Promise. I. Compare (1) the wonder-working prophets, such as Elijah and Elisha, with (2) the truth-teaching prophets, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel. Then divide the truth-teaching prophets into (1) those who delivered in plain words, with more or less eloquence, the message which God intrusted to them, and (2) those who, intellectually guided by the divine Spirit, saw visions and dreamed dreams. Of the second class Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah are conspicuous examples. They taught by symbols. Contrast Haggai, direct and simple-hearted, with the more youthful prophet Zechariah, who, morning after morning, had some startling vision to tell of red horses, or flying rolls, or measuring lions, or rolling chariots. II. Read the seven visions which Zechariah saw in one night, of which this, concerning Joshua, is the fourth. Explain the Orientalisms of the lesson: the typical meaning of filthy garments, of the standing on the right hand, of a "fair miter," of keeping God's courts, of the "stone with seven eyes," of the Branch, etc. III. Show the conditions on which the promise of prosperity is made.... Joshua and his fellow priests are typical of the Messiah, who is (1) priestly; (2) accused; (3) innocent; (4) sanctified; (5) the source of all blessings.

References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 4: Change of raiment, 487. Ver. 10: Sitting in the shade, 613.... FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Poetical, 3249, 580, 1, 2, 2629; Prose, 6276, 3334-3340. Ver. 1: Prose, 4255, 11586. Ver. 2: Prose, 189, 5173, 5193. Ver. 4: Prose, 3444, 10085. Ver. 5: Prose, 11669. Ver. 8: Prose, 7124.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *What God Can Make.*

[Print the "thought" in large, striking letters on the board. Let the children spell out the words, and, if the class is not too large, ask each one to tell something that God can make. It is wise at the very beginning of a lesson to waken little minds to active thought. If well guided and not allowed to become tedious, this introduction may prove helpful and stimulating.]

To be taught: 1. That we are standing before the Lord; 2. That our filthy garments may be cast away; 3. That we may be newly clothed by the Lord; 4. That Christ is the fountain of cleansing.

1. [Print "Zechariah," and tell that he was another of the Lord's prophets sent to the Jews to carry the Lord's word to them.] Sometimes the prophet saw strange visions, in which the Lord spoke to him. In this vision he saw Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord;

close by stood Satan, ready to hinder Joshua from being right and doing right. Perhaps Joshua did not see Satan, but the angel did, and rebuked him and sent him away.

The prophet told this vision to the Jews, and he tells it to us. The Lord wants us to know that we, too, are standing in his sight. He sees us and thinks about us. He knows all our little sorrows and joys. He knows, too, that Satan stands close by ready to harm us! Will he tell Satan to go away? Yes, if he sees that we do not want him near us. We show that we want him when we listen to him and do as he tells us. [Make a heart on the board, and print over and around it, "Thou God seest me."]

2. Does God see us just as we are? When Willie is cross and selfish, does God see him then? When Mary is sly and deceitful, does God see her? Yes; hear what he says: [Read Psalm 139. 1-4; 11. 12.] God looks at the heart. If sin is there, it looks dark and filthy to him. Though Joshua was the high priest, yet God saw that his heart was not clean. What did he say? "Take away the filthy garments from him." This is what God will say of us if he sees in us a hatred of sin. Do you want to have all that is naughty and unlovely taken away? Then say so to God, and listen for his answer!



3. [With flat erayon make the inside of the heart all white.] When God takes away our filthy garments—sin—he has something waiting for us. Hear what he says: [Read from the Bible, "I will clothe thee with change of raiment."] God has the clean, white robes of truth and purity for his children to wear. He wants to give them to us. We may have them if we will ask. But some people will not ask. They do not believe that their hearts are stained with sin. They are like the little girl who was screaming because she could not have her own way. Her mamma said, "It's the naughty old heart that makes you scream so, and all the time Jesus wants you to have a new heart." "I don't want a new heart," cried Maggie; "I won't have one! It'll hurt, I know it will." No; it's the bad old heart that hurts!

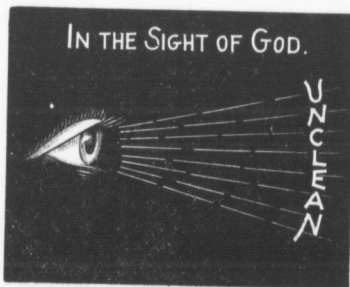
4. [Sing "What can wash away my stain."] Who loves us even when we are naughty? God always loves us, and comes seeking us when we do not care for him. [The dear old story cannot be told too tenderly or too often. Try to make the children see how unable we are to make our hearts clean, and that it is just the work that Jesus came to do.]

What is the Lesson Thought? Here is some-

thing very precious that God can do. Print under the "thought" "Make dark hearts white."

Close with the "Snow-prayer" repeated softly, hands folded, and eyes closed.

Blackboard.



This lesson teaches that in the pure sight of God we all appear unclean. Though the air seems clear in a room, yet a ray of sunlight shows it to be full of dust. We can none of us say, "I am clean." How then can we be saved? Not of ourselves. [Write on the board, between the eye and the word "unclean," these words, "Through Christ," and erase the letters *un*, so that it will read, "In the sight of God, through Christ, clean."] Read Isa. 64. 6; Psalm 49. 7-9; 143. 2; Eph. 1. 7; 1 Peter 1. 18, 19.

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Lord, we come before thee now.
Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear.
There is a Friend, a Friend you need.
'Tis the promise of God.
How firm a foundation.

No. 2.

Sing the praise of him forever.
O, join with the worshiping angels.
Ye that love the name of Jesus.
There is a name I love to hear.
What glory gilds the sacred page.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who resisted Joshua the high priest? **Satan.**
2. How was Joshua clothed? **With filthy garments.**

3. Who gave him a change of raiment and a miter upon his head? **The Lord.**

4. On what condition did the Lord promise Joshua great blessings? **If thou wilt walk in my ways.**

5. Whom did he say he would bring forth? **My servant the BRANCH.**

6. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"We have a great high priest,"** etc.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

6. How did Jesus Christ show that He was a Teacher sent from God?

By performing signs and wonders such as could be performed only by the power of God.

John iii. 2. Rabbi we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with him.

About B. C. 519.] LESSON V. THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD.

[Jan. 29.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the

Lord. Zech. 4. 6.

Authorized Version.

Zech. 4. 1-10. [*Commit to memory verses 5-7.*]

1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:

3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

4 So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord?

5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Ze-rub'ba-bel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

7 Who art thou, O great mountain? before Ze-rub'ba-bel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

8 Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

9 The hands of Ze-rub'ba-bel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you.

10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Ze-rub'ba-bel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

Revised Version.

1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have seen, and behold, a

candlestick all of gold, with its bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lamps thereon; there are seven pipes to each of the lamps, which are

3 upon the top thereof: and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the

4 other upon the left side thereof. And I answered and spake to the angel that talked with

5 me, saying, What are these, my lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and

said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? 6 And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the

word of the Lord unto Ze-rub'ba-bel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by spirit, saith

7 the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Ze-rub'ba-bel thou shalt be-

8 come a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone with shoutings of Grace, grace, unto it.

8 Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me 9 saying, The hands of Ze-rub'ba-bel have laid

the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the

10 Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the

hand of Ze-rub'ba-bel, even these seven, which are the eyes of the Lord; they run to and fro through the whole earth.

TIME.—About B. C. 519. **PLACE.**—Zechariah resided in Jerusalem. The lesson recounts a vision which came to him in that city. **RULES.**—Same as before. **OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL SUGGESTIONS.**—Same as before. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The omniscience of God.

HOME READINGS.

M. The Spirit of the Lord. Zech. 4. 1-10.
Tu. The obstacles. Ezra 4. 1-6.

W. "Not by might." 2 Chron. 20. 5-18.
Th. The Lord with us. 2 Chron. 32. 1-8.
F. Anointed with the Spirit. Isa. 61. 1-6.
S. The Spirit given. Luke 11. 9-13.
S. The Spirit's power. Acts 2. 1-11.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 75, New Canadian Hymnal.

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast.

No. 89, New Canadian Hymnal.

The door of God's mercy is open.

No. 91, New Canadian Hymnal.

Whoever receiveth the Crucified One.

DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 278, 276, 263.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Vision, v. 1-5.

Who had talked with the prophet?

What did the angel now do?

What did the prophet see?

How many lamps were on the candlestick?

How many pipes led to these lamps?

From what did the pipes proceed?

What stood beside the candlestick?

Did the prophet understand the vision?

Where else do we find mention of the golden candlestick? (Exod. 40. 24, 25.)

Where did the golden candlestick stand?

Who afterward saw in a vision the golden candlestick? (Rev. 1. 12, 13.)

What did the lamps represent? (Rev. 1. 20.)

Why does the candlestick represent the Church? [Because it bears light for the world.]

2. Interpretation, v. 6-10.

What is the word of the Lord in the GOLDEN TEXT?

What does this mean?

How is it explained by 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28?

Who was Zerubbabel?

In what work was he engaged? (Verse 9; Ezra 5. 2.)

To what are the obstacles before him compared?

What promise was given him?

What promise is given in Isa. 40. 4, 5?

Who were Zerubbabel's chief opponents?

What do we here learn concerning God's omniscience?

What direct lessons do we here learn concerning the Church and ourselves?

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That obstacles are nothing in God's way?

2. That the weak are mighty by God's aid?

3. That success is sure to God's cause?

Hints for Home Study.

1. Study the form of the golden candlestick or lamp stand; the history of the original article; its early mention; its capture; its restoration to Jerusalem; and its capture by the Romans.

2. Study its spiritual, typical meaning as brought out in Revelation, and by words of Christ concerning the Light of the world.

3. Read in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah causes for Zerubbabel's discouragement.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Vision, v. 1-5.

Who again came to the prophet?

What did the angel do?

What question did he ask?

What was the first object seen?

What stood on either side of the candlestick?

What question did the prophet ask?

What was the reply?

What do the olive trees represent? Verse 14 and Rev. 11. 3, 4.)

2. Interpretation, v. 6-10.

To whom was this vision a message?

What did it say about power? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

What about a mountain?

What does Jesus say about removing a mountain? (Matt. 21. 21.)

Who began the temple?

Who should finish it?

What question is asked about small things?

What would the people see?

Where are the eyes of the Lord?

Why does the Lord thus search the earth? (1 Chron. 16. 9.)

What can be hidden from his gaze? (Heb. 4. 13.)

Teachings of the Lesson.

What are we taught in this lesson—

1. About preparation for God's work?

2. About difficulties in God's work?

3. About success in God's work?

Home Work for Young Bereans.

How did Christ compare himself and us to light?

Who laid the foundation of the second temple, and who finished it?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who came and talked again with Zechariah?

The angel.

What did Zechariah see this time? **A candlestick.**

Of what was it made?

Of gold.

What was upon it? **Seven lamps.**

What was on either side? **An olive tree.**

What did Zechariah ask? **What this meant.**

What did the angel say? **That it was the work of the Lord.**

To whom? **To Zerubbabel.**

Who was Zerubbabel? **The governor of the Jews.**

What troubled him? **The building of the temple.**

Why was he troubled? **Enemies hindered the work.**

How did the Lord say the work would not be done? **By might nor by power.**

How did he say it would be done? **By his Spirit.**

What did he say would be brought low? **MOUNTAINS OF TROUBLE.**

Whom did the Lord say would finish the temple? **ZERUBBABEL.**

What are we told not to despise? **The day of small things.**

What side is sure to win? **The Lord's side.**

Words with Little People.

Sometimes you try to be good and please God, and fail. Maybe you have tried to do it yourself—by your own power and might! Remember what the Lord says in this lesson, and let it teach you the right way.

Lesson Teaching.

"By my Spirit."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

General Statement.

The dark days of captivity are over, and the remnant of the Jews are once more in the land of their fathers, and ruled by their own hereditary prince, Zerubbabel, though under the scepter of the Persian king. But their temple still stands incomplete by the opposition of their enemies and the prohibition of the jealous government. The people have lost heart for the work, and have turned from the unfinished walls of God's house to build and adorn their own homes. At this period of discouragement and lack of interest the prophets Haggai and Zechariah arise, to urge their countrymen to renew their toils for the building of the temple. Zechariah's vision appears to encourage the drooping hearts of the prince and the people. He beholds the golden candlestick standing in its place within the Holy House, and above it hangs a golden bowl, from which flows through pipes the oil to every lamp. On either side stands an olive tree, on whose fruit-laden branches, by mysterious distillation, the oil is formed, which, flowing through golden pipes, supplies the reservoir above the candlestick—a symbol of God's sustaining grace bestowed upon his people. An angel utters the promise that the princely hands which laid the corner stone of that temple shall yet place its headstone on the roof, and that God's cause, however weak and small, shall triumph over all its foes.

Verses 1, 2. The angel. The revelations to Zechariah were given, not directly from God, but through the ministrations of an angel. **Waked me.** After the previous vision of the high priest and the adversary standing before the angel, Zechariah had fallen into a sleep, from which he was now aroused and lifted into the prophetic state. **A candlestick.** Though the temple was still unfinished and its sacred furniture was as yet unused, the prophet saw in vision the golden candlestick in the holy place. This was a lamp stand, consisting of a central shaft from which branched three arms on each side, thus presenting places for seven lamps, which were arranged in a row, all at the same height. The candlestick was of pure gold, cast in ornamental form, and stood five feet high and three and a half feet wide at the summit.—*Canon Drake.* It may be taken as a type of the Church (Rev. 1, 20) in the following particulars: 1. Its purpose was to give light (Matt. 5, 15). 2. Its material was precious and costly, indicating how dear is the Church to God, and how lovely it should be in the sight of men. 3. Its seven lamps in a line point to the diversity, the equality, and the unity of the Church. 4. Like the Church, it often needed to be filled, replenished, and trimmed afresh. 5. Like the Church, it was not the light in itself, but the bearer of the light which represented Christ, who is the light of the world (John 9, 15). **A bowl upon the top.** This, though not a part of the candlestick, was

seen in the vision as surrounding it and supplying its seven lamps with oil, an emblem of the invisible stores of grace with which God supplies his Church. (1) *So God's people can see what others cannot, the fountain whence flow our blessings.* **Seven lamps.** The lamps were separate from the candlestick or lamp stand, being oil vessels in which the wicks floated. **Seven pipes.** There is some obscurity in the text here. It is literally, "Seven and seven pipes," or, "Seven several pipes," and would seem to indicate that in the vision there were seven pipes leading from the reservoir to each lamp, making forty-nine in all.

3, 4, 5. Two olive trees. The candlestick of the prophet's vision was supported on each side by an olive tree, from whose branches a golden pipe appeared to connect directly with the oil-reservoir surmounting the candlestick, supplying it with oil which flowed from the trees. (2) *The supply of divine power does not come through human ministrations, but directly from on high.* **What are these.** (3) *The divine teachings are not always understood, even by inspired men.* **No, my lord.** (4) *We should never be ashamed to acknowledge our ignorance of the divine mysteries, if we would receive instruction concerning them.*

6. This is the word of the Lord. That is, this vision was sent as a message to encourage the heart of Zerubbabel and his fellow workers by its picture of the divine supply which should meet every need. **Zerubbabel.** The hereditary

prince of Judah, who was, as his name indicates, "born in Babylon" during the captivity. He had led the exiles back to their own land, and begun the rebuilding of the temple about fifteen years before the period of this lesson. **Not by might.** As the golden candlestick was fed by invisible supplies, so God's purposes did not depend for their accomplishment upon human might or power, but were sure of success through divinely furnished instrumentalities. (5) *God can accomplish more through the weakest things than men can through the strongest.* He can raise up workers wherever he requires them. **My Spirit.** The oil of the golden candlestick symbolized supernatural power, which, in every dispensation—patriarchal and Mosaic, as really as Christian—God has given instinctively to his followers.

7. O great mountain. The difficulties which arose around Zerubbabel in his endeavor to restore the temple, from the oppositions abroad and lack of zeal at home, seemed like a mountain.

(6) *Whoever undertakes a noble work for God must expect to find obstacles in his way. A plain.*

(7) *Obstacles are easily overcome, or are except out of sight, if God be on our side.* The "mountain" of Samaritan opposition proved after all "a plain" when the decree of Darius authorized the completion of the temple, and compelled even its enemies to give their assistance to it (Ezra 5, 6). **The headstone.** That is, the keystone or crowning piece, being the last placed on the summit of the completed building. **Shoutings.** As shouts had accompanied the foundation (Ezra 3, 11), so

they were destined to accompany the completion of the work. **Grace, grace.** A supplication for divine grace to rest upon the building. (8) *Even when our work is done we need to ask for grace upon it.*

8, 9, 10. His hands shall also finish it. An encouraging assurance to the prince of Judah, who had now waited fifteen years and was destined to wait seven years longer for its fulfillment. (9) *God rewards with success those who work for him.* (10) *Those who do not witness the success of their endeavors here may yet behold it hereafter.*

Who hath despised. Some among the Jews, but more among the surrounding nations, had ever surveyed with contempt the effort to rebuild the temple. **Small things.** (11) *The greatest results often arise from the least beginnings.* There was a day when the whole Christian Church counted only one hundred and twenty members. **They shall rejoice.** An obscure passage, of which the best rendering seems to be, "They, those seven, shall rejoice, and see the plummet," etc. That is, not the despisers, but "the seven eyes of the Lord" shall rejoice as the work of the rebuilding advances. (12) *We may disregard the frowns of men if we possess the smiles of God upon our work.*

The plummet. That is, the plumb line in the hands of Zerubbabel, as evidence of work in progress, received notice and favor from the eyes of the Lord. (13) *God observes and honors his people's labors.* **Those seven . . . the eyes of the Lord.** Seven is used often in Scripture as the complete number. Hence seven eyes would indicate omniscience. See verse 9, last lesson.

CRITICAL NOTES.

The vision of this chapter is the sixth given to the prophet, according to his own record, and is called in verse 6, "a word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel." Not only unto Joshua, the high priest, was there given a special and encouraging revelation, but also unto Zerubbabel, the chief ruler of the restored Israel—all that was now left them of external royalty. He seemed little and insignificant before such rulers as the King of Persia, and his dominion and work were as much exposed to the assault of the adversary and as great a matter of derision as the depressed priesthood represented by Joshua. The enemy might say of his work, as they did of Nehemiah's, "What do these feeble Jews? If a fox go up, he will break down their stone wall" (Neh. 4, 2, 3). The great work of Zerubbabel was the rebuilding of the temple, and this word of the Lord to him had, accordingly, its appropriate symbols of the candlestick and the olive trees. The temple was itself a symbol of the Church as the household of God, and Zerubbabel as ruler, and Joshua as high priest, are both to be divinely encouraged by the thought that they, like two olive trees that pour out golden oil into the lamps of the golden candlestick, are

verily the two anointed ones who stand in the immediate presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The true Israel are the light of the world, and the unfailling source of their power is the spirit of Jehovah of hosts. That power is often imparted through human, though divinely anointed, agents, but is mightier than all the armies and empires of the world.

Verse 1. Came again and waked me. The visions were successive, and intervals of undefined length occurred between them.

2. Candlestick . . . bowl . . . seven lamps . . . seven pipes. The main features of this candlestick were doubtless the same as that of the Mosaic tabernacle, and consisted of a central shaft, and three branches upholding lamps on each side. The **bowl** and the **pipes** were peculiar to this vision, as were also the two olives seen on either side. How these were all adjusted to each other one may best answer by trying to draw a figure to correspond with the statement of the prophet. A helpful illustration may be seen in Wright's work on *Zechariah and his Prophecies*, page 84. The principal critical difficulty is the number of **pipes** connecting the lamps to the

bowl upon the top. The common version reads "seven pipes," but puts in the margin "seven several pipes." The Septuagint and Vulgate appear to support the common version. Others render literally "seven and seven pipes to the lamps," and explain it to mean fourteen pipes, two to each lamp. The Revised Version takes the number distributing, and renders "seven pipes to each of the lamps." This is the most proper import of the Hebrew idiom, as may be seen by comparing the phraseology of 1 Chron. 20. 6; 2 Sam. 21. 20. No good reason appears for doubting that each lamp had seven pipes connecting with the bowl, for the larger the number the more impressive and suggestive the vision. The candlestick as seen in the vision was probably very large, and forty-nine pipes by no means out of proportion or unseemly.

6. Not by might, nor by power. The allusion is to the military force and prowess of empire, with which the popular mind was wont to associate the highest ideals of power. Zerubbabel might have often thought of his inability to cope with such **might and power** as that which Cyrus the conqueror was employing to subjugate and hold in subjection the Oriental world. His exposure to enemies, and want of such resources as Solomon had at command in building the first temple, may have led him at times to wish for such power as a vast army and immense treasure imply. To cheer him he is shown that his highest success will be attained by a power not of this world. **My Spirit.** Symbolized by the "golden oil" that flowed out from the olive trees (verse 12).

7. O great mountain. The mountain here poetically addressed is to be understood of any and all difficulties and embarrassments which seemed to stand in the way of Zerubbabel. It is conceived in the spirit of Isa. 40. 4. "Every mountain and hill shall be made low." Perhaps it was suggested by that very prophecy of triumphant return from exile. Before a leader, chosen and anointed of God like Zerubbabel, the most threatening mountain of opposition becomes a plain. Comp. Matt. 17. 20. **Grace, grace, unto it.** Zerubbabel will complete the temple and put in place **the headstone** as the crowning act amidst the glad **shoutings** of the people, who invoke the continual **grace** or favor of Jehovah upon it.

10. Who hath despised. The question is to be taken as a challenge; a question that implies a negative answer, or something equivalent to, "surely no thoughtful man does so unreasonable a thing." **Day of small things.** Such as that of the new beginning at Jerusalem, and especially the new temple, which at first, in comparison with its former glory, was as nothing in their eyes (Hag. 2. 3). **They shall rejoice.** Namely, **these seven**, which are immediately afterward described as **the eyes of the Lord.** No one

should despise feeble beginnings when the eyes of Jehovah look on with joy. The number **seven** is so frequently employed as a symbolical number in apocalyptic prophecies that we should not wonder at it here, or suppose that the idea of "seven eyes of Jehovah" was derived from Persian ideas of the Supreme Being. Both here and in chap. 8. 9 we understand the number seven to suggest the infinite intelligence of Jehovah, the Omniscience which takes in **the whole earth.** This all-embracing vision of the Most High is poetically conceived as "running to and fro," and should be compared with the whirling wheels "full of eyes round about" which Ezekiel saw (Ezek. 1. 18; 10. 12, 13), and which moved with the swiftness of the lightning.

The ancient versions and some interpreters have explained this verse as if the latter part were a conclusion consequent upon the first part, thus: "For whoever has despised the day of small things, even they shall rejoice and see," etc. But the **who** is an interrogative pronoun, and Keil well observes that "it has hitherto been impossible to find a single well established example" of such an indefinite use of this pronoun. On the other hand, the "conception of the eyes of Jehovah" running all over the world, and sparkling with joy as they look on Zerubbabel's work, is a most beautiful and impressive one.

The Lesson Council.

Question 1. *What does this vision of Zechariah represent to us?*

The candlestick symbolized the Jewish Church; and also the Church of Christ. See Rev. 1. 20; 11. 4. Its purpose was illumination. The Church of God is the light of the world. The Church in its effectiveness is what its ministers make it, for out of the olive tree, the anointed ones, the oil flowed into the bowls, or the candlestick. But we are shown also that the success of God's cause depends at bottom on the energy of the Holy Ghost. The words "might" and "power" have no well defined difference of meaning in the Hebrew; they are used both of physical and mental power. Not laws, armies, ecclesiastical methods, or brilliant brains, but the Holy Ghost in these instruments, does the work. Just as it is not the hand, but the will in the hand, that does the act

Question 2. *Do mountains become plains in our time before God's people?*

The "biblical mountain," indicating difficulties and obstacles, is a common figure in human thinking—all successful work encounters a mountain. When Jesus attempted to establish his kingdom there were many mountains in his way. Prophecy had declared, "Every mountain shall be brought low." That Scripture was fulfilled. There is a

blessed sense in which all believers are in prophecy with Christ. Jesus tells us how to remove mountains in Matt. 17. 20. Mustard-seed faith following God-given duty will tear up any mountain. Nothing can withstand a concurrence between God and man. Jesus said, "Have faith in God," but instead of following instructions man appoints a committee. Faith in God does level mountains.

Question 3. *Who are meant by "the two anointed ones" in verses 12-14?*

In this vision two olive trees supply oil for the candlestick of the sanctuary. So in the second temple the anointed orders, priests and prophets, were to maintain the honor of the house by grace from sources divine, as the olive, getting oil from nature, delivers it for material uses. Like this are the mystic olive trees in Rev. 11. 21.

Question 4. *Do the words, "my Spirit," in verse 6 refer to the Holy Spirit? Would they have been so understood in the time of this prophecy?*

The words, "my Spirit," refer undoubtedly to the "Holy Spirit," but the Jews, during the prophetic age, had no such conception of the separate and distinct personality of the Spirit of God as we now possess; for the person, the attributes, and the operations of the Holy Spirit were made known more fully in the New Testament, and in the light of such later revelation such words as "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Jehovah," "the Holy Spirit," when heard by the patriarchs, prophets, etc., were probably understood imperfectly by them, though now full of meaning to us.—*Rev. M. J. Cramer, D.D.*

Analytical and Biblical Outline.

The Vision Interpreted.

I. THE VISION.

1. *A candlestick all of gold.* v. 2.
"Golden candlesticks....churches." Rev. 1. 20.
"Ye are....light of the world." Matt. 5. 14.
2. *A bowl upon the top.* v. 2.
"Seven spirits of God." Rev. 4. 5.
"Ye shall receive power." Acts 1. 8.
3. *Seven pipes to....lamps.* v. 2.
"Diversities of gifts." 1 Cor. 12. 4.
"To everyone....grace." Eph. 4. 7.
4. *Two olive trees.* v. 3.
"Two anointed ones." v. 14.
"My two witnesses." Rev. 11. 3, 4.
5. *The golden oil.* v. 12.
"The oil of gladness." Psalm 45. 7.
"Grace, mercy, and peace." 1 Tim. 1. 2.

II. THE INTERPRETATION.

1. *Not by might....my Spirit.* v. 6.
"My Spirit....among you." Hag. 2. 5.
"Baptize....with Holy Ghost." Matt. 3. 11.

2. *Bring forth the headstone.* v. 7.
"The house was finished." Ezra 6. 15.
"Headstone of the corner." Psalm 118. 22.
3. *The day of small things.* v. 10.
"A grain of mustard seed." Matt. 13. 31.
"Fear not, little flock." Luke 12. 32.
4. *The eyes of the Lord.* v. 10.
"Beholding....evil and good." Prov. 15. 3.
"To show himself strong." 2 Chron. 16. 9.

Thoughts for Young People.

Thoughts upon the Cause of God among Men.

1. God's cause may meet with discouragements from opposition without and lukewarmness within.
2. Though the interest of men in God's work may fail, yet he is ever watching over and guarding it.
3. When God's workers are disheartened he presents to them divine encouragements. (Verse 2.)
4. The sources and means which supply strength to God's people are often unseen by the world. (Verses 2, 3.)
5. Obstacles and difficulties in the path of God's cause melt away before his power. (Verse 7.)
6. Success is sure to those who work for God. (Verse 9.)
7. Though men despise, God honors those who work for him. (Verse 10.)

Lesson Word-Pictures.

O profound sleep of the prophet! Suddenly a hand is laid upon him. He is aroused. He opens his eyes. He hears a voice. "What seest thou?"

It is an angel speaking.

The prophet looks, and what a wonderful vision! A shining candlestick, its gold undimmed; and more marvelous still is the feeding of the candlestick! Two olive trees are there, green and fruitful, continually sending life into the candlestick. It is one steadily flowing current out of the olive trees, and giving strength to the pure golden flame.

As I look, that candlestick seems to be planted at Jerusalem, and the two olive trees are there also. They rise amid those broken, dishonored walls, and not far from that incomplete temple, giving the assurance of divine resources that are indeed measureless.

O Zerubbabel, be like that candlestick, one divinely fed!

But what is it rising up to hinder and oppose, perhaps destroy? How it towers and threatens! How its shadow darkens and covers everything as if with a pall! It is a mountain overhanging the work at Jerusalem. Will it overwhelm Zerubbabel?

No; his eye is fastened upon that olive-fed can-

dilestick. He boldly advances upon this obstacle. And what a change! Lo, the mountain dwindles! It sinks lower and lower. It falls away, spreads out, and subsides into a great plain.

And now a scene of victory follows. Zerubbabel brings forth the headstone of the temple structure. What interest attends this act! I seem to see a great multitude looking on and watching the work. Every eye follows the stone as it moves steadily, triumphantly, to its appointed place. And how many voices shout, "Grace, grace unto it," as the stone is successfully placed. One great chorus rises, wave upon wave of sound, "Grace, grace unto it!"

And are there any that despise the day of beginnings? Do they look upon Jerusalem's crumbled ruin heaps and the unfinished temple walls rising out of them and sneer at the day of small things? O despisers, look through the eyes of the prophet, and look into the future! O scene of steady progress! Zerubbabel is seen amid the uprising walls. He directs the advancing work. His plummet falls here and there in skillful examination of the growing structure. And O, eyes of mystery and power, the wonderful seven, eyes of the Lord that run everywhere, from north to south, from east to west—these notice every step, take up and hold everything. How they shine and watch, watch and shine! These, these shall help Zerubbabel, and these shall witness his success.

Lift up the voice again, O nation disheartened! Thou, too, mayest rejoice. I hear the echoing shouts, "Grace, grace unto it!"

Orientalisms of the Lesson.

Zech. 4. 9: The foundations of this temple were unlike some of heathen lands. In Africa it is not unusual to lay the foundations of great buildings with the slaughtered bodies of men; their blood and bones constitute a fortuitous foundation. This one was to be laid by Zerubbabel, according to the custom of the Orient, that some great man must lay the foundation stone.

By Way of Illustration.

Verse 6. Stephenson, when asked what power pulled the train along the rails, answered, "The sun." And if you ask what power is now working in the heart of civilization, I answer, The power of the Holy Spirit. When did science discover that the sun is the center of our system? Not till Luther discovered that Christ is the center of religion. When did the revival of literature and science take place in Europe? Not till the revival of Christianity under Luther.

What the light is to the mariner's compass, or the wind to the sail of the ships, or the oil to the lamp, or the sap to the tree, rising up softly and diffusing its life to the farthest leaf of the remotest

branch, that the Spirit is to Christian work. I should as soon attempt to raise flowers if there were no atmosphere, or produce fruits if there were neither light nor heat, as to attempt to regenerate men without the Holy Spirit.

Verse 7. Isaiah had said two hundred years before, "Every mountain and hill shall be made low." Political difficulties were leveled before the Jews could return to their own land. The entire history of the Christian Church and of missions is a lengthened fulfillment of this prophecy. When the first missionaries started for the Sandwich Islands in 1819, they did not know that they would be allowed to land. During that tedious journey of three months they held long seasons of prayer, claiming God's promises. When they reached the islands they learned that the old king was dead, that the new king had renounced idolatry and destroyed the idols; and behold! here was a nation without a religion all ready to receive the Christian faith.

"Who hath despised the day of small things." When Benjamin Franklin was flying his kite and experimenting with electricity, a man said to him, "What is the use of all this?" To which Franklin replied, "Of what use is a boy? He may become a man."

Judson's work in the mission field had its day of small things. He labored long for his little handful of converts. But his first Karen convert became a preacher. Under his preaching thirty churches grew up, and two thousand converts were gathered into them in three years.

"The eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth." God oversees and directs his work. When Raphael was executing his famous frescoes for the Roman government he drew the figures, determined the subjects, and grouped them. He then put them into his scholars hands, and when they had done their best he gave the pictures finishing touches. Though many agents were employed at successive stages, his brain-power, supervision, and inspiring counsels were the chief motive forces all through. So does God work through us.

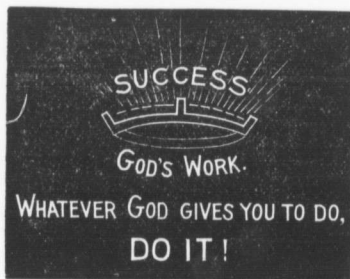
The Teachers' Meeting.

Notice the period of time and condition of the Jews when this vision was given.... The prophet Zechariah, his mission and message.... Zerubbabel, his work and character.... The golden candlestick, its history, form, material, purpose, and symbolical meaning.... A word-picture of the vision.... What were its lessons to the people?... Its encouragements to those who work for God.... What God does for his cause.... Duties suggested by this lesson.... Take as a lesson thought, "His hands shall also finish it" (verse 9).

References.

FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA. Poetical, 1813; Prose, 9192, 7916, 9564, 9567, 3002, 3008, 2994, 2996, 2997, 2999. Vers. 1-7: Poetical, 1069, 4115, 3868. Ver. 7: Prose, 8033, 12059-12069, 9199, 9185.

Blackboard.



This is a lesson of encouragement to all Christian workers. Look at the board: "Success crowns God's work." Whatever God gives you to do, do it, and despise not the day of small things. Though the work appears poor by the side of some greater laborer, keep at it for the glory of God, and success will crown your efforts. God's work never fails, no matter whether it be sowing the seed, reaping the sheaves, or gleanings where others have harvested. Remember, "Success crowns God's work."

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Light that never goes out.*

[Picture the golden candlestick on the board without the accompanying text. Recall the last lesson.] To whom did the Lord send a vision? Who was Zechariah? To whom did he tell the vision? Did it teach a lesson to any but the Jews? What lesson does it teach us?

God sent another vision to Zechariah. The angel waked him out of sleep and showed him a candlestick all of pure gold. There were seven lamps on it, all burning with a clear, pure light.

When will a lamp burn? Yes, when it has been lighted and the oil is there, ready to burn. Now the oil in God's book means something very precious. Will you say it after me, softly—"God's Holy Spirit."

Who were trying to build the new temple? Yes, the Jews, led by their governor, Zerubbabel. But there were enemies to make trouble. The Jews were not a strong people. All around were wicked men trying to hinder them from building the Lord's house. It was very easy to lose courage and stop trying! There was once a little girl

who made up her mind to be very good. She got along nicely for a whole day, and then so many things came to hinder and vex her that she gave up and said, "It's no use to try; I can't be good!" And so she stopped trying. The Jews were a good deal like the little girl. They stopped building the Lord's house because their enemies troubled them so much.

Did they do right? Did the little girl?

The candlestick lesson was sent to show them what they needed, and we need just what they did, to keep us trying to do what God gives us to do.

[Show picture of a dove with outspread wings; below, in illuminated letters, "The Holy Spirit." Call for Golden Text, and explain its bearings on the lesson. Give a short drill, that all may have the opportunity to learn the text.]

The prophet said that Zerubbabel should finish the house whose foundations he had laid. It was not because he was so strong, but because the Holy Spirit in his heart, and in the hearts of the Jews, would give them courage and strength.



[Add the text to the Lesson Symbol, and teach that God wants his little children to shine as lights in the world, and so he gives the promise of his Holy Spirit to be in their hearts.]

Can a lamp burn without oil? No; it will flicker and go out, and just so God's children cannot shine as lights without the Holy Spirit. If we try to make our own light, or to get light from another, we shall fail.

A soldier boy became a Christian, but could find no place to be alone for Bible reading and prayer. He knew that if he did not have the grace and help of the Holy Spirit his light would go out. So he ran the risk every day for six weeks of being punished, by going outside the lines to a quiet place to pray. His light shone so clearly and steadily that long afterward he learned that his captain had become a Christian through his example.

[Put Lesson Thought before the class.] What is the greatest light in the sky? But one day the sun will be put out. The moon and stars will cease to shine. You and I will die and be forgotten. But the Lord's light will never go out! He offers it to us now. Will we take it?

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

NO. 1.

With joy we hail the sacred day.
When all thy mercies, O my God,
Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,
O, let us be glad.

There is no name so sweet on earth.
I love thy will, O God.

NO. 2.

Sweet Saviour, bless us ere we go.
Hark, hark, my soul!
I love the name of Jesus.
Ye winds that once by Chebar's flood,
Sing a hymn to Jesus.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did the angel show Zechariah? **The golden candlestick of the temple.**
2. What did the angel say was the meaning of this vision? **GOLDEN TEXT, "Not by might, nor by power," etc.**
3. How should the great mountain flatten before Zerubbabel? **Into a plain.**
4. Who laid the foundation of this second temple? **Zerubbabel.**
5. What did the Lord say of him? **His hand shall also finish it.**

CATECHISM QUESTION.

7. In what other ways did He show this? **By the heavenly wisdom, the authority, and the graciousness of His teaching.**
- Luke iv. 22. And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth.
John vii. 46. Never man so spake.

Book Notices.

Bible Studies from the Old and New Testaments Covering the International Sunday-school Lessons for 1893. By GEORGE PENTECOST, D.D., author of "Out of Egypt," etc. Pp. x.-436. Paper, 60 cents; cloth, \$1. New York: A. S. Barnes & Co. Toronto: Wm. Briggs.

Dr. Pentecost's Bible Studies have been for several years among the most widely used of the many valuable lesson helps which are issued from the press. This prominence has been secured by their striking merits. Dr. Pentecost is permeated to his heart's core, not merely with the evangelical, but with the evangelistic spirit of the gospel. Of this, his recent remarkably successful revival tour in India is a conspicuous illustration. Through his ministrations the churches were greatly quickened, and many souls brought to Christ. The same qualities pervade his elucidations of the Sunday-school lessons. He gives in these notes the very marrow and fatness of the gospel. The missionary studies, as we might expect from a man in such deep sympathy with missions, are of special interest. The exposition of the temperance lessons is also specially strong. For the size of the volume, this is one of the cheapest of the lesson helps, and one of the best.

The Miracles of our Lord. Expository and Homiletic. By JOHN LAIDLAW, D.D., Professor of Theology, New College, Edinburgh. Cloth, 8vo, 384 pp. \$1.75. New York and Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

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It has been said: "Christianity rests upon the miracles of the Gospel," and hence the altruist, the sceptic, the antagonist of Christianity has always endeavored to show the unreality of these works of Jesus, knowing full well that if the people were led to disbelieve in the miracles, it would not be long before they would disbelieve in the Miracle-Worker. On the other hand, the Christian preacher has found in the miracles the evidences of the God-power of the Nazarene; while the unlearned disciple hath seen in these works of the Carpenter's Son the manifestations of divine love and compassion and help for the suffering children of men. No wonder, then, that the miracles of our Lord have always been the subject of intense interest to the Christian Church, and that theologians and scholars have brought their report and profoundest learning to the interpretation of the teachings of these wonderful works of the Lord.

"I Believe in God the Father Almighty." By JOHN HENRY BARROWS, D.D. Chicago and New York: Fleming H. Revell Co. Toronto: William Briggs.

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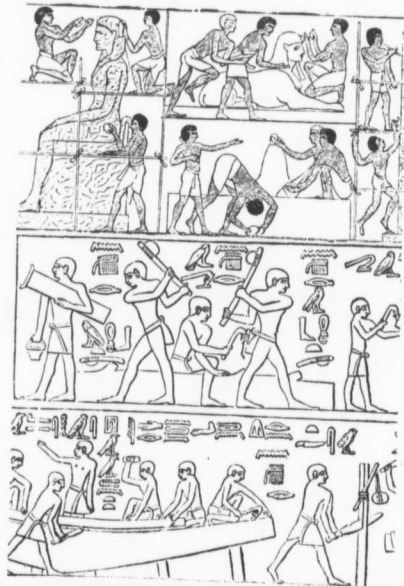
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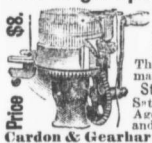
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