

Sunday School Banner

FOR TEACHERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

John Wesley on the Drink Traffic

“**T**HE men who traffic in ardent spirit, and sell to all who will buy, are poisoners-general; they are murderers of His Majesty's subjects by wholesale; neither does their eye pity or spare. And what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men? Who would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them. The curse of God is on their gardens, their walks, their groves; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell. Blood, blood, is there; the foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood. And canst thou hope, O man of blood, though thou art clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day, canst thou hope to deliver down the field of blood to the third generation? Not so; there is a God in heaven; therefore thy name shall be rooted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed, both body and soul, thy memorial shall perish with thee.”

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ESTABLISHED 1866

THE S. S. SCRANTON CO. PUBLISHERS, HARTFORD, Conn.



Vol. 39

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SUNDAY SCHOOL BARRER

for

TEACHERS

AND

YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 39

NOVEMBER, 1905

No. 11

To-Day.

BY M. CARRIE HAYWARD.

Thou hast to-day, dear heart ;
 Its golden opportunities are thine ;
 To thee a priceless boon, a gift divine.
 See thou, that in each moment be in-
 wrought
 Thy highest ideals, and thy noblest
 thought.

We are so prone to think,
 Some future day, when we have time to
 spare,
 We'll help to lighten others' load of care.
 Life is so trying now, and so complex ;
 We'll be more kind when there is less to
 vex.

And thus we idly dream
 Of what life might have been in other
 spheres ;
 Or of what it yet may be in future years ;
 While the good we crave lies all about
 our way,
 Could we but grasp the meaning of " To-
 day."

This very day may bring
 A blessed chance to know the pure delight

Of leading some lost soul back to the
 light.

A chance to give a kindly word or smile,
 Which we might miss, in the fancied
 "after-while."

And it may hold for thee,
 Privilege to learn sweet patience under
 trial,

The grace of meekness, or of self-denial ;
 A chance "for Christ's sake" to forgive
 a wrong,

Thus making thine own life more sweet
 and strong.

Then prize to-day, dear heart.
 Be thy very best, in word, and deed, and
 thought,

Through all its precious moments be in-
 wrought.

To-day is thine, to-morrow may not be,
 Oh live it then as for eternity.

Corinth, Ont.

The trivial round, the common task,
 Will furnish all we ought to ask—
 Room to deny ourselves, a road
 To bring us daily nearer God.

—Keble.

OUR PERIODICALS.

The best, the cheapest, the most entertaining,
the most popular.

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Magazine and Review, Guardian and Onward.....	2 50	
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Halifax, N.S.

Sunday School Banner

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

TORONTO, NOVEMBER, 1905.

Our Periodicals.

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER.

DURING the past year the Sunday School Banner has been enlarged about eight pages, and has been much more closely printed so as to contain a very large amount of additional matter in illustration of the Sunday School lessons. From many quarters have come very strong testimony as to the widespread appreciation of this great improvement in the contents and make-up of this Sunday School magazine which, it is believed, is abreast of any published in the world. No pains nor expense will be spared in keeping it in this foremost rank. All these improvements, with still others which are in contem-

plation, are given without extra cost to our readers, though largely increased expense has been involved in their publication. See rates printed above.

ONWARD.

This periodical will endeavor to maintain, and, if possible, surpass, its record as a bright, wide-awake, up-to-date young people's periodical. Its interesting and instructive short and serial stories, its mission studies, especially those of our own church in its varied fields of labor, its stirring, patriotic papers, its strong temperance numbers, its numerous illustrations in prose and verse and picture of the Sunday School lessons will be maintained with all their vigor. The purpose is to make this paper simply indispensable in all our schools. No other Sunday School paper issued contains such a large number of high-class illustrations.

PLEASANT HOURS.

This periodical is designed for the great intermediate grade of scholars which forms the bulk of our Sunday Schools. It is for them what Onward is for the senior classes. It has, therefore, the largest circulation of any of our illustrated papers. It will have the same features as Onward, and will print during the year one of the best boys' stories ever written, "Eric," a tale of school-boy life, by the late Dean Farrar. The fact that Onward and Pleasant Hours, as indeed all our Sunday School papers, have gone up in circulation by leaps and bounds, is the best proof of their hold upon our schools.

THE SENIOR QUARTERLY.

This periodical is steadily growing in the appreciation of our schools. For those of our schools which want something cheaper for distribution than The Banner, the colored maps and copious illustrations make it a favorite Sunday School help. It is especially adapted also for the Home Department.

THE SUNBEAM AND HAPPY DAYS

issued fortnightly meet the needs of the senior primary department. Taken together they form a regular weekly issue. Dew Drops is intended for the little folks and gives pictures on the lessons and other illustrations adapted to even the youngest mind in the schools.

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THE BEREAN QUARTERLY

still cheaper than the Senior Quarterly, contains picture illustrations of the Sunday School lessons and condensed notes. Price, six cents a year.

THE BEREAN LEAF

contains nearly the same matter, but is adapted for weekly distribution.

THE QUARTERLY REVIEW SERVICE

is invaluable for fixing in the hearts and minds the lessons of the quarter.

A Pledge-Signing Campaign.

An aroused interest is being felt and shown in the old-fashioned pledge-signing temperance work. An earnest effort is being made in Great Britain in connection with the World's Temperance Sunday, November 26th, to secure a million signatures in the Sunday Schools of that land to a temperance pledge. An earnest effort in the same direction is being made on this continent.

The Sunday School Board of the Methodist Church gave a strong deliverance on this subject and appointed a committee to formulate a pledge and exhort every school and every teacher through our far-extended work to make it the special object of that temperance Sunday to secure signatures to such a pledge. This pledge can be obtained in card form at our Book Rooms, but to bring it within the reach of every school we print its form, with spaces for signature, in our chief Sunday School periodicals. As this form of pledge has not yet reached us, we submit the very simple one adopted for the churches' twentieth century campaign in Great Britain. We hope that an earnest effort will be made to secure the signature of every teacher and scholar of our schools to this pledge on the World's Temperance Sunday, November 26th. What a tremendous power for good would be exerted if the over twenty millions in the Sunday Schools of Christendom would sign and keep such a pledge. It would shake the very gates of hell, and save the many thousands who drift out of our schools into the habit of intemperance, with all its awful consequences.

It would be highly desirable if on that

Sunday our ministers, as far as practicable, would join in this world-wide temperance movement by either preaching a sermon or by conspicuously calling attention to this important subject and urging the co-operation of their people and schools. Nor should this movement be confined to the schools. Our Epworth Leagues and Young People's Societies, our church classes, all the machinery of our church organization, should be got in motion to make this an epoch-making and epoch-marking event. We call special attention to the words of our indefatigable Moral Reform Secretary, Dr. Chown, on this subject, and pray that by the blessing of God such a temperance revival may begin which shall enable the churches of this land to unite to stay the tide of intemperance which flows through our streets.

Pledge

I PLEDGE myself never to use
intoxicating liquor as a drink, and
I promise to do all I can to end the
Drink Habit and the Liquor Traffic.

Signed

Place

Date 190

A Great Opportunity for Toronto
S. S. Teachers.

Many of our Toronto Sunday School teachers, Epworth Leaguers, ministers, and other church workers have been wondering why the General Sunday School Board and the Educational Society did not arrange an Institute for this city like those so successfully carried on by Revs. Crummy, Irwin and Lavell, in Ottawa, London, and elsewhere. We are glad to know that such an Institute has been arranged. It will be held from Tuesday till Friday, November 28th to December 1st. It will be in three divisions simultaneously. The one in Victoria College chapel will include the workers of 70-

ronto Central District, that in Sherbourne Street Church will reach Toronto East District, and that in Parkdale Church will be for the Toronto West District. An hour's session will be held morning, afternoon, and evening in each place. Dr. Crummy will give a course of four lectures on "The Babylonian Period in Hebrew History," Rev. A. J. Irwin's subject will be "St Paul and His Letter to the Galatians," and Rev. Alfred E. Lavell's course will include lectures on Pope Gregory VII., St. Bernard, and St. Francis of Assisi, as instances of medieval revival worth our modern study.

It is a fine opportunity for Toronto workers. Glowing reports have come from the Institutes already held in Ottawa and Kingston this fall. It should be a time of intellectual and spiritual revival. Admission will be free to all, but those desiring the complete copyright syllabi of all the course in advance, and all the privileges of membership, should send a dollar to the Institute Secretary, Rev. Alfred E. Lavell, Waterloo, Ontario.

The Methodist Magazine and Review.

We are preparing a programme of special interest for the coming year which will soon be announced. It will include many copiously illustrated articles of special Canadian interest, as: Our Missions, The New West, On the Frontier, With the Mounted Police, The Playground of Ontario, Wild Sports in Canada, Canadian Art and Artists, Royal Palaces of England, England in Egypt, British Guinea, China in Reconstruction, New Japan, Russia and Its People, and many other features of special importance. The Magazine will be better than ever. An increase of only a thousand would enable us to greatly improve its character. Will you kindly help us to obtain this for our 63rd and 64th volumes. November and December numbers will be sent free to new subscribers for all of 1906.

The Sunday School should be like a refined Christian home in attractiveness, comfort, beauty, cheerfulness, and in the mutual confidence and affection of its members.

Meeting of General Sunday School and Epworth League Board.

BY A. C. CREWS, D.D.

General Secretary of Sunday Schools and Epworth Leagues.

The annual meeting of the General Sunday School and Epworth League Board of the Methodist Church, Canada, was held in the city of Hamilton, September 27th and 28th, in the Board Room of the Centenary Church, with Rev. Dr. Carman, General Superintendent, in the chair.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SECTION.

1. FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The collections of the Sunday School Aid and Extension Fund amounted to \$3,155, an increase of \$224. During the past few years many new Sunday Schools in the North-West and other localities have been organized by help afforded by this fund, and poor schools, where the population is sparse, have been assisted to obtain periodicals and papers.

2. TEACHER TRAINING.

The figures given by the General Secretary showed how great is the need for more attention to the preparation of our Sunday School teachers. Only 106 schools are reported as having Teacher Training Classes. This is an increase of 11, but it is a small showing for so large a church as ours.

There are a number of simple courses such as Hurlbut's Revised Normal Lessons, Hamill's Legion of Honor series, etc., which can be taken up by local workers at home, under the guidance of the pastor or other competent leader. The Board strongly urges our Sunday Schools to inaugurate such work during this season.

3. STATISTICS.

In making his annual report, the General Secretary stated that it was a great pleasure to present figures which show a marked increase in every department. The following are some interesting extracts from the report:

Officers and Teachers	33,716
Increase	528
Total Number of Scholars	273,962
Increase	1,915

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There are 5,573 Methodist scholars attending Union schools. Including all departments, the total Sunday School force of our church is 321,492, an increase of 8,341.

4. THE CRADLE ROLL.

This is a plan for enrolling the names of children who are too young to attend the sessions of the school. The object is to identify children with the school from their earliest infancy, that they may be under the care of the primary teachers, and also to enlist the sympathy and cooperation of parents.

We now have 8,241 names on the Cradle Roll, an increase of 1,600 for the year.

Those who desire fuller information concerning this department will be supplied free by applying to the General Secretary.

5. THE HOME DEPARTMENT.

The Home Department shows 14,204 members, an increase of 1,915. This department is intended to enlist all who are willing to study the Sunday School Lessons, but who are not able to attend the sessions of the school regularly. The only thing necessary to become a member of the Home Department is to undertake to study the International Sunday School Lesson for half an hour each week.

The Board strongly recommends all our schools to conduct this department, if at all practicable. A free leaflet will be sent to any who ask for it.

6. DECISION DAY.

The returns show that 12,086 scholars from the Sunday Schools joined the church during the year, an increase of 2,322. This was the cause of much gratification to the Board, as it manifested that, to some extent, the primal purpose of the Sunday School was being realized.

Probably many of these young people came into the church through Decision Day, which has been frequently commended to our schools. It was felt that the greatest possible vigilance should be exercised to make sure that the children who sign Decision Cards, and are received into the church, have consciously given themselves to the service of Christ. The General Secretary will be pleased to send (free) a leaflet on Decision Day and how to make it effective.

7. OUR PERIODICALS.

Our Sunday Schools take 336,416 copies of the splendid periodicals published by

the Methodist Book Room, under the able editorship of Rev. Dr. Withrow. This is an increase of 15,721, indicating the great popularity of these publications.

Considerable conversation took place on this item of the report, the members of the Board emphasizing the importance of our schools being provided with literature that will strengthen the bonds of national and denominational loyalty.

8. MISSIONARY CONTRIBUTIONS

The contributions for missions by the Sunday Schools amount to \$24,134, an increase of \$1,725.

In a few schools all the collections are given to missions, the running expenses being paid by the Official Board of the church, in many places one collection a month is given, while in others mite boxes or contribution cards are used.

9. THE SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON COURSE.

The General Secretary reported that descriptive leaflets concerning the Supplemental lessons had been sent out to all the Methodist Sunday Schools in Canada, and that repeated articles on the subject had been published in the connexional papers. Recognizing the importance of this feature of our work, the General Secretary was instructed to again send out the leaflets to superintendents and ministers. One will be found enclosed with this report. It is worthy of careful perusal.

It is hoped that next year many of our schools will be conducting this course.

10. PLEDGE-SIGNING CAMPAIGN.

A communication was presented to the Board from Rev. Dr. Chown, conveying a resolution passed by the Temperance and Moral Reform Committee at its last meeting, relating to a pledge-signing campaign among our young people.

By resolution it was decided to observe Sunday, November 26th, as a general pledge-signing day in all our schools, with a view to securing the signatures of the scholars to a pledge of total abstinence from strong drink. This movement has untold possibilities for good, and it is hoped that officers and teachers will put forth an earnest effort to make it successful. A roll of pledge abstainers should be kept in the secretary's book. Very attractive pledge cards can be obtained at the Methodist Book Room.

EPWORTH LEAGUE SECTION.

1. MEMBERSHIP

The growth of the Epworth League during the past year has been very satisfactory indeed. The returns show that we have 1,776 Young People's Societies, an increase of 33. The membership is 70,338, an increase of 2,434.

The Junior Societies number 308, an increase of 16, with a membership of 13,283, an increase of 617.

2. READING COURSE.

The Reading Course had a very prosperous year. The usual number of books were published, and by the first of April every set had been sold. The Course never was disposed of so quickly before. The returns show that 159 Leagues have Reading Circles, an increase of 11.

For this year we have two books by Canadian authors, one on our own country by Rev. F. A. Wightman, Alberton, P.E.I.

The Board earnestly recommends all our Leagues to avail themselves of this splendid Course, either by organizing Reading Circles, or by utilizing the books for the literary programmes of the League, and encouraging their general sale.

During the past ten years over 60,000 good books have been circulated under the direction of the Board, among the young people of Canadian Methodism.

3. GENERAL EPWORTH LEAGUE FUND.

This fund is used in supporting the Central Office of the Epworth League, which is intended to be a bureau of information and extension concerning Epworth League work.

The sum contributed by the societies through collections amounts to \$1,690, an increase of \$83. This indicates that the young people are determined to make this department self-sustaining.

4. MISSIONARY CONTRIBUTIONS.

Our Young People's Societies during the past year have contributed some \$37,492 for missions, which is an increase of \$5,147.

The Forward Movement has been a great inspiration to the Leagues, and not only are the givings increasing, but the spirit of interest in world-wide evangelism is growing everywhere, and having

its effect upon the general work of the church.

5. CONVENTIONS.

The International Epworth League Convention in July last was generally regarded as one of the best that has ever been held. Our district conventions continue to be well attended and full of interest. They form one of the most helpful features of our organization.

6. SUMMER SCHOOLS.

Dr. F. C. Stephenson, Secretary of the Forward Movement, reported that eighteen schools had been held in various parts of the Connexion, from British Columbia to Nova Scotia, attended by about 10,000 people, and it is safe to say that fully one-half of these received inspiration for aggressive work. Special attention was paid to the study of the Bible and missions.

7. BIBLE INSTITUTES.

Institutes for the historical and literary study of the Bible and Church History under the auspices of the Board were held in the four districts—Ottawa, Kingston, Woodstock and London—with very good success. The attendance was good and the interest well maintained.

The membership was not confined to the Young People's Societies, but came largely from the Sunday School teachers and older members of the church.

The Secretary of the Institutes, Rev. A. E. Lavell, M.A., addressed the Board in reference to this work, giving interesting facts concerning the success of the past, and speaking hopefully in regard to the future. He hoped to see the movement grow into a great university extension enterprise.

The Board expressed its satisfaction with what is being done.

8. EPWORTH LEAGUE TOPICS.

By action of the Board at its last meeting we shall use the Uniform Topics for 1906.

9. THE CANADIAN EPWORTH ERA.

The Board strongly commended the League paper, and urged the Leagues to sustain it loyally. Special mention was made of the splendid Sunday School and Epworth League Convention numbers, which have been recently published.

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League matters and should be in the hands of every officer and member.

10. THE JUNIOR DEPARTMENT.

On motion, it was decided to appoint a committee to consider the advisability of preparing and publishing a Reading Course for the Juniors. The Junior Topics for 1906 were decided upon.

11. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The following were appointed as the Executive Committee for the year:

Rev. J. J. Redditt, Rev. R. J. Elliott, F. W. Winter, Dr. Stephenson, Dr. W. E. Willmott, Dr. W. H. Withrow, E. S. Caswell, and the Secretary.

This committee meets during the year for the transaction of business as occasion may demand.

12. PERSONAL STATEMENT.

During the year the General Secretary has travelled 9,000 miles and delivered 201 public addresses and sermons, besides editing the Canadian "Epworth Era" and many miscellaneous Sunday School and League publications, and looking after a large amount of miscellaneous office work.

Wesley Buildings, Toronto, Ont.

Epworth League and Sunday School Progress.

THE statistical report of our church during the year, by our indefatigable Conference Statistician, Rev. Dr. Cornish, shows very gratifying progress in almost every department. The increase of membership for the year 1904-5, after making up for all the losses caused by deaths, removals, suspensions and dismissals, is 5,941. For this there is devout reason to thank God and take courage. Yet with the multiplied agencies employed in this behalf we would fain look for still greater progress.

The growth of the young people's societies is also very gratifying, especially the large increase of \$5,147 in the amount given for missions, reaching the splendid aggregate of \$37,492. But above and beyond all this is the added advantage of the increased interest and sympathy and

co-operation of our young people with this best of all causes.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL RECORD

shows marked advance in almost every department. The increase of preaching appointments is seventy-one. The increase in schools, however, does not keep pace with the increase of appointments, but many of these are among the mining and lumbering settlements where it is impracticable to establish a school. Yet on the other hand, in the natural process of development, the Sunday School is often the precursor of the church, and in the new settlements of the North-West we hope that earnest endeavor shall be made to plant schools everywhere. Liberal co-operation in the way of books and papers will be given such schools by the Sunday School Aid and Extension Fund.

It is interesting to note that the increase in scholars is almost identical with the increase in church membership, and the number who have united with the church from the schools is more than twice as much. Many of these no doubt united through revival efforts in the church, and many more from the more general observance of

DECISION DAY

in the schools. This is becoming more widely observed, and what is best of all, it is being accompanied with weeks of earnest preparation and co-operation of teachers and scholars and pastor in this great work, and in some cases whole families are brought in,—a little Child leading them.

The schools are giving more to missions than they have heretofore, but with the three hundred and seventy-five thousand scholars we might expect still larger increase. Out of a grand total of nearly \$200,000 raised in the schools surely more than one-eighth should be given for the cause of missions.

The increase in the circulation of our own periodicals is very gratifying, that of outside periodicals is not so gratifying. But most of these we have reason to believe, are of the cheapest grade, with which we are endeavoring more and more to compete, in order that, as in the great majority of schools, our own periodicals may be found in our own schools.

We are glad to note also that in the mother Wesleyan Church of Great Britain substantial progress in Sunday School

work has taken place, notwithstanding the depletion by emigration from which we are so largely the gainers. It is curious to note that the increase in scholars in Canada is considerably larger than the increase in scholars in Great Britain, though our total membership is only about one-quarter as much. The number of scholars who are church-members is nearly as great in Canada as it is in this large church, and the increase in Canada is even greater than in Great Britain. They have, however, over ninety-four thousand who are meeting in junior class, ten thousand on trial for membership, which greatly lessens the discrepancy.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES.

Number of Young People's Societies	1,776 inc.	33
Number of Active Members	45,531 "	1,047
Number of Associate Members	24,807 "	1,387
Total	70,338 "	2,434

CONTRIBUTIONS.

For League or Society purposes	\$22,815 inc.	\$266
For General Epworth League Fund	1,685 dec.	31
For Missions	37,492 inc.	5,147
For Superannuation Fund	592 dec.	24
For Educational Fund	120 inc.	20
For all other purposes	17,987 "	2,129
Grand Total	\$80,641 "	7,507

SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

Schedule G contains a full record of Sunday-Schools, and shows that great success has crowned the labors of the year. The Home Department and the Cradle Roll, though comparatively new, are proving invaluable auxiliaries, and are worthy of being worked to the utmost extent.

Number of Preaching Appointments	4,825 inc.	71
Number of Sunday-schools	3,459 "	15
Number of Officers and Teachers	33,716 "	528
Average attendance	26,114 "	4,300
Number of Scholars in Primary classes	77,881 "	892
Number of Scholars in Intermediate classes	103,724 "	98
Number of Scholars in Adult classes	78,153 "	2,786
Number of Scholars in Home Dept.	14,204 "	1,915
Total number of Scholars	278,902 "	5,691
Number on Cradle Roll	8,241 "	1,000
Number in Union Schools	5,573 "	522
Total Sunday-school force	321,492 "	8,341
Number who have united with the Church during the year	12,086 "	2,322
Number who are members of the Church	81,526 "	5,645

CONTRIBUTIONS.

For Missionary Fund	\$24,134 inc.	\$1,725
For Superannuation Fund	648 "	137
For Educational Fund	621 dec.	17
For S. S. Aid and Extension Fund	3,142 inc.	289
For Special purposes	5,805 dec.	562
For Sunday-school purposes	158,007 inc.	1,492
Grand Total	\$192,367 inc.	\$3,064

LITERATURE.

Copies of periodicals published by our Book Room	336,416 inc.	15,721
Copies of other periodicals	64,971 "	19,197
Volumes in Library	214,001 "	28,758

SPECIAL DAYS.

Number of Schools that observe Rally Day	1,035 "	174
Number of Schools that observed Decision Day	551 "	33

IN THE HOMELAND.

The annual report of the Wesleyan Sunday School Union tells of increase in every item of our Sunday School work. The increases this year, following substantial and unbroken increases for the last three years, are most encouraging. They are as follows:

Number of Schools	7,498 inc.	58
Teachers	133,301 "	641
Teachers who are Church Members	112,517 "	975
Number of Scholars	1,006,515 "	5,071
Morning average attendance	338,142 "	3,499
Afternoon average attendance	649,182 "	6,917
Scholars above fifteen years of age	261,444 "	2,252
Scholars who are Church Members	97,977 "	4,650
Scholars who are on Trial for Membership	10,006 "	1,381
Scholars in Junior Society classes	94,683 "	3,067

—Guardian.

The Methodist Magazine and Review for October.

The illustrated articles of this number are: "Methodism in Mexico," "Slavery and the Slave Trade," by the Editor; "Rural England," by Violet Brooke-Hunt; "The 'Good Angel' of Bulgaria," "London Charities," and "A Romance of Old St. Paul," by Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, describing the way in which the iron fence which surrounded the old cathedral comes to surround the grave of the late John G. Howard in High Park, Toronto. A number of short and serial stories and illustrated current topics and events make up an admirable number.

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

Let God be your guide in the building of the vessel in which you expect to cross the ocean of life, and enter entirely without wreck. Use no timber that will not bear storm. Never sleep while you skirt the reef.—Joseph Cook.



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INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS

FOURTH QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

LESSON VI. Esther Pleading for Her People

[Nov. 5]

GOLDEN TEXT. The Lord preserveth all them that love him. Psa. 145. 20.

AUTHORIZED VERSION

[Study also Esth. 4. 1-9. Read the book of Esther]

Esth. 4. 10 to 5. 3 [Commit to memory verses 13, 14]
10 Again Es'ther spake unto Ha'tach, and gave him commandment unto Mor'de-cai:

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

12 And they told to Mor'de-cai Es'ther's words.

13 Then Mor'de-cai commanded to answer Es'ther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REVISED VERSION.*

10 Then Esther spake unto Hathach, and gave him a message unto Mordecai, saying: 11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law for him, that he be put to death, except those to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. 12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

13 Then Mordecai bade them return answer unto Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. 14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish: and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

15 Then Esther bade them return answer unto Mordecai, 16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish. 17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

1 Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the entrance of the house. 2 And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favor in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the scepter. 3 Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be given thee even to the half of the kingdom.

*The Revised Version, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

Home Readings

[Furnished by the International Bible Reading Association]

- M. Haman's wicked decree. Esth. 3. 1-13.
T. Great sorrow. Esth. 4. 1-9.
W. Esther Pleading for Her People. Esth. 4. 10 to 5. 3.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 287.

Safely through another week,
God has brought us on our way;
Let us now a blessing seek.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 438.

Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on his gentle breast,
There by his love o'ershaded.

The Lesson Hymns

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 131.

Saviour! thy dying love
Thou gavest me,
Nor should I sought withhold.

Questions for Senior Scholars

1. *Faith's Message* (v. 10-14).—To whom did Esther send a message? Of what law of the palace did she remind Mordecai? What exception was there to this law? Why did Esther hesitate to enter the palace? What message of rebuke did Mordecai send to the queen? What would follow her refusal to venture into the presence of the king? What question did Mordecai ask? Wherein does Esther's attitude resemble that of a hesitant penitent?

2. *Faith's Resolution* (v. 15-17).—What request did Esther make of Mordecai? What was her resolve? What attention did Mordecai

Questions for Intermediate Scholars

1. *The Queen and Her Mission* (v. 10-17).—What plot had Haman laid against the Jews? Who had told Esther about it? What had Mordecai asked Esther to do? What was the law concerning entering into the presence of the king? How was Esther related to Mordecai? Was her life in danger through the plot of Haman? What hope had Mordecai for his people? What did Mordecai say which must

Questions for Younger Scholars

Who was Queen Esther? *A beautiful Jewess.* By whom had she been brought up? What was the name of the king of Persia? Who was his prime minister? What kind of a man was Haman? *A selfish, wicked man.* What did he lay a plot to do? *To have all the Jews in his country killed.* Why did he do this? *Because Mordecai would not bow down to him*

The Lesson Analysis

1. *The Trial of Faith* (Esth. 3. 5 to 4. 9). *Introductory.*

(a) The Jews in exile were prospering: Mordecai, a Jew, was a courtier of King Ahasuerus, and Esther, his niece and adopted daughter, had been made queen. (b) Haman, the king's favorite, hated Mordecai because

- Th. The plot frustrated. Esth. 7. 1-10.
F. The decree revoked. Esth. 8. 1-8.
S. Joy and gladness. Esth. 8. 9-17.
S. Pride and destruction. Prov. 16. 5-19.

Time.—Perhaps about B. C. 475. **Place.**—Shushan (Susa), a capital city of the Persian empire.

pay to her request? In what is Esther an example to the seeking sinner?

3. *Faith's Triumph* (v. 1-3).—How long did Esther fast? Whose presence did she seek? What preparation did she make? Where did she find the king? What sign of favor did the king show her? What did Esther venture to do? What was the king's question? What was the king's promise? What other king made a like promise? (Mark 6. 22.) What is the GOLDEN TEXT? What was the result of Esther's heroism? In what is Esther's triumph a symbol of the Christian's triumph?

have determined the course of Esther more than anything else? What answer did she give to Mordecai's message? How long did the people fast and pray?

2. *A Great and Generous King* (v. 1-3).—How did Esther appear before the king? How did the king greet her? What sign did he give that she was welcome? What did the king promise to give her?

and honor him. What did Mordecai beg Esther to do? Why was it not safe for her to go to the king? What did Mordecai tell her? What did Esther ask all the Jews to do? What did she and her maidens do? What does this show? When she came to the king what did he hold out to her? What did he say?

Mordecai showed contempt for him. (c) He man, in revenge, determined to destroy not only Mordecai, but the entire Jewish nation. (d) By maligning the Jews to the king, and by bribery, Haman obtained a decree for their extermination. (e) Their doom was fixed for the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. (f)

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Mordecai by secret message urged Queen Esther to plead with the king for the lives of her people.

II. Reasonings of Faith (v. 10-14).

(a) Queen Esther's difficulties seemed insurmountable. (b) By messenger she told Mordecai that even to approach the king unbidden would forfeit her life; how, then, could she plead for her people? (c) Mordecai showed her that the dangers of *faithfulness* were not greater than the dangers of *faithlessness*; (d) that *by somebody* God would surely deliver the Jews; and (e) that the providence which had made her queen might be only the first chapter in her providential career. (f) The omission of the name of God from the narrative throughout does not indicate any skepticism or disregard of God; he is assumed to be standing

"within the shadows

Keeping watch above his own."

III. Plans of Faith (v. 15-17).

(a) Esther first asks for the prayers of all the Jews within reach (fasting was the out-

ward and visible sign of inward and spiritual prayer). (b) She also, and her maidens, will fast and pray. (c) She declares her resolution to perform her lofty and perilous duty, breaking the lower to obey the higher law. (d) This resolution is taken with a clear understanding of the risks: "If I perish, I perish."

IV. The Triumph of Faith (v. 1-3).

(a) After three days of fasting and prayer, (b) Esther began her perilous task by summoning to her aid all her personal attractions, (c) and proceeded unbidden into the presence of the king; (d) but before she had reached the forbidden precincts the king saw her, and (e) "she obtained favor in his sight" ("The hearts of all men are in His hands"). (f) The king gave to Esther a token of favor which insured her safety; (g) and asked her to state her request, promising to grant it even "to the half of the kingdom." (h) We should keep vividly in mind the rest of the story: the queen's clever statement of her request, the salvation of the Jews, and the destruction of their enemies.

The Lesson Word Studies

NOTE.—These Word Studies are based on the text of the Revised Version.

QUEEN ESTHER.—The name "Esther" is derived from "Istar," the name of the great Babylonian goddess, and was given to the heroine of our lesson story probably on her becoming the wife of the Persian king. Her proper Hebrew name was Hadassah (comp. Esth. 2. 7). She was the daughter of Abihail, a Benjaminite, and cousin to Mordecai (Esth. 2. 15). Her ancestor, Kish, had been among the captives led away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Left an orphan, Esther was brought up by her cousin, Mordecai, who held an office at Shushan in the palace of the king (Esth. 2. 5-7). King Ahasuerus, the well-known Xerxes of profane history, having divorced his wife because of her failing to comply with his commands, caused search to be made for the most beautiful maiden of the realm to become her successor. The choice fell upon Esther, "for the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti." At the counsel of Mordecai, Esther did not make known her parentage and race to the king at first (Esth. 2. 10), but Mordecai himself at heart was a loyal Hebrew and worshiper of Jehovah. As such, he refused to do reverence to Haman, the Agagite, who was second to the king in authority and to whom all subordinates did obeisance. This independence of Mordecai, the Jew, so enraged Haman that he planned, not only the death of his enemy, but the destruction of the entire Jewish people to whom Mordecai belonged. That his murderous purpose was not successfully carried out was due to the intervention of Queen Esther, who, at the risk of her own life, appeared unbidden in the royal judgment chamber of the king, interceded for her people, and brought about the downfall of Haman and the deliverance of the Jews. The details of the beautiful story of Queen Esther's intercession for her people form the topic of to-day's lesson.

Verse 10. Then.—After Esther had learned from messengers of Mordecai that the king had signed a decree authorizing the extermination of the Jews in all parts of his dominion.

Hathach.—One of the king's chamberlains whom he had appointed to attend upon Esther, the queen.

Mordecai.—The cousin (or possibly, as some have thought, the uncle) and former guardian of Queen Esther.

11. The king.—Ahasuerus, the Xerxes of profane history, king of Persia from 485 to 465 B. C.

The inner court.—The royal throne chamber and principal audience hall of the king.

There is one law for him, that he be put to death.—Literally, *one is his law, to put to death.* That is, the king's law or custom in this matter is one and unchangeable. Every intruder into the royal presence, whoever he be, regardless of rank or station, was put to death.

The golden scepter.—A long tapering staff, the emblem of royalty.

I have not been called... these thirty days.—There seemed, therefore, little probability of Esther having an early opportunity to

present her plea to the king without risking her life by coming unbidden into his presence. We have here a glimpse of female life in the harem of the Persian king.

12. They—That is, Hathach and others.

13. Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape—Esther had not at first made known her nationality to the king, but this being known to others, if not also to the king by this time, would make her escape impossible since even a member of the king's harem would be subject to a decree such as had been issued.

14. Then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place—It has been pointed out that the name of God does not occur in the book of Esther; still this and other passages in the book indicate the faith of Mordecai and others in Jehovah (comp. 3. 2-4).

16. Shushan—One of the three capitals of Persia, situated in the southwestern part of the empire. Its Greek name was Susa. Its modern name is Sus or Shush (comp. 1. 2-7).

Fast ye for me—This fasting was certainly a religious observance, and the purpose of the fast in this case may be assumed to have been prayer and supplication to Jehovah for deliverance of the Jews.

Three days, night or day—Compare note on verse 1, below.

Not according to the law—The law referred to in verse 11, above.

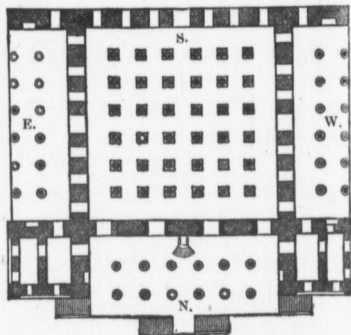
1. The third day—Counting from the day of the agreement between Mordecai and the queen (4. 14), the first day being that on which the agreement to fast was made. The fast, therefore, lasted probably about forty-five hours.

Put on her royal apparel—In chapter 2, verse 17, we are told of Esther's becoming queen and receiving the royal crown.

THE JEWS OF PERSIA.

This book of Esther must be read with a clear understanding of the historical settings of the events which it describes. To begin with, it must be remembered that the time of these events was after the return of the Jews from captivity in Babylon. Only a minority of the Jews chose to go back to Jerusalem when the decree of Cyrus authorized the return. The Jews described in the book of Esther were the descendants of that less devout and religiously zealous portion of the captive population that declined to join the company of some fifty thousand, who, in the face of the greatest difficulties, returned again to rebuild the temple and the Holy City. These were voluntary exiles, therefore, who chose to remain among a

The inner court...over against the king's house—We present below a restored plan (by Ferguson) of the great hall of Xerxes at Persepolis, which may be taken to correspond in its main features with the palace of Shushan as well.



XERXES' HALL AT PERSEPOLIS.

"The great central hall has thirty-six columns, and is surrounded on three sides by great porches, each two hundred feet wide by sixty-five feet deep, and each supported by twelve columns. The porches were beyond doubt the great audience halls of the palace. There was no porch, as we might expect in that climate, to the south, but the principal one, both at Susa and Persepolis, was that which faced the north, with a slight inclination to the east. This was the throne room *par excellence* of the palace. The inner court in front of this audience room was probably so called in contradistinction to an outer court beyond it."—*Wheeler's Commentary*.

3. It shall be given thee even to the half of the kingdom—An example of Oriental hyperbole, the simple meaning of which was, "Thou shalt have anything thou wilt ask."

The Lesson Exposition

heathen people. They did not represent a high type of Jewish character; particularly they did not represent at its best the Jewish religion. They were narrow, with intense race prejudice and animosity, encysted rather than assimilated in the body of Persian society, socially more than religiously incompatible with the people surrounding them, and yet holding to certain traditional forms of religious faith with such tenacity as to add the spirit of acrimonious bigotry to their racial pride. They were not devout. The name of God does not appear in this book of Esther. They are represented as pitilessly cruel and revengeful toward their enemies. We must recognize that the book pictures the people as they were, and does not pretend to approve their spirit. The fact that

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Mordecai and Esther petitioned the king for the wholesale massacre of their enemies, including even the women and children, must not be taken as implying that God approved of such atrocity. Even a psalmist, breathing forth the spirit of vindictiveness against Babylon, sang, "Happy shall he be who taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" (Psa. 137. 9). But God, we may be certain, no more approved of the butchery of children than that he would approve of it now. Man's ethical standards have risen, but God's have not, because they were always perfect. Our God is not a better God than the God of antiquity.

OVERIDEALIZING CHARACTERS

There is a strong tendency to idealize the better characters in Scripture history. Because certain men are presented as illustrations of some virtues we are inclined to regard them as embodiments of all virtues; because they were given God's approval in some things we mistakenly conclude that they had the divine approval in all things. This makes Bible characters unnatural and unreal, and compels us to think unworthily of God in the attempt to justify his supposed approval of the conduct of those whom we have accepted as illustrations of model rather than of mixed morals. This has been done in the case of two of the characters in this story. Mordecai had undoubtedly many excellent qualities. He had inflexible integrity. He had also an inflexible spinal column, as Haman to his great exasperation discovered. But Mordecai was a first-class hater, and in intrigue he easily outmastered Haman at his own game. He could see the iniquity of the plot against his own life and the lives of his people; but when the sword was in his own hand he had no mercy. A good man was Mordecai, but we probably would find him a very undesirable next-door neighbor. And Esther has been still more idealized. Of course, we must not judge her by our present-day standards, but we must not forget that she was not in fact the wife proper of the king, but probably only for a time the favorite of his harem. She entered into the intrigue with Mordecai to gain the king's favor. The king was a fool and a monster of cruelty and injustice, but for the distinction and the power she was willing to become his favorite. And finally he was of the same implacable and revengeful temper as Mordecai, joining with him in the slaughter of thousands. We are not to think of her as a saint, but as a woman who in many respects did nobly in the situation in which she was placed. And that is better than an unreal saint with an imaginary aureole about her head.

IMPLIED PROVIDENCE

Not a word is said in all this story about providence, but providence is implied in all of

its parts. God's name is not mentioned, but the hand of God unseen is by implication in every act of the drama. No mention is made of religion, but the spirit of religion breathes through the whole account. We soon come to feel that there was nothing accidental in things which appeared to be accidents. There was a relation between events which no human mind understood. There were human plots and counter-plots, but we realize before we have read far that there was an invisible player by whose hand the determining moves upon the board were made. Haman was shrewd and Mordecai was shrewder, but there was evidently One taking part in affairs wiser than both of them. Things are brought together at the right time through an unseen power. The king was sleepless, and perhaps, that their very dullness might put him to sleep, he had the current "records of the chronicles" read to him. The account of Mordecai's frustration of a plot against the king's life was in that reading. That was where the unseen hand linked things together. It was the lightest kind of a touch, but it changed the whole situation. And this is the more remarkable in that the Jews there in Persia did not represent in any important sense the people of God. They were half heathen, who had preferred to live in a heathen land rather than go back to the land that God had given to their fathers. There was no special issue drawn between the worshippers of God and the worshippers of other gods. We can see why special providence was over Joseph, and over Moses and the Israelites in Egypt, and over Daniel in Babylon. But why over Mordecai and Esther and the Jews in Persia? The answer to that question lets us into the central meaning and peculiar worth of the book of Esther.

THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE SECULAR

The book of Esther teaches us as its chief lesson that God's interest in, and connection with, human life is universal. His providence is not determined by ecclesiastical relations, his care is not confined to what we narrowly call religious interests. In this story of Esther neither church nor prophet nor priest nor any question of worship was involved. It was merely God's interest in human life. He had not gone back to Jerusalem with the fragment of the people who returned from captivity and forgotten or ceased to care for those who did not return. God never goes away and forgets anyone. His providence is a constant and universal force in the world. He is always and everywhere against the workers of iniquity, and always on the better side of the issues of life. His providences are not necessarily ostentatious and manifest. He is none the less present though his name may not be mentioned. History is none the less supernatural though it be called

secular. God's view of life takes in a great deal more than priests' and prophets and churches. These are only agencies through which he works sometimes to reach the larger world. God is working in and ruling over the commonest sections of human society. We may not see it, it may run too deep for our dull human perception, but God's providence is connected with all the passing affairs of the world.

THE RESOURCES OF PROVIDENCE

When Mordecai sent back his reply to Esther's message, which indicated that she was hesitating about attempting to intercede for her people, he asked a question that suggested an idea that probably had never occurred to Esther. "Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" That question probably lifted the life of Esther into the light of a higher meaning in her own eyes. A thousand times she may have thought of the strange fortune that had lifted her, an orphan girl of a despised race, to her place of honor and influence. Mordecai gave the solution. The king did not know, she had been known, but now she saw that she had been called to her place for just that great purpose. Then her heart was made strong. She accepted the divine appointment and determined that she would go forward to fulfill the purpose

for which she had been raised up. But Mordecai made another statement that presented still another aspect of God's providence. "If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise from another place." It was Esther's peculiar opportunity and responsibility. But Mordecai's hope did not rely upon Esther simply, but upon the resources of divine providence. God would find some one else if Esther failed. She had her chance, but if she threw it away some one else would take it up in another form. And the rule still holds. God is never dependent upon just one person, and is not defeated because some one fails him. God has several ways for doing a thing which he can employ if necessary, and it is surprising and humbling to human pride to see how God manages to go forward with his plans though some one fail upon whom the responsibility of the whole thing seemed to rest. Some one else is within easy call to take our crown if we refuse to fulfill the obligation of the crown. Some one else will take the message out of our hands and go forward with it if we stop. A great engineer a little while ago had his chance to do such a great work as only comes once in an age, and could have linked his name with it in the immortal honor of history. He withdrew from it, but the work goes on. Another took his place, and the opportunity of his life passed away.

THE LESSON PRAYER

O Lord, make us ready for the crises of our lives, when we must do or refuse to do the things upon which our destinies will depend. When it is necessary give us to know when these great hours are come to us, that we may gird ourselves and go forth to meet their demands. But may we be ready for these supreme issues though they may come upon us unawares, and we pass through them to success or failure without knowing how freighted with destiny they were. For we know that the hours of men's highest visitation come sometimes silently and without pretension, and that they cross without seeing it the line that runs between success and failure. Help us to face every duty as if it were the supreme duty and opportunity, for so, sometime, whether we understand it or not, we shall face and fulfill what will be to each of us in fact the supreme hour and the supreme opportunity. Amen.

The Lesson Coin Thoughts

I

The world has not known all its heroes or all their deeds of heroism.

True patriotism is unselfish.

Esther was a great queen because she was a great character.

God will have somebody ready when the crisis comes.

He is very unlovely who loves nobody but himself.

In order to grow, wisdom, like wealth, must be invested.

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II

Heroes cannot be spun from unheroic stuff.

Esther was queenly because she honored the King of kings.

We must all choose between clods and crowns.

Sin always unscupers the soul.

The first step in righteousness is the initial step to power.

A man may get close enough to kiss the lips of life and yet go down to death.

III

Esther had correct views of earthly things because she had clear views of heavenly things.

We never see the greatest earthly things till we look heavenward.

It is soul-vision that sees God.

Esther had force because she had faith.

Faith is the soul's prophecy of fact.

No soul can fly till the wings of faith are fledged.

Belief in the certain is the soul of certainty.

IV

Esther knew that apart from God there are no rewards.

God's blessings are always too vast to measure and too numerous to count.

Wherever God calls is the best place to go.

Peril pulls at the skirts of power.

The badness of man can never destroy the goodness of God.

Royalty of soul passes through the fires of death unscathed.

V

The proud world wags its head, but the princely soul seizes its scepter.

Nothing that saves the soul can be counted as a sacrifice.

There is always a fact under the feet of faith. It were better to start anew each day than to stop forever.

Every place of honest service is a sanctuary. Nothing is right till it "makes for righteousness."

When a man builds anything good he builds something for God.

An honest effort to please God always pleases him.

VI

Heroism will drain the cup of duty, though at bottom it be thick with dregs of death.

God brings us to our best by demanding of us nothing less.

The highest errand is to help the lowly.

The garment hem of mercy is always close to the finger-tips of misery.

God is good enough to love the worst.

The best of service may be done for the worst of people.

The saint is like the sun; he gives light wherever he goes.

VII

The trapper may be caught in his own trap. No man can rob another without cheating himself.

A man may be wise in his own eyes, yet in the face of facts a fool.

VIII

The will of the people may be right, the will of God must be.

It is a great government which is of the people, by the people, and for the people; but it is a greater government which is of the people's God, by the people's God, and for the people's God.

It is only when the people's rule is right that the people have right to rule.

That which ministers good is always God's minister.

What we pay to God always pays us most.

IX

The highest heroism is of the heart.

The happiest ending is found in the truest beginning.

Our first business is not to be happy, but helpful.

The art of living is the greatest art.

It is not the triumph of party, but the triumph of principle, that true patriotism seeks.

Patriotism does not seek crowns, scepters, thrones, but character, service, truth.

True patriotism seeks the reign of God in human government.

It will follow its leader only when its leader follows the Lord.

True patriotism holds that rebellion against wickedness is loyalty to righteousness.

The only really good government is God's government.

The Lesson Heart Talk

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES

There is much in this old Oriental story strange to our thought in this modern Western world. Some details possibly are true to present facts in Eastern households; but we would scarcely go there for instruction in high thinking and living. But in the midst of Ahasuerus's voluptuous, drunken, disgraceful court Esther

shines like a star in the rift of a black cloud. She illustrates what a woman may do when her gifts are devoted to noble, unselfish purpose. One thing which is fundamental in all true character is said of her: She was teachable and obedient. A little orphan girl, she came to live with her uncle, Mordecai. She was a sweet,

obedient child, and when grown to womanhood, in the very different life of the king's household she "did the commandment of Mordecai like as when she was brought up with him." This is not the prevailing habit of girls, is it? Too often they are noisy, self-assertive, careless of advice, and disobedient; and away from home influence they drift from early teaching. Really, this picture of Esther is beautiful to see in the gallery of girlhood, which affords too many contrasts. One like her can be trusted anywhere, at any time; and society needs such antiseptic bits of salt.

An obedient heart is good soil for the roots of conscientiousness and duty. The girl accustomed to obedience grew to the woman ready to meet serious responsibility. Accustomed not to put her own will and her own ease first, she was able to set herself utterly aside to serve others. This sweet self-forgetfulness is shown in one little touch in this picture. It was the custom to give every maiden whatever she desired when she was called to go to the king's house. When Esther was called she required nothing but what the king's chamberlain had appointed. She possessed that quiet contentment which marks high breeding, so refreshing to see in contrast with the vulgar effort to get everything for one's self; the clamorous wish to "have things because other girls have them." Of all the feasts in Ahasuerus's court Esther had the best, for "a contented mind is a continual feast." Her sweet temper won her the favor of all who looked upon her. With these attractive traits of character she possessed, too, the dangerous gift of personal beauty, a graceful figure, and a beautiful face. If God has given you such gifts please remember you are very responsible for their use. They are gifts to be valued; not to make one vain—O never!—but to be made a power for usefulness. Esther's beauty was part of her equipment for the salvation of her people. She was fair in her royal robes standing in the court, and because the king admired her he held out to her the golden scepter. There are two ways of serving God.

He calls some of us to give up earthly possessions and follow him in the renunciation of all that allures one's taste and preference; others he calls to serve him in the use of these gifts. The thing of real importance is to be ready to lose all or to use all as he may choose. Only let us not forget that every gift of mind or body or possession is an opportunity to glorify not the gift, but the Giver.

There came a crisis, a great test of this young woman's fiber. Her own people were threatened with destruction; she was providentially in the place to save them. She did not know the facts until Mordecai told her; but she heard them with a listening and obedient heart. Two considerations moved her. She was in the place where she was for this very purpose; if she did not use the opportunity she would herself suffer loss. It was not an easy thing she was asked to do. Her own courage was not sufficient. But for days with her maidens, and Mordecai outside the palace, she fasted—which means she waited upon God for strength and guidance. Then with fine self-abandonment she said, "I will brave the anger of the king, and if I perish, I perish."

Many a young woman, conscientious and true, is now answering the call of duty in the same spirit of self-forgetfulness. But I wish my voice might reach the girls of all this land. You who have culture, wealth, beauty, social influence, do you not know you have come to your kingdom for the present crisis of the world's need? Your youth itself is a gift to be used, and it will so soon be gone! Everything is given you to share with others who have less. Your gifts are your opportunity; if not used, you will suffer loss in your own character and in the last reckoning, when the Lord shall say, "Give an account of thy stewardship." Your present position, whatever it is, is your opportunity; your possessions, whatever they are, are your means of service. Your kingdom is just where God has put you, and all he wants to carry out his plan to save the world is you, whatever you have or have not.

The Lesson in Literature and Art

1. Every man's life is a plan of God.—*Bushnell.*

2. "Fail not in the harder trial;
Faint not in the greater struggle."

3. God fashioned Man from out the common earth,
But not from earth the Woman: so does she,
Even when fallen, ever bear with her
Some sign of heaven, some mystic, starry light.
Most gentle is she in all gentle deeds,
In all sweet offices of fireside life;

A touch to cool the fevered brow of pain,
A voice to ease the heavy heart of care:
Most holy is she, since child Jesus drew
Life from the sacred circles of her breast.
Nor this alone, for, grappling with her fate
In ancient days, she buckled armor on.
And grasped the sword, and sprung the battle
bolt.
And wore the martyr's scarlet shroud of blame.

—T. B. Aldrich.

4. Verse 11. For Esther to approach Ahasuerus

rus unbidded jeopardy. Cruel and cruelty and "Xerxes, on na, a city of by Pythias five sons in t left with him went into a in the present into two par side of the r and the whol Rec. J. S. Va

5. When t surroundings senseless dove her tens of the Christian life as it threads shafts of the escapes unbur himself to be l row summit of and on the left for his destruct grace his feet is able to stan long ere this l

6. Verses

whether God i is to be on Go —Abraham Li 7. We can deep a reveren affection too pu her with an en of zeal too ste

8. Verse 1 worth more th there is no pr in importance n of five minutes And this all-imp to all other mo be upon us?—L

1. "Thou ar a time as this." Esther in these more than possi nity had come; t place of influen pose; and that

rus unbidden was to put her life in actual jeopardy. Oriental monarchs were notoriously cruel and capricious. One illustration of such cruelty and caprice will serve as an example: "Xerxes, on his way to Greece, halted at Celenae, a city of Phrygia, where he was entertained by Pythias with incredible magnificence. But when Pythias begged as a favor that, of his five sons in the king's army, the eldest might be left with him in his old age, the brutal monarch went into a rage and caused the son to be slain in the presence of his father, the body divided into two parts, and placed the one part on one side of the road, and the other on the other, and the whole army marched between them."—*Rev. J. S. Van Dyke.*

5. When the instructed Christian sees his surroundings he finds himself to be like a defenseless dove flying to her nest, while against her tens of thousands of arrows are leveled. The Christian life is like that dove's anxious flight, as it threads its way between the death-bearing shafts of the enemy and by constant miracle escapes unhurt. The enlightened Christian sees himself to be like a traveler standing on the narrow summit of a lofty ridge; on the right hand and on the left are gulfs unfathomable, yawning for his destruction; if it were not that by divine grace his feet are like hinds' feet, so that he is able to stand upon his high places, he would long ere this have fallen to his eternal destruction.—*Spurgeon.*

6. Verses 13, 14. Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side; my great concern is to be on God's side; for God is always right.—*Abraham Lincoln.*

7. We cannot honor our country with too deep a reverence; we cannot love her with an affection too pure and fervent; we cannot serve her with an energy of purpose or a faithfulness of zeal too steadfast and ardent.—*Grimke.*

8. Verse 16. There are moments that are worth more than years. We cannot help it; there is no proportion between spaces of time in importance nor in value. A stray unthought-of five minutes may contain the event of a life. And this all-important moment, disproportionate to all other moments, who can tell when it will be upon us?—*Dr. Arnold.*

9. Yet do thy work; it shall succeed
In thine or in another's day;
And if denied the victor's meed,
Thou shalt not lack the toiler's pay.
Faith shares the future's promise; Love's
Self-offering is a triumph won;
And each good thought or action moves
The dark world nearer to the sun.
Then faint not, falter not, nor plead
Thy weakness; truth itself is strong;
The lion's strength, the eagle's speed,
Are not alone vouchsafed to wrong.
Hast thou not, on some week of storm,
Seen the sweet Sabbath breaking fair,
And cloud and shadow, sunlit, form
The curtains of its tent of prayer?
So, haply, when thy task shall end,
The wrong shall lose itself in right,
And all thy week-day darkness blend
With the long Sabbath of the light!
—*Whittier.*

10. Verse 1. Dress has a moral effect upon the conduct of mankind. Let any gentleman find himself with dirty boots, soiled neckcloth, and a general negligence of dress, he will, in all probability, find a corresponding disposition by negligence of address.—*Sir J. Barrington.*

11. Heavenly Father, I would wear
Angel-garments, white and fair:
Angel-vesture, undefiled,
Will thou give unto thy child?
Not a robe of many hues,
Such as earthly fathers choose;
Discord weaves the gaudy vest;
Not in such let me be dressed;
Take the raiment soiled away
That I wear with shame to-day:
Give my angel-robos to me.
White with heaven's own purity.
Take away my cloak of pride,
And the worthless rags 'twould hide:
Clothe me in my angel-dress,
Beautiful with holiness.
—*Lucy Larcom.*

12. Verse 3. The heaven-sent man is always successful.—*Moody.*

13. The Lord, like a most bountiful king, will be angry if any man will ask a small thing at his hands; because he would rather give things of great worth than of small value. His goodness is infinite.—*Powell.*

Lesson Side-Lights and Illustrations

1. "Thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this." The suggestion made to Queen Esther in these words of Mordecai, that it was more than possible that her hour and opportunity had come; that she had been brought to this place of influence and power for a special purpose; and that in case she refused to act de-

liverance would be wrought by the hands of some one else, while she and her father's house would probably perish, was calculated to awaken within her high motives, lofty courage, and laudable ambitions. The thought that she might prove to be the woman for the hour, raised up to meet a dreadful emergency, and that she might be

able to save the nation in its time of urgent and critical need, was full of inspiration. The words which stirred her heart and inspired her to take the step she did are susceptible of wide application and vivid illustration.

1. *A Lost Chance.* Sir George Prevost, in 1814, was in command of the most powerful British expeditionary force raised during the War of 1812. It consisted of three of the Duke of Wellington's well-tried generals and 8,000 of his veterans, together with some 3,000 militia. A British fleet was also outfitted under Commodore Sir James Yeo on Lake Champlain, and they had arranged to co-operate in a simultaneous attack on the American land and water forces at Plattsburg. Sir James Yeo attacked as arranged, but Sir Geo. Prevost's troops were nearly four miles from the promised point of co-operation when the naval action was in progress. Our fleet was destroyed, and on learning of it Sir Geo. Prevost ordered a precipitate retreat instead of trying to redeem the disaster caused by his tardiness. His opportunity was lost, and it was well for the future of Canada that others, like Brock, were equal to the emergency and our national peril, and were not found wanting.

2. *"Opportunity."* One of the well-known mottoes on the walls of the ancient Grecian temple at Delphi, "Know thy opportunity," may well be borne in mind by us. The literal meaning of opportunity—coming from two Latin words which signify "in the harbor," or possibly "at the gate," or "at the door"—is full of suggestiveness. It brings to mind a knock at the door where a messenger waits; a ship just ready for sailing; an exigent and fleeting moment on whose issues great things depend. And chiming in with this thought is the utterance of Shakespeare, threadbare, perhaps, and yet ever fresh and apt:

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

3. *Our Age Fraught with Opportunities.* God's providence says to every intelligent, well-equipped youth, to every discerning soul in this new age of discovery, invention, educational facility, and literary affluence, "Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" What other preceding generation ever had such opportunities for growth, usefulness,

Christian activity, and world-wide influence as those which abound in our time? The fact that God has cast our lot in this new age increases our obligations, as well as enhances the possibilities of our labors. We are summoned to take possession of our throne and kingdom.

2. *"If I perish, I perish."* These heroic words indicate a noble resolve. Queen Esther was willing to take her life in hand, run all the risks in the case, make a daring venture, in the bare hope that she might "win out." The history of our country is full of incidents which illustrate the same motive and principle. On the 5th June, 1813, an invading force of 3,000 American troops, under Generals Winder and Chandler, reached Stoney Creek. They were following up a small British force under General Vincent, who had been compelled to evacuate Fort George by a vastly superior force of the enemy. It was absolutely essential to General Vincent that he should have accurate information of the designs and movements of the American force. Lieutenant James FitzGibbon was commissioned to ascertain their position, and disguising himself, actually gained access to the enemy's camp. Death would have been the penalty of discovery, but for his country's sake he ran the risk, and the invaluable information that he procured enabled Colonel Harvey with but seven hundred men to completely route the American forces in a night attack at Stoney Creek.

3. *The Heart-Broken Penitent.* The words of Queen Esther have had for ages a timely and searching application to the case of grieving, awakened, needy sinners, who, in despair on account of their guilt and misery, have felt like the publican who did not dare so much as to lift up his eyes unto heaven, and yet dared to say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." An old hymn transfers this feeling to verse in these tender lines:

"I have tried and tried in vain
Many ways to ease my pain;
Now all other hope is past,
Only this is left at last:
Here before thy cross I lie,
Here I live, or here I die.
If I perish, be it here,
With the Friend of sinners near;
Lord, it is enough—I know
Never sinner perished so:
Here before thy cross I lie,
Here I cannot, cannot die!"

The School of Practice.

1. The character of Haman shows me the hatefulness and folly of the spirit of selfishness that seeks to exalt itself above others. This week I will watch myself with reference to all evidence of this spirit, and seek to cast it out.

2. Esther did what she saw to be her duty notwithstanding the danger it involved, and the uncertainty of success. This week I will undertake to do my duty in every form in which it may come to me, whether easy or difficult, and leave the result with God.

3. The moral beauty of the story of the book of Esther is marred by the revenge which Esther and Mordecai took upon their enemies. I will this week suppress every impulse in my own heart to return evil for evil.

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The Lesson Digest and Teacher's Guide

The Junior Grade

[For pupils from nine to twelve years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Berean Leaf.]

Preparing the Lesson.

To get the connection it is essential that the preceding chapters, as well as the succeeding incidents to the lesson, be studied.

Illustrative Material: The picture in our Intermediate Quarterly, page 97, will help in presenting the story to the class.

Getting ready: The teacher who has succeeded in getting each of his class to read the carefully selected HOME READINGS day by day will have easy work on Sunday. A careful study of the "hard words" and phrases should be encouraged. Explain "All" (verse 11) as including everybody, official and unofficial. Two changes of the Revised Version should be noted: "message" instead of "commandment" (verse 10) and "relief" instead of "deliverance" (verse 14). The GOLDEN TEXT thoroughly memorized will be a treasure for life to the pupil. Outline: 1. Background of the story. 2. The Messages, verses 10-14. 3. The Answer, verses 15-17. 4. The Result, verses 1-3.

Teaching the Lesson.

Suggestions for Developing the Outline:

1. *Background of the Story.* God's people, the Jews, in exile, worshipping the true God in the midst of idolatry; one of them a faithful but neglected courtier; another, a loving but neglected queen. The wicked plot of Haman to destroy God's people, and Mordecai's first message to Esther.

2. *The Messages.* Esther saw difficulties in the way of carrying out Mordecai's advice that he could not see. To go unbidden into the presence of the king would probably result in Esther's death, without any consequent good to the Jews. But Mordecai saw that some one would be sure to tell Haman that Queen Esther was a Jewess, so that she would be put to death anyhow, except somehow all the Jews could be saved; he believed that God would save his people with or without Esther; but he thought that God had made her queen for this very purpose.

3. *The Answer.* Esther turns to God in prayer. She and her companions and servants will pray; and she desires Mordecai and all the Jews of Shushan to pray also. After three days of prayer she will go into the king unbidden, and ask that the lives of her people shall be saved.

4. *The Result.* Make the whole story an exemplification of the truth of the GOLDEN TEXT. Make plain the faith in God of Mordecai and

Esther, and show how we in our everyday lives may exercise a faith as complete as theirs.

Home Work for Pupils.

Advance Work: Urge the pupils to read the HOME READINGS during the coming week. Select the hard words and phrases of Lesson VII—not more than five or six—and ask the boys and girls to bring explanations next Sunday. Call attention to the pictures in the Intermediate Quarterly, page 98.

Review Work: Ask the pupils to be ready next Sunday to recite in whispers the GOLDEN TEXT of this lesson.

The Intermediate Grade

[For pupils from thirteen to sixteen years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly, the Intermediate Quarterly, or the Lesson Leaf.]

Preparing the Lesson.

Master the entire book of Esther; get a clear understanding of every act in the drama; then omit every detail that is not required by the lesson.

Illustrative Material: On the supposition that Ahasuerus was Xerxes the cut on page 222 of the Senior Quarterly will interest the pupils. A picture of the traditional tomb of Esther and Mordecai is given on page 219; and a very informing scene (Assyrian)—"Assurbanipal feasting with his queen"—on page 222. See also pictures on pages 197 and 214.

Constructing the Lesson.

Study WORD STUDIES, LESSON EXPOSITION, and SCHOOL OF PRACTICE. Make up a Lesson Plan on the framework of the LESSON ANALYSIS, page 824. 1. The Trial of Faith (Introductory). 2. Reasonings of Faith. 3. Plans of Faith. 4. The Triumph of Faith.

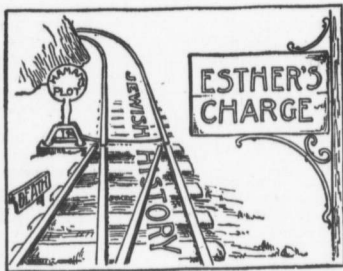
Teaching the Lesson.

Suggestions for Developing the Lesson Plan:

1. *The Trial of Faith.* By a rapid survey of the story of this book show the terrible plight in which Mordecai suddenly found himself and all his kin, a knowledge of which had just come to Esther at the beginning of our lesson. In the ordinary secular business of Christendom there is many a plot as nefarious as that of Haman. In the life of youth as really as in maturity come emergencies when there is no possible remedy except in God.

2. *Reasonings of Faith.* Esther was neither cowardly nor unfaithful in her words of verse 11; nor are Mordecai's words (verses 13, 14) to be understood as a reflection on her. We must understand and feel our own helplessness before we can take help from God.

3. Plans of Faith. In Esther's resolution of verse 16 there is much of the spirit shown by Cromwell's famous order, "Trust in God, and keep your powder dry." He who leans most heavily on God is best fitted to act wisely and energetically himself; for God gives wisdom as well as power to all who ask him.



4. The Triumph of Faith. The climax of the story contains also the climax of its teachings. Let the pupils write on their pads our GOLDEN TEXT:

THE LORD	}	{	ALL THEM THAT
PRESERVETH			LOVE HIM.

The Blackboard Exercise printed herewith explains itself.

The Senior Grade

[For pupils above the age of seventeen. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly.]

For the study of the printed lesson verses our LESSON ANALYSIS, supplemented by the WORD STUDIES, may profitably be followed, but only very unusual biblical information would justify the restriction of the attention of a Senior class to the printed verses. The entire story of

the book of Esther should be at the command of both teacher and pupils. A brief study of Xerxes' (Ahasuerus) character as shown in profane history will give an interesting sidelight on the lesson. Its moral and spiritual lessons are unfolded in our LESSON EXPOSITION, especially in the paragraphs on Providence and on the presence of the Supernatural in the Secular.

The duty of enduring as seeing Him who is invisible is the great message of the book to us. In the background of the story are unpleasant glimpses of the intrigue, sensuality, and cruelty of a typical Oriental court. Its best characters are conspicuously faulty, and the LESSON EXPOSITION on over-idealizing characters merits careful reading. But through all the moral disorder and confusion we hear ringing the clear song of the Golden Text. "The Lord preserveth all them that love him."

Emphasize this truth: Whatever may have been the previous character of a soul, the supreme act of dependence necessary to command divine preservation in the extremity of danger begets love. God may be trusted to preserve from temporal danger and from physical harm except where these are the means of greater joy in the life eternal; but the deeper import of this promise is spiritual. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty," and there his soul shall be kept in perfect peace. The example of Esther, therefore, bears equally upon our temporal, secular life and upon our spiritual, eternal life.

The LESSON HEART TALK, by Mrs. Knowles, will be found helpful by teachers of girls and young women. Abraham Lincoln's words, quoted on page 831, are explanatory of much in the book of Esther. Mordecai and Esther were both faulty characters, but they were on God's side. The writer in the SIDE LIGHTS takes his cue from Mordecai's words, "Thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this," and his illustrations of the value of opportunities are impressive.

The Responsive Review

1. Who was Esther? *A beautiful Jewess, Queen of Persia.* **2.** What had the Persian king ordered? *That all Jews should be killed.* **3.** What did Mordecai urge Esther to do? *To try to save the Jewish people.* **4.** By what words did Esther show that she understood the risk she ran by going unbidden into the king's presence? *"If I perish, I perish."* **5.** What is the GOLDEN TEXT? *"The Lord preserveth,"* etc. **6.** What did the king do? *He saved the people for Esther's sake.*

The Church Catechism

61. What is a sacrament? A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein by outward and visible signs Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented and sealed to the Church, and received by those who worthily partake thereof.
Matthew xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

GOLDEN

[Study als

Ezra 8. 21-

21 Then river of A- before our us, and for stance.

22 For I a band of against the had spoken our God is him; but I all them th

23 So we this; and h

24 Then the priests, of their bre

25 And y the gold, at the house of counselors, I present, had

26 I even dred and fif sels an hun dred talents

27 Also ty drams; and as gold.

28 And I the LORD: t silver and t the LORD Go

29 Watch them before Le'vites, and Je-ru'-sa-lem, the LORD.

30 So took weight of th vessels, to br house of our

31 Then wa on the tv go unto Je-ru was upon us, of the enemy the way.

32 And we there three dr

[Furnished by

M. The king's

Tu. Royal gift

W. Ezra's J

21-32

LESSON VII. Ezra's Journey to Jerusalem

[Nov. 12]

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

AUTHORIZED VERSION

[Study also verses 15-20, 33-36. Read chapter 7 and 9. 1 to 10. 17.]

Ezra 8. 21-32 [Commit to memory verses 21-32]

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

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

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

24 Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sher-e-bi'ah, Hash-a-bi'ah, and ten of their brethren with them,

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

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

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

28 And I said unto them, Ye are holy unto the LORD: the vessels are holy also; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers.

29 Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Le'vites, and chief of the fathers of Is'ra-el, at Je-ru'sa-lem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD.

30 So took the priests and the Le'vites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Je-ru'sa-lem unto the house of our God.

31 Then we departed from the river of A-ha'va on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Je-ru'sa-lem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.

32 And we came to Je-ru'sa-lem, and abode there three days.

Home Readings

[Furnished by the International Bible Reading Association]

M. The king's letter. Ezra 7. 6-20.

Tu. Royal gifts. Ezra 7. 21-28.

W. Ezra's Journey to Jerusalem. Ezra 8. 21-32.

REVISED VERSION*

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

22 For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. 23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us.

24 Then I set apart twelve of the chiefs of the priests, even Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them, 25 and weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering for the house of our God, which the king, and his counselors, and his princes, and all Israel there present, had offered: 26 I weighed into their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels a hundred talents; of gold a hundred talents; 27 and twenty bowls of gold, of a thousand darics; and two vessels of fine bright brass, precious as gold. 28 And I said unto them, Ye are holy unto Jehovah, and the vessels are holy; and the silver and the gold are a freewill-offering unto Jehovah, the God of your fathers. 29 Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chiefs of the priests and the Levites, and the princes of the fathers' houses of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of Jehovah. 30 So the priests and the Levites received the weight of the silver and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

31 Then we departed from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the lie-in-wait by the way. 32 And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

Th. Mourning for sin. Ezra 8. 33 to 9. 4.

F. Confession. Ezra 9. 5-15.

S. God's leading. Exod. 15. 11-18.

S. Trust in God. Psa. 20.

Time.—B. C. 458. Places.—Ahava: Jerusalem.

*The Revised Version, copyrighted 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

The Lesson Hymns

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 30.

Oh, precious words that Jesus said!
The soul that comes to me,
I will in no wise cast him out,
Whoever he may be.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 32.

Oh, word of words, the sweetest,
Oh, word, in which there lie
All promise, all fulfilment,
And end of mystery!

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 33.

Seeking the lost, yes, kindly entreating
Wanderers on the mountain astray:
"Come unto me," his message repeating,
Words of the Master speaking to-day.

Questions for Senior Scholars

Where did Ezra live? What was his character? What were his aspirations? How many companies of returned captives had preceded this one to Jerusalem? Under whose leadership? What had been attempted by those who had returned earlier? What had been accomplished?

What discouragements awaited these newcomers? What sources of encouragement were at their command? Why was the journey a dangerous one? How much treasure had the Jews with them? Why were these treasures called holy?

Questions for Intermediate Scholars

1. *A Brave and Trustful Leader* (v. 21-27).—Upon what journey was Ezra about to start? Who had offered him help and protection? Upon whom did he call for the help which he needed? What did the Jews do besides praying at the river of Ahava? What did they ask God for? Why had Ezra refused the king's kind offer? How did he express his faith in God?

2. *Holy unto the Lord* (v. 28-32).—Why

were the Jews carrying such immense treasures with them? Why were these treasures called holy? What charge did Ezra specially give these priests before they started? At what time of the year did they start for Jerusalem? How long were they on the journey? Whose hand did Ezra say was upon them all the way? What deliverance did God give them for which they were so thankful?

Questions for Younger Scholars

Who was Ezra? Why was he still in Persia? *He did not return with the others to Jerusalem. Why did he want to go there now? He thought the people needed to be taught the law of the Lord.* Who was the king of Persia? How did he help Ezra? *He gave him gold and silver and vessels for the temple, and told him to take all*

his friends with him. Through what kind of a country did Ezra have to pass? Why did he fear robbers? What might he have asked of the king? *A guard of soldiers.* Why did he not do this? *Because he had a strong protector.* What did he call the people to hold? For what did they pray? *For a safe journey.*

The Lesson Analysis

I. *Faith in God* (verses 21-23).

(a) More than half a century after the dedication of the second temple (by returned exiles) another caravan of exiles returns to Jerusalem. (b) Ezra the priest, their leader, is the speaker of our lesson passage. (c) These exiles return by authority of the great king Artaxerxes, (d) who has made Ezra ruler of the province of Judah and bestowed upon him and his people many privileges. (e) Several days of the journey have already passed when our lesson story begins. (f) Ezra and his people rest at the river Ahava, (g) where they are reinforced by Levites and others. (h) Their confidence is not in themselves nor in their leader nor in the friendly king, but in God, before whom they humble themselves by fasting and prayer. (i) From God they ask not only defense, but wisdom to direct. (j) Ezra's earlier

profession of faith in God helps now to increase his dependence upon God. (k) He obtains a comforting assurance that God will keep his promises.

II. *Business Principles* (verses 24-30).

(a) Ezra has charge of the entire party of returning exiles, with all of their wealth; (b) but he wisely intrusts the details of supervision to others. (c) The sacred treasure, dedicated to the temple service, he puts into the hands of twelve well-known priests and ten Levites. (d) There was an appropriateness in thus placing dedicated vessels in the charge of dedicated men. (e) These vessels were weighed and counted before witnesses when given into the hands of these priests and Levites, and were to be again weighed and counted before witnesses when they reached the temple. (f) Some of this treasure had come from the heathen king.

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some from his counselors and lords, some from God-fearing Hebrews; it all became sacred when devoted to sacred uses.

III. Prosperity (verses 31, 32).

(a) Earthly astuteness and heavenly mindedness were beautifully united in the leadership of the people across the desert. (b) Ezra

planned to avoid the Bedouin and others who lay in wait to steal the treasure, and trusted in God for ability to carry out his plans. (c) The entire caravan reached Jerusalem without loss of life or treasure, a consummation due to faith in God and adherence to business principles.

The Lesson Word Studies

NOTE.—These Word Studies for this lesson are based on the text of the Revised Version.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE—The first company of Jewish captives returning from Babylonia came to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel in the year 538 B.C., the first year of the reign of Cyrus. Two years later was begun the rebuilding of the temple, which, after many hindrances and delays, was finally completed about 516 B. C. (comp. lessons for October 15, 22, and 29). Nearly sixty years elapsed after this time before Ezra led the second and larger company of returning captives from Babylonia to Jerusalem. This entire period of almost sixty years is passed over in silence by the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, save for two short references to events of the period found in Ezra 4. 6 and Neh. 12. 26 respectively. The events connected with the story of Esther (comp. lesson for November 5) belong to the reign of Ahasuerus or Xerxes toward the close of this long period. For an analysis of the contents of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah the student is referred to the Introductory Note to the Word Studies for the next lesson.

Verse 21. Then—After having gathered a great company of approximately eight thousand souls, preparatory to leading them back to Jerusalem.

I proclaimed—Ezra, the patriotic leader of the company, is himself relating the story of the events.

A fast—A time of abstinence from food. It is to be thought of, however, as a spiritual exercise, expressing humility and emphasizing absolute dependence of those participating upon Jehovah, and also as a time of special prayer and supplication to God. The pagan notion of propitiating God's favor by voluntary physical suffering is entirely absent.

At the river Ahava—Probably an artificial canal near Babylon. There were many such canals commonly designated as rivers (comp. Psa. 137. 1, "By the rivers of Babylon"). In Acts 16. 13 a reference is made to a place of prayer "without the gate by a river side."

A straight way for us—A direct road. The intended meaning may include also the thought of a road free from dangers, from robbers or enemies, as well as a level road without obstacles or inequalities (comp. Isa. 40. 3, "Make straight in the desert a highway for our God").

22. A band of soldiers and horsemen—A military escort such as was granted to Nehemiah a little later.

The enemy in the way—Bedouin bandit hordes such as have always been common in this part of the Orient. These might easily harass the stragglers and rear guard of such a large company and cause serious delay and even loss of treasure and life.

The hand of our God—The merciful favor of Jehovah. The use of the same expression in

verse 31 brings out plainer its meaning: "The hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us."

Against all them that forsake him—

Implying that Ezra and his companions, if they had asked an escort of the king and relied upon its protection even in part, would have been forsaking Jehovah and doubting his power to protect them.

24. Twelve of the chiefs of the priests, even Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them—In Neh. 12. 24, Sherebiah and Hashabiah are mentioned in a list of Levites, and as such would be distinguished from the priests proper who were higher in rank and authority. It is, therefore, probable that the optional reading suggested by the marginal note in the Revised Version which substitutes the word *besides* for the word *even* is the more correct. We have, then, to think of two companies, one consisting of "twelve of the chiefs of the priests" and another of twelve Levites, namely, "Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them." That there were these two companies seems to be implied in verse 30, "So the priests and the Levites received the weight of the silver and the gold."

25. The offering—Wherein the offering consisted is shown in 7. 15-20.

26. Six hundred and fifty talents of silver—The silver talent referred to was worth about \$1,875, so that the total amount of silver was approximately \$1,218,750.

Silver vessels a hundred talents—Worth about \$187,500.

Gold a hundred talents—The gold talent was worth about \$33,750, a hundred talents would therefore be worth approximately \$3,375,000. Money, especially in large quantities,

was almost universally weighed instead of being counted.

27. A thousand darics—The Persian daric of this period was worth about \$5 in our money.



PERSIAN DARIC, SLIGHTLY ENLARGED.

Fine bright brass, precious as gold—The word here translated *brass* occurs nowhere

else in the Bible. Copper and bronze were in more common use, and it is uncertain whether brass, the alloy of zinc and copper, as we know it, was known to the Persian. As bronze vessels were known and used, it is probable that we should substitute the word *bronze* for the word *brass*, since the real meaning of the word to be translated is not known.

28. Holy—Consecrated in the sense of being sacredly set apart unto **Jehovah**.

29. Princes of the fathers' houses of Israel—The elders, heads of families and of groups of families, to whom the family and tribal division of the nation gave rank and authority in public affairs.

31. The enemy and the lier-in-wait—The enemy in this case may refer to the more formidable foes, possibly the Samaritans and other peoples. The lier-in-wait is the treacherous, stealthy highwayman and bandit.

The Lesson Exposition

EZRA THE TEACHER

We should pause long enough, before taking up the lesson proper, to see at least something of the man who was the author of the lesson. He was the second of the three men who had chiefly to do with the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem from their captivity in Babylon, and in the elements of enduring influence he was the greatest of the three. The first was Zerubbabel, who was the leader of the first company who returned by authority of the decree of King Cyrus. The reader will observe that the account of the movement which he led closes with the sixth chapter of Ezra. The seventh chapter opens with the words, "Now after these things." Now between these two chapters lies a period of sixty years. Of those years we have no record. At the end of that period Ezra, under authority of King Artaxerxes, led another company of exiles back from Babylon. Following Ezra, and not long after, came Nehemiah, of whom the next lesson will tell us. These were the three men who laid again the foundations of the new national life of the Jews in Palestine. They were extraordinary men. Great historical movements always have, because they require, extraordinary men for leadership. God does things through men, and he requires for great things the agency of great men. These three men were men of distinct qualities. Zerubbabel was essentially a pioneer. He had the inspirational power to stir enthusiasm in the hearts of others and lead them on a hard adventure. If he had lived in this country in its early history he would have been among those who pushed westward over the mountains and through forests to plant the seeds of civilization in the wilderness. But he

was not a man of culture and he was not an organizer. Nehemiah, who came after Ezra, was a statesman and a ruler. He came to organize society and bring it into civic order. But Ezra was not a commander of men nor a statesman. He was preëminently a teacher. The characteristics of the three men fit into each other. Ezra could have done nothing if the way had not been pioneered by Zerubbabel; and Nehemiah could have done nothing without the religious teachings of Ezra. "Nehemiah caught the spirit of Ezra's ideas; and Ezra, whose work came to a standstill while he was left to his own resources, was afterward able to carry through his great religious reformation on the basis of the younger man's military and political renovation of Jerusalem."

INNER STRENGTHENING TO MEET DANGER

It was an enterprise full of danger for which Ezra had gathered his company. The journey purposed was a long one and beset with many perils. There was apparently some particular enemy whom Ezra had reason to fear might attack them on their way, for when the journey was at last safely completed he gave thanks for deliverance from "the hand of the enemy" (8. 31). This enemy may well have been some leader of the hostile people who had harassed those who, under Zerubbabel, began to rebuild the temple. In any case, Ezra was clearly aware of the danger. He could have asked for and obtained an escort of soldiers from the king ample for protection. Under ordinary circumstances that would have been the wise thing to do. But the circumstances at that time were not ordinary. It was distinctly a religious movement which he led. The ability of their

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God, of whom they had been testifying to the king, to care for them was on trial. Their own trust in that God needed to be drawn out and strengthened. It was not worth while that they should go back to their national home unless they went in the name and the strength of God. So Ezra had the people tarry and with fasting and prayer gather inner strength for the trying undertaking upon which they were about to embark. And the bravest people have always been those who, in the sense of their own impotence and inadequacy, have found strength of heart through insistent and desperate prayer. The men who have gone forth to their high providential adventures from nights of soul-wrestling with God have always been men dangerous to withstand. And back of every great advance movement in the world that has required the highest courage you are pretty certain to find a prayer meeting in which with conquering earnestness and faith the help of God was sought and found. Enterprises not projected by prayer do not usually carry very far.

MONEY AND THE CHURCH

Ezra took a large amount of gold and silver and other treasures with him back to Jerusalem. It is estimated to have been equal to nearly five million dollars. That would have been a pretty sum for "such as lay in wait by the way" if it had fallen into their hands. That it did not, in view of the lack of a military escort, can only be explained by the fact that God, who was "entreated" of Ezra and the people, protected them. There certainly would be anxiety in this country if a treasure so large as that was being carried through an uninhabited region by an unarmed company. It explains the carefulness with which Ezra divided the treasure among the twelve chiefs of the priests. The money had been given to Ezra chiefly by the king and his highest officers, though some was the free-will offering of the Jewish people. In addition to this large treasure which Ezra carried with him he bore letters of credit to the king's treasurers for large additional sums, and for wheat and wine and oil. And all of this was given to Ezra for religious purposes, for the service of "the house of the God of heaven"; that is, for the church. The church required it. The animals for sacrifice would have to be purchased and the labor needed must be paid for, and a thousand things would require money. The king and his counselors made no question about the necessity for money in the work which Ezra went to do. They did not say, as some practically now, "Because it is religious work we should not be called on for money." That, on the contrary, was the highest reason why they should give the money. If an enterprise is God's work, then ought we to be most eager to invest in it and help it on with our gifts. Money, with him who under-

stands its best uses, is condensed time, stored labor, compressed power. A man who has a dollar carries a day's labor in his pocket, which he can have expended, if he prefers, on the other side of the planet. Money is portable influence, and it makes possible an infinite transmutation of energy. A washerwoman's gift of five dollars to a college may be made to work forever through a great teacher's brain. A farmer may earn his money by hard labor and turn it into the service of the skilled physician and the trained nurse for the alleviation of suffering and the saving of life in a hospital. So far from complaining that the church asks for money, we should be thankful that in money God has given us the means of such varied and far-reaching power, and that the church provides for us some of the noblest opportunities for the use of our money.

AN OPTIMIST DISILLUSIONED

Ezra was very much of a dreamer and a seer of visions. That is to be put to his credit. Optimists have always led the world. The idealist, we say, lives in an unreal world, seeing things as they should be and not as they are. Yes, but some one must see things in that wise before things ever become as they should be. If everybody saw this world only as it actually is, it would be a very poor world and would never be a better one. But it must be confessed that the idealists and optimists frequently come in very painful contact with life as it is, and are often rudely awakened from their dreams. It was so with Ezra. He was full of enthusiasm as he went to Jerusalem. His life had been essentially that of the scholar. He had evidently thought very highly of the company of his people who had years before gone back to Jerusalem, and he expected to find a society embodying the ideals of the ancient law of Moses. But the ecstasy of the first great service of worship after he had reached Jerusalem had not died out, before his eyes were opened to a state of things which filled him with dismay and shame. Read verses one and two of chapter nine. The remainder of the chapter reveals the darkness and the depth of the disappointment in which he was involved. But Ezra's optimism was the optimism of faith, and so when his eyes were opened to the hard facts in the lives of the people, his disappointment did not drive him to despair but to prayer. The optimist who believes in God and thinks well of the world because of that belief, when disillusioned by some sudden revelation of evil, he awakens to see that the world is not what he thought it was, still turns to God with tears and entreaties, and believes that through divine help his dream of the world can still be realized. And it is better to have dreamed and been disappointed than never to have dreamed at all.

SOCIAL RELIGION

It is to be noted how largely, as described in the lesson, indeed in the Bible, religion pertained to society. The community went astray. Public conscience was debased. General practices of evil prevailed. The nation sinned. The social body was morally diseased. Individuals of course sinned, but their sin was a part of the sin of society; and individual reformations were the result of extensive social reformations. And we are coming to see the principle involved in this in the study of modern life. Real life is not individual and isolated, but is social. And the moral life as well as the business life is in

large measure communal. We must still deal with society in matters of morals. It is deeply suggestive of this communal character of the moral life that the very word "moral" means custom, the practice and standard of society. And there is nothing more characteristic of our times than the recognition of the social character of Christianity. We are returning to the position taken by Ezra and Nehemiah, that religion is not simply a matter of the church, but of the family, and of business, and industry, and of government; and that it is vain to hope for individual perfection while social ideas are disregarded.

THE LESSON PRAYER

We are glad to believe that Thy Spirit is still working everywhere in the world for the advancement of the kingdom of righteousness. Thou didst put it in the heart of the king of Babylon to beautify the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, and thou art ever stirring up the hearts of men to good thoughts and to good deeds. And thou art interested in every good undertaking, and all good undertakings, whether great or small, are at thy prompting. And thou art with those, if they mean thy glory, who build great and costly temples, and with those also who build humble chapels in remote and obscure places. The good hand of the Lord is with every one of us in all our work for thee, and thou art our deliverer from the hands of the enemy. Our trust is in thy grace and thy mercy that thou wilt bring us safely to the end of our journey, and that thou wilt prosper the works of our hands. Amen.

The Lesson Coin Thoughts

I

The farther a man goes to do his duty the closer he comes to God.

Ezra was a great human factor in a divine revival.

Prayer is always preliminary to the great revival.

Study Ezra as a revival leader.

Ezra was sincere.

Ezra was sympathetic.

Ezra was a student of his country and its needs.

He was a student of the Bible.

He was filled with the Spirit of God.

He was willing to sacrifice himself to save the people.

II

A great revival must be preceded by a great awakening.

A great revival must be preceded by a great work.

A great revival is the work of a great inspiration.

A great revival is attended by great disturbances.

All great revivals are God's revivals.

Many cherished things die when revivals come.

III

A man is only worth what he is worth to God. Every man's value is measured by his value to man.

One's work for one will save the multitude at last.

The work that reaches men must find the man.

The individual must be touched before the mass is stirred.

The body never does its best till every member does.

IV

Cowards wait for great occasions.

Heroes make occasions great.

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The man with a hesitant heart cannot be a heroic leader.

God is closer at midnight to a true man than he is at noontide to a false man.

The largest leader is always led of the Lord. God's ministering angels call men to holy ministries.

V

If we shrink from others' burdens Christ will not bear ours.

God would pass his help to others through us.

Help that is withheld will hinder the heart. If we are comforted it is that we may give solace.

We have been taught of God that we may be God's teachers.

A man of large gifts must be a large giver.

VI

If we would *serve* God we must *save* men. Real gain is in the securing of permanent values.

Money at the price of manhood would be irreparable loss.

To be self-centered is to describe a small circle. It is difficult for self to see itself in the true perspective.

To lose one's selfishness is always immeasurable gain.

A man is never so rich as when he bestows the wealth of his heart on others.

VII

No matter how heavy is the hand of God it is always upon us to help us.

Whatever helps the heart, most is real help.

To be helpless is not to be hopeless.

The hand of the enemy touches us lightly when God's hand is upon us.

VIII

The supreme struggles are always in the soul. The armor of God is mightier than the army of Satan.

The Gospel of peace is the best preparation for war.

Right is the only rebuke to wrong.

Bibles are better than *bullets*.

IX

Foes flee when they hear the footfall of faith. When the new bark comes the old bark falls off; so it is that old habits slip from the soul when the new life comes.

All real revivals start from the soul as the center. Inner life will find outward expression.

The real revival must precede the real reformation.

You cannot kill the tree by cutting off its branches, you must destroy the root.

Real revivals are radical and reach the roots of things.

The spiritual revival is the result of spiritual inspiration.

God will come at man's call when man's call is for God.

Real revivals are always attended with revolutions and revelations.

The real revival reaches every interest of the community.

The Lesson Heart Talk

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES

The lessons of Ezra's going from Babylon to Jerusalem are so practical I am sure we will be glad to take this journey with him. We may learn much from a traveling companion. Ezra was a good traveler. He knew how to prepare for a journey and how to take it with comfort and safety. The hints he gives us are useful for any undertaking we may have in view, and especially for the life-journey we all must take.

In the first place, Ezra recognized that the journey was a plan of God, that God had thought of it and prepared the way before it ever came into his own mind at all. True, King Artaxerxes sent forth the decree and arranged the expedition, but Ezra saw God behind the human means and circumstances. He gratefully said, "Blessed be the Lord God who has put such a thing as this into the king's heart," and said, too, that he was strengthened for what he had to do, as the hand of God was upon him. This is the true view of your life and of mine. It is

God's thought for us; it is not a happening, it is a plan; it has a purpose; the human conditions that seem to direct it, against which we often rebel, are not outside of his care or control. What a difference it makes when we clearly recognize this. We are, indeed, strengthened according to the measure of our belief that the hand of God is upon us. Out of this recognition of God naturally grow the three characteristics which distinguished Ezra. He prepared his heart to seek the law of his God, to do it, and to teach it. This is the sum of successful and happy living. You are quite mistaken if you think this is only a bit of religious sentiment. It is sound good sense. What can be more sensible than for a young person to ask when starting out in life, "What is God's will for me?" Who knows so well as he who gave you your abilities of mind and body how and where you can best use them? Who but he sees all the path before you and its final outcome? Who more than the

heavenly Father loves you and desires the best things for you? Who controls your life? Is it not God? We have such strange, wrong views of the will of God. We think it has nothing to do with business or pleasure or the choice of our life work. We put it into a little narrow circle of religious duty and experience, when it should include every possible interest of our life. When shall we ever learn that the will of God, which is the love of God, covers all that concerns us, as mother love covers all that concerns her child? Only God's will, God's love, is wise and strong and tender where even mother love would fail. If we knew God better we would wish above all things to know his will. But because we misunderstand him we are afraid of him. Ezra prepared his heart to find out God's will, and do it. I cannot say this is always easy. At least it is not easy until we have come to know God as a child knows a very good and loving father.

I know it often costs a battle with our own will before we consent to do duty that is made quite plain. All sorts of obstacles, opposition, and the bent of our personal choice make it hard to do the thing which providential circumstances and inward conviction show us is "the law of our God" for us. But although I cannot say it is easy, I do say, with emphasis, that it is always best to do God's will, and that nothing else will end for us either happily or successfully. There are many "wrecks on the shores of time" because this chart and compass—his law and his love—have been cast aside by the voyager. God has something to say about human conduct. He is the Ruler of men. However independent we may wish to be, we dare not forget that every soul must give account to him.

It is not enough to know and do the will of God; we must teach others what we have ourselves learned. "No man liveth to himself." Scientists tell us the universe is so made that each atom influences another. You cannot move a flower, it is said, without disturbing a star. I do not know the facts of science in nature, but I do know the facts of personal influence in human lives. And I know that a good, true life that recognizes God in everything and rever-

ently seeks to know and do his will is a "lamp giving light to all that are in the house." There is one very especial thing we must not overlook in Ezra's preparation for his journey: He prayed before he started. He took time, as he says, to "seek of God a right way for us, and for our little ones and for all our substance." He was an Old Testament saint, but he prayed a New Testament prayer. In "everything" he made his requests known unto God. A right way for the grown-up people, who might be inclined to depend too much upon their own good sense and judgment in the affairs of this important journey; a right way for the little ones; who were starting out without any knowledge of their own; a right way for the management of all their earthly possessions. I am sure he set out upon the road over the desert with a calmness and confidence he could not have felt had he not taken that quiet time to talk with God. Do you really know, for yourself, the blessedness in seeking of God "a right way" at the beginning of each day; before every undertaking; before every journey; for the grown-up people, who are your fellow pilgrims; for the little children, who need your help over the hard places; and for the use of your money and all other possessions?

Ezra's conduct was consistent with his prayer. He was ashamed to ask the king to take care of him after he had committed his affairs to God and had told the king that he trusted God. Artaxerxes no doubt would have given him the band of soldiers to protect him from the enemy in the way, but he would have said to himself, "This man does not quite believe all he says about his God; he probably is no better than the gods we worship in Babylon." I am afraid the world has occasion to say so of us and of our God. We say we commit our way to him; that we trust him, and we sing, with great fervor, "He leaeth me, O blessed thought, O words with heavenly comfort fraught!" and then go about with no heavenly comfort in our faces or in our hearts. No wonder the world doubts our sincerity and is not won to love and trust our God. Let us consider well the lessons of this wisely planned journey from Babylon to Jerusalem.

The Lesson in Literature and Art

1. Verse 21.

Leave God to order all thy ways,
And hope in him whate'er betide;
Thou'lt find him in the evil days
An all-sufficient strength and guide;
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on a rock that naught can move.
—George Newman.

2.

I know the hand that is guiding me through the shadow to the light,
I know that all betiding me is meted out aright;
I know that the thorny path I tread is ruled by a golden line,
And I know that the darker life's tangled thread, the richer the deep design.

3. Verse
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4. God is
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5. Verse 23
to prayer, and
trouble.—Melo

6.

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3. Verse 22. A little, with the blessing of God upon it, is better than a great deal, with the embracement of his curse; his blessing can multiply a mite into a talent, but his curse will shrink a talent into a mite; by him the arms of the wicked one are broken, and by him the righteous are upholden; so that the great question is, whether he be with or against us, and the great misfortune is, that this question is seldom asked. The favor of God is to them that obtain it a better and enduring substance, which, like the widow's barrel of oil, wasted not in the evil days of famine, nor will fail.—*Bishop Horne.*

4. God is said to have brought the Israelites out of Egypt on eagle's wings. Now eagles, when removing their young ones, have a different posture from other fowl, proper to themselves, . . . carrying their prey in their talons, but young ones on their backs, so interposing their whole bodies betwixt them and harm. The old eagle's body is the young eagle's shield, and must be shot through before her young ones can be hurt. Thus God, in saving the Jews, put himself betwixt them and danger.—*T. Fuller.*

5. Verse 23. Trouble and perplexity drive me to prayer, and prayer drives away perplexity and trouble.—*Melancthon.*

6.
 "Lord, what a change within us one short hour
 Spent in thy presence will avail to make!
 What heavy burdens from our spirits take!
 What parched ground refresh as with a
 shower!

We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;

Lesson Side-Lights and Illustrations

1. Seeking Guidance and Help. A great caravan, with camels, horses, oxen, asses, tents, and all the paraphernalia for a long journey, is halted on the edge of a vast desert, nine days' journey from Babylon. A perilous tour, filled with privation and uncertainty, stretches before them, to occupy the next fourteen weeks. Nearly nine thousand people, none of them armed, and including many tender babies, helpless children, and women, are to be cared for. Their needs, dangers, and sorrows, rest on the heart of their leader. He had spoken to the king of Babylon so often of the divine care and protection that he had been ashamed at the last to ask for a convoy of troops. Now, at this camping place, before the longest part of the journey is undertaken, he halts his caravan, and sends word to every little company of that great throng that three days are to be spent in fasting and prayer to Almighty God for his guidance and help in the journey that is before them.

We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
 Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear."

7. We will suppose that some opulent person makes the tour of Europe. If his money fall short, he comforts himself with reflecting that he has a sufficient stock in the bank, which he can draw out at any time by writing to his cashier. This is just the case spiritually with God's elect. They are travelers in a foreign land, remote from home. Their treasure is in heaven, and God himself is their banker; when their graces seem to be almost spent and exhausted, when the barrel of meal and cruise of oil appear to be failing, they need but draw upon God by prayer and faith and humble waiting. The Holy Spirit will honor their bill at sight, and issue to them, from time to time, sufficient remittances to carry them to their journey's end.—*Salter.*

8. Verses 24-31. There is a burden of care in getting riches—fear in keeping them; temptation in using them; guilt in abusing them; sorrow in losing them; and a burden of account at last to be given up concerning them.—*M. Henry.*

9. As to myself, I live like a galley slave, constantly occupied, and often passing the night without sleeping. I am wrapped in a labyrinth of affairs, and worn out with care. I do not value fortune. The love of labor is my highest emotion. When I rise in the morning, my only effort is to labor so hard during the day that, when night comes, I may be enabled to sleep soundly.—*Stephen Girard. Written to a friend.*

For those who in our time are in somewhat similar straits, in view of the journey of life, how apt the prayer:

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
 Pilgrim through this barren land;
 I am weak, but thou art mighty,
 Hold me with thy powerful hand!
 Bread of heaven,
 Feed me till I want no more!"

2. Precious Promises. There were special pledges of divine protection and care which had been provided for that very hour. By the mouth of Isaiah, in view of the needs and dangers of that very journey, God had said: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. The poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the bare heights; and fountains in the midst

of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee. I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; in paths that they know not I will lead them; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight" (Isa. chapters 42 and 43). With these and other promises on their lips we can almost see that great company of exiles, homeward bound, seeking God's mercy and throwing themselves on his care.

3. Scriptural Prayers for Guidance. The Book is full of instances of men and women pleading with God for a revelation of his guiding and helping hand in trouble, perplexity and danger. Take some of them, almost at random: "Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face" (Psa. 5, 8). Note the prayer of Moses, and its answer (Exod. 33, 13, 14): "Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight; and consider that this nation is thy people. And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." The book of Psalms abounds in such prayers: "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation." Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies." "Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." How full also is the gospel of this sort of comfort. "If any of you lacketh wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Thus we are taught throughout the Word to ask for, and to expect, God's guidance.

The School of Practice

1. Ezra, when about starting on his journey to Jerusalem, took time for prayer until he was certain God would help him. I will this week begin every day by asking God to be with me and guide and protect me.

2. Ezra was greatly grieved and discouraged by the discovery of unexpected evil in the community. But his sorrow did not cause him to forsake, but to seek, God. I will endeavor also, in whatever discouragement may come to me, to find help in prayer.

The Lesson Digest and Teacher's Guide

The Junior Grade.

[For pupils from nine to twelve years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Berean Leaf.

Preparing the Lesson.

Illustrative Material: The picture of the priests and Levites carrying the gold and silver vessels

4. The Poet's Witness.

"He leads us on by paths we did not know;
Upward he leads us, though our steps be slow;
Though oft we faint and falter on the way,
Though storms and darkness oft obscure the day.

Yet, when the clouds are gone,
We know he leads us on.

"He leads us on through all the unquiet years;
Past all our dreamland hopes, and doubts, and fears;

He guides our steps, through all the tangled maze

Of losses, sorrows, and o'erclouded days;

We know his will is done;
And still he leads us on.

"And he, at last, after the weary strife,
After the restless fever we call life,
After the dreariness, the aching pain,
The wayward struggles which have proved in vain,

After our toils are past,
Will give us rest at last."

—Author unknown.

"Lord, thy children guide and keep,
As with feeble steps they press
On the pathway rough and steep,
Through this weary wilderness.
Holy Jesus, day by day,
Lead us in the narrow way.

"There are stony ways to tread;
Give the strength we sorely lack;
There are tangled paths to thread;
Light us, lest we miss the track.
Holy Jesus, day by day,
Lead us in the narrow way.

"There are sandy wastes that lie
Cold and sunless, vast and drear,
Where the feeble faint and die;
Grant us grace to persevere.
Holy Jesus, day by day,
Lead us in the narrow way."

—W. W. How.

on their long march to Jerusalem, in the Berean Intermediate Lesson Quarterly, page 98, will be of service in making vivid the lesson story.

Constructing the Lesson.

Arrangement of Lesson Facts: The lesson passage naturally falls into three divisions, verses 21, 23; 24-30; and 31, 32—Faith in God; Business Principles, and Prosperity.

Teaching the Suggestion

1. Reminiscences of exiled Jews and fathers of that beloved land, longed, but (them) had n to return to had already delight about ruins of the in the Lord's people, so th ships of Jeru Babylon. B home of their trains in that must pass wa there were hu any who trie hand of exile they had a l the priest; th Ahava, and the dangerous

2. God hel These good Je God was to d fully and car they had had their care ma which were to temple. Verso came from. a out these, ar trusty men wh to take care o Jerusalem the counted over a was lost. Th others, so th no mistake ma duty of accur do. We sho This lesson fur impress the m girls to whom God's cause—

3. The word 22, harmonize gratitude in ve in leading the Ezra trusted G days the peo then gave the tended to the king had charg Home Work fo Advance Work MEAN N-S MADE the HOME READ.

Teaching the Lesson.

Suggestions for Developing the Outline:

1. Remind the pupils of the thousands of exiled Jews who lived in the far East—mothers and fathers who day by day told their children of that beloved Jerusalem to which they belonged, but which they themselves (most of them) had never seen. Their hearts' desire was to return to Jerusalem. Some of their relatives had already gone there. They had heard with delight about the new temple built upon the ruins of the old one. It was the Lord's city in the Lord's land, and they were the Lord's people, so that their lives fitted into the hardships of Jerusalem rather than the luxuries of Babylon. But how could they ever reach the home of their fathers? There were no railroad trains in that day; the country over which they must pass was hot and sandy, with little water; there were hundreds of robbers lying in wait for any who tried to cross it. But there was one band of exiled Jews who trusted in God, and they had a leader who trusted in God, Ezra the priest; they fasted and prayed at the river Abava, and then, protected by God, crossed the dangerous desert to Jerusalem.

2. God helps those who help themselves. These good Jews, who had prayed as hard as if God was to do it all, made their plans as carefully and carried them on as diligently, as if they had had no divine Helper. They had in their care many articles of gold and silver, which were to be used in the services of the temple. Verse 25 tells where these treasures came from. Ezra was careful to weigh and count these, and then to give them in charge of trusty men who would have nothing to do but to take care of them. When they all reached Jerusalem the treasures were weighed and counted over again, to make sure that nothing was lost. This was done in the presence of others, so that no wrong should be done and no mistake made. Make emphatic the religious duty of accuracy and faithfulness in all that we do. We should begin early to keep accounts. This lesson furnishes a valuable opportunity to impress the moral responsibility of boys and girls to whom money has been intrusted for God's cause—missionary or other collections.

3. The words of our Golden Text, in verse 22, harmonize beautifully with the words of gratitude in verse 31. God gave Ezra success in leading the people across the desert because Ezra trusted God and did his best. For three days the people rested after their journey, and then gave the treasures to the temple and attended to the other business with which the king had charged them.

Home Work for Pupils.

Advance Work: Request each pupil to study the MEANINGS MADE EASY of Lesson VIII., and urge the HOME READINGS for each day.

Review Work: [Let the teacher write these or other questions on slips of paper with a blank space for each answer, and give a slip to each pupil, expecting answers to be returned next Sunday.] **1.** What was the name of the river at which Ezra and his people fasted? **2.** Why did he not like to ask the king for soldiers to defend them? **3.** What was the name of the king? [Artaxerxes.]

The Intermediate Grade

[For pupils from thirteen to sixteen years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly, the Intermediate Quarterly, or the Lesson Leaf.]

Preparing the Lesson.

Illustrative Material: **1.** The Blackboard Exercise. **2.** The Tomb of Ezra, Senior Quarterly, page 224. **3.** The picture mentioned in our notes for the JUNIOR GRADE. **4.** The order given by Oliver Cromwell, the Christian soldier, to his troops: "Trust in God and keep your powder dry."

Constructing the Lesson.

THE LESSON ANALYSIS, page 836, follows the structural lines of the passage, and furnishes the most natural outline for the teacher. If preferred, however, the character of Ezra may be taken as the topic for study, related Scripture passages being referred to in the class, and the Blackboard Exercise taken for an outline, "Faith" being emphasized under the head of ZEAL, and "Business Principles" under ABILITY.

Teaching the Lesson.

Whichever outline may be selected the gist of this Lesson is in the Golden Text. Consider its *unchangeable truth* and its *individual application*. What the dictionaries call "anthropomorphic" conceptions of God are unavoidable in our efforts to come close to him, and of his sympathetic "eye" of the Lord, and of the activities of his hand. **1.** Compare with verse 21 the words of Abraham's servant, spoken centuries before, "I, being in the way, the Lord led me" (Gen. 24. 27). Compare with "afflict" or "humble" the larger views of "our Father" and of prayer introduced by our Saviour. As unfaithfulness begets unfaithfulness, Ezra's holy deed makes the next one easier; Ezra's godly words to the king led naturally to his completed faith in crossing the desert (verse 22). Consider fasting as an aid to prayer. **2.** To Ezra as the chief of the expedition had been intrusted offerings to the temple of silver, gold, and "copper," by (1) the king, (2) his counselors and lords, (3) and Hebrews who were not returning to Jerusalem (verse 25). These vessels Ezra carefully and publicly

counted and weighed, and formally committed them to the care of twenty-two distinguished men, who, as priests and Levites, inherited special responsibilities for the temple service. Ezra's counting and weighing these vessels, his accurate valuation of them ("precious as gold,"



verse 27), and his recognition of the givers are all so businesslike as to command our admiration. "Order is Heaven's first law." But religion is interwoven with Ezra's "business." He reminds these men that by their office they are "holy unto the Lord"; and enjoins on them (verse 29) a detailed accuracy similar to his own. 3. Verses 30, 31 are the logical outcome of what went before. Ezra depended on God and did his duty, and true success came.

Ask the pupils to print on their pads:

THE HAND OF OUR GOD

Show how God influenced Ezra's heart, directed his way, and defended him and brought him to Jerusalem. Print on the pads:

THE HAND OF OUR GOD

BECKONS
POINTS
DEFENDS
WELCOMES

Home Work for Pupils.

Advance Work: Ask the pupils to read Neh. 8. 8-18 (Lesson XI). Urge the HOME READINGS.

Review Work: Give to each pupil a writing tablet with the following questions, with spaces for written answers to be returned next Sunday: 1. How many of the Jewish exiles returned with the first and second migration? 2. Who was the leader of the first? 3. How long did it take for Ezra and his company to reach Jerusalem?

The Senior Grade

[For pupils above the age of seventeen. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly.]

THE LESSON ANALYSIS, page 836, gives the natural divisions of the lesson narrative. On almost every salient fact in the story a spiritual truth is hung. Ezra's entire life was consistent with his conduct on this occasion.

Treat the lesson as a study in God's providence. It was God who (a) called and trained Ezra for this great work; (b) gave him favor with the pagan king; (c) secured him influence over his fellow Hebrews; (d) provided financial backing for his great undertaking; (e) defended the company from the dangers of the desert, which were many; (f) quelled jealousies in Jerusalem and secured warm welcome to the newcomers.

How was God's providential support secured by Ezra? How is a favoring wind secured by the master of a sailing vessel? He goes in the way of the wind and is wafted toward his desired port. Ezra chose God's plans and God's thoughts, linked himself with God, and the outcome of his life, therefore, was according to God's will. But not in every case does success crown the effort of good people, even when their hearts are in perfect harmony with the will of God, for sometimes God's plans suffer temporary defeat; it is permanent success which is assured.

Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience he stands waiting,
With exactness grinds he all.

Several invaluable illustrations of divine guidance appear in the Lesson in Literature and Art, to be found on pages 842, 843, and 844.

The Responsive Review

1. What had Ezra told the king? *That God would help those who sought him.* 2. For what did he and his people pray to God? *That God would point out the right way for them to go.* 3. Was his prayer answered? *Yes; the Lord delivered and guided them.* 4. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? *"The hand of our God," etc.*

The Church Catechism

62. What sacraments hath Christ instituted in His Church? Christ hath instituted two sacraments in His Church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Ephesians iv. 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

1 The word a-l'ah. And Chis'leu, in t Shu'shan the P

2 That Ha-he and certain concerning the were left of the sa-lem.

3 And they are left of the are in great aff Je-ru'sa-lem al thereof are bur

4 And it ca words, that I s certain days, a God of heaven

5 And said, heaven, the gre covenant and m observe his com

6 Let thine eyes open, that thy servant, wh and night, for t

7 And, and confe Is-ra-el, which w I and my fathe

8 We have de and have not ke statutes, nor th mandated thy se

9 Remember, thou commanded if ye transgre among the natio

10 But if ye t commandments, and you cast out ur

11 I will bring them will bring them chosen to set my

12 Now these ple, whom thou power, and by t

13 O Lord, I l e attentive to t e the prayer of ear thy name: r vant this day, t of this man rarer.

Furnished by the

1. Nehemiah's P

2. Request gran

3. Resolve to bu

LESSON VIII. Nehemiah's Prayer

[Nov. 19]

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

AUTHORIZED VERSION

[Read Nehemiah, chapter 2.]

Neh. 1. 1-11

[Commit to memory verses 8, 9]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REVISED VERSION.*

1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachai'ah.

Now it came to pass in the month of Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, 2 that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men out of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, that were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days; and I fasted and prayed before the God of heaven, 5 and said, I beseech thee, O Jehovah, the God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and loving-kindness with them that love him and keep his commandments: 6 let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee at this time, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, while I confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee. Yea, I and my father's house have sinned: 7 we have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. 8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye trespass, I will scatter you abroad among the peoples: 9 but if ye return unto me, and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts were in the uttermost part of the heavens, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen, to cause my name to dwell there. 10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. 11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who delight to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. (Now I was cupbearer to the king.)

Home Readings

Furnished by the International Bible Reading Association]

Nehemiah's Prayer. Neh. 1. 1-11.

a. Request granted. Neh. 2. 1-8.

b. Resolve to build. Neh. 2. 9-20.

Th. The promise. Lev. 26. 40-46.

F. Far-reaching deliverance. Deut. 30. 1-10.

S. Daniel's prayer. Dan. 9. 3-15.

S. Prayer in adversity. Psal. 80.

Time.—B. C. 445 or 444. Places.—Shushan, the palace; Jerusalem.

The Lesson Hymns

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 201.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire,
That trembles in the breast.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 203.

'Tis the blessed hour of prayer, when our hearts lowly bend,
And we gather to Jesus, our Saviour and friend;
If we come to him in faith, his protection to share,
What a balm for the weary! Oh, how sweet to be there!

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 202.

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
That calls me from a world of care.
And bids me at my Father's throne
Make all my wants and wishes known.

Questions for Senior Scholars

1. *The Burden* (v. 1-4).—Who speaks in this lesson? What was his office? (Verse 11.) What were the duties and privileges of a cupbearer? What is meant by "the palace"? Who was "the king"? (Neh. 2. 1.) What people does our lesson describe, as in need? What had been the condition of Jerusalem for many years? Why had God permitted it to be destroyed? (2 Chron. 36. 14-21.) What was the great need of walls? Give some of the causes of the "affliction and reproach" from which the Jews suffered? How did Nehemiah receive the news?

Questions for Intermediate Scholars

1. *Nehemiah the Patriot* (v. 1-4).—Who wrote the account given in this chapter? What position did Nehemiah hold at the court of Artaxerxes? Where did the king reside in winter? In what month did Nehemiah meet these men from Jerusalem? Where had Hanani and these certain men of Judah been? What did Nehemiah ask them? What did they tell him was the condition of the people and city of Jerusalem? What had caused this condition?

Questions for Younger Scholars

Who was Nehemiah? A Jew. Where did he live? In Persia. What did the king of Persia give him to do? He made him his cupbearer. Who was the king of Persia? Artaxerxes. Why did Nehemiah love his own country? Because it was the Lord's land. What did he hear one day? Who brought him this news? What did he say about Jerusalem? What had been

2. *The Prayer* (v. 5-11). How are Jews now generally esteemed? Does the general sentiment toward them accord with Christ's teaching? What elements of true prayer appear in these words of Nehemiah? What confession did he make? What had been the offense of the people? What threatening of the Lord did Nehemiah call to mind? What one thing does he plead as his hope? Must confession and repentance always precede pardon? What is our GOLDEN TEXT? How is the purpose in his heart foreshadowed? What was his purpose?

2. *Nehemiah the Priest* (v. 5-11).—How did Nehemiah act the part of the true priest of his people? What did he acknowledge first in his prayer? What reason did he give for asking God to be attentive to this prayer? What was the confession which he made of the sins of the people? What promise did he plead in his prayer? What was the thing which Nehemiah prayed for specially? What lessons may we learn from Nehemiah's prayer?

broken down? What had been burned? Why was this a sad thing? Because now enemies could come in. What did Nehemiah do when he heard this? What did he ask of the Lord? That he might go and build up the walls. What did he fear? That the king would not let him go. What did he ask of God? To make the king willing.

The Lesson Analysis

I. *The Framework*, verses 1, 11.

(a) The first sentence is the title of the book of Nehemiah. (b) It was winter, and therefore the Persian court was established in Shushan, the winter residence of the kings. (c) King Artaxerxes had long been upon the throne, and knew whom to trust and whom to avoid. (d) He trusted Nehemiah greatly; he was "the king's cupbearer."

II. *Nehemiah's Sorrow*, verses 2-4.

(a) Nehemiah's brother was a resident of Judah. (b) In God's providential plan he now visited Shushan, perhaps on secular business. (c) Nehemiah asked him and his companions concerning the dwellers in the Holy Land, (d) and especially concerning Jerusalem. (e) Their answer piled up sorrows. (f) Times were hard in the Holy Land—poor crops, untiring enemies, weak leaders. (g) Jerusalem was undefended from the prowling barbarian

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robbers. (h) When Nehemiah heard these words he mourned, wept, fasted, and prayed.

III. Nehemiah's Prayer, verses 5-11.

(a) It is directed to Jehovah, the God of heaven. (b) It recalls God's greatness and terribleness, and also his faithfulness and mercy. (c) It notes the two conditions of God's favor—love and obedience. (d) It asks that God's ear may be attentive to his petition and that God's eyes may be open to the sufferings of God's people. (e) Nehemiah prays continually until the answer comes, by "day and night." (f) He prays for the entire nation, and confesses national, family, and personal sins and shortcomings, (g) for God's law

has, from every point of view, been broken by God's people. (h) Nehemiah reminds God of his own promise, (i) to scatter his people if they are rebellious, but to gather them again when they repent and become obedient. (j) The first half of this promise has been fulfilled, and Nehemiah asks for the fulfillment of the promise also. (k) Nehemiah gratefully recognizes the prayers of fellow Hebrews, (l) while he asks for prosperity in his approach to the king.

[The resultant history should be traced sufficiently to show how Nehemiah's prayer was answered. His career as the builder and ruler of Jerusalem should be traced.]

The Lesson Word Studies

NOTE.—These Word Studies of this lesson are based on the text of the Revised Version.

EZRA—NEHEMIAH.—The books Ezra and Nehemiah together record events of two most important epochs in the history of the Jewish people. The first of these epochs covers the period of the return from captivity and the rebuilding of the temple; the second embraces the period of reform under Ezra and the governorship of Nehemiah. An intervening period of almost sixty years is passed over in silence by both books, except for two brief references to persons and events of this period found in Ezra 4. 6 and Neh. 12. 26, respectively. The following analysis will indicate more in detail the contents of the two books, which, it is to be remembered, were originally one volume.

ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS.—I. Ezra 1-6 (omit 4. 7-24). The Return and the Rebuilding of the Temple. B. C. 538-516. 1. Ezra 1-3. Return under Zerubbabel; the Altar Dedicated; The Foundations Laid. B. C. 538-536. 2. Ezra 4. 1-6; 5 and 6. The Work Hindered, Resumed, and Completed. B. C. 536 and 521-516. II. Ezra 7-10 and 4. 7-24. Reforms under Ezra and Nehemiah. B. C. 458-432. 1. Ezra 7-10. Ezra's Mission and Drastic Measures. 2. Ezra 4. 7-24. Opposition and Hostility of the Jews. 3. Neh. 1-12. Nehemiah at Jerusalem; Walls Rebuilt; The Law Reestablished; Reform Measures. 4. Neh. 13. Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem.

The purpose of the books seems to be, not so much the setting forth of a continuous historical narrative, as "the selection of incidents which illustrate the beginnings of Judaism."

Verse 1. The first sentence of this first verse forms a title or heading for the entire book.

Words—Or, history (Rev. Ver. Marg.). The rendering "words," would seem to point to Nehemiah as the author of the entire narrative which follows; the rendering "history," which is just as admissible, would be more in harmony with the known composite structure of the book.

Nehemiah, the son of Hacaliah—The father's name is given to distinguish Nehemiah from other men bearing the same name, mentioned in Ezra 2. 2 and Neh. 3. 16.

The month of Chislew—The ninth month of the Jewish calendar year. The names of the months in their order were: Nisan, Iyyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Ab'Elul, Tishri, Marcheshvan, Kislev (or Chislew) Tebeth, Shebeth, Adar.

Shushan—One of the three capitals of the Persian empire. It had formerly been the capital of the kingdom of Elam, whose territory stretched along the shores of the Persia gulf east of the Tigris River. The kingdom of Elam is mentioned in Gen. 14. 1. It was conquered by Assur-bani-pal who destroyed the capital city

of Shushan. Darius Hystaspes rebuilt the city and made it his royal residence and capital.

2. Hanani, one of my brethren—Probably a near kinsman of Nehemiah, if not actually his real brother.

Certain men out of Judah—Men who had come from Judah to Shushan to communicate to Nehemiah the news which they brought.

Jews that had escaped, that were left of the captivity—Men who had returned from Babylonia to Jerusalem and who were now doubtless well advanced in age.

Concerning Jerusalem—Probably also concerning the temple, though this is not specially mentioned.

3. Great affliction and reproach—This is not a reference merely to the humiliation of being subject to a foreign ruler, but rather to the evil plight in which, on the one hand, the residents of Jerusalem were within the city walls, and to the scornful attitude, on the other hand, of their enemies without.

Broken down . . . burned—At one time since the captivity, the walls had probably been

whole and the city secure. Now the walls were again broken down and the gates of the city destroyed.

Sat down and wept—Indicating the evil news concerning Jerusalem was to Nehemiah unexpected.

Before—Lit. "In the presence of."

God of heaven—A title also frequently found on Persian inscriptions.

5. Verses 5 to 11 contain Nehemiah's prayer. In verse 5 we have the opening address of that prayer; in verses 6 and 7, the humble confession of sin, and in verses 8-10, the petitioner's confident appeal to the divine promise. The prayer closes, verse 11, with an earnest supplication for the people, and especially also for Nehemiah himself as their representative at the royal court.

That keepeth covenant and loving kindness with them that love him and keep his commandments—(Comp. Deut. 7. 9.) The expression "keepeth covenant and loving-kindness" is an abbreviation of "keepeth covenant and showeth kindness." To the Jewish mind the relation of sinful man to God was that of a servant to his master. Devotion on the part of man could be realized, therefore, only in obedience to God's law.

6. **While I confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against thee**—To Nehemiah the scattered Jewish nation is still a unit and as such God's people. It is itself responsible for national disaster which has come upon it. We note also the sense of personal responsibility of the indi-

vidual for the sin of the nation which Nehemiah manifests and which is emphasized in the next clause, **Yea, I and my father's house have sinned.**

7. **We**—The pronoun refers again to the nation including, of course, Nehemiah and his father's house.

Commandments, statutes, ordinances—These three words occur together in Deut. 5. 31; 6. 1; 7. 11; 8. 11; 11. 1.

8. **If ye trespass, I will scatter you abroad among the peoples**—"And ye shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And they that are left of you shall pine away in iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them," Lev. 26. 38, 39.

9. **But if ye return unto me**—The promise referred to in this verse is given in Deut. 30. 1-4, from which it is taken almost verbatim.

The place that I have chosen, to cause my name to dwell there—Referring to Jerusalem and the temple. The Hebrew verb translated "cause to dwell" is the same word from which has come the later Hebrew word *Shechinah*, applied to the visible manifestation and glory of the divine presence.

11. **To fear thy name**—Name here stands for nature and attributes, that is, for God himself.

Cupbearer—An office of exceedingly high honor at an ancient Oriental court, though one which might be held by more than one person at the same time.

The Lesson Exposition

EASE-LOVING SPIRIT VERSUS PHILANTHROPY.

Nehemiah was such a man as many people would call a fool. He held a high office in the court of the greatest king of his time, with a large salary and many enviable privileges. He had every opportunity to live in luxury and gratify to the fullest his love of ease and honor. Every principle of worldly wisdom demanded that he should be content with his situation and not trouble himself about things for which he had no responsibility. But he failed to do that. One day he was found cast down and distressed, weeping and fasting and praying. And it was all because he had received news of a bad state of things at Jerusalem, a place very far off, where indeed his ancestors once lived, but which a century and a half or more ago had been destroyed by one of the great predecessors of his royal master. Some enthusiasts of his countrymen, the first company about sixty years ago and another quite recently, had gone back with the purpose of restoring the city; but it had not

turned out well. It was probably a visionary enterprise and impossible of success. Anyhow, why should Nehemiah make himself wretched about it? Let him make the most out of his own good fortune and let the adventurers at Jerusalem take care of themselves. If there was a typical representative of hard-headed worldly wisdom at hand when Nehemiah began to distress himself, he probably called him a fool. There are plenty of people who would call such a man a fool now.

BEARING THE BURDENS OF OTHERS

Nehemiah might have followed the counsels of worldly wisdom and contented himself with some expression of regret concerning the news that had come to him, and settled down in the luxury of his office. But if he had done so he would never have known anything about him. He would have nursed and coddled himself for a few years, and died a fatted courtier and passed into respectable oblivion. People who have followed such counsel of worldly wisdom

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do not occupy much space in history. If that kind of wisdom had prevailed universally, there never would have been anything worth recording in history. It has been first this foolish habit which certain men have had of taking unnecessary burdens on their hearts that has given glory and worth to human annals. It is living in a very small way when people bear only their own burdens. When a man carries nothing but his own personal cares, is burdened only with thoughts of his personal misfortunes, the real weight and worth of life have not yet been realized by him. There is fine perception of this shown in Longfellow's "The Bridge." Read it again, and see how merely selfish, personal burden-bearing is first described, and how that burden seemed greater than he could bear." Then came entrance into the larger vision of human needs, and the wider sympathy with human sorrow, when personal care fell away and "only the sorrows of others" became the burden of the soul. It is easier to bear a great burden of unselfish sympathetic sorrow than a little burden of merely personal selfish sorrow; for God strengthens him who will bear the burdens of others, but the soul that will put itself under nothing but its own burden is left to bear that alone.

GREAT CONFESSORS AND INTERCESSORS

Nehemiah is one of several great confessors and intercessors for the nation. This is one of the sublimest features in Jewish history. No race but the Jews furnishes the moral qualities necessary for the coming at last of Christ the universal Advocate and Intercessor for humanity. For the Jews had the capacity for what may be called communal repentance, vicarious moral humiliation, to a degree beyond that of any other people. It must be observed that Nehemiah manifested two kinds of sorrow which are very different. The first was his sorrow for the misfortunes and lamentable condition of his countrymen in Palestine. That was a generous and creditable feeling, but it was only a natural sympathy. But the sorrow expressed in this prayer is of another sort. In it he shows himself grieved not because of what the people had suffered and were suffering, but for what they had done. That was spiritual sorrow, the taking upon him of the sins of others and feeling the weight of their guilt. And this is the more remarkable that Nehemiah was not himself guilty of any of the things for which he made confession and intercession on behalf of the people. He was born in exile, and had no part in the sins which had brought calamity upon the nation. And indeed it was not simply for the returned Jewish exiles at Jerusalem, of whose sad situation he had heard, that he was making confession, but for the nation whose history included all the

past generations. In the life of a nation passing generations are only as passing days—the national personality continues and the national responsibility is unbroken. With that national personality Nehemiah identified himself, and felt the sins of the people as if they were his personal sins. That requires great depth and power of spiritual nature. A heart must have large capacity for moral feeling that can become the conscience of a nation, and experience the throes of repentance for the sins of a race. That is the high-priestly quality that distinguished the Jewish character, and that found its final and highest expression in Christ, who, though without sin, took upon himself the sin of the world and made intercession for transgressors. As other examples in Jewish history of great confessors and intercessors, take Moses and Daniel, as shown particularly in their intercessory prayers (Exod. 32. 31, 32; Dan. 9. 3-19).

THE GROUND OF HOPE

Nehemiah based his hope, in the prayer that he made for his people, upon the character of God. God was true, God was kind. He was one who "keepeth covenant and loving-kindness with them that love him." The Jewish conception of God had two unchanging factors in it. First of all God to their thought was great and terrible in his majesty and power, stern in his justice and inexorable in his laws. But he was also merciful and compassionate. Sin in God's sight was a grievous thing; but there was forgiveness for the sinner if he repented. And God had multiplied his promises of grace to his people if they would turn from their evil ways to obedience. Upon these promises and the character of God which they expressed Nehemiah rested his hope as he made intercession. It is well yet for us to remember that God is compassionate in his disposition toward the sinful. He is anxious to forgive, he is abundant in mercy. There is no indisposition to pardon to be overcome. God is always disappointed if, through impenitence and refusal to confess, we make it impossible for him to forgive. There is no hope in prayer except in the character of God; but in that character there is ground for the most abundant hope. And knowing God now as we may, as revealed by Jesus as the heavenly Father, there is much greater encouragement to hope for mercy than was given to Moses and Daniel and Nehemiah. There is no limit to the possibility of kindness and grace in the divine Fatherhood.

PATIENCE AND PRAYER

Nehemiah was a man of faith and prayer, but he was also a man of good sense. His prayer was directed to a definite object. He saw that the one man in the world through God who could grant his desire for the rebuilding

of the walls of Jerusalem was King Artaxerxes. "Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of that man." And having offered that prayer, he did not rush at once to the king to urge his request. He waited for the opportune moment; waited, indeed, until God should open the way for him. It was three months before the hour came. All through those days he carried the burden on his heart; night and day, we may be sure, he renewed his prayers. But he waited patiently. At last the time came. The very sorrow that he was bearing opened the way. Coming into the king's presence one day when only the queen was with him, the king observed the sadness of his countenance, and drew him out to tell of the sorrow that was in his heart and to make his request.

If he had not sorrowed deeply he would have found no entrance to the king's heart. His suffering was the measure of his power with God and with man. And this is characteristic of the deepest and mightiest prayer, that it is joined with the spirit of greatest patience. When we make our lightest requests we are most likely to be impatient if they are not answered at once. But when our hearts are ready to break with the sorrow out of which we pray, we can wait longest and without murmuring for the divine answer. And there was once in the church what we see little of now, a "burden for Zion," that made the faces of men and women sad as it did the face of Nehemiah, and which resulted in bringing in seasons of great spiritual grace. This is worth pondering upon.

THE LESSON PRAYER

Our Father, may the knowledge of the moral wretchedness of the world deeply stir our hearts, even as the news of Jerusalem's desolation moved Nehemiah to tears and to fasting. We pray first of all for ourselves that there may come to us the heart-break out of which prevailing prayer for others must spring. Save us from half-hearted prayer that is not greatly disappointed if its requests are not granted. Give us such views of the needs of those for whom we pray that we shall lift up tear-stained faces to thee in our supplications. And raise up for the church those who in sorrowing earnestness shall bear its burdens upon their hearts, and who shall have the spirit and the power of intercession. Amen.

The Lesson Coin Thoughts

I

Nehemiah's prayer was not a new prayer.

The newest prayers are based on the oldest principles.

Prayer is the point at which God's Spirit and man's spirit touch each other.

Prayer is the movement of God in souls.

As soon as we begin to climb the ladder of prayer we meet angels.

Prayer is the soul's pulse when God's Spirit touches it to life.

Prayer is the key to the gate of mercy; to open the gate, use the key.

Prayer is man's *method* of finding God's *might*.

Prayer is the path by which the victor climbs to victory.

God always hears the voice of the soul.

We enlarge our own souls when we "magnify the Lord."

The mount of prayer is reached through the vale of humility.

The window of prayer always opens heavenward.

The laws of prayer and the laws of power are in harmony.

Real prayer is real power.

II

Prayerfulness is progressiveness.

The *mystery* of prayer does not invalidate the *ministry* of prayer.

Does any man know any better method of touching God's power than the method of prayer?

If I am to approach God's power there must be some *plan* of approach; that plan is prayer.

III

All paths away from good are paths away from God.

One word of practical prayer is worth more than a volume of the philosophy of prayer.

I may *apprehend* many a thing which I cannot *comprehend*.

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Many a man intelligently uses much more than he intelligently understands.

Every man may have a working prayer though he may not have a working philosophy of prayer.

God would never do much for us if he waited for us to understand everything he does.

To trust in superior minds is a sign of a superior mind.

He whose *beliefs* do not reach beyond his *brains* is foolish and feeble.

IV

God's *power* makes it sure that he can answer prayer if he will.

God's *love* makes it sure that he will answer prayer if he can.

Every prayer you breathe lessens the distance between you and God.

V

It is as reasonable that God should be *responsive* as it is that man should be *responsible*.

God may know the way I take though I may not know how he takes me that way.

Ten thousand things that I see were real before I saw them.

My grasp may be good, but there are many good things *beyond* my grasp.

God is complete, but man is still in the making.

The world in the dark is as real as the world in the daytime.

The invisible seeds in the soil are as real as the blossoms I see.

The unsung songs are as real as the singing I hear.

VI

We need to know that God will "bear acquaintance."

My life may know a peace that my lips cannot explain.

Love is more a matter of *experience* than of *explanation*.

The law of love comes from the God of love. We cannot expect the finite to comprehend the Infinite.

God turns to us the moment we begin to RETURN to him.

VII

If God is with me it matters not who is with the enemy.

All of God helps all that is good. *
Everything goes wrong when we are on the wrong side.

If we put ourselves on the right side all hell cannot destroy us.

If we put ourselves on the wrong side all heaven cannot save us.

All real prayer is in the present tense.

We may always rely on God to help us in doing the right.

What is all wrong can never come out all right.

What is all right can never come out all wrong.

The Lesson Heart Talk

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES

Why not share with God our joys as well as our sorrows? Why "invite him to our funerals and not to our feasts"? He asks us to "serve him with gladness, come into his presence with singing." Surely he grows weary of our long faces, our sighs, our thinking that he prefers the worship of the poor and miserable to that of the rich and happy. What he prefers is the service of the poor and happy and the rich and happy. Poverty or riches are small considerations with God; it is fellowship with himself that he cares for. The heart that serves him with singing, whether in joy or pain, poverty or abundance, is his delight. What has this to do with Nehemiah? Well, just this: I am impressed as I read of him how unlike he was to many young men whom I know. So many of them put the kingdom of God and his righteousness quite outside the sphere of wealth and pleasure or position in social and civic affairs. Here is one in a place of ease and prosperity who cared very much for the interests of his fellow men and for his own religious faith. Like Esther, he used his worldly advantages to carry out what he believed was the will and purpose of God. Men like Gladstone, the late

Duke of Argyle, Lord Shaftesbury, and Wilberforce, who, despite the temptation of wealth and power, used the advantages of their high position for the advancement of God's Kingdom and his righteousness, should be an inspiration to the young men of our country.

Word reached Nehemiah, through some travelers from Judea, of the distressing state of affairs there. The people were in affliction and reproach, and Jerusalem was exposed to her enemies through her broken walls. This is the sort of tidings coming to us now from all parts of the world. From our cities; from our lumber camps in the North; from mountains and plains in the West; from factories where children are defrauded of the rights of childhood; from Africa, Asia, the islands of the sea—everywhere people are in trouble, in spiritual darkness, in need of everything which Christian civilization gives to us. You cannot read the daily papers without seeing the world's sorrow and sin. There must be a willful and determined turning away of the ear if one does not hear the cry of the Christian nations.

Nehemiah heard how things really were in Judea, and his heart was moved in far-off Persia. He could not be at ease in prosperity

when his fellow men were in dire need. His sympathy took hold of his very soul, and he did the best thing he could do to help them; he prayed to the God of Heaven. How often does it occur to the young men of this church or this Bible class that they have any responsibility to relieve the world's sorrow or help to cure its sin? Suppose when the facts are put before strong, prosperous business young men they should be so moved that they would earnestly talk with God about the situation, what a stir of helpful activity we should soon see! We never pray in earnest about a matter without being led to do something. Prayer always leads to work. Nehemiah's prayer gave him courage to speak to the king, and put him in the way to get means to help those whose need appealed to him. There were three young men moved by the Holy Spirit praying behind a haystack. All who know the facts believe this was the starting place of one of the great missionary movements of the last century, bringing the healing of redemption in Jesus to the heart-sore of the world. If we could draw aside the veil between this world we see and the very real though unseen spirit world, we would see the angels of God ascending and descending, busy in answering the prayers of those who have heard somebody's cry for help. O how blessed it would be if all our young men in places of prosperity could pray like Nehemiah!

But they must go back to the good old habit of daily prayer before they can be "effectual" in an emergency. Nehemiah was used to praying. He did not have "to catch a train" to get to the king's palace on time; but if it had been

so, I am sure he would not have neglected his morning prayer. No one could plead with God as he pleaded who was not in the habit of daily communion with him. Nor would he have lifted his heart to God when the king was talking with him if he had not been used to asking guidance in all that he had to do. In these rushing days when material things so engross the energies of men and women, and of the boys and girls, too, there is great need that the unseemly and the spiritual should be made very real. Everyone is in danger of forgetting the Maker and Giver of material blessings, and saying, "The might and power of mine own hand has gotten me this wealth"; or in the struggle to meet our daily needs to think God has forgotten and does not care for our temporal wants. By precept, exhortation, encouragement, and many examples in his Word he teaches us that he is intimately concerned with all the affairs of men. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." A good man who was widely useful while he lived and left a wholesome memory when he went from earth to heaven used to say, "I always tie to God in the morning for the day's work and in the evening for the night's rest." A boy in school came out first in all his classes, and his father, somewhat surprised at his success, said, "Well, my boy, how did you manage to do it?" "Well, father," he said, "you see, I prayed over every lesson; but I didn't give the other fellows the dodge on that."

Happily, prayer is not an exclusive privilege; we may use it in everything and help "the other fellows" to use it too.

The Lesson in Literature and Art

1. Like the sea anemone, which feels the first returning wave upon the rock, and throws out all its tendrils, so the tender nature of some individuals will give forth all its sympathies at the slightest intimations of woe.—*Rev. J. Everett.*

2. I will go forth 'mong men not mailed in scorn,
But in the armor of a pure intent;
Great duties are before me, and great songs,
And whether crowned or crownless when I fall
It matters not, so as God's work is done.
—*Alexander Smith.*

3. Verses 1-3. The great and successful men of history are commonly made by the great occasions they fill. They are the men who had faith to meet such occasions; and therefore the occasions marked them, called them to come and be what the successes of their faith would make them. The boy is but a shepherd; but he hears from his panic-stricken countrymen of the giant champion of their enemies. A fire seizes him,

and he goes down with nothing but his sling and his heart of faith to lay that champion in the dust. Next he is a great military leader; next the king of his country. As with David, so with Nehemiah; as with him, so with Paul; as with him so with Luther. A Socrates, a Tully, a Cromwell, a Washington—all the great master spirits, the founders and lawgivers of empires, and defenders of the rights of man, are made by the same law. These did not shrink despairingly within the compass of their poor abilities; but in their heart of faith they embraced each one his cause, and went forth, under the inspiring force of their call, to apprehend that for which they were apprehended.—*Dr. Horae Bushnell.*

4. Verse 4.

No radiant pearl which crested fortune wears,
No gem that twinkling hangs from beauty's ears,
Not the bright stars which night's blue arch
adorn.

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Nor rising sun that gilds the vernal morn,
Shine with such luster as the tear that flows
Down virtue's manly cheek for other's woes.
—E. Darwin.

5. Verses 4-7. Of all acts, is not, for man, repentance the most divine? The deadliest sin were the consciousness of no sin. The heart so conscious is divorced from sincerity, humility, and fact. Hence the experience of David is the truest emblem of man's moral progress and warfare ever written.—*Carlyle*.

6.

God of mercy, God of grace,
Hear our sad repentant songs;
O restore thy suppliant race,
Thou to whom our praise belongs.
Deep regret for follies past,
Talents wasted, time misspent,
Hearts debased by worldly cares,
Thankless for the blessings lent.
These and every secret fault,
Filled with grief and shame, we own,
Humbled at thy feet we lie,
Seeking pardon from thy throne.
—J. Taylor.

7. Verse 9. One of my little children had committed a fault, for which I thought it my duty to chastise him. I called him to me, explained to him the evil of what he had done, and told him how grieved I was that I must punish him for it. He heard me in silence, and then rushed into my arms, and burst into tears. I could sooner have cut off my arm than have then struck him for his fault; he had taken hold of my strength, and he had made peace with me.—*Rev. R. Tolls*.

8. Verses 8, 9. A heathen could say, when a bird, scared by a hawk, flew into his bosom for refuge, "I will not kill thee, nor betray thee to thine enemy, seeing thou fliest to me for sanctuary." Much less will God either slay or give up the soul that takes sanctuary in his name.—*Gurnall*.

9. Verses 7-11. A man called at my house, some time ago, for charity. Thinking that the man's rags and poverty were real, I gave him a little money, some of my clothes, and a pair of shoes. After he had put them on and gone out I thought, "Well, after all, I have done you a bad turn very likely; for you will not get so much money now as before, because you will not look so wretched an object." Happening to go out a quarter of an hour afterward, I saw my friend; but he was not wearing the clothes I had given him—not he! Why, I should have ruined his business if I could have compelled him to look respectable. He had been wise enough to slip down an archway, take all the clothes off, and put his rags on again. He only wore his proper livery; for rags are the proper livery of a beggar. The more ragged he looked the more he would get. Just so it is with you. If you are to go to Christ, do not put on your good doings and feelings, or you will get nothing. Go in your sins; they are your livery. Your ruin is your argument for mercy; your poverty is your plea for heavenly alms; and your need is the motive for heavenly good.—*Spurgeon*.

10. Humanity is never so beautiful as when praying for forgiveness, or else forgiving another.—*Richter*.

Lesson Side-Lights and Illustrations

1. A Poetical Paraphrase. William Knox, the quaint Scottish poet, for whose writings Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, and Robert Southey had a genuine admiration, wrote in verse a representation of the appeal of Nehemiah to King Artaxerxes which is worth citing here, especially as the piece is rarely seen in print:

"Tis sorrow, O king, of the heart,
Not anguish of body or limb,
That causes the hue from my cheek to depart,
And mine eye to grow rayless and dim.

"Tis the memory of Salem afar,
Of Salem, the city of God,
In darkness now wrapped like the moon and
the star,
When the tempests of night are abroad.

The walls of the city are razed,
The gates of the city are burned;

And the temple of God where my fathers have
praised
To the ashes of ruin is turned.

"The palace of kings is consumed,
Where the timbrels were wont to resound;
And the sepulcher tombs, like the bones they
entombed,
Are moldering away in the ground.

"And the fugitive remnant that breathe
In the land that their fathers have trod
Sit in sorrow and gloom, for a shadow like
death
O'erhangs every wretched abode.

"I have wept, I have fasted and prayed
To the great and the terrible God
For this city of mine that in ruin is laid
And my brethren who smart by his rod.

"And now I beseech thee, O king,
If favor I find in thy sight,
That I may revisit my home, where the wing
Of destruction is spread like the night.

"And when I to Shushan return
From rebuilding my forefathers' tomb,
No more shall the heart of thy cupbearer burn
With those sorrows that melt and consume."

2. *An Unusual Combination.* The character and record of Nehemiah embody an extraordinary cluster of virtues and graces. Not many such combinations can be found in history, either in the Scripture or in secular annals. In him we find the tact and graces of the courtier; devout prayerfulness, confidence in God's Word and care, and deep humility; patriotic devotion, the courage, skill, and disciplinary functions of the warrior; high administrative gifts; architectural and engineering knowledge; compassionate sympathy, inflexible firmness, religious and political insight, a noble dignity and an autocratic authority; an occasional faculty for fiery wrath and flaming indignation; literary ability as a scribe and historian; unbending courage, and personal integrity of an unquestionable order. This is a rare assortment of high qualities, and they make up an exceptional personality. Such a man was needed in that critical hour, and he furnishes a remarkable example of the right man in the right place in a great emergency.

3. *A Notable Gift in Prayer.* Nehemiah knew how to pray; of that we may be assured again and again in the book which bears his name. In this opening paragraph of the book we find some of the essential qualities of prayer enshrined. This prayer was humble—it came from a heart filled with penitence and contrition; it was marked by sincere confession of sin and need; it laid before God some of his covenants of mercy, the promises, great and exceeding precious, which he had spoken in other times, and which had in view just such a situation of desperate need and trouble as that which confronted this pleading soul; it

was straight and definite in its desire and aim; it asked for something exceedingly specific, and it laid before the throne of grace in a most simple and affecting way the burdens and sorrows which Nehemiah vicariously bore on his soul. These qualities of acceptable prayer, thus embodied, are available for study, emulation, and imitation for all time.

4. *A Great Patriot.* The union of religious devotion with patriotic affection in the heart and life of this man is a striking fact. He was faithful to his royal master in the palace at Shushan; he worshiped and served Jehovah with all his heart; but his very soul went out in desire, anxiety, zeal, and devotion to his own people, their desolate city, their ruined temple, their stricken estate. Gladstone, in our time, is a fine type of this combination; and our own Canada, thank God, has not been lacking in men whose religious life and patriotic sympathies were vitally intertwined, who served both God and the nation with sincere devotion.

5. *Tribute from Apocryphal Book.* In "Ecclesiasticus," that remarkable book in the Old Testament Apocrypha, otherwise known as "The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach," nearly the whole of the closing half dozen chapters are occupied with tributes paid to the great men of the Jewish nation. Among these tributes this occurs:

"Also of Nehemiah the memorial is great;
Who raised up for us the walls that were fallen;
And set up the gates and bars,
And raised up our homes again."

Josephus, also, at the end of his narrative of this man's achievements, says: "He was a man of good and righteous character, and very ambitious to make his own nation happy; and he hath left the walls of Jerusalem as an eternal monument of himself."

The School of Practice

1. Nehemiah prayed for an opportunity to help other people. His prayer for them, I am sure, would have availed nothing if he had not been willing to do his part toward answering it. This week I will ask God to open the way for me to help some one.

2. The great thing in Nehemiah was his willingness to use his own good fortune to serve the misfortunes of others. I will for myself recognize that whatever advantage I have over others in prosperity or attainments is a measure of my obligation to help the less fortunate.

The Lesson Digest and Teacher's Guide

The Junior Grade

[For pupils from nine to twelve years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Bercon Leaf.]

Preparing the Lesson.

Illustrative Material: The picture of Nehemiah

engaged in prayer on behalf of his afflicted country. Intermediate Quarterly, page 100, will be found serviceable. In the Senior Quarterly is a picture of the walls of Jerusalem as they now stand.

Constructing the Lesson.

Arrangement of Lesson Facts: The lesson divides on each side of verse 4. Verses 1-3 give

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Teaching the Suggestion

1. Who was a man of dif close in atten of his counter could not len and who wa Shushan, very salem which

2. What ne away Shusha came. How th surprised! Ne the people w Hanani and h tell about them held in scorn them, and not a city.

3. How did days together verses that fo made the natu means by whic

4. What was LESSON ANALY hemiah's confes those of the n promises God h from the prayer his special requ

eyes. Tell the story granted to Nehr included in the of the most impo Home Work for Advance Work ance in the Read can help the pu Bible reading she for the memoriz was MADE EAST

Review Work set Sunday to text of Lesson questions and ask e be brought in can ever please C art when we Why should Ch

the news Nehemiah received from Jerusalem; verse 4, his sorrow and supplication, caused by that news; and verses 5-11, his prayer. All the HOME READINGS are valuable; emphasize especially those for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. If, according to our suggestion for last Sunday, the pupils have already mastered the MEANINGS MADE EASY the teaching of this lesson will not be a difficult task.

Teaching the Lesson.

Suggestions for Developing the Outline:

1. Who was Nehemiah? A trusted courtier; a man of different race from the king, but so close in attendance upon him that every change of his countenance was observed; an officer who could not leave the court without permission, and who was now in the winter palace of Shushan, very far away indeed from the Jerusalem which he loved.

2. What news came to Nehemiah? To far-away Shushan Nehemiah's brother, Hanani, came. How the good cupbearer must have been surprised! Nehemiah's first question was about the people who had remained in Jerusalem. Hanani and his friends had nothing hopeful to tell about them. They were poor and suffering, held in scorn by the people who lived about them, and not able to build walls to defend their city.

3. How did the news affect Nehemiah? For days together he mourned and fasted. The verses that follow our lesson show that God made the natural signs of Nehemiah's sorrow means by which his desire was granted.

4. What was Nehemiah's prayer? Follow the LESSON ANALYSIS here. Call attention to Nehemiah's confession of his own sins as well as those of the nation; to his pleading of the promises God had made; to the comfort he got from the prayers of his fellow Hebrews; and to his special request of God for favor in the king's eyes.

Tell the story of the great favor which was granted to Nehemiah by the king. Although not included in the printed verses, this story is one of the most important parts of the lesson.

Home Work for Pupils.

Advance Work: Urge conscientious continuance in the Readings for each day. If a teacher can help the pupil to form the habit of daily Bible reading she has enriched him for life. Ask for the memorization of the definitions in MEANINGS MADE EASY, Intermediate Quarterly, page 100.

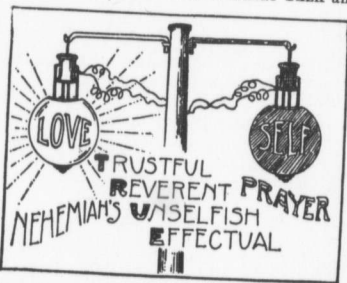
Review Work: Ask the pupils to be ready next Sunday to recite in whispers the Golden Text of Lesson IX. Write out the following questions and ask for written answers to them to be brought in next Sunday: 1. Can selfishness ever please God? 2. Whose feelings do we hurt when we hurt other people's feelings? 3. Why should Christians refuse to drink wine?

The Intermediate Grade

[For pupils from thirteen to sixteen years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly, the Intermediate Quarterly, or the Lesson Leaf.]

Preparing the Lesson.

Our WORD STUDIES will assist in the understanding of the lesson facts; THE LESSON EXPOSITION unfolds its spiritual meaning; from THE LESSON COIN THOUGHTS brilliant sayings may be gathered peculiarly adapted to the juvenile mind; illustrations of value may be drawn from THE LESSON IN LITERATURE AND ART and the LESSON SIDE-LIGHTS; while powerful personal application and appeal may be made with the help of THE LESSON HEART TALK and



THE SCHOOL OF PRACTICE. Pictures that will help: "Nehemiah and the King," Senior Quarterly, page 232; "The Walls of Jerusalem," Senior Quarterly, page 229.

Constructing the Lesson.

Build up your lesson on the framework of THE LESSON ANALYSIS, but so as to make salient and emphatic the truths which are formulated below for the pupils' lesson pads, and which should be written in their hearts also.

Teaching the Lesson.

Suggestions for Developing the Lesson Plan:

1. The Narrative, verses 1-4; the last clause of verse 11; and the immediate sequel, Neh. 2, 1-9. Make the background of the story throb with life—the stately, luxurious life of the royal palace of Persia; the timid, staggering, starving life of Jerusalem; the venturesome journey of Hanani from Jerusalem to Shushan (it would furnish good substance for a traveler's book to-day, and the journey in Nehemiah's day was evidently quite as perilous); the Oriental demonstrativeness of Nehemiah's sorrow; and the parting scene between the king and his cupbearer.

2. The prayer, verses 5-11 (here THE LESSON ANALYSIS will be of help, but do not follow it too closely). Press home the truth that GOD ALWAYS ANSWERS PRAYER, and ask your pupils to print the first three words in a line at the

top of their lesson pads, and the last word at the bottom. Then show how many exercises pass for prayer which are not. One sort of heathen think they are praying when they are turning a crank, and another sort have their prayers written and burn them, expecting the smoke pleasantly to titillate the nostrils of their god. Such praying does not even require attention of the mind. Beads are used in prayer by some Christians for the purpose of helping concentration; but the *mind* does not always bring with it the *heart*. Some pray with all the heart, but pray *selfishly* or *impenitently*. Now turn to the model prayer which Jesus gave us—the Lord's Prayer—and note how like to it in essentials is this prayer of Nehemiah's. Observe in both prayers, 1. Recognition of God's holy attributes; 2. Reverence; 3. Desire for God's will to prevail; 4. Absolute dependence upon God; 5. Confession of sin. Draw from the consecutive verses the characteristics of Nehemiah's prayer, and as each characteristic is made plain have the pupils print it, so that at the close the inscription on their pads will be as follows:

GOD ALWAYS ANSWERS

INTELLIGENT,	PERSISTENT,	BELIEVING,
EARNEST,	UNSELFISH,	SUBMISSIVE,
PENITENT,	PURE-MINDED,	DEFINITE

PRAYER.

The Responsive Review

1. Who was Nehemiah? *Nehemiah was cupbearer to the king of Persia.* 2. What sad news was brought him? *His relatives in Jerusalem were in poverty and danger.* 3. What did he do? *He fasted and prayed.* 4. What petition of his was granted? *"Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day."* 5. What is the Golden Text? *"The effectual fervent prayer,"* etc.

The Church Catechism

6. What is Christian baptism? *Christian baptism is baptism with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as the sign of purification from sin and of admission into the Church, and the seal of the covenant blessings.*

Matthew 28. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

1 Peter 3. 21.

LESSON IX. Abstinence for the Sake of Others

[Nov. 26]

[World's Temperance Sunday]

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

AUTHORIZED VERSION

[Read 1 Cor. 8. 1-12; 9. 19-27]

1 Cor. 10. 23-33 [Commit to memory verses 31-33]

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

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

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

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

27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatso-

The Senior Grade

[For pupils above the age of seventeen. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly.]

1. Nehemiah's faithfulness. A trusty official in a corrupt court; a worshiper of the true God among idolaters; a man of pure life in surroundings of sin; a lover of poor Jerusalem dwelling in luxurious Shushan.

2. Nehemiah's consecration. Loyal to his king, he nevertheless loftily devotes himself to the interest of God's people; his first inquiry is about them; his prayers are for them; with their sins he classes his own shortcomings; for them he is ready to make great personal sacrifice.

3. Nehemiah's practicability. No dreamer or idler, he. The account of his supervision of the building of the wall of Jerusalem is characteristic. That was only the carrying out of the plan which sprang from this prayer.

4. Nehemiah's unselfishness. He gave up position and wealth for the sake of God's people.

5. Nehemiah's perseverance. Obstacles confronted him only to be surmounted. Having shaped his course according to God's will as he understood it, he continued "firm unto the end" and God gave him success.

5. Nehemiah's idealty. His ideal was a pure church. Avowed enemies gave him less trouble than fellow Hebrews of unfaithful life. To obey God's law, to keep covenant with God, to belong to God in truth was Nehemiah's ideal.

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28 But if offered in sacrifice that show for the earth thereof:

29 Conscience the other: for other man's conscience: 30 For if I evil spoken thanks?

31 Whether whatsoever ye

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33 Even as not seeking mind many, that the

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M. Abstinence

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*The Revised Version, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons.

ever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake.

28 But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience' sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof:

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

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

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

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

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

and ye are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake. 28 But if any man say unto you, This hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience' sake: 29 conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other's; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? 31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: 33 even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved.

Home Readings

[Furnished by the International Bible Reading Association]

M. Abstinence for the Sake of Others. 1 Cor. 10. 23-33.

W. A stumbling block. 1 Cor. 8.

W. For the gospel's sake. 1 Cor. 9. 10-27.

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 447.

Throw out the Life-Line across the dark wave,
There is a brother whom someone should save,—
Somebody's brother!—oh, who then will dare.

New Canadian Hymnal No. 226.

When storms around are sweeping,
When lone my watch I'm keeping,
'Mid fires of evil falling.

Th. Considering others. Phil. 2. 1-11.

F. For the good of others. Rom. 15. 1-7.

S. A cause of stumbling. Rom. 14. 10-21.

S. Be sober! 1 Thess. 5. 4-11.

Time and Place.—Written from Ephesus probably in the spring of A. D. 57.

The Lesson Hymns

New Canadian Hymnal, No. 164.

Gather them in, for there yet is room,
At the feast that the King has spread;
Oh, gather them in, let his house be filled.

Questions for Senior Scholars

1. A Second Golden Rule (v. 23, 24).—How many letters from the pen of the apostle Paul are found a place in the New Testament canon? Where was he when he wrote his first letter to the Corinthian church? What peculiar conditions obtained in the church at Corinth which made the counsel of our lesson passage especially necessary? Concerning what has he been writing in the chapter just preceding? What is the rule of expediency for the Christian? What is the meaning of edify?

2. Two Examples of Its Working (v. 25-30).—What were the shambles? Why did some people conscientiously refuse good food that was sold there? What course did Paul recommend for conscience' sake? What reason did he give, and how does it apply? Would the

Christian who took Paul's advice in such a case be seeking his neighbor's good? What is Paul's second example of the working of the rule given in verse 24? What sort of a feast is probably referred to in verse 27? What course should be followed at the feast? How does Paul define conscience? Explain verse 30, as it is given by the Revision.

3. A Third Golden Rule and a Summary (v. 31-33).—Compare the rules of verses 23 and 24 with our Lord's epitome of the Ten Commandments. Into what three classes were people divided in Paul's day? What had been the character of Paul's example? Give five good reasons for abstaining wholly from the use of alcoholic liquors. In the light of these reasons is their use a sin?

Questions for Intermediate Scholars

The Conscience of the Other Man (v. 23-33).—Why did Paul write this letter to the Church at Corinth? What question was he answering

in this lesson? In what way did Paul mean that it would be right for him to do anything which would not harm him? Whose welfare

must the Christian think of besides his own? What was Paul's great rule of conduct in the church and out of it? Can anyone truthfully

say that "it does not harm me if I drink intoxicating liquor"? What harm is done when a man otherwise good drinks even moderately?

Questions for Younger Scholars

What was Paul? A great and good missionary. What did he sometimes do to help the churches he had started? He wrote letters to them. To what church was this letter written? To the one in Corinth. What had the Corinthians been before they knew Paul? What had he taught them? That there is but one God. What did some do after Paul went away? Ate meat offered to idols. Did this hurt them?

What did Paul say would hurt them? To do what they felt was wrong. What did Paul say Christians ought to do? Deny themselves for the sake of others. What does not commend us to God? Our outward acts. What does he look to see? Can selfishness ever please God? Against whom do we sin when we sin against a weak one? Why should Christians refuse to drink wine?

The Lesson Analysis

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY, PH.D.

I. *The Christian's Privilege and Duty*, verses 23, 24.

(a) Until Christ came religion consisted in restrictions (just as a child's goodness is measured by his obedience to his father and mother). (b) Christ's coming substituted whole-souled love of God for methodical obedience to God's commands; so that (c) in this sense all things are lawful for the Christian. (d) But things that do not help the progress of Christianity, acts that do not build up Christian character in ourselves and in our neighbors are unworthy of the Christian. (e) The Christian should first of all seek to do good, and, secondarily, seek to get good. (This rule applies in every field of human activity.)

II. *An Illustration*, verses 25-30.

(a) The revenue of the heathen temples came largely in the form of beef and mutton (sheep and cattle killed in sacrifice), and pagan priests were wholesale butchers. (b) This kept some conscientious Christians away from the meat market or shambles, because they could not be sure that the meat had not already been offered to an idol, and they hated idolatry. (c) Paul says: "Do not permit your conscience to ask troublesome questions." (d) For no matter to what imaginary god or goddess some poor pagan may have consecrated meat, it really belongs to Jehovah the Lord of the Universe. (e) If pagan neighbors invite the Christian to dinner, it may be well to go (even though the chances are that nearly all

the food has been consecrated to idols), because conscience must not be an inquisitor, must not be permitted to ask troublesome questions. (f) These two illustrations show what Paul means by saying, "All things are lawful for the Christian." (g) But if some sensitive soul should tell you that the meat has been consecrated to idols, the Christian should not eat it for two reasons: (h) Because if he eats it he may hurt the sensitive soul; and (i) because after the idolater's consecration has been avowed his eating it would be misunderstood even by the idolaters. (j) For the Christian must never consent that the good things of earth belong to any person or god but Jehovah. (k) We must never hurt another man's conscientious scruples, never endanger another man's soul. (l) It would be sad indeed if conduct, innocent on my part, should give rise to heedless speech and damage Christianity.

III. *The Christian's Rule of Conduct*, verses 31-33.

(a) Our food and drink and clothing and all the choices of our life should be selected with an eye single to the glory of God. (This is the most emphatic reason for total abstinence ever formulated.) (b) The Jews, the Gentiles, and the Christians were the only three classes in Paul's world, so that the injunction of verse 32 is universally comprehensive. (c) In this one regard, in the policy of his life, Paul sets himself forth as an example to all Christians.

The Lesson Word Studies

NOTE.—These Word Studies for this lesson are based on the text of the Revised Version.

PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.—The church at Corinth, which had been founded by Paul, was composed partly of Jews and partly of Gentiles. Many of its members had but recently been converted from heathenism and idolatry. It was natural, therefore, that after the apostle's departure questions of dispute and some disorders in practice and life should arise. Reports of such disputes and disorders reached Paul and prompted him to write a letter of admonition and counsel to his Corinthian converts. The first

epistle was v deals with p authority; a sion to refer tions for, the which those of which had deciding a qu also. On the to respect the fellows, but t Paul's argum such liberty.

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epistle was written probably from Ephesus in the spring of the year 57 A. D. A large portion of this epistle deals with personal matters. Within the church some had arisen who sought to disparage Paul's apostolic authority; and hence, in the first chapters of the epistle and again in the ninth chapter, where he has occasions to refer to his own practice in certain matters, he lays great emphasis upon his call to, and qualifications for, the apostolic office. Among the questions of dispute in the Corinthian church was the attitude of which those converted from heathenism and idolatry were to take toward the question of eating food part deciding a question of practice the Christian is to have in mind not simply his own profit, but that of others also. On the question at issue he may have no scruples of his own, but even when this is the case he is still to respect the scruples of others; not that another has any right to lay down principles of conduct for his fellows, but that in all things each shall seek first and only God's glory and the edification of his neighbor. Paul's argument is both a defense of Christian liberty and at the same time a warning against the misuse of such liberty.

Verse 23. Lawful—In the sense of *permissible*.

Expedient—Profitable, wise, contributing to a desired end.

Edify—From "aedēs," to build up. The meaning of edification, therefore, includes the thought of building up a Christian life, the strengthening of faith, and the molding of character.

24. Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good—This clause states the great fundamental principle of Christian life, that of unselfish and self-forgetful service for others.

25. Shambles—Tables or stalls in the market place, especially in the meat market; hence, the market place itself.

Asking no question for conscience's sake—Raise no unnecessary question of principle when in your own mind that question is already settled and the principle of practice involved established. Portions of sacrificial animals brought to the heathen altars and temples became the property of the priests, who disposed of their surplus supply of meat by selling the same to the traders in the public market. In buying a piece of meat from the public market, therefore, one could not be certain whether it had not been previously dedicated to a heathen god or goddess.

26. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof—These words are found in Psa. 24. 1, and a very similar phrase is found in Psa. 50. 12. It is not unlikely that the apostle had one of these psalms in mind and consciously used this sentence as a writer not seldom weaves into his paragraph a fitting quotation.

27. One of them that believe not—That is, one not a Christian, which in Corinth meant, of course, an idolater.

To a feast—At family and other social gatherings feasting was common. Many of the religious ceremonies also were made times of feasting.

Asking no questions—At such a feast, given by one who was himself an idolater, it

was possible, and in many cases even probable, that a portion of the food served had first been dedicated to an idol. It would be unnecessary scrupulousness on the part of a guest at such a feast to ask concerning each dish whether the food had or had not been thus dedicated, taking for granted always that the person whose action was in question realized fully for himself the nothingness of the idol.

28. This hath been offered in sacrifice

—Such a definite statement made to the guest would indicate a conscientious scruple on the part of the person making the statement, and to partake of the food thus specifically pointed out as having been offered in sacrifice to an idol might seem to others to be a recognition of the idol to which it had been offered. In such a case it became necessary to take into account the influence that the action might have on others.

For his sake—Lest his faith be weakened or he be led to regard your life and practice as inconsistent with your profession of faith.

29. For why—The word translated "for" may be translated "but," or it may be omitted, not being essential to the rendering of the thought. Possibly the translation "but" would make the meaning of the clause a little plainer.

31. Do all to the glory of God—In themselves, eating and drinking may be indifferent things; but there are circumstances under which they, at times, become matters of highest importance. At all times the glory of God is to be the chief aim of all we do. "In our own day, for instance, the question of using or abstaining from intoxicating liquors is one which ought to be dealt with on the same principles as those which Saint Paul has laid down in this chapter. Such a question should be approached and decided on one ground alone, namely, whether by using them or abstaining from them we shall best promote the glory of God."—*Lias*.

32. Give no occasion of stumbling—This is the negative putting of the same principle expressed in the preceding verse. In giving an occasion of stumbling to others we fall

to glorify God; that is, others will not by our actions be led to faith in him. Our inconsistency of life robs God of the glory which consistency of life on our part would bring him in the eyes of others.

33. This verse restates in another form the principle of expediency of action for another's profit.

Verses 1 of chapter 11 belongs properly with our lesson passage. It reads, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ."

It is well to remember that the division of the books of the Bible into chapters and verses was not made by the authors of the books themselves, in whose time it was not customary so

to divide a writing. A careful examination of different books will show that those who in later times made the division did not in many cases make the best, or even a correct, division. Only the inconvenience which would be caused to readers of the Bible everywhere by a correction of these errors, and the additional fact that men ultimately might not agree as to what the proper division should be, accounts for the retaining of these incorrect divisions in our Bibles at present. In the English Revised Version an attempt is made to overcome the difficulty, in a measure, by spacing and by correctly grouping paragraphs independent of existing chapter divisions.

The Lesson Exposition

DUTY SPRINGS OUT OF RELATIONS

Duty means that which is due to some person or persons. If a man existed absolutely alone in the universe, that is, in relations with no other beings, his duties would be very few, simply those which he would owe to himself. Grant the existence of God, and duties growing out of relations to him would come into existence. There is no such thing as duty in the abstract. Duty is what, because of their relations, one person owes to another. Virtue, that is, moral merit, results from the recognition and fulfillment of the obligations which spring out of the relations between two or more persons. We must always take the other man and the other woman into the account. The boy who occupies an entire seat in school may sit as he prefers; but if another boy occupies it with him he must consider that boy. A farmer without any neighbors may do very much as he pleases; but when neighbors come he must adjust himself to them. There are large unoccupied spaces in the world where a man may live alone if he chooses; but while he lives among other people what he may or may not do, or what he should or should not do, will be determined largely by his relations to those people. Things become wrong because of others which would be right without them. It is proper to fire a gun or throw a rock provided it does not endanger some one else. On a road where no one else travels one may drive as fast as he chooses, but not if the limbs and lives of others might be endangered.

THREE KINDS OF ACTS

Morally distinguished, all possible acts may be put into three classes, namely, the required, the permitted, and the prohibited. Must, may, shall not—everything one may consider doing will fall under one of these three. In such a case as the parable of the Good Samaritan duty required that the unfortunate man should be

helped. In all things morally indifferent doing or not doing is permitted. But some things are prohibited. The requirements of the Ten Commandments must be observed. Now, when we come to questions involved in the use or sale of intoxicating drinks it will help us to conclusions if we will consider them in relation to these three classes. Under which head will a given course of action fall? Certainly a man is not *required* to drink or to sell intoxicants as a beverage. And certainly it cannot be claimed that drinking or selling is a matter of *moral indifference* to be done or not done as a person may choose. At least they have possibilities of harm. The only question, therefore, is whether they are unconditionally prohibited by the law of duty.

THE DETERMINING PRINCIPLE

Paul furnishes the determining principle for answering this question. Take drinking. This only partially corresponds to Paul's case of eating meats offered to idols. Meat was good and could do the eater no harm. It was merely a question whether under given circumstances its use by one person might work moral harm to another. If some one should ask another to eat it because it had been offered to idols, then it must be refused, for that would be idolatry. But if ignorantly eaten it would involve no harm. It was unnecessary for a Christian in the heathen market or in a heathen home to make any inquiry about the meat. And even in case a Christian knew certain meat had been offered to idols he might eat so far as he was himself concerned. It could do him no harm. But it might concern another. Some one not understanding the matter rightly might be caused to return to idolatry. In case of such danger the meat must not be eaten. Now more than this is involved in the case of drinking intoxicating liquors. It cannot be said of such drinks that they are good in the sense in which

Paul declared in themselves the one who drinking man must settle himself does beverages, own health involved in and even if he should r thousand gl were harmle deadly pois take the ris know the ha is vastly gre

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Paul declared the meats to be good. They have in themselves the possibilities of great harm to the one who uses them, whether his habit of drinking may harm some one else or not. One must settle it first of all whether his duty to himself does not prohibit the use of intoxicating beverages. No man has a right to expose his own health and life and character to the danger involved in drinking. If he took no risks except for himself he would have no right to take them. And even if the danger were much less than it is he should not expose himself to it. If ten thousand glasses were before a man, and all were harmless except one, and that were a deadly poison, he would be a fool who would take the risk of drinking one glass. But we know the hazard to the drinker of intoxicants is vastly greater than that.

TAKING RISKS FOR OTHERS

But the drinker does not take risks for himself only. He takes risks for persons as weak or weaker than himself who may be encouraged to begin or continue to drink by his example. He takes risk for all the harm that may come to anyone through another for whose drunkenness he may be at least partly responsible. A betrayed trust, a wrecked home, a life taken, with endless radiations of harm may be involved in the influence of his example. He takes the risk for them all. And the risks he takes may be very close at hand. When a young man begins to drink he may be taking the risk of sending his father or mother broken-hearted and in shame to their graves; he takes the risk of bringing his own children into the world with the passion of drink as their inherited curse, or hopelessly defective in body or mind; he takes the risk of ruining his own home, of breaking the heart of his own wife, of bringing poverty and shame upon those whom he should love and care for most tenderly. Has any man the right to take such risks as these for others?

THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC

What of the rum-seller? What consideration has he for the good of those to whom he sells? What conceivable service does he render to his customer? The grocer renders a genuine service to those whom he supplies with food materials; the druggist may save the life of a customer by filling the physician's prescription; the tailor gives in honest cloth and workmanship an equivalent for the money paid to him. But for the money paid over the rum-seller's bar the customer gets harm and not good. No one knows better than that the saloon-keeper the evil effects of his business. If he has been engaged in it for several years he has seen many patrons fall from honor into shame. He has seen their wealth wasted, their health broken, their homes darkened, and in many cases he has

seen them go to dishonored death. He has grown familiar with the manifestations of the basest passions as the result of drink, and he has seen manifold crimes committed as the result of the maddening intoxicants which he has sold for gain. He cannot point to a single life which he has made nobler, a single home he has made happier, a single burden he has made lighter, a single virtue he has helped to develop. His business is the enemy of the church, the foe of the school, a danger to the state. In his prosperity only the evil rejoice; and from whatever community he has been excluded it has been to the advantage of its business, its health, its social life, and its public order.

BASED IN SELFISHNESS

The sale and the use of intoxicating beverages are rooted in selfishness. The rum-seller considers only his own profit. He is always willing to sacrifice the happiness of others to his greed. He makes himself a vampire sucking the blood of the community. He comes soon to be able to sneer at the prayers of wives and mothers and widows. His saloon is made a snare and a pitfall for all whom he can entice. And selfishness, also, is the spirit of the drinker. He consults only his own pleasure. He drinks not that he may be stronger for the service of others, but that he may have the pleasure of the taste and the stimulus and excitement of intoxication. He thinks with indifference or contempt upon the effect of his practice upon others. He cares nothing that boys are led by him to take the first steps toward drunkenness. His own wish is alone consulted. He will do as he pleases and have what he wants, and others must take care of themselves. The edifying of others is not a part of his programme. He looks on his own things and not on the things of others. He has not learned how to sacrifice for the sake of others.

THE HABIT AND THE BUSINESS

The habit of drinking intoxicating beverages and the business of selling them must be judged by their effects and by the spirit which they develop. An occasional drinker seems to suffer no harm; but from earliest ages until now strong drink has been the cause of unmeasured wretchedness and evil. And the drinking house has always been a center for all evil influences. There is but one thing to advise as to the habit, and that is to break it off entirely. And there is but one thing to do with the business, and that is to treat it as a plague to be suppressed entirely when practicable, but to be reduced to the lowest degree of harmfulness where it is impossible to prohibit it entirely. Total abstinence and prohibition should be the steady ideals of all Christian people.

THE LESSON PRAYER

Lord Christ, thou camest into the world not to please thyself, not to be ministered unto but to minister, not to destroy but to save men's lives. Thou art the friend of the tempted, and thou art ever seeking to make it easier for men to do right and harder for them to do wrong. We would have in us the spirit that was in thee, that we may feel that it is our mission, as it was thine, to seek and to save them that are lost. Help us that we may take heed to our ways that they do not cause any to stumble and fall, remembering thy word, that it were better that millstones were tied about our necks and we be cast into the sea rather than that we should offend one of thy little ones. Amen.

The Lesson Coin Thoughts

I

Half views of truth often lead to false views.
Sin always stifles the conscience.
The religion that never gets inside is a failure.

The *sense* of right is always *sensible*.
No scale pan can measure the weight of conscience.

It takes more than outward ceremonies to do away with inward sins.

It is wrong for me to do whatever will cause another to do wrong.

It is easy for the spirit to be ensnared by the mesh of the flesh.

As the water is to the ship, so the body is to the soul; it helps to sail it or sink it.

II

The *surface* of things always is less important than the *soul* of things.

Inward principles always mean more than outward prohibitions.

Essential virtues are of more value than incidental virtues.

The roots of right and wrong are found in the soil of the soul.

III

Riotous living is *ruinous* dying.

It is the infinite mercy that is kindest to the unmerciful.

Goodness always gains when it spends itself in good.

IV

Mercy counts more than mathematics.
If we have the forgiveness of the spirit we shall have the spirit of forgiveness.

Rebellion against righteousness reacts against the rebel.

The secret of the Lord is with them that he can trust.

No man can right another while himself is wholly wrong.

It is the man that is nearest right that is most merciful to him that is farthest wrong.

The greatest sinner is least ready to forgive sin.

Only the living Christ can give the death-blow to sin.

V

The sirens of sin make sad discord in the music of the soul.

Sin is a serpent whose fang frays out the silk of the soul.

It were better to have a well soul in a sore body than a sore soul in a well body.

Dogs licked Lazarus's body, but angels kissed his soul.

The highest *test* is the test of the *highest*.

It were far better to be right and poor than rich and wrong.

Any loss that saves the soul is great gain.

VI

He blocks his own way who puts stumbling-blocks in the way of others.

The great question is not about *meat* but about *men*.

Long enough to see God is long enough to be saved.

We touch forces now with which we shall be in touch forever.

Righteousness must have the right of way because its way is right.

Meanness never mends itself.

VII

The place of physical danger may be the only place of moral safety.

It is of no use to ask a false man to swear to the truth.

Purity is puissant.

Manhood is might.

The richest sinner is a pauper.

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What we pay to God always increases our personal account.

Responsibility for sin inheres in the sinner. The soul is natal to the skies.

The bird of paradise is not at home with the vulture.

VIII

When life becomes a mere matter of eating it will soon consume itself.

Eating, drinking, and being merry are often the preface of starving, dying, and being miserable.

Wine is wedded to woe.

He who carries with wine dallies with death.

No dove of peace nestles in the drunkard's bosom.

Weal can never abide where wine waits.

In the haunts of vice womanhood withers like lilies scorched by flame.

The Lesson Heart Talk

BY MRS. J. H. KNOWLES

Can it be necessary to talk to my class of the fearful peril in using intoxicating drinks or drugs? It seems as if you, with eyes to see their effects everywhere, should be wise enough to shun temptations so degrading, so utterly ruinous. And yet I would miss no opportunity to plead, even with tears, that you will not only keep away, far away, from the snare for your own sake, but also for the sake of others. "In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird." That is, if the bird sees the net he uses his wings to get out of the way. This danger is in plain sight; do not persuade yourself it is not there; look at it fairly, undeceived, then use your wings of knowledge, resolution, good sense, and high purpose, to lift you up where you cannot be caught. The nets are spread, but do use your wings so they may, for you, be spread in vain. I recently heard a physician speak of the effects of tobacco upon nerve tissue and brain cells, and in dulling the moral sense. I am not an extremist, nor a fanatic; I cannot agree with those who say tobacco is as great an evil as liquor, so deadly in its heart-breaking devastation. But I do believe it may keep a soul out of the kingdom of heaven. Anything that dulls the moral sense or unnaturally stimulates the nerves—that mysterious part of the body that is the border land of the soul—is a thing to be feared. It will never hurt you to abstain; it may be for you a great risk to indulge. But let me say, whatever you do, be honest about it. If you are determined to smoke or to do anything else that you have been advised is wrong, do not try to hide it. Hypocrisy hurts the soul most of all. I will venture to say that bad as cigarettes are—and they certainly are very bad—smoking on the sly is essentially worse. If you will smoke, do it openly and take the consequences.

IX

Maudlin laughter will soon mingle with grinning skeletons.

The drunkard's soul must soon shiver in sunless deserts of despair.

Like the reptile that finds a brood of tender birdlings the serpent of the still plunders the home nest.

Bridal beauty is nothing to Bacchus, the beast.

Mothers sigh when Bacchus sings.

Bacchus's kiss is the sure destroyer of man's bliss.

Sin is often like sundew; it enfolds the honey-loving insect slowly and surely, and the silent embrace is death.

As surely as God lives the time will come when Bacchus must die.

But our lesson is broader than this; we have to consider not ourselves alone, but others, in what we do. Some people follow their own convictions, but the majority are influenced by their fellows. I was sitting by a friend on the front seat in a large congregation; the long-meter doxology was sung without announcement at the end of a hymn. "Let us stand up," she whispered, and rose to her feet. I turned to see, and the whole audience were following her example. Observe the people in a public place where there is a "nickel-in-the-slot" machine. If one drops in a coin half a dozen follow. If a beggar gets something from the first man in a row of seats on the ferryboat he is successful all along the line; if the first man shakes his head it is hardly worth while to go on. Such little things illustrate our social human nature. We need not go far, nor indeed outside of ourselves, to see how words and deeds bound and rebound like shuttles weaving the fabric of character and of society. We are like sheep; when one goes through a hole in the fence all the rest follow. How beautiful to lead in the right direction! We may do more good so than by the eloquence of preaching. Indeed, living is the most effective preaching. Saint Paul believed his example was more weighty than his words; he says, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

Abstaining for the sake of others is a principle of wide application. When conversation turns to criticism or gossip the silence of one person may rebuke the careless speech of many. It is such a temptation to talk and be entertaining! Yes; but we must not entertain at the expense of charity, which is love. "For the sake of others"—it is a beautiful life-motto. The Lord Jesus, loveliest of all who ever lived on earth, pleased not himself. Think of it; he

who had the right to do as he chose because he could not do wrong, and had the right to use everything for himself because it all belonged to him, lived by this rule, how can I selfishly please myself without caring how my words and acts may influence another?

This habit, this indulgence, you say, does me no harm; my conscience must not be brought to the bar of another's judgment. True; Saint Paul says not your conscience, but the other man's, is to be considered. You answer only to God for what seems right or wrong for yourself to do, but you answer also to him for the keeping of the law of love, which is to care more to help some one else than to gratify yourself. "If thy brother be grieved with thy meat"—hindered in his Christian life by anything you do or say—"then walkest thou not charitably." For love's sake; for other's sake; for Jesus' sake—this is the beautiful life. If we know Jesus it is not hard to give up anything for him. Everything looks so very insignificant compared with him and with what he asks us

to do. A young girl wore round her neck a jewel which she really loved because it was a family heirloom, and she supposed was very valuable. One day a sermon she heard convinced her that she must make some personal sacrifice to show her love for Christ. At once she thought of the jewel; but no, she could not give that, it was too precious. But the conviction pressed upon her until after quite a struggle and even the shedding of some tears she took it to a jeweler to see what he would give for it. He said "Leave it with me, and come back to-morrow." All night she was troubled and almost resolved to take the jewel back. When she returned to the jeweler, he said: "This stone has a beautiful setting; I do not wonder you value it; but I am really sorry to tell you it is not what you think it is. It is a sham; it is worth only about one dollar." All that agony of soul about a worthless trinket! Some day in the light of his blessed face, how small will seem every poor little thing we have called a "sacrifice" for Jesus' sake.

The Lesson in Literature and Art

1. Verse 23. "The highest principle is the highest expediency."

2. The shaping our own life is our own work. It is a thing of beauty, it is a thing of shame—as we ourselves make it.—*Ware.*

3. A father that had three sons tested their discretion by giving each an apple filled with rotten specks. The first ate his, rotten and all; the second threw his all away because some part was rotten; the third picked out the rot, and ate what was good, and was adjudged the wisest. Some swallow down all that is presented; some throw away all truth; the wise choose the good, and refuse the evil.—*Spencer.*

4. Verse 27. A large charity is the growth of years, the last result of many trials.—*Stopford Brooke.*

5. Verses 27, 28. He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue unexercised, and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.—*Milton.*

6. Verse 29. Best unbar the doors
Which Peter's heirs keep locked so overclose;
They only let the mice across the floors,
While every churchman dangles as he goes
The great key at his girdle, and abhors
In Christ's name, meekly. Open wide the
house—

Concede the entrance with Christ's liberal mind.

And set the tables with his wine and bread.

What! commune in "both kinds"? In every kind—

Wine, wafer, love, hope, truth, unlimited,
Nothing kept back.—*Mrs. Browning.*

7. Verses 27-30. A physician is not angry at the intemperance of a mad patient, nor does he take it ill to be railed at by a man in a fever. Just so should a wise man treat all mankind, as a physician does his patient, and look upon them only as sick and extravagant.—*Seneca.*

8. Verses 30, 31. A Christian lives in two worlds at one and the same time—the world of flesh and the world of spirit. It is possible to do both. There are certain dangerous gases, which from their weight fall to the lower part of the place where they are, making it destructive for a dog to enter, but safe for a man who holds his head erect. A Christian, as living in the world of flesh, is constantly passing through these. Let him keep his head erect in the spiritual world, and he is safe. He does this so long as the Son of God is the fountain whence he draws his inspiration, his motives, encouragement, and strength.—*George Philip.*

9. Verse 31. When Christians have two aims they are like two rivers which flow near the city of Geneva, the Arve and the Rhone. The Rhone comes flowing along a beautiful blue—a blue which painters give to Italian skies, and to the rivers of Switzerland. It is no exaggeration, they are as blue as they are painted.

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The Arve comes down from the glacier, a chalky, dirty white. I stood some time ago at the place these two rivers join. It was not long before the Arve had quenched the Rhone; all that beautiful blue had fled away and nothing but white was seen. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." If your life be made up of two streams, worldliness running in like the Arve, and you hope to have spirituality running in like the blue Rhone, you will soon be mistaken.—*Spurgeon*.

10. Verses 32, 33. As the mother-pearl fish lives in the sea without receiving a drop of salt water; and as, toward the Chelidonian Islands, springs of fresh water may be found in the midst of the sea; and as the firefly passes through the flames without burning its wings; so a vigorous and resolute soul may live in the world without being infected with any of its humors, may discover sweet springs of piety amid its salt waters, and fly among the flames

of earthly concupiscence without burning the wings of the holy desires of a devout life.—*Francis de Sales*.

11. "From that time forth I never took any sort of stimulant to facilitate composition. Stimulants used for that purpose are like stones let fall into a fountain to create an overflow. The immediate effect may be to raise the water, but at the best they merely forestall the supply, and, even if they do not render it turbid, they often choke it at the source while appearing temporarily to increase it. Tobacco, in the form of cigarettes and cigars, I had used with moderation, ever since I came to Boston; but as I was now becoming intimate in a small circle where even the taint of it in clothing was unwelcome I soon gave up smoking altogether. I have always rejoiced at a resolution that rid me so early and so entirely of a habit which might otherwise have become inveterate."—*J. T. Trowbridge*.

Lesson Side-Lights and Illustrations

1. Paul's Attitude Here. Canon Farrar has a fine suggestion in regard to the general scope of the teaching of the apostle in this passage. He says: "It is clear that *theoretically* Saint Paul sided with the views of the 'strong,' but *sympathetically* with those of the 'weak.' He pleaded for some concession to the scrupulosity of overmorbid consciences. He disapproved of a defiant, ostentatious, insulting liberalism. On the other hand, he discouraged the miserable micrology of a purblind and bigoted superstition, which exaggerated the importance of things external and indifferent. He desiderated more considerateness and self-denial on the one side, and on the other a more robust and instructed faith. He would always tolerate the scruples of the weak, but would not suffer either weakness or strength to develop itself into a vexatious tyranny."

2. Ordinary Things Dignified by Worthy Motives. An English writer, Rev. J. Waite, in a comment on the words, "Do all to the glory of God," has a fine paragraph which we cite: "No doubt life is for the most part an aggregate of many little things. To some it may seem but a monotonous round of trivialities—the same things done day by day in the same way, and to the same end, and that an end of very little moment. But may not the noblest principles of moral feeling and life, as motive powers, be underlying these seemingly insignificant activities and making them really great? Infuse something of the wealth of a devout and godly soul into them, and the meanest doings of your life become no longer mean. That inner, invisible greatness of holy thought and feeling makes them great. There is no motive so lofty

but it may be brought to bear upon the so-called trifles that make up the story of our days. The minutest movements of the material world around us are effected by the same forces as ground the most majestic.

"The very law that molds a tear
And make it trickle from its source,
That law preserves the earth a sphere
And guides the planets in their course.

So may the grand motives of reverence for God and love to the Saviour give shape and beauty, consistency and harmony, to everything we do. And then He who seeth not as man seeth, who recognizes none of the distinctions of great and small, will accept it as a welcome tribute to his praise. Learn to fill your common, everyday life with the inspiration of a high and holy purpose. It will then become a thing of imperishable beauty and worth."

3. Not the Only Rule. The principle laid down in this lesson, that from certain things which might be in themselves intrinsically harmless, we must often abstain on account of the influence of our example on others, is but one of many foundations on which the rule of total abstinence from intoxicating liquors is based. In a few cases a man might possibly conclude that certain light drinks, which in excess are injurious, were to him not harmful; does that give him the right to use them? By no means. He is bound to consider the influence of his drinking example upon others, upon the young, upon those who are already allured by liquor, upon the community; and in view of that influence he is to conclude his duty. But in the

case of wine and liquor drinking this is, as we started out to suggest, only one rule out of many. Look at some other reasons why we should abstain from all that intoxicates.

4. "Wine is a Mocker." This is a declaration of the wise man, written two thousand years ago. In connection with it he tells us that the man who is deceived thereby is not wise. This principle, established in our times with scientific precision, that the use of liquor involves the mind in manifold delusions, self-deceptions, and snares, ought to warn the young especially against it. The imaginary world into which wine introduces its victim is a perilous sort of dreamland. He is made to fancy himself safe, when he is in peril; at peace, when all manner of trouble is at the door; wise and exalted, when he is indeed abased and foolish. The unearthing of the judgment, the disturbance of the equipoise of the reason, the stupefying of the intellect, occasioned by liquor—this is one of the inevitable effects which any physician will substantiate by his testimony. Is it not a foolish thing to put that into the stomach which steals away one's wits?

5. *The Will Weakened.* The use of opiates and of alcohol has a specific effect upon the human will. That faculty, the executive power

of the soul, that faculty by which purposes are formed, and plans are carried into effect, and character is solidified and built up, is gradually undermined, and finally broken down, by the liquor habit. The human soul uncrowns and dethrones itself when it yields to the blandishments of the cup.

6. *One Instance Out of Thousands.* The late Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage once said: "I had a friend who for fifteen years was going down under this evil habit. He had large means. He had given thousands of dollars to Bible societies and reformatory institutions of all sorts. He was very genial and very generous and very lovable, and whenever he talked about this evil habit he would say, 'I can stop any time.' But he kept going on, going on, down, down, down. His family would say, 'I wish you would stop.' 'Why,' he would reply, 'I can stop any time if I want to.' After a while he had delirium tremens; he had it twice; and yet after that he said, 'I could stop at any time if I wanted to.' He is dead now. What killed him? Rum! Rum! And yet among his last utterances was, 'I can stop at any time.' He did not stop it, because he could not stop it. O, there is a point in inebriation beyond which, if a man goes, he cannot stop!"

The School of Practice

1. Because drinking and the liquor business are the business, I will, if I have the opportunity, use my drinking and some one to abandon the business.

2. Recognizing that my influence will depend upon keeping free from the drinking habit and out of all connections with the liquor business, I pledge myself to total abstinence from the use of all intoxicating drinks, and to unceasing opposition by voice and by vote to the liquor traffic.

The Lesson Digest and Teachers' Guide

The Junior Grade

[For pupils from nine to twelve years, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Berean Leaf.]

Preparing the Lesson.

Illustrative Material: Use the picture on page 102, Intermediate Quarterly, of a youth being warned against intemperance. **Getting Ready:** Careful study of the MEANINGS MADE EASY, page 102, Intermediate Quarterly, should as a rule be encouraged; but the text of this lesson is not well adapted for verbal study by "Juniors."

Constructing the Lesson.

Arranging the Lesson Facts: From verses 23, 24 we learn the simple truth that the Christian lives to help others and make others happy. From verse 31 we learn that the Christian's motive in life is the glory of God. The other verses are merely illustrations of these two

truths; and the entire passage harmonizes perfectly with our Lord's condensation of all religious duties into, first, love of God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and, secondly, love of neighbor (in the broadest signification of that word) as great as our own self-love.

Teaching the Lesson. Suggestions for Developing the Outline: Make the two truths of the passage clear and emphatic: 1. Many things that have not been forbidden ought not to be done by us, just because it will not help other people for us to do them, and if we are truly the friends of Jesus we will seek not our own good but the good of other people. 2. We should live, every minute, to glorify God—that is, to please him and help him; for we are "workers together with God."

These two rules are the essentials of this lesson. It is not at all important for children under twelve to understand the social and religious customs of ancient Corinthian heathen. For a

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very few well-informed pupils the instances suggested in verses 25 and 27, 28 might shed light on the meaning of the entire passage, but most children will need more modern and familiar illustrations. The wise teacher will spend all his force on the truths of verses 23, 24, and verse 31, giving the first truth in simple language, and insisting on the memorization of the second truth, by rote in the class, if necessary.

1. *The First Rule*, verses 23, 24. Some people, old enough to act wiser and better, try not to disobey God's law, but they take pleasure in going as near to disobeying it as they can—like the little city boy whose mother had told him to keep out of the middle of the street and play only on the sidewalk, and who kept all the time on the very edge of the sidewalk, as near to the middle of the street as he could go; what he did was "lawful"—his mother had not said, "Keep off the edge," but it was not wise or right—"not expedient," Paul would say—because when he walked on the edge he was thinking only of pleasing himself, not of pleasing his mother. If he had been an affectionate son he would have thought first of his mother's pleasure, not of his own. Show how this principle bears on "temperance." If all people sought the welfare and pleasure of their friends and relatives and neighbors nobody would drink intoxicating liquors. It is not expedient (that is, it is not wise) and it does not edify (that is, does not help anyone) to have anything to do with liquor or with gambling. It is wisest and best to keep as far away as possible from everything that does harm to anyone. Don't be a busybody and ask unnecessary questions; never arouse suspicions about others; but always yourself keep as far away from wrong as you possibly can.

2. *The Second Rule*, verse 31. Some people think that religion consists in praying and reading the Bible and going to church. Those are only parts of a religious life. Everything that we do may be done in the right way or in the wrong way, for God or against him—even eating and drinking.

"Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
And what I do in everything
To do it unto thee."

Show how this principle also bears on temperance.

The Intermediate Grade

[For pupils from thirteen to sixteen, inclusive. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly, the Intermediate Quarterly, or the Lesson Leaf.]

Preparing the Lesson.

A careful comparison of the two Versions will help to a clearer understanding of this somewhat difficult passage. The WORD STUDIES and THE LESSON EXPOSITION should be mastered.

The incidental and illustrative character of verses 25-30 and verses 32, 33 should be clearly recognized. The essential lesson, as we have said elsewhere, consists in verses 23, 24, and verse 31.

Paul's first thought is that a course of action which might be right if one were thinking of himself alone becomes wrong in the light of the effect it would have on others who observed it. We live, like our Master, not to please ourselves, but to save others. The word *expedient* in its etymology means *assisting in walking* (think of *pedestrian*), or *helping progress*; while the word *edify* (think of *edifice*) means (etymologically) *build*. The duty of the Christian is to assist all



others in the journey of life, to help build up the character of others; to live not for himself but for others. That which in itself is innocent becomes harmful so soon as it exerts a bad influence over another. It is not necessary to raise questions of conscience; but we must always take into account the consciences of others who may be harmed by our example. Our habits, amusements, dispositions, business, conversation, etc., come under this rule also.

There is nothing egotistical in verses 32, 33. Paul's life was wholly given over to the welfare of others. His life was one long lesson of abstinence and self-sacrifice for others.

Teaching the Lesson.

Following the line of thought indicated above and in THE LESSON EXPOSITION, the pupil should be asked to place on his lesson pad:

I SHOULD TAKE HEED

Then, as the moral and spiritual dangers pointed to in our lesson passage are consecutively considered, let him place them on the pad:

LEST I FALL.

LEST I HURT ANOTHER.

LEST I COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

The Senior Grade

[For pupils above the age of seventeen. Each pupil, if possible, should be supplied with a copy of the Senior Quarterly.]

Consider our duty to our neighbor in the light of Paul's words (verses 23, 24) and of our Lord's summary of the Second Great Commandment.

Consider our duty toward God in the light of verse 31 and of our Lord's summary of the First Great Commandment.

Consider, in the light of both verses, the proper attitude of the modern Christian toward Drunkenness, toward Moderate Drinking, toward the licensing of the sale of liquors.

Consider the bearing of "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof" on the teaching of verse 25 and on the teaching of verses 27, 28.

The deeper teachings of this lesson are well unfolded by the author of the LESSON EXPOSITION. A notable sermon entitled "Free to Amusements and Too Free to Want Them," by Dr. Horace Bushnell, based on verse 27 of this lesson, has satisfactorily settled the honest questionings of many immature Christians concerning self-indulgence. It shows the full meaning of, and reason for, Paul's refusal, as a teacher of the gospel, to legislate over small questions

of restrictive morality. He sets the disciple perfectly free in the exercise of personal judgment; but we have scarcely noted the position given them under this liberty, when we begin to see that he is thinking of a second kind of liberty, so much higher than the first as to make it quite insignificant. Paul meant much when he wrote, "and ye be disposed to go." How can a Christian be disposed to indulge in any pleasure which will weaken the conscience of another? The dear love of God brings with it a liberty too full and sweet and positive to allow any hankering after questionable pleasures. The Christian in so far as he is a Christian is not down on the low plane of mere morality, asking what he may do and what he may not do; but of his own free choice he will do more and better things than all codes of ethics and all commands of moral law. He is so united to God himself through Christ and the Spirit that he has all duty in him by a free inspiration. Common sense requires us, on grounds of ordinary morality and prudence, to abstain from intoxicating liquors. On higher grounds, if we have entered into the new and nobler life of Christ, we will loathe such indulgence and keep our nobler tastes unmarred by descending to that which they have so far left behind them. "Do all to the glory of God."

The Responsive Review

1. What does Paul say every Christian should do? *Every Christian should seek the good of others more than his own.* 2. What is another good rule for the Christian? *To discuss no useless questions about religion.* 3. What is a third good rule? *Never to do anything to hurt another's conscience.* 4. What is the rule given in the GOLDEN TEXT? *"Let him that thinketh," etc.*

The Church Catechism.

64. Who are the proper subjects of baptism? The proper subjects of baptism are infants and adult believers.

Mark 16. 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Acts 2. 38, 39.

Temperance Programme

To be rendered after the close of the lesson study in place of the usual platform review and closing exercises.

HYMN. New Canadian Hymnal, No. 447.

READING. "Appeal on Pledge Signing Campaign in Onward" for November 25th.

GOLDEN TEXT. Repeated in concert by the entire school or department.

FIVE-MINUTE ADDRESS. By the Pastor.

CALL FOR PLEDGE SIGNERS.

ENROLLMENT OF NEW MEMBERS in Sunday School Total Abstinence Roll.

PRAYER. Short and appropriate. By the Superintendent.

HYMN. New Canadian Hymnal, No. 338.

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Primary Teachers' Department

Primary Notes

Mother and Teacher. The primary teacher who does not in some way come into touch with the mothers of her little ones is greatly handicapped. It is sometimes the case that a teacher is unable to visit her class, and so cannot meet the mothers in their homes. But this drawback may be in part overcome by the use of the mails and the sending of messages through the children.

Coöperation. A letter of greeting, inviting cordial coöperation in the work of the Sunday school, will be appreciated by any mother. The letter should be in good form, carefully considered and prepared, and should make it evident that the teacher feels the importance of her work, and really wants the mother's help in winning and holding the child to the church of the Lord Jesus.

A Legitimate Expense. Such letters printed in attractive form, or, better, made to closely imitate a typewritten letter, are a legitimate part of the primary teacher's equipment, especially if she is unable to visit her class in their homes. The question of needed class supplies is an important one, and the teacher should not hesitate to make her desires known to the Sunday School Board. So great are the interests involved in the making of these little spiritual "bricks" that no teacher should consent to even try to make them "without straw."

The Mother in the Class. A general invitation to visit the class is not enough. Have an occasional "visiting day," to which every mother is, with some degree of ceremony, invited. Ask the mother with the "Cradle Roll" baby to bring it along, and ask all the mothers present to tarry at the close of the school for a little social time. Let them feel your real heart-interest in the religious training of their children. The teacher will get many a side-light on the character of Willie and Mary, perhaps, which will show the way to their hearts. The mother, too, will be helped by observing the teacher's aim and method, and the two will learn to work together for the child's welfare.

"Ask Mamma." The teacher who is determined to come into touch with the mothers of her children will try many devices. "Ask mamma to hear you sing your new song." "Ask mamma to hear you say your text just before you start to Sunday school." "Ask mamma to

read your little paper to you." "Teacher said so," the child will be likely to add. An attractive leaflet or card may now and then be sent to the mother by the child, "with teacher's love." Make the mother feel, be she rich or poor, high or low, good or bad, that her child's Sunday school teacher thinks of her and loves her.

The Cradle Roll

AS VIEWED BY THE DEACONESS

It is a great scheme—my Cradle Roll. It is a regular department of the Sunday school, of course, but quite aside from that it is such a good introduction into my poor homes! I call at the door, and state that I want names for the Cradle Roll, hastening to explain that it costs nothing. The mother is certain to be curious, and I have to step in to tell her about it. Then she says she "doesn't care," and next I have to see the baby. Then I show the certificate of enrollment for the baby—I leave one at each house where we have a member. It bears a picture of Christ blessing little children. The other children usually gather around to see the picture, and then I sit down to explain. "That is Jesus," I say, pointing out the central figure. But many times the children get ahead of me, recognizing the benign form. Then I tell them the story—it runs about this way:

"You see, Jesus loved the little children—he loves them yet. And he wants them to come right along to him. He loves even the smallest baby—he loves the mammas and papas, too, and wants them to come—to come to him, and to come to the church, where we talk about him." Many times when I get about to this place in my story I have glanced up and seen the mothers listening with tears in their eyes. Then it is the easiest thing in the world to ask if I may pray for the baby, and while I am talking to God about the baby I very naturally ask blessings also for the baby's mother.

It brings me closer to the mother's heart than a dozen ordinary calls.—*Deaconess Advocate.*

Little Gifts

LORD, when to thee a little lad
Brought the small loaves of bread,
Thy touch enlarged the gift until
Five thousand men were fed.
So wilt thou use our little gifts
Of time and work and love
To bring to many a suffering child
Sweet comfort from above.

—Mrs. L. B. Ayres, in *Children's Missionary*.

International Bible Lessons

FOURTH QUARTER

LESSON VI—November 5

ESTHER PLEADING FOR HER PEOPLE

Esth. 4, 10 to 5, 3

GOLDEN TEXT: "The Lord preserveth all them that love him." Psa. 145. 20.

Primary Notes



Approach. While this is one of the most beautiful illustrations of intercessory prayer, or pleading, the children will understand the word love better than intercession, and as it was love that prompted the queen to

brave everything and say, "If I perish, I perish," this may be taken as the jewel-word of the lesson. Children need to be deeply impressed with the true spirit of love which is sacrifice and service. Let us not exact too much of these small lovers, but not the less we should seek to lift the right standard from the beginning. Esther is a concrete example, which we may lodge in little memories for all time.

A story is told of an ancient king of Greece, when that country had a very strict code of laws. The king's son was found guilty of an offense that called for the loss of both eyes. The father was torn by conflicting emotions. He was determined to enforce the law, but was agonized at the thought of having to see his own son blinded. The only way out of it, to satisfy his parental affection and justice at the same time, was to bear part of the punishment himself, so he suffered the loss of one eye and his son the other. Why did the father suffer such pain for his son? Because of the love he bore him. Love never counts anything too hard to do for the loved one.

Draw out from the children what love will do, how it will work and suffer, and then impress the fact that a mother will do the same for all her children as for one. Lead on to thought of love of country and of what a soldier will do for love of his land and flag. It is possible to love many people, to say of them all, "These are my people, my brothers and sisters."

People in Danger. If one love is in danger how much we will do to help and save. If many are in danger we are not less anxious but more.

The people called the Jews were in great danger. They had an enemy in the place. He wished them all put to death.

Give very briefly the simple facts of the Jews' exile, the choice of the beautiful Esther as queen, her continued obedience to Mordecai, who had brought her up, the high favor of the king to Haman, Mordecai's refusal to bow down to this man, and the plan of revenge not only upon Mordecai, but upon all the Jews, simply because Mordecai was a Jew.

How the Queen Loved and Saved Her People. Queen Esther was a Jew, too, though King Ahasuerus did not know it. Mordecai told the queen she must go and ask the king to spare the life of her people, and bade her remember that she must not think to escape, for she would die with the rest, if they all perished. But if Esther held her peace and did nothing to save them all, then Mordecai believed that God would send some one else to help. Impress especially Mordecai's word that Esther did not know but she had come to her place in the kingdom for just this time. We never know how much good we may do, nor why we are just where we are, but God knows, and if we obey him he will use us. Picture the beautiful queen's feelings. She had not been called to stand before the king for thirty days. Explain the rules in those old countries, and how easily person's lives paid the cost of disobedience.

Portray all the preparations, and dwell upon that concert of prayers arranged, and make the children see the lovely queen in her royal robes going uncalled to the king, for love's sake, to beg for her people's life. Every child should seem to see it when the king holds out the golden scepter, and to rejoice in all that it means to Esther, to Mordecai, and to all the Jews, for now they are saved—saved.

Crown Jewel Love. Could Esther have done so hard a thing if she had not loved, and loved much? If we love much will we not try to help others, no matter how much it costs? Will we pray for those in trouble? Will our King always listen? Yes, but we must ask. He bids us do this.

Thought for Teachers. The golden scepter is always held out to us when we go into the King's



presence to plead for the life of those we love. Are we not culpable, if we withhold the intercession?

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LESSON VII—November 12

EZRA'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM. Ezra
8. 21-32

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

Primary Notes



Approach. Little children are more ready to say "I'm afraid" than grown folks are.

Use this as a basis of approach, in a positive way, by leading the thought to perfect safety. How good it is to feel

safe instead of being frightened. Ray was a very little fellow and could not take care of himself very well. One day when he was in the garden it began to rain hard, but at the first drops, mother ran out and threw her apron around him, hurrying into the house as fast as she could. "Now I am all safe from the wet," said Ray, feeling the little curl on top of his head where two or three drops had fallen.

That afternoon Ray was walking with Ralph, his big brother, when a great, fierce dog ran at him. He clung to Ralph, who lifted the little boy in his arms and drove away the dog. Another day Ray was walking with father, and they had to cross a stream on a very narrow bridge. Father took his boy's hand and held it tight, leading him safely across. He was not frightened at all because father was so strong and held his hand so tight. Now, you see that in all these dangerous times the little boy was safe, not because he was strong, but because some one else was strong, and was close beside him to care for him.

That is the way we ought to feel all the time—safe and glad, because our Father in Heaven, and Jesus our Elder Brother is nearer than even father and brother can be, or mother either. God will keep us so safe that we need never be afraid. Ought we not to be rather ashamed to be scared, when God is near? It looks as if we thought he was not strong enough to take care of us.

This is the way a good man in to-day's lesson felt about it. He thought it was not treating the heavenly Father right to act as if he would not keep his children safe. What do you think?

Little Eddie was away from home. When auntie undressed him and heard his evening prayer, Eddie began to long for mamma. He was afraid something would happen to her while he was gone. "God will take care of her," said auntie. "Yes, but I want to be there," cried the little boy. He seemed to think he

must help God. Could not the dear Lord do it alone? What do you think? Isn't Jesus enough?

Ezra. This is one of the ten Bible characters that this quarter's lessons introduce to us. Each one should be made to live before the children.

Describe the circumstances surrounding this leader. God's people, the Jews, were in a strange land, but the king had said they might go back home. Ezra was a priest, or minister, and was to be their leader. He knew a great deal about God, and had studied the Law of God very carefully. There was not as much of the Bible written then as now, but Ezra knew all that there was very well. He was so well acquainted with God that he was ready to trust him. Are you as well acquainted as that? You ought to be, and you may be.

Dangers of the Journey. The journey was long and the people had to go on foot. They would grow very tired, and might perhaps be sick. But the greatest danger was from enemies who might try to hurt them, keep them from reaching Jerusalem, and take away their treasure. For they were to carry back a great deal of gold and silver and hundreds of gold and silver vessels that belonged to God, and had been carried away from the temple in Jerusalem. These precious things were to be taken back, and thieves might want to steal them. How could they be kept safe?

Preparing for the Journey. Describe the necessary things to be done before such a pilgrimage could begin—the gathering of goods, the packing and planning and dividing up the burdens and the care of the treasure. But most important of all, Ezra called a prayer meeting by the river bank, so that they might all "seek of God a right of way," for he said he was ashamed to ask the king for a guard of soldiers after saying that God would take care of them all.

The Safe Journey. Describe the arrangements for the treasure, and picture the departure—the long way, the attacks of enemies, and the



deliverance, with final safe arrival at Jerusalem, because of "the good hand of God upon them." *Crown Jewels Safely.* Apply the lesson to

present day, and needs of the children. God, who never changes, will keep his children safe now.

Thought for Teachers. Do practice story-telling. Go over in your own mind the lesson story, fastening the thought to impress which must color and control the whole, then the points most picturesque and important. Decide what to include and leave out. Master all details.

LESSON VIII—November 19

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

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

Primary Notes



Approach. It is always taken for granted that the Golden Text will be used, explained, illustrated, and impressed all through these lessons, without special reference being made to this. The lesson thoughts are, usually,

closely akin to the teaching of the text, and it is supposed that the teachers will keep the text in mind and apply it, whether it is thought best to memorize it at the opening or closing of the lesson teaching. This lesson is closely interwoven with the Golden Text, and the approach may be an explanation of the text. Before teaching it, explain "effectual." Begin with "effect," but do not use the word at first. Try to make clear that action makes something happen. The fire is low in the furnace or stove, or grate. Somebody must bring coal and put it on. What happens? The fire burns up and we are warm. The blaze and heat are the effect of putting on coal. You are sick. Doctor gives you medicine, and you get better. Getting better is the effect of taking the medicine with God's blessing on it. He made the medicine and gives it power to help the pain.

An effect does not happen by itself. It comes because something is done. If what is done is enough then we say that it is effectual. If the wrong medicine is given it is not effectual in making you well. If you put stones instead of coal upon the fire they will not be effectual in making blaze and heat. The text says something about effectual prayer. That means prayer that does something, that makes something happen. We pray and God answers. The answer is the effect of praying, because God has said that if we want anything we must ask for it. If we ask in the wrong way or for the wrong thing it has no effect. We must pray an effectual prayer—

one that gets a blessing. What does fervent mean? Warm. Fervent heat is great heat. If your heart is cold, and you don't care whether our Father listens and answers or not, your prayer is not fervent prayer. It is not warm. You must feel what you say and want what you ask for, as when you beg mother to let you have a birthday party, or go to a picnic that you think would be delightful. Mother can tell from the way you ask whether you really want it or not. So can God.

To-day's lesson tells about a man and his prayer. The man's name was Nehemiah. He was a good man and loved and prayed to God. He did not go with Ezra to Jerusalem, but stayed behind in the king's palace. It was not yet time for Nehemiah to go, but the time was coming. There was something for him to do in the palace, to help his own people, for he was the king's cupbearer, and had a good chance to ask favors. The cupbearer pressed the grapes into the cup, and gave the cooling drink to the king.

What Made Nehemiah Pray? He was in trouble. We ought to pray when we are not in trouble, but feel happy and all seems just right. But it is right to pray in trouble, and it is then that most of us feel like praying, for we want help. Nehemiah's trouble was not selfish. It was about others. One of his brothers had been in Jerusalem, and brought back a sad story of things there. The wall was broken down, the gates burned with fire, the people were in great distress. Nehemiah was safe. He lived in the king's palace. Why should he care about those friends and relations, and all those people so far away, even if they were Jews like himself? You know why he cared? He was a good man with a loving heart. His heart ached over all this, and he knew, too, that there had been sin among the people and this made him more sorry still. Now he was indeed in trouble. To whom could he go? What could he do, far away as he was. He could pray, and he did.

What Did Nehemiah Pray For? Do you



suppose he asked for a great many things that he did not care for? No indeed, he prayed for

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what his heart longed to receive. His heart was hot with wishes for his people. Three things in this prayer, to think about. He confessed sin. He told the Lord all about his own and his people's sins, and begged forgiveness. He spoke to God about the promises made to them all. He gave this good reason for asking—"God has promised to give." Then he asked for just what he needed and longed for. He wished God to help him to speak to the king and ask to be allowed to go to Jerusalem and do what he could to help.

Crown Jewel Prayer. Use Nehemiah's prayer as pattern.

Thought for Teacher. There can hardly be a more important lesson than a prayer-lesson. Make this one the best ever taught. Pray it into the heart and out of the heart into the children's hearts.

LESSON IX—November 26

ABSTINENCE FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS. 1 Cor. 10. 23-33

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

Primary Notes

Approach. Again the thought of the Golden Text may be used as an approach to this unspeakably important lesson. It ought not to be hard to make young-boasters feel a little conscience-smitten, for children of a certain age and disposition are apt to "speak swelling words of vanity" sometimes, confident of their own powers. A few illustrations of defeat may be drawn from childish life. Jack said he could stand or walk on the smooth ice, as easily as not, and nobody need take his hand. Press home the truth that when Jack fell, as fall he did, and soon, it was all the sooner because he was so sure of himself that he was not careful. Give illustrations from school life of children who boasted that they knew the lessons so well, or could get them so soon that there was no need to study any more, and failure followed.

Lead on the young minds to the thought of pulling down others as they fall. Jack had hold of Raymond's hand, when he boasted that it was easy to walk on ice. Raymond was stronger than Jack and trusted to him. Jack couldn't hold himself up and down they both went.

Mother told Mary to stay inside the yard, because Lily would run out if her older sister

went. Mary disobeyed and Lily followed. Mary did not look to see what little sister did, and Lily was lost. It was long before she was found, and there was great trouble.

Show a chain, or make one, of many links, and explain that we are all linked together, and when one pulls a certain way, he pulls the rest. If one link is weak the whole chain is weaker for it.

Because we can help or hurt one another so much, we must not act as if it made no difference to anyone else what we do. What may not hurt us may hurt another, as Mary's running away hurt Lily. What hurts us may drag down another, as when Raymond fell with Jack.

The Lesson. Make the first point that Temperance is the only safe thing. Teach this positively. Never to touch the poison, drink, is to be safe in health, in mind, in heart. It is to give the body a chance to grow strong, as God meant it to be. It is to keep clean and sweet as God wishes us to be. Drink-poison is not the only kind. The poison of bad words, or profane and unclean words and thoughts will hurt us too, and to keep the lips clean from all such words and the heart sweet and free from bad thoughts, is to be temperate and to please God by growing up strong and good as we should.

Make the second point, the unselfish teaching of the lesson—abstinence for sake of others. If we are not strong, if body and mind are weak and the heart is unloving, then we can't help anybody very much. Then, in another way, we may hurt others still more. Illustrate by incidents of following example. One touches the evil thing, and another says "He did it and I may. It didn't hurt him, it won't hurt me." Everybody has some one near him who likes to follow. There is always somebody somewhere to say "I will, if you will." Even if one boy could take a little wine, and perhaps smoke a few cigarettes, and not be much hurt, he might lead another to do these things, who could not bear as much of the poison, and great harm would be done. Who, then, would be most to blame? Tell what Paul said about eating and drinking?



what would hurt others, and how he made up his mind, that even those things he might be

allowed to do, he would deny himself, if anybody else was hurt. Paul could eat meat that had been offered to the idols before being sold in the market, for he knew that it wouldn't hurt him. But if somebody felt differently Paul would not eat this meat. How much more careful should we be, about strong drink and cigarettes and such things, that always hurt in some way.

Crown Jewel: Temperance. Make the final thought that Jesus says we must be temperate. He wishes it, and that is enough. We must be like him.

Thought for Teachers. Year by year the appalling truth is burned in, that young children are tempted earlier and more distressingly than we have dreamed. To fortify every child in our classes, is the urgent need of the hour.

Are All the Children In ?

THE darkness falls, the wind is high,
Dense black clouds fill the western sky,
The storm will soon begin;
The thunders roar, the lightnings flash—
I hear the great round raindrops dash—
Are all the children in ?

The future days are drawing near—
They'll go from this warm shelter here
Out in the world's wide din;
The rain will fall, the cold winds blow,
I'll sit alone, and long to know—
Are all the children in ?

If He should call us home before
The children to that blessed shore,
Away from care and sin,
I know that I shall watch and wait,
Till He, the Keeper of the Gate,
Let all the children in !

—Selected.

Whisper Songs for November

SIXTH LESSON

IF any gentle soul
Grows faint and full of fear,
Then we may pray to God each day,
And he will surely hear.

SEVENTH LESSON

Lord, in the years to come,
If we are called by thee
To lead thy bands to other lands,
Let each one say, "Send me."

EIGHTH LESSON

Lord, if thy children sit
In darkness and in fear,
Help us to pray, and walk thy way
With songs of faith and cheer.

NINTH LESSON

Around the world there flows
A tide as dark as death;
Dear Lord, fill up thy children's cup
With love, and truth, and faith

Order of Service

FOR THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

Fourth Quarter

Teacher. This is the day which the Lord hath made.

Class. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
RECITATION, OR SONG.

"Here we come again on Sunday,
When the church bells sweetly call,
With our bright and happy greetings,
Wishing our good-day to all.

"Here we come to help each other,
Loving, kind, and strong to grow,
And we thank our heavenly Father,
For he ever loves us so."

WHISPER PRAYER.

"Lord, help me when I try to pray.
Not only mind the words I say,
But may I try, with watchful care,
To have my heart go with my prayer."

PRAYER (all joining in Lord's Prayer at the close).

SONG OF PRAISE.

OFFERING.

(Arrange a march, if possible, even though the space may be limited. A pretty basket decorated with pink ribbons as a receptacle, and sweet giving song, as the children march pass the basket, depositing their offerings, will do much to dignify and enrich this part of the service.)

BIRTHDAY OFFERING. (Sing softly.)

"Hear the pennies dropping,
Hear them as they fall,
Every one for Jesus,
He shall have them all."

SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.

REVIEW OF LAST LESSON.

MOTION SONG.

LESSON TAUGHT.

ECHO PRAYER.

CALLING BACK THE LESSON.

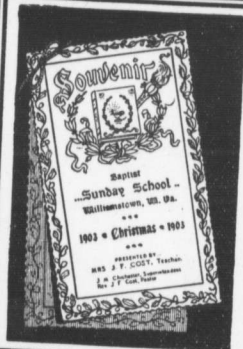
CLOSING EXERCISE.

"As we raise our hands toward the sky above,
We remember God's banner over us is love.
And we bow our heads again in prayer,
Giving ourselves to his loving care.
May the lesson learned in our hearts sink deep
May the Lord between us a loving watch keep
May we show this week in our work and play,
That we've learned of Jesus on this holy day.
We pray thee to take each little hand,
And lead us all to the better land. "Amen."



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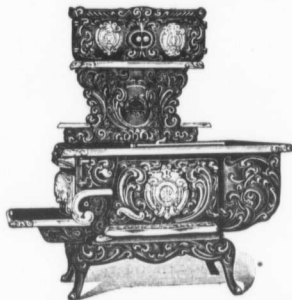
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