

WORD AND WORK

WORDS IN SEASON.

R. H. B.

HOMELY PHILOSOPHY.

It is a queer fact that you can increase the sensitiveness of any part of the body by concentrating the mind on it. When some one picks a splinter out of your finger, it hurts out of all proportion, for your whole mind is centered upon the spot and on the little operation. On the other hand, in the course of an exciting game or hunt or in the heat of a conflict one may sustain a pretty severe injury and not be aware of it at the time, nor until he has some leisure to think about it. These are facts. Now the practical conclusion is this, that interested activity, a work that enlists the heart and mind, is the best buffer spring to lessen the pain of the jolts of life, whether they be physical or mental. Get into a good work, and your troubles will be greatly diminished. There are hypersensitive, chronic sufferers who endure a torment from comparatively slight causes, which normal and busy people hardly realize. The trouble lies often in their having too much time to think of themselves—their heads, their stomachs, their nerves, their backs, their sides, their livers, and so forth. They feel the smallest disorder exaggeratedly; they even provoke disorder by undue watching of the vital processes of their bodies and prying into their own minds and souls. Man was not made to be self-centered. He must look out to others, not in upon himself. Steady, useful employment promotes health and happiness, and unselfish labor of love makes the burdens and sorrows of life seem small.

THE CURSE OF IDLENESS.

In his quaint, but still standard work, "The Anatomy of Melancholy," Burton says: "Thus much I dare boldly say: he or she that is idle, be they of what condition they will, never so rich, so well allied, fortunate, happily situated—let them have all things in abundance and felicity that heart can wish and desire, all contentment—so long as he or she or they are idle they shall never be pleased, never well in body or mind, but weary still, sickly still, vexed still, loathing still, weeping, sighing, suspecting, offended with the world, with every object, wishing themselves gone or dead, or else carried away by some foolish phantasy or other." That is just what the Bible means when it says that "the sluggard's way is a hedge of thorns." The remedy many sick and distressed people need is not one that doctors can supply. But those who take the yoke (which is a figure of servitude and service), even the yoke that Jesus offers them, and pull under it in the doing of the work of faith and the labor of

love in his name—they shall find rest unto their souls. "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

THE LURE OF OPTIMISM.

Predictions of judgments and disaster tend to lay low the pride of man; while visions of prosperity and success flatter it. The popular prophet is always what the world terms an "optimist;" and those who trim their sails to catch the popular breeze know that right well. From of old the false prophets said, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace; and all men spake well of them. The prophets of the Lord, on the other hand, called men to repentance, and their picture of man's condition and impending doom was such that "pessimism" is all too tame a word to apply to it; nor is there such black and blood-red and fire-glow to be found on the color plate of any human painter as God used in depicting the fate of the world. The word of God insults human pride; and if accepted, it lays it low in the dust and puts a better thing in its stead. But there is no such hatred as the hatred of the sunshiny, cheerful, popular optimist toward the man of God who is the prophet of evil. The page of inspired history tells that tale, and our eyes may behold it enacted today. "Blessed are ye," said the Lord Jesus to his disciples, "when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake: . . . for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you." (Matt. 5:11, 12). "Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. Behold, we call them blessed that endured." (James 5:10, 11.) All the more is the marvel of the Bible's continuance and steadily increasing circulation upon the earth. For the message (unless, as often the case, it is scrapped and garbled by the teachers of false peace) does not flatter the world: it abases it; and the forecast is not bright, but surpassingly dark—a vision of menace and gloom upon guilty humanity.

Nevertheless the prophet of God was at the same time the messenger of a hope so wondrous that in all the range of human pigments there are no colors to paint the brightness and the glory that shall be revealed, in comparison with which the world's "optimism" is a cheap and shallow thing. Yet it is a glory that comes only by the path of repentance, humility, faith; and the earth at large shall not see its golden age except through convulsions and travail, through judgments and purgings and burnings that will consume rebels and sinners.

THE PROPHET WHO WEPT ALONE.

A woman of the world wrote:

Laugh, and the world laughs with you;
Weep, and you weep alone;
This sad old earth must borrow its mirth,
It has trouble enough of its own.

There was a prophet in the olden days whose voice was choked in weeping—and he wept alone. Like Cassandra, the fa-

bled seeress of Troy, who in the midst of the doomed city's foolish revelings had a premonition of the impending destruction, and, crazed in her agony of love and fear for her people, warned and pleaded—so, only much more, and for a much longer time, did this one warn and suffer—Jeremiah, the prophet of tears, doom, and failure. If it takes a brave man to stand up and succeed for the Lord, it must be a braver still who will stand and hold his ground to *fail for the Lord*. It was to such a life task that God called this faithful servant. It has been well said of him: "So far as we have data for judgment, Jeremiah was the healthiest, strongest, bravest, grandest man of the Old Testament history. There is not a scrap of evidence that he was otherwise than naturally ardent, hopeful, buoyant, with a soul as full of song as a bird's, and as receptive and radiant of light as a diamond. Every reserve which we make in estimating his temperament is an uncalled-for subtraction from the tragic truth of history. It is only when we admit what the fall of Judah meant to one so clear-eyed, so healthful, so elastic as Jeremiah, that we begin to see how dreadful that fall really was." It was Jeremiah's fate to be ignored, and "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and they hid their faces from him. Had he laughed, the world would have laughed with him. Had he cried, "Peace, peace," with the Hananiahs (Jer. 38), and curried favor with such pillars as Pashhur (Jer. 20), he could have had applause. As it was, he was rejected. Even to this day he is misunderstood. To quote again from the same source as before (Dr. Ballantine—"Jeremiah, a Character Study"): "Jeremiah is the most misunderstood of all the great men of history. To be one of the healthiest men and to be thought morbid, to be one of the strongest and to be thought weak, to be one of the bravest and to be thought faint-hearted, to be a Titan and to be thought a pigmy, has been his hard fortune." But in all this he stood like a fortress impregnable.

TEARS BEFIT THE MESSENGER OF JUDGMENT.

D. L. Moody used to say to his students: "If you do preach about hell, do it with tears in your eyes." Moody was right. A man can tell the truth about man's perdition in such a way as to harden, embitter, drive away sinners, not with the truth (which would be well), but as God did not intend. I remember a remark I heard made in an out-of-the-way place concerning a preacher who had been there. "Brother So-and-So showed us that we are all going to hell," they said, "and it seemed to do him so much good to let us know." *That* was a testimony to a preacher of the gospel! Now God had a heavy, heavy message to send to his people, and he picked him a man to carry it—not a stern man, of hard rectitude and cold righteousness, such as men would probably have selected, but a man with a heart as tender and pitiful as a mother's toward her suffering child, yet no less strong than the roughest warrior. He has been called "the prophet with the bleeding heart and the iron will." He was so constituted that to

do his God-appointed work cost him the keenest anguish of heart; and at times his lot seemed so bitter to him that his soul found vent only in the bitterest words in which Job gave expression to his misery, and he cursed the day in which he was born. But forbear his preaching he could not, desert his post he could not, nor modify his terrible message and warning to please the popular ear. Often we find incidental reference to the breaking of his heart; and, as in the Lord Jesus' burning denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 23), his scathing words die out in a wail of sympathy and sorrow, as a mother's wail for a lost child. "My anguish, my anguish," he cries out in the midst of his discourse. (Jer. 4:19.) He alternates his fiercest denunciations with tenderest pleading and prayer to God on behalf of the very people whom he denounces—only to meet with God's determined refusal to hear the intercession. "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (9:1). "My soul shall weep in secret for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because Jehovah's flock is taken captive." (13:17.) "Mine eyes do fail with tears, my heart is troubled." "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath." For though righteous himself, with his doomed and sinful people lay his work and interest, and with them and for them he suffered. Such was the man upon whose lips our God laid the message of warning and wrath in a time of great crisis.

THANKLESS TASK.

Other preachers and prophets have had some earthly compensation for the severity of their tasks. The stormy days of persecution alternated with bright and tranquil times of peace. But Jeremiah knew no discharge from his warfare. Others had more or less success; but if Jeremiah's life was gladdened by any noticeable success, the book fails to show it. "Neither Moses nor Joshua nor Samuel nor Elijah nor Paul was ever subjected to a tithing of what Jeremiah endured. As a sufferer, he stands next to the Lord himself." "In his presence," writes Dr. Ballantine again, "the hollowness of the popular fallacies which pervade the literature of the day becomes more than ever apparent. Here are some of them. First fallacy: That one should always look on the bright side. Second fallacy: That all things are for the best. Third fallacy: That truth is mighty and will prevail. . . . Sixth fallacy: That if religion is rightly presented, people will always welcome the preacher."

Jeremiah's career demonstrates that a God-sent and divinely equipped man may do God's work in God's power, and lovingly and faithfully, and yet fail absolutely. To be sure, the day will come when God will show that such a career, though so far as concerns the world only fruitless labor and defeat, was, after all, one continued and unmitigated success and victory unto God and eternity. But it takes men of faith to fill such a place for the

Lord. We are needing them today—men of Jeremiah's type who will stem the blatant, lying optimism of the time and unafraid to point out the certain disaster and judgment that must sooner or later fall upon the world and the easy-going churches, preachers who will call men to repentance and proclaim their earnest message to the ears of men whether they will hear or forbear.

“Nay, now—if the things thou yearnest to teach

Bear wisdom in thy judgment, rich and strong:

Give voice to them, though no man heed thy speech,

Since right is right, though all the world go wrong.

The proof that you believe what you declare

Is that you stand firm, though the throng go by;

Rather cry truth a lifetime to void air

Than datter list'ning millions with a lie.”

THE MARK OF FRIENDSHIP.

One of the features of the Holy Spirit's work, the Lord Jesus announced, was to be this, that He would declare unto us “the things that are to come.” (John 16:13.) In nothing does the Lord honor us more, nor is there any mark of our friendship and fellowship with God, than just this very thing, that he reveals his far-reaching plans to us and tells us the things that are to come to pass. We may also add that nothing is less appreciated than this very mark of his friendship. On that memorable evening the Lord Jesus Christ said to his disciples: “No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you.” (John 15:15). This, then, is the distinction between a worker who is a mere Lord servant and one who is the personal friend of the man for whom he works. The one simply gets orders what to do, instructions by which he may perform the duties required of him, and no more. But with a friend a man will sit down and talk things over and unfold his plans. And this is the relation between God and his own people. He not only tells them what to do, and gives them a list of duties, but He does them the honor of unfolding his secret plans to their eyes that they might cooperate intelligently, not blindly, with God. “The friendship of Jehovah is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.” (Ps. 25:14).

“SHALL I HIDE IT FROM MY FRIEND?”

The pattern “Friend of God” was Abraham, and three times the Scripture so designates him. On one occasion God manifested his attitude of fellowship with that friend of his, when he accepted his hospitality, and then divulged to him His immediate purposes in regard to Sodom and Gomorrah. (Gen. 18.) From one point of view, it was none of Abraham's business or concern. What was it to Abraham what God would or would not do with Sodom? How could that have any bearing on his duty or on his salvation? From another and juster point of view, however, it *did* concern Abraham; for were not he and God

friends? And how could a thing which was of concern to God fail to concern Abraham, his friend? So God, after proposing to himself the question, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I am about to do?" decided to tell Abraham all his plans in the matter and the whys and wherefores of them.

TWO WRONG ATTITUDES AND ONE RIGHT ONE.

There are two attitudes which Abraham *could* have taken toward this friendly confidence toward him; neither of which, however, we are glad to note, Abraham adopted. He could have taken the attitude of the short-sighted, hard-headed "practical" man, with all it implies of misunderstanding and lack of appreciation. He could have said, in effect: "Now, Lord, what thou intendest to do is very well, I know; but what, after all, is it to me--more than just that I know if I do right every day *I* will come out all right? I pray thee, therefore, to pardon me if I pass all those things by and occupy my mind with my present duty. And if thou wilt teach me aught, show me what I must do today and tomorrow." It probably did not even occur to Abraham to take such a purblind position toward God's revelation. The other attitude he could have taken and did not take is that of idle curiosity, which would have said, "How great that plan is, and how very interesting to know beforehand what will happen beyond the hills!" and which would simply have mused on the matter to the entertainment of the mind. But Abraham understood. He perceived the honor God had done him, and in the congeniality of friendship he knew God's mind and felt the vibrant emotion that was uppermost in God's heart. He just as intuitively perceived the hidden invitation that underlay the whole, and what part he must take. The fact was that a great stroke of judgment was about to fall, and God, always loath to destroy the sinner, was *looking for a man to stand in the breach before him*, if by any means the judgment might be stayed. And so Abraham, with the quick understanding of a kindred soul, took his place as *intercessor before God*; and his intercession availed to this much at least, that he procured marvelously favorable terms for Sodom, and that on his account Lot, who had laid himself open to share in Sodom's perdition, was permitted to escape. Abraham at once laid hold of the *practical* end of God's revelation. And all the scriptures, including all the unfulfilled prophecies, involve a very practical privilege to God's friends.

THE CASE OF ANOTHER FRIEND.

Daniel had been pondering the prophecies of Jeremiah, and had found and understood that the desolation of Jerusalem should last for seventy years. In his simplicity and common good sense he took Jeremiah's prophecy at plain face value; and knowing that the seventy years were well-nigh run out, he took it that the time of Judah's release from Babylon was upon them. (Dan. 9:2). In all of which points he was quite correct. It would be a great help if all teachers and students of the word

of God would take God's prophetic word in as straightforward and simple a fashion. Now the edifying point about Daniel as a student of prophecy was this, that it was not to him merely a pleasing thought, a curious and interesting view of things, but a clarion call to action. It was an intensely practical matter. A great crisis was near. The promise that the Jews should return to their land was due. But the realization of God's promise required repentance and confession on their part. (Lev. 26:40-42). God's word cannot fail. But the Jews were not penitent. What, therefore, could be more evident than that he (Daniel) had come into possession of the truth for just such a time as that? It devolved on him now, he saw, to do the missing part. So (he writes) "I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. And I prayed unto Jehovah my God, and made confession." (Dan. 9:3, 4.) And there follows a prayer of singular contrition, confession, self-accusation, pleading with God, in which he takes the position of his people's representative and intercessor. And God was well pleased and sent Daniel, so wise and faithful in the use of prophetic light, yet more light.

Let us note how practical a thing prophecy was in the eyes of God's earnest servants of old. We also are in a time of crisis, and prophecy takes on a fresh interest. Let us, like Daniel, take it in utmost simplicity and faith, and may it be more to us than a curious tale: may it lead us to prayer, intercession, watchfulness, purity, and earnest missionary effort.

"I take refuge in the Lord. What do you mean by telling me to flee as a bird to my mountain—for that the wicked have bent their bow, and have laid their arrow to the string, to shoot in the dark at the upright, and 'if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do'? Have you forgotten, or have you never known, that *Jehovah is in His holy temple*? Do you think He has surrendered His government? Nay, His throne is in heaven: day by day His eyes behold, His eyelids scrutinize, the children of men. He puts to test His righteous ones in many a trial; but the wicked and them that love violence his very soul hates. With them will He deal in judgment: upon them will He rain snares: fire and brimstone and burning wind shall be their inheritance. Jehovah is righteous and righteousness He loves. The righteous need not fear: the Lord will see him safe through all trial, and at last the upright shall behold His face."—*Paraphrase of Psalm XI.*

R. H. Boll's remarkable article—perhaps the most remarkable he has ever written, "The Church I Found and How I Found It," is now obtainable as a tract. 5c each, 50 for \$1.00, \$15 the thousand.

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A MONTHLY MAGAZINE WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO DECLARE THE
WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.

R. H. Boll, *Editor-in-chief.*

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NEWS AND NOTES.

Look for the expiration notice under the front cover—if your time is out this month. Your prompt renewal is needed and will be greatly appreciated.

From W. J. Johnson, Amite, La.: "I have just closed a short meeting at Little River, where three members live. There is no church there, and our work resulted only in seed-sowing.—Bro. Maston Sitman, of New Orleans, began a series of gospel meetings at Loranger on June 11. Brother Stanford Chambers, of New Orleans, will join us on July 10 at Amite to conduct a series of meetings.—The writer will go to North Louisiana in this month to conduct some mission meetings. Pray for us."

From Iota, La.: "Brother A. K. Ramsey began a tent meeting at Maxey, La., June 1. He was joined by Brother McQuiddy, of Forest Hill, La. We have been hindered at present by daily showers, otherwise good prospects for a good meeting."

R. G. Schell, of Toronto, writes that he has been assisting D. H. Jackson in a meeting at the Erin Church, Ontario. He says, "Erin is a praying church, with a sincere desire to get back to the New Testament model entirely." Jackson and Schell are certainly a strong pair.

R. H. Boll was with the church in Henning, Tenn., in a good short meeting late in June. Some of God's noblest live in Henning. It is one of the few churches where *every member* attends the services. Brother Boll is now in Dallas in a meeting.

Elsewhere will be found a notice of Dasher College. Earl Smith and J. Edward Boyd, two of the teachers, are doing summer work in Mercer University and in the University of Florida.

There are no better men than these, and they are doing a great, unselfish work.

H. L. Olmstead held three meetings of one week each in Perry County, Indiana, under the direction of the Lily Dale church. The number added averaged about one each night. Brother Olmstead is now in a meeting at Utica, Indiana, together with Leonard Daugherty, who preaches there.

From Miss Margaret Ehresman, Kearney, Neb.: "If you have space in *Word and Work*, I will appreciate it if you will request names and addresses of brethren living in or near Kearney. We hope to find enough to gather a church there."

Three were baptized in the Highland church, Louisville, June 18.

"The June *Word and Work* was certainly a wonder. How can you cram so much valuable material into so small a paper? Some single articles are worth more than the price of the paper for a whole year"—so writes John Von Allmen. Nearly all who *read* the paper feel more or less the same way. Of course, if you lay it aside, and do not read the articles, you will not care to renew when your time is out. Those who read, renew.

A. C. Reader, of Louisville, helped and encouraged by Portland Avenue and Highland churches, conducted a fruitful meeting in the Camp Taylor district. About twenty confessed Christ and were baptized, while some others cast in their lot with the new congregation of Christians there. Brother Reader is now in a mission meeting at Mt. Washington, Ky.

Morris Clymore and G. B. Dasher are doing good work as mountain missionaries again this year. They are in the region of Harlan, Ky.

Don Carlos Janes is resting and gaining strength at Battle Creek just now, preparatory to visiting the churches later if the Lord permit. His message to the Louisville churches concerning the need of China and the other pagan fields was one of the most stirring addresses we have ever heard.

Evangelists will help the *Word and Work*, and also the churches with which they labor, if, on the last night of the revival they will speak of the magazine and offer to take subscriptions. It will continue the good teaching after they are gone, it is *clean*, inexpensive, expository, newsy. Samples furnished.

Brother Fry, of Detroit, sends us this note: "Will you kindly insert in the *Word and Work* the following announcement to run continuously for six months: The Plum Street Church of Christ, Detroit, Michigan, now meets in its new building, Cor. Hamilton Blvd., & Tuxedo Ave. Visiting brethren welcome."

From T. B. Clark, Gallatin, Tenn.: "Hot Springs, Ark., is a beautiful little city that entertains thousands of people every year. These people should be given an opportunity to know the truth as taught in the New Testament. Efforts are being made by a few interested persons to establish the Cause of Christ firmly. Brethren generally ought to be interested. Hot Springs

is a fine center from which the truth can be sounded out to people from all over the U. S. I will begin a meeting there the second Sunday in July continuing for at least three weeks. I will do the preaching on my own accord. If brethren do not wish to help me, who will help support a singer for the meeting? Communicate with Dr. E. W. Gossett, 508 Hobson Ave., Hot Springs, Ark."

GOOD AT ALTAR SERVICES.

STANFORD CHAMBERS.

A "mission worker" once said of a certain Christian, "That member of yours I am sure would make a good one at altar service." That "member" as well as the writer, believes God uses the prayers of His people in behalf of the lost and keeps a special prayer list of names to bear up constantly to the throne of grace, and has had occasions of rejoicing at answers obtained.

But that is hardly the practice referred to as "altar service." Both the term and the practice are objectionable, being unscriptural. The modern method of "getting religion," in vogue among many, is a system of works substituting the New Testament salvation by grace through simple faith in the Lord Jesus,—a kind of penance performed to make satisfaction for sins committed, as a man said not long since, "I think God will forgive me for I have been repenting for three weeks."

To be good at "altar service" one must be successful in holding the sinner on his knees in penitence and prayer until it is felt that satisfaction has been made when the sinner is expected to rise up and proclaim that he has "prayed through" and has assurance that he is a saved man. The best altar worker is the one who can make the strongest appeal to the emotions and hold them in high tension until decided reaction sets in which is interpreted as assurance from on high that God has spoken peace to the soul. Many, many the time has it proven out to be a peace which Satan spoke and by which he held the soul in a false security. Where in Acts of Apostles in all their mission work do we have an example of this "altar service?" Where do we read of sinners called to an altar? Where are they even told to pray, or to come and be prayed for? Such was not the practice of the apostles and yet they were under the control of the Holy Spirit, in teaching infallible. It is a fine thing when the word of the cross is so effective as to bring the sinner to the point of prayer, but invariably the inspired messengers of the Lord led all such right on, without tarrying, to other things, whether it was day or the midnight hour. Why? And why do we never once read of their urging the penitent to "keep on praying," to "pray through" and such like? And what shall we say of those who profess to do service for the Master to whom this modern "altar service" appeals more than does the Spirit-guided apostles' way? Why is this?

THE SEED, THE OX, AND THE GARMENT.

Jehovah's abhorrence of mixed principles was pictured a thousand years before the time of Christ. "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with two kinds of seed" (Deut. 22:3)—*mixed teaching*: "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together"—*mixed service*: "Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together"—*mixed conduct*. God abhors mixed principles.

The prohibition of Mixed Teaching is extremely clear. "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with two kinds of seed." Distinction of species, producing sterility of hybrids, is a glory of creation: "The earth brought forth grass, herb yielding seed *after its kind*, and tree bearing fruit *after its kind*: and God saw that it"—creation so ordered—was good" (Gen. 1:12). Now Christ reveals what God spiritually means by "seed" and "sowing." The "seed," He says, is the "Word"; the "soil" is the "heart"—an honest and good heart, sometimes: a "sower" is a "teacher;" and "the vineyard" is the group of hearts—in the family, or the class, or the church, or the open air—over which God has set us to sow,—our orchard of souls.

Our Lord's example reveals exactly what God means:—He sowed one kind of seed only, and that pure wheat. "The words which *Thou gavest Me*"—for the Father is the Husbandman, the Lord of the granaries—"I have given unto them" (John 17:8): "my doctrine is not mine, *but His that sent Me*" (John 7:16). Our Lord never sowed mixed seed; and the Holy Ghost rings the changes for us on the command—"preach *the Word*." The attempt to mix Scripture and science, Scripture and art, Scripture and sociology, Scripture and politics, has been the ruin of the modern pulpit. "*Lest the whole fruit be forfeited*," for the soil of our fallen hearts, predisposed to evil, will grow the weeds more rankly than the wheat, if both be sown together. Ruskin, a prince of art critics, who, sitting for two years under the voice of Spurgeon, was an acute judge of both kinds of seed, makes this startling statement,—"I never knew a man whose heart was really right with God who cared about art at all." We do not despise learning, but we distrust it: the Most High insists on the lonely enthronement of the Word of God; and it is a mystery to me how the Man of God, clothed with the sacred dignity of holding in his hand the actual utterances of Jehovah can ever step down from the sublime plateau of Divine Revelation. Thus the Christian teacher is to be a man of one idea—and that idea, Christ; he must belong to the oldest fashion in the Church—the fashion of the Apostles; he must have but one sword—the sword of the Spirit; and he must be rigid as adamant on one point—he must sow nothing but the Word of God. "*Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with two kinds of seed.*"

God's second prohibition is Mixed Service:—"Thou shalt not plow with an ox (a clean animal) or an ass (an unclean) together." The ox is the ox of service. Paul has put the meaning

of the type beyond all doubt, when he says,—“Thou shalt not muzzle *the ox* when he treadeth out the corn” (1 Cor. 9:9), and applies it to ministerial service; adding significantly,—“Is it for the oxen that God careth?—is it oxen that He has in mind in recording the type?—“or saith He it altogether for our sakes”—a lightning-rash on the types. Now observe: “the field is the world;” the ox is not forbidden to be in the same field, but in the same yoke; else “must ye needs go out of the world” (1 Cor. 5:10). *God’s furrow is not only to be sown solely with God’s seed, but His plow also must be driven only by His oxen.* The deliberate choice of a partner or colleague,—in marriage, for domestic ends; in business for commercial ends; in friendship for social ends; in religion for philanthropic ends:—*God forbids an unbeliever to be in the team.* “Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity?” (2 Cor. 6:14).

Here is a letter a Christian wrote to Herbert Spencer, the infidel philosopher, breaking off their friendship,—“The subjects we discussed last Saturday involve everything in our existence of more than momentary interest; our principles and practices, hopes and fears, our happiness and misery here and hereafter. Such matters are of no light moment, and it seems to me that no two persons holding so different views can remain friends to each other. Feeling as I do, so very painfully that my faith is so little the heart-felt faith which should actuate the true Christian, the danger which might accrue from my association with one so talented as yourself, and so well able to make the worse appear the better reason, I must, therefore, at however great a sacrifice (and believe me, I feel it to be a great one) renounce the pleasure I have received from your acquaintance, and request that henceforth we meet no more or meet as strangers. I shall ever remember the past with pleasure, and think of you with kindness, and I trust nothing may prevent your feeling similarly towards myself.” Herbert Spencer replied that if he had felt any such danger, he too would have renounced the friendship. *Countless disciples are being ruined by worldly friendships. “Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.”*

God’s final prohibition is *Mixed Conduct*:—“Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together.” Conduct expresses a man precisely as his clothes line out his exact contour; so Scripture constantly uses clothing as figurative of conduct. New linen is always in Scripture the holy fabric; the white linen is stated in the Apocalypse to be the righteous acts of the saints (Rev. 19:8, R. V.); it is the only textile fabric the priests—we are priests—were allowed to wear; (Ezek. 4:17) and a linen garment, shot through with woolen threads, is forbidden. *My life is not to consist of holy principles adroitly mingled with worldly maxims and compromising conduct; it is to be a holy fabric throughout.* O, for the holy fabric of the consecrated life, the pure, white linen, shot through and through with the threads

of God! The peril of compromise has been vividly revealed in an incident reported by Dr. Wilbur Chapman: "A tramp once entered an evangelistic meeting. At the close it was thrown open for anyone to speak; he arose and said:—"This is the chapel I used to attend when I was a little boy. My father was an officer in this church. He used to sit in that pew. There were seven of us boys in our Sunday school teacher's class, and we very much loved and respected her. She used to take us home Saturday afternoons, and we used to have music and refreshments, and then we had a look over the lesson for the following day. After a bit, in order to keep hold of us, she introduced us to cards. She showed us how to play them, and she showed us a number of tricks, and so on. We soon began to ask her to have a little less of the lesson and a little more of cards, and to show us a few new tricks. Shortly after that we began ceasing to go to her house at all, and we took to cards and cigarettes at other places. Then we took to gambling, and as a matter of course we left the Sunday School and her evening class altogether. I want to tell you what has become of those boys. Two of those seven boys have been hanged, three others are in State prisons for life, the sixth one, if the police knew where he is, would be there too, and I am the seventh, and if the police knew I was here, I should be behind bars in double quick time. All I have got to say is that I do wish my Sunday school teacher had never taught us boys how to play cards!" He had no sooner finished, than a woman dressed in black staggered forward and fell before his feet, and she cried, 'My God, I am that Sunday School teacher!' She left the meeting, never to return." "*Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together.*"—D. M. Pantou.

PORTLAND AVENUE BIBLE CLASSES.

My dear brethren, do you realize when you are preaching that the final destiny of your hearers depend upon your correct teaching of God's Word? How very important, therefore, that we understand clearly that which we teach. "How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!" Many are out now sowing the seed and reaping the "already ripened grain," and all are rejoicing in the ingathering of souls; however, the cold winter months are coming when our labors will be greatly hindered. Have you planned a way in which you may increase your usefulness in God's vineyard during those months? If not, do not fail to be with us in the Portland Avenue Bible Classes where the very things you need are given freely and in the fear of God. Write now and tell us you are coming.
J. M. HOTTEL, 2630 Montgomery St.

Matthew Henry's commentary on the entire Bible, six large volumes, \$17.50.

SAVED BY GRACE.

W. J. JOHNSON.

Grace is a beautiful and precious word. It is widely used and little understood and appreciated. For many sing "Saved by Grace" and have failed to grasp its meaning. When they are pressed for an illustration of salvation by grace they manifest their ignorance.

This beautiful and precious word owes its significance to Him who manifested His gracious love for the rebellious and stubborn races of mankind. For at various times, He sent His messengers to them to make known His will and to exhort them to turn away from idols to worship and serve the true and living God; and, in the fulness of time, He sent His only beloved Son, "The effulgence of His glory, the very image of His substance," to reveal Himself unto them, who had allowed "the god of this world" to conceal His noble character from their view.

Above any character, which the mind of man can create, as an ideal, the character of His only begotten Son stands sublime, to guide all unto Him who is the author and giver of life eternal. He was humble, kind, gentle, patient, longsuffering, and full of love and sympathy for burdened humanity; the sick and afflicted were healed; the halt and the maimed were cured; the outcasts were received; demons were cast out; the blind received their sight; the dead were raised and many other wonderful works were done. Several times His enemies sought to take Him and were foiled in the attempt; but when the time came He surrendered Himself to them that they might fulfil the scriptures concerning His suffering and death.

But as He did not deserve to die, nor to enter Hades, the Father did not let His body see corruption, nor suffer His soul to remain in Hades; for on the third day He raised Him up and exalted Him to His own right hand, where He shall remain till the times of the restoration of all things spoken of by the prophets (Acts 3:21).

After this triumphant victory over His enemies, He received all authority both in heaven and on earth, and, before pouring out His wrath on them, He sent His ambassadors to them with a message of pardon; urging them to repent and turn again that their sins may be blotted out so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19).

All this manifests His unbounded love and unmerited favor—grace, for their evil works reveal the mind of the flesh, that it is against God and cannot please Him. (Rom 8:7, 8). For it still says, "Away with Him, Crucify Him;" "We will not have Him to rule over us."

In the marvelous light of the gospel, to attribute salvation to the good works of men is absurd. But some magnify the goodness of men and minimize the shedding of Christ's blood for the remission of sins; others teach that the submission of our-

selves to be "buried with Him through baptism into death is not essential to salvation. They think that justification by faith excludes baptism. But the faith which fails to lead one to accept the death of Christ in this form of teaching wherein we are made free from sin, and become servants of righteousness, stops short of salvation. For in this act, acknowledging our condemnation and our God-appointed substitute, is the answer of the good conscience (1 Pet. 3:21, 22) which asks, "What must I do?" (Acts 2:38, 39; 16:31-34).

Now the faith that leads to justification and peace with God, by accepting His Son as the prepared and acceptable offering for our sins, by obeying from the heart the form of teaching, by being buried with Him through baptism into death—this faith is not to be confused with the law of works, which severs from Christ and causes one to fall away from grace. (Gal. 5:4).

Faith does not set aside law, but it establishes law; because it receives Him who bore the curse of the law that life may be given. Wherefore He is the end of the law to every one that believes (Rom. 10:4); but he that believes not bears his own condemnation, because he refuses to let Christ bear his burden—death, the penalty of the law for transgression. "Therefore it is of faith that it may be by grace" (Rom. 4:16); "And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace." (Rom. 11:6).

Silver, or gold, or the earth with all its precious treasures is not of sufficient value to purchase even one soul. (Matt. 16:27; 1 Pet. 1:20). Indulgences are purchased in vain, and the blood of animals are of no profit. There is only one price, and Jesus paid it for all and asks all the weary and heavy laden souls to come unto Him and find rest. (Matt. 11:28, 29). "The Spirit and the bride say, 'come,' and he that heareth, let him say, 'come.' And he that is athirst, let him come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17).

"None but an omniscient mind can continue to maintain a precise identity of views. Finite minds, unless they are asleep, or stultified by prejudice must advance in knowledge. The discovery of new truth will modify old judgments and there is perhaps no end to this process with finite minds. True Christian consistency does not consist in stereotyping our views and in refusing to make any improvement lest we be guilty of change, but in holding our minds open to receive the rays of truth, and as fast as we can obtain further information. I call this Christian consistency, because this course alone accords with a Christian profession. A Christian profession implies the profession of candor, and of a disposition to know and obey all truth. It must follow that Christian consistency implies continued investigation, and change of views and practice corresponding with increasing knowledge."

—C. G. FINNEY.

JAMES A. HARDING --A TRIBUTE.

Under the providence of God it was my good fortune to be associated with the above named character for a period of twelve years--three years in the Nashville Bible School, and nine years in Potter Bible College of Bowling Green, Ky. During these years Bro. Harding was my teacher, friend and father. I cheerfully and most gratefully acknowledge the impress of his wonderful power, his kind and forceful words, often spoken through tears, and his helping hand I shall never forget nor cease to appreciate. Whatever I have accomplished, or may accomplish, in this life for the glory of God and the betterment of men is due largely to the living influence of this noble, heroic and faithful follower of the Christ. With his pupils he was a teacher beloved, and with his co-laborers throughout twenty-one years of college life, in sunshine and shadow, he was a brave and honored leader. I am safe in saying that fifty years of his life were literally filled with works of faith and labors of love. Prior to his college career he spent seventeen years of unceasing endeavor in the evangelistic field. Endowed with a charming personality, having a passion for souls, and believing with all his heart in the gospel of the grace of God to save, he moved thousands of men to take up the cross and follow his Lord.

In a rather remarkable degree, Bro. Harding possessed most every constituent of character that enters into the making of one of God's princely men. Along with his clear vision, subtle insight, tender heart, sublime faith, self-sacrifice, reverential fear of God and love of his fellow-man, there was a devotion for truth, a vigor of purpose, an ardor of will, a brave force of action and consecration to labor seldom ever so perfectly blended in the heart and life of one man.

It was my sad, sweet pleasure to stand by his bier alongside of others who had known him in the days of old. How we loved him, and how our tears did flow. We wept, but not as those who have no hope. Our tears were tears of gratitude. Grateful that we had felt and known the glory of such a life. Verily the soft memory of his manly virtues will ever abide with us to cheer and inspire in the service of our God.

"In the way of righteousness is life;

And in the pathway thereof there is no death."

James A. Harding is not dead, but lives—forevermore.

DURWARD H. FRIEND.

THE LOUISVILLE BIBLE COURSE.

To break away from the usual routine for awhile and settle down to earnest, orderly Bible study with congenial classmates and a competent teacher is a privilege highly to be prized. Those who come to Louisville to attend the classes conducted in Portland Avenue Church each winter by Bro. R. H. Boll have this

and other precious opportunities. I have at different times been in these classes and would be glad to take all the work that is offered. Maybe it will some time be my privilege to do this. Young men and women as well as more mature persons (even experienced preachers) desiring to increase their understanding of things spiritual and add to their usefulness in the church will do themselves a favor by planning to spend time here this winter. There are several churches and missions in our city and you will have a feast of good things if you come our way.

DON CARLOS JANES.

DASHER COLEGE.

Our catalogue is ready to mail. Write for it and see what we have to offer you. We think we have a number of advantages. We do thorough work in common school, high school, College, Bible, and expression free of tuition, and piano at a reasonable tuition. Board and room is only twenty dollars per month. Besides our students do not have the thousand temptations to spend money that are found in the city. We do not turn any one away without giving them a chance. Our climate is mild and healthful. We had flowers blooming at Christmas time last year.

EARL C. SMITH, Valdosta, Ga.

HARPER COLLEGE.

Dear Brother Boll:

Harper College has planned a new administration building, and this building is a severe need of the school. We have about \$25,000 already raised for this purpose. Since Brother Harding's daughter is my wife and one of the essential workers in the college, and since Brother Harding dies just as this building is in planning, it has been suggested that we call the building the "J. A. Harding Memorial Building." The building will cost \$100,000.

Brother Harding's life-work was not confined to state lines, but was nation-wide, and since Harper is very near the center of this great country, the location could not be objectionable. Brother Harding gave his best and most to this work and he loved it devotedly. Therefore a monument that would aid the perpetuating of his life's work is entirely worthy of our faithful efforts. Shall we do it?

If this is done, of course, his old students and friends should contribute a worthy amount to the fund that builds it. I think there are many who would be glad to have a part in the erecting of this monument. What do you think about it? Would you encourage and support the effort? I mean would you give it your endorsement? Would you help us put the effort through?

There are at least two points to be accomplished by the effort. It does honor to whom honor is due, and it helps us to

supply an imperative need in our work. Without the building Harper College is badly hampered but with it the school becomes a senior college.

Your brother,

J. N. ARMSTRONG

LOUISIANA FRENCH MISSIONS.

STANFORD CHAMBERS.

Returning from meetings with Fullerton brethren I stopped off May 30th for a visit with our French preachers, Prather and Newman who live at Jennings. Brother Ivy Istre, of Estherwood, was with them there at the time, whom I was also glad to see. Brother Elston who had just spent some time with these brethren in Bible teaching, singing and preaching, had left the day before for meetings at Shreveport. I was sorry to miss him. It is a pleasure to be with these earnest French brethren and observe their relish for the word and their joy in telling others the story. Congregations are being patiently taught and new fields are being entered. Since arriving at home word comes of four baptisms at Thibordeaux Cave. Pray for these workers and the converts.

SELF-CONFESSION.

When in controversy one condescends to garbling and perversion; to "scrapping" of testimony, misrepresentation, and slander, he but confesses that he cannot establish his point by fair means. Even people who have no scruples prefer to use truth when they can; and the fact that one resorts to trick and falsehood is in itself a confession of inability to accomplish his end by honest method.

We clip the following fine sentence from a current number of a religious monthly:

"To publish a false statement with intent to injure is not any less a crime because it is done under the name of orthodoxy, nor less cowardly because it is well known that the accused cannot and will not strike back. A truth which needs that kind of a defense is not a truth."

When at any time you find in your heart motions of envy towards any person, whether on account of his riches, power, learning, reputation, or advancement, if you should immediately betake yourself at that time to your prayers, and pray to God to bless and prosper him *in that very thing which raised your envy*; if you should express and repeat your petitions in the strongest terms, beseeching God to grant him all the happiness from it that can possibly be received, you would soon find it to be the best antidote in the world to expel the venom of that poisonous passion.

WM. LAW.

ON FOREIGN FIELDS.

MISSIONARY NOTES.

DON CARLOS JANES.

SOUTHERN CHINA.

He who writes on China has a big subject. Even "Southern China" is no small consideration for Kwong Sai province alone, in which we spent some time, has a population of 8,000,000 souls, 20,000 of whom are blind. There are 72 walled cities, 1,200 market towns, and 45,000 villages running in size from one clan to some thousands. Sixty of these walled cities have no chapel and no missionary; only a few of the villages have work in them. Hong Kong, under British rule, is on an island in South China where a British pirate used to loiter between his raids. From this port we began our voyage of six hundred miles up the West River to the interior to visit a mission station held by one devoted couple of Americans who have cut loose from all "boards" and never desire to be under another.

Conditions are and have been rather unsettled in this part of the world. British law does not permit any West River passenger boat to leave or enter Hong Kong without three British officers and an armed guard. These last are for protection against robbers who are in the habit of doing very much as they please in South China. But from Wuchow onward the navigation is wholly in the hands of natives and we have Chinese crews through and through. As we had to change boats and wait one night here, Mrs. Janes and I went up to a protracted meeting the Baptists were holding and they were so glad to see foreigners (and from Kentucky, too,) that we were constrained to spend the night in a bed in a missionary's home instead of sleeping on a shelf (open berth) on a little river boat. Though rather late at night, one of the men took me through the new hospital they are building (Dr. Leavell, of Louisville, being an important factor) and making pay a profit even before its completion. Along in the night, some shooting was heard which sounded like fire-crackers which are extensively used, and no attention was paid to it, but as we went to the boat in the morning there was a lively trail of blood spots up the hospital steps, the explanation received as we came back down the river being that a soldier was attempting robbery and a citizen shot him, necessitating the amputation of his foot.

We heard numerous things about the troubled conditions. One of the officers of the boat out of Hong King, when he learned our destination, simply bowed and said: "God bless you." The man we were to visit made the long journey down to Wuchow to meet us and help along. He had been out to open a new mission and found our telegram upon his return. Hastily embarking on a soldier boat (where he was very much un-wanted) he

reached Wuchow in time to greet us as we drew up to the wharf boat. When we were only a few hours out of Kwai Hsien, our destination, a boat heavily laden with soldiers and having a small boat lashed alongside and well laden too, met us. The military officer took possession, turned us back to Kwai Ping, and there we lay in uncertainty for two days.

It is perhaps important to know that President Sun Yat Sen, who was in Wuchow the night we were, was preparing for another campaign against the north, or so it seemed by the great number of soldiers he was assembling up one of the side rivers. Many boats had been seized just as ours was, and it was understood no recompense was made for them to their owners. At last we reached our destination, a dirty, old walled city sitting on the bank of the river with a very uninviting aspect. Here in this lonely place one man and his faithful wife are working among the blinded, superstitious heathen, the only other white person known being a French priest who bears a not-very-good name. This interesting and successful mission, I leave for the present without attempting to describe further than to say one line of work is the rescuing, cleansing, clothing and educating of blind children. They take them so filthy that the first treatment is a bath in disinfectant and so covered with sores sometimes as to suggest leprosy. The truth about this work would make interesting chapters—too long for this space.

John Chinaman lives in dread and fear. He fears the evil spirits and he fears the robbers with which the land is freely infested. A month before we reached Kwai Hsien, the bandits (of whom it was estimated there were 2,000) came down from the mountains and attacked the city, held by a garrison of one thousand. The outcome was a defeat of the raiders, the burning of a suburb, the killing of some of the citizens whose bodies lay for days before permission was given for their removal, plundering and general terrorization. While we were there word came to the mission that they were expected again and some shooting was heard during the night, which seems to have been from the garrison—a warning perhaps to robbers that they were on their job, though our friends didn't rate them very highly.

We were exceedingly fortunate in being able to get a boat when ready to leave, as most of them had been commandeered to move troops. The one we boarded was "full," but we stayed on and the Chinese Christian who helped us back to Wuchow (as the missionary feared to leave) made Mrs. Janes a berth by combining the wash stand and dining table, while he and I and about a dozen others slept on the floor. There seemed to be no real safety for our good friends we had been sojourning with, but they are devoted to their work and trust God to take care of them. During the war last year, they were twice warned by wire to leave, but they stayed at their post and were not molested, though a man was taken out from a nearby house one morning and led away to execution despite his pitiful begging. By a

letter we learn that another village has been visited by two hundred robbers in open day. One of the Christians began to pray and as they came nearer, he prayed in an undertone. They took everything he had—and paid him! While they were searching and robbing, another had the experience of being passed unmolested. These disciples believe God favored and spared them and tell it to his glory.

OUR FRONT DOOR.

O. D. BIXLER.

Our door has a night-latch which is operated by simply pushing a button on the front of the lock. This simple arrangement, locking the house safely from the outside, while it may be opened as usual from the inside, I knew would mean much to us where the custom is to walk in without notice. As I surmised, it came in useful one day in a way not altogether expected. I looked out in the yard and saw two fellows so drunk they could scarcely walk, staggering up the walk. Anna was nervous so I told her to lock the back door and I'd go out and keep them out. By the time I got out of the door, (giving the button a push on the way out) they were on the porch expecting to get in. They saw me simply close the door, but did not suspect that it was locked, so when I did not ask them in they decided to go in. They looked perplexed when the door did not open (they know only sliding paper doors) and asked me for a key. I had one but there was one in the door, so I gave them mine and yet they failed. They may have thought I lied when I said I could not open it either, but they remarked "very smart," and went away.

Note:—When Holman Hunt painted the famous picture illustrating Rev. 3:20, "Christ at the door," in which no latch is visible, some one remarked that Hunt had made a great blunder. The artist answered that he had made no blunder at all—"the latch is on the inside." Even Jesus Christ Himself cannot come in unless we open from the inside.—E. L. J.

REPORT FOR JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH.

Receipts—J. J. Bixler, Washington, \$10; Through Bro. Elston for three months, \$235; Miss Ehresman, Texas, \$5; Portland Avenue church, Louisville, Ky., \$55; Mrs. Poynter, Lincoln, Neb., \$25; Women's Bible Class, Louisville, Ky., \$7.25; Friends of Mrs. Bixler, \$12.50; Mrs. W. G. Bixler, \$20. Total, \$369.75. Expenses—Living expenses, \$219.75; Building Fund Refund, \$31.50; To the work—Moving to new location, \$100; Literature, \$16; Evangelistic work direct, \$2.50. Total, \$369.75. We are ever thankful to God and brethren. Had largest attendance at the new house last Sunday that we have had. Pray for us.

ORVILLE D. BIXLER.

FIRST LORD'S DAY LESSON OF JULY.

The Scripture Text used in these lessons is the American Standard Revised Version, Copyright, Nelson & Sons.

Lesson 1.

July 2, 1922.

EZEKIEL, THE WATCHMAN OF ISRAEL.

Golden Text: Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.—Isa. 55: 6, 7.

Lesson Text: Ezek. 2:1-6; 3:17-21.

1. And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee. 2 And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet; and I heard him that spake unto me. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to nations that are rebellious, which have rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me even unto this very day. 4 And the children are impudent and stiffhearted: I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah. 5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. 6 And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house.

17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. 18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand. 19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. 20 Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and

Read first the Notes: Introductory—Ezekiel—The Book of Ezekiel.

Verses 1, 2. Who was speaking? (See note on Ezekiel's First Vision. To whom in the New Testament came a similar summons? Acts 26:16. What Spirit entered into him, and what for? 2 Peter 1:21; Ezek. 3:4.

Verse 3. Who was sending him? What was the motive of God's heart in sending them a prophet? (Cp. John 3:17). To whom was Ezekiel sent? (On "nations" compare, Gen. 48:19). What sort were they?

Verse 4. What sort was the younger generation? Is it not a calamity for the young to be impudent and stiffhearted? With what authority was E. sent?

Verse 5. Must the message be delivered regardless of whether they will hear or not? (Cp. v. 7). Must the river of God's grace flow on whether any drink or not? But—whether they listen or refuse—what would God make them know? Wonder how?

Verse 6. One thing on the prophet's part was very essential—what was it? (Cp. Jer. 1:8, 17). Is it essential yet? (Acts 4:29; Eph. 6:20). Can God use a timid and cowardly messenger?

Ezek. 3:17. To what position had God appointed him? What is a watchman's responsibility? Who are God's watchmen today? What must Ezekiel do first? What then? Can one speak for God before having heard?

Verses 18, 19. When God says, "Thou shalt surely die," can that decree be changed? (Comp. Jer. 18:7-10). How can his life yet be saved? Suppose the watchman fails of his duty—what becomes of the sinner? But what of the watchman? But if the watchman does his duty, on whom rests the re-

commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thy hand. 21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning; and thou hast delivered thy soul.

sponsibility thenceforth? (Comp. Acts 20:26, 27). Verses 20, 21. Does the same apply to the case of the backslider? If a man forsakes the way, will his former righteousness be remembered for him? Does this rule work both ways? (Ezek. 33:12, 16). What does James tell us about converting a backslider? Jas 5:19, 20. What is the watchman's responsibility in all this? Am I my brother's keeper?

INTRODUCTORY.

Do you recall the scope of the lessons of the first and second quarters of this year? In the first we traced the history of the kingdom of Judah in its kings and prophets, to the time of its downfall. In the second quarter we followed the history of the kingdom of Israel to the time of its downfall. In this quarter we shall learn of the events of the captivity, and of the restoration of Israel to their land when the captivity was over.

EZEKIEL.

This is our only lesson in Ezekiel. We must take this opportunity to learn something about this man and his prophecy. Ezekiel was a prophet of the captivity, himself one of the captives in the land of the Chaldeans (Babylon.) He was carried away captive from Judah in the days of Jehoiachin, (see 1 Kings 24:8-17). Jerusalem did not fall until the end of Zedekiah's reign, 11 years later. During this time those first exiles among whom Ezekiel lived in Babylon, confirmed themselves in their sins with false hopes of a speedy restoration to their home-land. But Ezekiel's message declared God's firm purpose to give Jerusalem over to destruction, and the whole people of Judah to captivity.

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL.

Divide its 48 chapters into two portions:—the first half contains the prophet's messages **before** the fall of Jerusalem; the second his prophecies **after** the fall of Jerusalem. The first part announces the judgment upon the guilty city; the second predicts her glorious restoration. In the first part Jehovah is seen leaving the city to desolation; in the second He is seen returning to the restored city, and her name thenceforth is: "Jehovah Shammah"—that is, "Jehovah is there." (Ezek. 48:35.) Of the latter half you will find the first eight chapters devoted to judgments upon nations who were adversaries of Israel. In chapter 33, then, the prophet is again set as watchman of Israel introductory to the message of restoration; as in chapter three he is appointed spokesman and watchman for the message of judgment.

EZEKIEL'S FIRST VISION.

Among the captives by the river Chebar, Ezekiel beheld the heavens opened and saw visions of God; the word of Jehovah came unto Ezekiel "expressly," and the hand of Jehovah was there upon him. These statements are found in Ezek. 1:1-3. Then follows the description of the initial vision. A storm-cloud came out of the North, enfolding within it a glowing brightness as of molten metal. Out of the midst of it came four living creatures (very much like the four of Rev. 4). Later Ezekiel speaks of them as **Cherubim**. (Ezek. 10). Enthroned upon a firmament which was stretched over the heads of the cherubim sat One who in the likeness of His appearance was as a **Man**. Ezekiel tells us, with great reserve and caution of expression, that "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah." (1:28). When he saw it he fell upon his face, and he heard a **voice of One that spake**. (At this point begins our printed lesson).

THE WATCHMAN.

At the railroad-crossings we often see the watchman's lookout—an elevated little pavilion, having windows on all sides. The man stationed up there can see in every direction. It is his duty when he sees a train approaching to sound the warning bell to the passers below and to let down the guard-bars. If he fails to watch and warn, the careless driver below is killed by the train for his carelessness, but the watchman must answer for it. If a reckless driver, despite the proper warning, breaks through upon the track, the watchman is held guiltless.

Now who is it today that is set on high, who has the light and the outlook, who knows the danger and can warn and plead with the sinner to save him from the inevitable fate of his course? The preacher? Yes. The elder? Yes. But also every one who knows the gospel of Christ, the perdition of the sinner, and the way of escape through Christ. Is that you? and have you warned anyone?

TEACHING POINTS.

1. What we know of Ezekiel: the time and circumstances.
2. Why God sent him, to whom, and what for.
3. His Message: its Source, its Inspiration. Recall 2 Pet. 1:21.
4. The character of the people to whom he was sent. What did that mean for Ezekiel?
5. The prophet's need of boldness.
6. The Watchman: his vantage point; his duty; his responsibility.
7. God's readiness to rescind the sinner's doom if he turns. See the Golden Text.

SECOND LORD'S DAY LESSON OF JULY.

Lesson 2.

July 9, 1922.

DANIEL INTERPRETING NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.

Golden Text: The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.—Rev. 11:15.

Lesson Text: Daniel 2:36—45, 47.

36. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory; 38 and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush. 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou saw-

Read all the Introductory Notes, and Dan. 2, first.

Verse 36. Who is saying this? To whom is he speaking? What was the dream? (See Notes). Why did Daniel have to tell the king his own dream? How was Daniel able to interpret it? (vs. 19, 30). What was the purpose of the dream? (v. 28).

Verses 37, 38. What did the head of gold represent? How great a king was Nebuchadnezzar? What four things had the God of heaven given him? How far and wide did his dominion extend? (See also 4:22 and 5:18, 19).

Verse 39. What did the silver and brass parts of the image represent? How was their inferiority represented? How wide was the sway of these kingdoms?

Verses 40, 41. What was the chief point about the iron kingdom? Toward its end what would be mingled with the iron? What sort of kingdom would it be? Would it be wholly weak?

est the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron doth not mingle with clay. 44 And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces, the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. 47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou hast been able to reveal this secret.

Verses 42, 43. What part of the feet is specially mentioned here and in v. 41? What is the effect of the clay in the iron? To what would "they" naturally refer? With whom or what would those toes (the kings represented by the toes) mingle? Would the two elements unite?

Verses 44, 45. What would God do "in the days of those kings?" What happened to each of the preceding kingdoms? To whom was the sovereignty left in the case of each of those four kingdoms? But would this kingdom ever be destroyed? or its sovereignty pass on to a successor? What would this kingdom do to the others? How was that represented in the dream? What did God thus make known to Nebuchadnezzar? Was there any doubt or uncertainty as to all this? Why not? (Isa. 46: 10).

Verse 47. Did Nebuchadnezzar recognize his forgotten dream? What conviction concerning the God of Israel did now take possession of him? Why did he give glory to the God of Israel rather than to Daniel? (Vs. 27, 28, 30). How ought God's servants do all their good work? Matt. 5:16.

NOTES ON LESSON 2.

WHO WAS DANIEL?

The answer to this is found in Dan. 1:1-7. He was of Judah; "of the seed royal and the nobles"; was carried away captive unto Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon after the siege of Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim king of Judah. He was selected among others to "stand before the king"—as court-attendant, or officer in the king's presence; and to fit him for such high position he was subjected to a course of training. Of his firm purpose and loyalty to God; of his victory over the hostile environment of the world-court; of his success and acceptance by the Babylonian king, the first chapter of Daniel gives an account.

THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL.

By the word of the Lord Jesus Christ Daniel is declared a prophet. (Matt. 24:15). That settles that forevermore. The five great prophecies of Daniel are as follows:

- I. The Image of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream. (Dan. 2).
- II. The Vision of the Four Beasts. Dan. 7.
- III. The Vision of the Ram and the He-Goat. Dan. 8.
- IV. The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. Dan. 9.
- V. The Prophecy of the "Great Warfare." Dan. 10-12.

Two minor prophecies are found in chapters 4 and 5.

Like Ezekiel, Daniel prophesied in the land of the Captivity, the land of Babylon. But Daniel's prophecy concerns itself more with the affairs of the world-powers and governments. All his visions end with the terrific and utter overthrow at God's hands of the final wicked world-power (headed up by the most terrible and powerful of all rebels against God's sovereignty) and the ensuing world-wide government of the Lord and His saints.

THE OCCASION OF DANIEL'S PROPHECY.

Israel, God's nation, whose was the promise of world-sovereignty, had failed, and God has given them, and all the earth's dominion besides, into the hands of the king of Babylon. But in order to curb the pride of the Gentile world-power, God sent Nebuchadnezzar a dream, showing him his dependence on God's favor and sketching briefly in symbolic vision the course and end of his and all Gentile world-empires, and the destined final glorious rule of the kingdom of God; and would thus also comfort the captive people of Israel with the outlook of the final realization of all promised glory. Moreover, though the dream was given to Nebuchadnezzar, the very remembrance of it and the interpretation thereof must come to him through the appointed channel of God's revelation, Israel; and through that man in Israel whom God had chosen to transmit His word. That man was Daniel. How it all came about—the entrancing story of Nebuchadnezzar's forgotten dream, the danger which threatened all his wise men because of their inability to tell the king what he had dreamed (in which danger Daniel and his companions were involved); the young men's prayer-meeting held in Babylon; Daniel's revealing to the king his dream and the interpretation of it—is all told us in Daniel 2.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM TABULATED.

Nebuchadnezzar in his dream saw:

- I. A Great Image: standing, mighty, of excellent brightness, terrible of aspect.
 1. Its head: of fine gold.
 2. Its breast and arms: of silver.
 3. Its belly and thighs: of brass.
 4. Its legs: of iron.
 5. Its feet: part of iron, part of clay.
- II. A Stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, smites the Image upon its feet which were of iron and clay.
 1. The feet are broken to pieces.
 2. The iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold are broken in pieces together, and become as the chaff of the summer threshing-floors.
 3. The wind carries them away, so that **no place is found for them.**
- III. The stone that smote the image becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth.

ON THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS PROPHECY.

The sequence of the four world-empires is so clearly marked in history that practically no doubt or difference exists as to their identity. Babylon (whose representative monarch was Nebuchadnezzar) was the head of gold. The two inferior kingdoms that succeeded and did "bear rule over all the earth," were Medo-Persia, and Greece. The next universal empire, the iron power, was Rome. We need not go outside the scriptures for any of this information. At this point however there is divergence. Some say seeing that in the days of Rome the kingdom of God (that is to say, the church) was established, that that was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Dan. 2:35 and 44. Others while believing that the church represents the kingdom of God on earth today, deny that the event in view in Dan. 2:35 and 44 has taken place as yet. Let everyone examine the question for himself. Has the stone as yet smitten the Image on its feet? Has the Image been broken in pieces, and its constituent elements reduced, as it were, to chaff, and all the debris swept utterly away? Has the little stone taken possession of the earth? Does the prophecy say that the stone will diffuse a moral influence through the Image and transform it into the kingdom of God? Or does it say, perhaps, that the stone will gradually wear away the Image? Or that the stone in its growing will gradually crowd out and displace the Image? Or does the stone begin to grow into a mountain at all until the fragments of the Image have been carried away into the nowhere? Do the stone and the Image in the prophecy occupy the stage together at any time? Or is the

descent of the stone the knell of doom for the Image? We can answer these questions for ourselves from the record of Dan. 2, taking heed not to force any preconceived interpretation upon God's prophetic word. The Golden Text points out correctly the time of the fulfillment of Dan. 2 (at the sounding of "the seventh trumpet." Rev. 11:15). The descent of the stone is described in other terms in Rev. 19:11-21, as yet future. If it be contended that Rome is gone, yet her equivalent is still here. Gentile world-power still holds sway and sovereignty; and in the great Beast of Revelation (ch. 13) we see her once more consolidated and unified before the stroke from on High destroys her. The limits of this lesson preclude fuller discussion of these points, but enough has been said to enable the student to judge for himself.

TEACHING POINTS.

1. What we know of Daniel: his position in Babylon; his firm principle; his faithfulness; God's blessing of him.
2. About Nebuchadnezzar's Dream—why God sent it to him; why he forgot it; how Daniel was endangered, and how he obtained the secret from God.
3. The Dream itself. Tell all the items of it.
4. The Interpretation, as told by Daniel.
5. The effect of this on the king.
6. God as the real Sovereign over all, even then. (Ps. 103:19).
7. God holding the destinies of all nations in His hand, and bringing His promise to pass in the end.

THIRD LORD'S DAY LESSON OF JULY.

Lesson 3

July 16, 1922.

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

Golden Text: God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.—Ecl. 12:14.

Lesson Text: Daniel 5:17-28.

17. Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. 18 O thou king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty: 19 and because of the greatness that he gave him, all the peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he raised up, and whom he would he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: 21 and he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts', and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed with grass like oxen, and his body was

Read first note "Daniel before Belshazzar."

Verse 17. To whom did Daniel say this? What gifts and rewards had the king promised him? (v. 16). For what were these gifts offered him? Did Daniel care for Belshazzar's gifts and honors?

Verses 18-21. God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar. How had Nebuchadnezzar come into possession of all his greatness and power? What was the extent of Nebuchadnezzar's sway? How absolute was his authority? Would such power tend to puff a man up? Did it have that effect on Nebuchadnezzar? What lesson did God teach him then? What did Nebuchadnezzar learn?

Verses 22, 23. Belshazzar's contempt of God's light. Did Belshazzar know what God had taught his father? Did this knowledge increase his responsibility? What, in the light of what he knew, ought he to have done? But what did he do? What power was in the hands of the God whom he slight-

wet with the dew of heaven; until he knew that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that he setteth up over it whomsoever he will. 22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this, 23 but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine from them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. 24 Then was the part of the hand sent from before him, and this writing inscribed. 25 And this is the writing that was inscribed: **mene, mene, tekel, upharsin**. 26. This is the interpretation of the thing: **mene**; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end. 27 **Tekel**; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. 28. **Peres**; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

ed? Ought he to have **known**? How does God measure a man's responsibility? (Cp. Rom. 1:20, 21).

Verses 24-26. The Handwriting on the Wall. When was this hand (the "part of the hand"—"The fingers of a man's hand," v. 5) sent to write? How many words in the inscription? What did they mean? (Rev. Vers., margin: "Numbered, weighed, and divisions.") How did Daniel interpret the first word (which is repeated)? How the second? In whose balances was Belshazzar weighed? Shall we all be weighed in God's balances? How did Belshazzar weigh up? Who will weigh to the standard? (Rom. 8:1). Why? (Eph. 1:7; 2 Cor. 5:17). What was the interpretation of the third word? (On the sequel, see Notes).

NOTES ON LESSON 3.

DANIEL BEFORE BELSHAZZAR.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was dead and Belshazzar his son was reigning. (There is some historical evidence that this Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, and was reigning conjointly with Nabonidus, his own father. But for the Bible-student's purpose the Bible statement is all-sufficient) God had dealt very manifestly with Nebuchadnezzar, and had given him much revelation. Belshazzar not only ignored that light, but went out of his way to insult the God of Israel. Then God made an example of Belshazzar—a warning to all the Gentile rulers and kings for all future. What Belshazzar did to provoke Jehovah, and the story of the mysterious handwriting on the wall, which, when none of the king's wise men and soothsayers could decipher it, Daniel was called to read, is recorded in Dan. 5:1-16. Our printed lesson begins with verse 17.

THE SEQUEL.

Belshazzar bestowed all the promised gifts and honors upon Daniel. But it was all too late to avert the judgment then. In that night Belshazzar was slain, and the kingdom passed into the hands of Darius the Mede. The allied Medes and Persians ("Medo-Persia") took over the world-power. The "head of gold" was followed by "the arms and breast of silver." (Dan. 2).

TEACHING POINTS.

1. The whole story of the Handwriting on the Wall, and what led to it.
2. Belshazzar sinning against light—how much light did he have?
3. Responsibility and guilt are greater in proportion to the light. See Matt. 11:20-24.
4. God's supreme power in all the earth. (Dan. 4:35).
5. The fatal mistake of slighting and insulting "the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways."
6. The connection of **pride** with **judgment**; and of **humility** with **grace**. (Luke 1:51-53; 1 Pet. 5:5).
7. Daniel: evidently forgotten and neglected after Nebuchadnezzar's death; needed; sent for; perfectly fearless in his declaration of God's word; exalted and honored.

FOURTH LORD'S DAY LESSON OF JULY.

Lesson 4.

July 23, 1922.

DANIEL AND THE LIONS.

Golden Text: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.—Heb. 11:33.

Lesson Text: Daniel 6:16-23.

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. 17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. 18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of music brought before him; and his sleep fled from him. 19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. 20 And when he came near unto the den to Daniel, he cried with a lamentable voice; the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? 21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. 22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. 23 Then was the king exceeding glad, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he had trusted in his God.

king? What was done at the king's command? Was Daniel in the least injured? Why not? How did Daniel trust in God? (v. 10). See the Golden Text. Was the requirement of the law fulfilled? (vs. 12, 15). But was the death-den able to hold and destroy Daniel? (Cp. Acts 2:24).

Read first the Note on Daniel and Darius.

Verses 16, 17. What had the king been doing all day long? (v. 14). Did he succeed? Why not? (v. 15). Was his dominion as unlimited as that of Nebuchadnezzar? (Dan. 5:19). What tribute did the king pay Daniel? Ought people be able to see that we **serve God continually**? What shows that the king was not so certain that Daniel would be delivered? (See vs. 18-20). Could Daniel have known for certain? (Comp. Dan. 3:17, 18). What only did he know? (Rom. 8:28). If it had been God's will that Daniel should die would Daniel have been well pleased?—What method was taken to make the den secure, so that Daniel would not be rescued? What does that remind you of? (Matt. 27:60, 66).

Verses 18-20. What evidence of the king's high esteem and love for Daniel? Had Daniel been entirely worthy of it? With the first dawn of the morning what did the king do? Why was his voice "lamentable?" Did Darius know enough about God yet to be sure that He is able to deliver? Was it long before he learned?

Verses 21, 22. Who answered the king's anxious cry? What did Daniel say his God had done? Has God angels at His disposal? (Ps. 103:20, 21; Cp. Dan. 7:10. Also Matt. 26:53). What does the angel of the Lord do? Ps. 34:7. For what does God send his angels forth? Heb. 1:14. Why was Daniel so protected?

Verse 23. How glad was now the king? What was done at the king's command? Was Daniel in the least injured? Why not? How did Daniel trust in God? (v. 10). See the Golden Text. Was the requirement of the law fulfilled? (vs. 12, 15). But was the death-den able to hold and destroy Daniel? (Cp. Acts 2:24).

NOTES ON LESSON 4.

DANIEL AND DARIUS.

In the Medo-Persian kingdom Daniel held the highest honors, and the king was planning to exalt him to supreme place over all the realm. But this aroused the jealousy of other high officials, who got together and plotted Daniel's destruction. Their first attempt was to find some flaw in his

work and to impeach him. But no fault or default could be found. Then, knowing well enough that under no circumstance would Daniel falter in his devotion to God they framed a law forbidding anyone, for thirty days, to make prayer to any god or man except to the king only; and succeeded in getting the king to pass the law. The rest, as they knew, was simple. Daniel went, as openly as before, and prayed three times a day with his windows open toward Jerusalem. All they had to do was to report him and to demand the execution of the penalty upon Daniel. The king no doubt saw through the scheme, and tried hard to find some way of saving Daniel, but was himself powerless to circumvent the terrible unalterable law of the Medes and Persians. At this point begins the printed lesson.

THE SEQUEL.

"The righteous is delivered out of trouble; and the wicked cometh in his stead." (Prov. 11:8). This was exactly what happened in this case. The law was executed upon Daniel, and Daniel came out unscathed. Then the king asserted his authority and sentenced the accuser of Daniel to be cast into the lions' den. The lions had no such scruples about devouring them as they had about the person of Daniel. This was final proof settling all possible doubt, that Daniel's deliverance was of God. The result was the world-wide glorification of God's Name.

TEACHING POINTS.

1. Tell the whole story, briefly, but with all essential features.
2. Daniel's unimpeachable character and careful work.
3. Daniel's unyielding firmness in his devotion to God.
4. Daniel's faith. See Golden Text.
5. The results of Daniel's faith: for Daniel; for his enemies; for the king; for all the kingdom; for the glory and honor of God.

FIFTH LORD'S DAY LESSON OF JULY.

Lesson 5.

July 30, 1922.

THE FIRST RETURN FROM EXILE.

Golden Text: We know to them that love God all things work together for good.—Romans 8:28.

Lesson Text: Jer. 29:10; Ezra 1:1—8, 11.

10. For thus saith Jehovah, After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

1. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem,

Jer. 29:10. From what book is this prophecy taken? Who gave Jeremiah the words? (Jer. 1:9). Of what did God assure Jeremiah at the time? (Jer. 1:12). Was this a plain prophecy? Did it mean exactly what it said? Could people understand it? (See Dan. 9:2).

Ezra 1:1. Did God fulfill His word? Who stirred up the spirit of Cyrus? Can God do such things? (Prov. 21:1). For what did God stir up the spirit of Cyrus? What did God stir Cyrus up to do?

Verse 2. How wide was Cyrus' reign? Did he recognize who had given him this power? How, when, where had God charged Cyrus to do such a thing? (Isa. 44:28; 45:1, 13. God mentioned Cyrus by name long before he was born).

Verses 3, 4. To whom was the proclamation? Whose people did Cyrus

which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah, the God of Israel (he is God), which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the free-will-offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem. 5 Then rose up the heads of fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of Jehovah which is in Jerusalem. 6 And all they that were round about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered. 7 Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of Jehovah, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put in the house of his gods; 8 even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. 11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when they of the captivity were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

call them? To what place did Cyrus tell them to go? For what did Cyrus let them go back? What acknowledgment of Israel's God did Cyrus make? Who had made the same before? (Dan. 6:26). Did even Israel's captivity serve to spread abroad the name of the true God in all the world? Can God overrule evil for good? Were the exiles to go empty-handed? Who was commanded to help them? What else did they carry with them besides?

Verse 5. Who rose up to go? Was anyone compelled to go? Who only went? Who stirred their spirit to go? (Cp. Phil. 2:13). For what did they go? Was anything said then about rebuilding the city? Who later got special permission to do that? (Neh. 2:7, 8).

Verse 6. Did the people of the land respond to the king's edict? Of what does this remind us? (Exod. 3:20, 21).

Verses 7, 8. In addition to the gifts, and the freewill offering, what was Cyrus careful to send back?

Verse 11. How many articles in all? Were they safely brought back to Jerusalem? Who had the responsibility of it? Who was Sheshbazzar? (Ezr. 5:14; Hag. 1:1, The same as Zerubbabel).

NOTES ON LESSON 5.

THE CAPTIVITY ENDED—A REMNANT RETURNS.

As God had foretold by the mouth of Jeremiah, after seventy years the term of Judah's exile was over, and they were permitted to return. Our printed lesson gives all the circumstances.

But, while all were free to go, it was in fact but a mere handful that returned, even as Isaiah had predicted. (Isa. 10:21). These were under the leadership of the heads of Judah and Benjamin and Levites. There were also individuals among them from the "Ten Tribes" (who had been carried away to Assyria about 150 years before Judah was carried to Babylon). Most of the Israelites, having become settled and prosperous in Babylon preferred to remain there. What was there for them in Palestine the home of their fathers, now desolate and wasted, its cities in ruins, its fields overgrown with bushes and briars, but toil and hardship? There was no earthly gain there nor comfort nor prospect of worldly good. So many of them abode in prosperous Babylon (or, as it then was, Medo-Persia). Only those whose spirit God stirred up—those who were susceptible to the motives of faith and who prized the hope of Israel and whose hearts were touched with the love of Jehovah and Jehovah's house, were prompted to go. And they were comparatively few—not more than 50,000 in all. And these, as the future lessons will show, came in for great toil and trouble and persecution: they suffered much. But with them God took up His dealings: to them He sent prophets, them he reproved, chastened, encouraged. Over the many that remained in the land of the exile God continued His faithful watchcare. (Ps. 121:4). But His direct and special dealing was thenceforth with the Rem-

nant in the Land. Which then is better—to go through hardship and sufferings with God, or to live in ease and prosperity without Him?

TEACHING POINTS.

1. Read Jer. 29:10 in connection with 1:12.
2. God's power over the hearts of kings. Prov. 21:1.
3. Cyrus' (and Darius', Dan. 6:26) world-wide acknowledgment of God. God using even sinful captive Israel to the glory of His name.
4. Who went up at Cyrus' proclamation. How did God stir up their spirits? How does He stir us? When one is moved by the word of God—by the faith and hope and love which God's word generates in our hearts—is it not true that God stirred up his spirit?
5. What the returning exiles left behind and what prospects they were facing. (See Note). Who only would make a similar choice today? Can you think of instances?
6. God's faithfulness in fulfilling His word. What has He said to us that He will fulfill? (1 Cor. 1:9).
7. Daniel's prayer, when, by studying Jeremiah, he understood that the captivity was to last 70 years, and knew that the time was nearly up. (Dan. 9). Ought God's people search God's prophetic word and enter into God's plans by prayer and obedient activity?

THE USE OF THESE LESSONS.

We invite attention to the special features of these lessons:

1. The Questions.

These questions are not so much intended to be read out and used in the class, though they are suitable for that purpose also.

2. The References.

Among the questions quite a number of Scripture-references are found. It is some trouble to look them up, but this also is good and fruitful work for the student. All these references are important and worth while, and there is always a reason for their being given. Look them up.

3. The Comments.

The comments are few and appear in the Notes on each lesson. They generally treat on something about the lesson, rather than on the lesson itself. The questions alone furnish the best comment on the lesson. Not what someone tells you does you most good, but what you find yourself by thought and searching.

The Questions printed on the right hand column are the very best guidance that can be given to the direct study of the Scripture-Text. Each question calls attention to the verse on which it is asked, and generally brings out some truth that might have been overlooked, or suggests some application to our own lives. The questions are not directly answered. The answer must be sought, and can always be readily found in the Scripture-text, or in the Scripture reference. Of course this arrangement is not so convenient as if the answers were given with each question, but it is far better, because it provokes and necessitates real research and study.

*The great classic work of refutation of Seventh-Day Adventism is a book entitled "Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced," by D. M. Canwright, who had for twenty-eight years been one of their preachers, and who finally with regret and aversion turned away from them. No man should consider the acceptance of Seventh-Day Adventism until he has weighed the arguments and reasons set forth by this good man. The book is obtainable through **Word and Work**.

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