

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1879.

SUNDAY, January 5th, 1879.—The Second Temple.—Ezra iii. 1-13.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 10-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid."—Ezra iii. 11.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Assembly at Jerusalem, V. 1. II. Altar worship instituted, Vs. 2-6. III. Second temple begun, Vs. 7-9. IV. Mingled emotions, Vs. 10-13.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Ezra 1. Tuesday, Ezra 2. Wednesday, Ezra 3. Thursday, Isa. xlv. 21-28. Friday, Jer. xxv. 1-14. Saturday, Jer. 1. 1-20. Sunday, Ps. cxxvi.

QUESTIONS.—What captivity was to be endless? What limited? Why? Gen. xlix. 10. When did Judah's begin? What Psalm records its sad experience? Ps. cxxxvii. When did it end? How many returned? How many months did the return take? Who ordered it? What led him to do it? What Scripture does this verify? Prov. xxi. 1.

I. Vs. 1.—What month was the seventh? What feasts were ordered in this month; Lev. xxiii. 23-34. How many Jews now came to Jerusalem?

II. Vs. 2-5.—What did they do at once build at Jerusalem? Why this before the temple? Where was it built? What fear was upon the people? What daily ceremonial did they observe? What yearly? What monthly? How strict was their obedience? v. 4.

III. Vs. 7-9.—What preparations for building the temple were now made? What means had they in hand for this work? Ezra ii. 68, 69; Compare Ex. iii. 21, 22; 2 Chron. ii. 3.

IV. Vs. 10-13.—To whom was the hour a joyous one? To whom sad? Why? What did the old men appear to despise? Hag. ii. iii. What place has no mingled joy and sorrow? Rev. xxi. 4.

Points to Talk About.—Religion before business, as a rule, is often reversed. v. 1.—The altar before the temple or when we cannot do as we would, we should do as we can. v. 2.—An altar is made to be used. v. 3.—A good motto this: "As the duty of every day requires." v. 4.—When God orders, he provides. v. 7.—Joy and sorrow the type of the world. vs. 11-12.

I. The Book of Ezra.—The book of Ezra covers data spread over a period of seventy-nine years, from the first return, under Zerubbabel (b. c. 536), to the second return, under Ezra (b. c. 458). For Ezra's nativity and character see Ezra 7. He wrote the book called by his name, and revised much, if not all, of the preceding Old Testament. He alone recorded the re-building of the temple. He was a man of great learning, of sincere piety and patriotic zeal (Ezra vii. 10), and has ever been held in high honor by ancient and modern Jews.

II. The Return.—Israel's captivity was unceasing (1 Kings xvii. 18-23); but Judah's was limited to seventy years (Jer. xxv. 9-11), from Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Judah (b. c. 606), to the decree of Cyrus (b. c. 536) or from the final destruction of Jerusalem (b. c. 588) to the order of Darius for the completion of the second temple, (b. c. 519). The return was "the Revival, the Second Birth, the Second Exodus of the Nation."—Stanley. It probably took four months, as Ezra's did subsequently (Ezra vii. 9), from late spring to early fall. Of the details of journey there is no record. It was conducted by Zerubbabel the Moses, and by Jeshua the Aaron, the leader, and priest of the people. The independent existence of the Jewish nation was destroyed. Idolatry was for ever put away. This was the great moral gain of the captivity. The whole nation, however, did not return. There were in the transportation about 60,000, including slaves and singers (Ex. ii. 64, 65), of which number 10,000 or 12,000 doubtless were from the scattered tribes of Israel, as they are not registered in the account of the families of Judah. Besides this, 5400 vessels of all descriptions, originally taken from the temple, were also carried back. Ezra i. 7-11. Liberal presents and large free-will offerings from the people who remained, were contributed to the house of the Lord, to be built at Jerusalem. Ezra i. 3, 4.

III. Cyrus.—Cyrus, son of Cambyses, ordered the return, and by so doing will ever be remembered as one of the fore-

most benefactors of the race. He was led, by a motive undoubtedly divinely inspired, and confirmed by Daniel, to undo the bad work of his predecessors. Being very little polytheistic, and chiefly monotheistic in belief, he cherished a sincere regard for the Jewish faith. To this high trust of emancipating the Jewish race he was called by the sovereign purpose of God. Isa. xlv. 13. That he should do so could hardly have been with Isaiah, writing one hundred and seventy-five years before, a guess! Isa. xlv. 1, 13.

EXPOSITION.—(1.) The seventh month, Tisri, or our September. (2.) Joshua (1 Chron. vi. 14), high priest; name used typically of Jesus (Ezra iv. 3; v. 2; Hag. i. 1, 12, 14; ii. 24; Zech. iii. 1-8; vi. 11, 12); Zerubbabel (a stranger in Babylon), son of Shealtiel or Salathiel, and heir of the house of David (1 Chron. iii. 16, 17); builded the altar, probably of rough stone at first; as it is written—Ex. xx. 21-25; Deut. xii. 5-7; Ps. lxxviii. 68. (3.) upon his bases, in the same place on Mount Moriah, and of the same dimensions, as the one built by Solomon (2 Chron. iv. 1); for fear was upon them, though unprepared for war, they would be true to God; first, by daily burnt offerings (Ex. xxix. 38-42); second, by keeping the appointed joyous feast of tabernacles, our thanksgiving (Ex. xxiii. 16); and third, by observing all the other sacred days as ordered by Moses, "as the duty of every day required." Num. 29. (6.) first day of the seventh month, by previous arrangement; according to the grant, Ezra vi. 3-5. (8.) the second month, or May; twenty years old. 1 Chron. xxiii. 24-22. (9.) Jeshua, not the high priest, but another man. Ezra ii. 40. (12.) ancient men, not very old if the captivity be dated b. c. 588, but fifty-three years since. Though the ground-plan of the second temple (Ezra vi. 3) be larger by a third than the first, it was to be far less glorious in internal wealth and beauty. For the past the old men sighed, for the present they were unthankful.

—Baptist Question Book.

SUNDAY, January 12th, 1879.—The Dedication.—Ezra vi. 14-22.

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

For the Primary Class Teacher.

THE JEWS RETURN.

Last year we learned how the people of Judah were carried captive to Babylon, and that they remained there seventy years. Then the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, to let the people return to Jerusalem. About 50,000 Jews went back under the charge of Zerubbabel. They found Jerusalem nothing but a heap of ruins, but they meant to rebuild the temple. Some of the Jews gave a great deal of gold and silver; they also gave 100 dresses for the priests. Then they separated to their different cities until the summer was over.

THE LESSON STORY.

In October the children of Israel came from their different cities to Jerusalem. They first built up the altar on the same base or spot where it had once stood; Jeshua, the high priest, and the other priests, offered burnt-offerings upon this every morning and evening. The feast of tabernacles was also kept, during which the people lived for seven days in tents made of branches of trees. The first day thirteen bullocks were offered for a burnt offering, and one less every day, until the last or seventh day, when seven bullocks were slain. This was just as the law of Moses told them to do. They also kept all the feasts commanded by Moses, and willingly brought gifts to the Lord. But they had not yet laid the foundation of the temple. Cyrus had given them orders for cedar trees from Lebanon. So they gave money to masons and carpenters to get everything ready. In April of the second year of their coming to Jerusalem the work was begun; Zerubbabel and Jeshua overlooked everything. The priests were dressed in white, with trumpets; the Levites had their cymbals, and the singers sang a psalm of praise and thanksgiving. The people shouted for

joy that the first stone of the temple was laid; but amidst the joy there were cries of grief from the old men who had seen the glorious temple which Solomon had built.

International Bible Lessons for 1879.

- FIRST QUARTER. 1. Jan. 5.—The Second Temple. Ezra iii. 1-13. 2. Jan. 12.—The Dedication. Ezra vi. 14-22. 3. Jan. 19.—The Mission of Nehemiah. Neh. ii. 1-8. 4. Jan. 26.—The Builders Interrupted. Neh. iv. 7-18. 5. Feb. 2.—The Reading of the Law. Neh. viii. 1-8. 6. Feb. 9.—The Keeping of the Sabbath. Neh. xiii. 15-22. 7. Feb. 16.—The Way of the Righteous. Ps. i. 1-6. 8. Feb. 23.—The King in Zion. Ps. li. 1-12. 9. Mar. 2.—The Prayer of the Penitent. Ps. li. 1-13. 10. Mar. 9.—The Joy of Forgiveness. Ps. xxxii. 1-11. 11. Mar. 16.—Delight in God's House. Ps. lxxxv. 1-12. 12. Mar. 23.—The All-seeing God. Ps. cxxxix. 1-12. 13. Mar. 30.—First Quarter Review. SECOND QUARTER. 1. April 6.—Sanctified Affliction. Job xxxiii. 14-30. 2. April 13.—Prosperity Restored. Job xlii. 1-10. 3. April 20.—Queen Esther. Esth. iv. 10-17. 4. April 27.—The Coming Saviour. Isa. xlii. 1-10. 5. May 4.—The Suffering Saviour. Isa. liii. 1-12. 6. May 11.—The Saviour's Call. Isa. lv. 1-11. 7. May 18.—The Saviour's Kingdom. Mic. iv. 1-8. 8. May 25.—The Holy Spirit Promised. Joel ii. 1-28-32. 9. June 1.—Prophecy against Tyre. Ezek. xxvi. 7-14. 10. June 8.—The Valley of Dry Bones. Ezek. xxxvii. 1-10. 11. June 15.—The Need of God's Spirit. Zech. iv. 1-14. 12. June 22.—Consecration to God. Mal. iii. 8-18. 13. June 29.—Second Quarter Review. THIRD QUARTER. 1. July 6.—Peace with God.—Rom. v. 1-10. 2. July 13.—The Security of Believers. Rom. viii. 38-39. 3. July 20.—Christian Love. 1 Cor. xiii. 1-13. 4. July 27.—Victory over Death. 1 Cor. xv. 50-58. 5. Aug. 3.—The Ministry of Reconciliation. 2 Cor. v. 14-21. 6. Aug. 10.—The Fruit of the Spirit. Gal. v. 21-26. 7. Aug. 17.—The Christian Armor. Eph. vi. 10-20. 8. Aug. 24.—The Mind of Christ. Phil. ii. 1-13. 9. Aug. 31.—Practical Religion. Col. iii. 16-25. 10. Sep. 7.—The Coming of the Lord. 1 Thess. i. 10. 11. Sep. 14.—The Christian in the World. 1 Tim. vi. 6-16. 12. Sep. 21.—The Christian Citizen. Titus iii. 1-9. 13. Sep. 28.—Third Quarter Review. FOURTH QUARTER. 1. Oct. 5.—Our Great High Priest. Heb. iv. 14-16. 2. Oct. 12.—The Types Explained. Heb. ix. 1-12. 3. Oct. 19.—The Triumphs of Faith. Heb. xi. 1-10. 4. Oct. 26.—Faith and Works. James ii. 14-26. 5. Nov. 2.—The Perfect Pattern. 1 Pet. ii. 19-25. 6. Nov. 9.—The Perfect Saviour. 1 John i. 1-10. 7. Nov. 16.—The Love of the Father. 1 John iv. 7-16. 8. Nov. 23.—The Glorified Saviour. Rev. i. 10-20. 9. Nov. 30.—The Message to the Churches. Rev. iii. 1-13. 10. Dec. 7.—The Heavenly Song. Rev. v. 11-20. 11. Dec. 14.—The Heavenly City. Rev. xxi. 21-29. 12. Dec. 21.—The Last Words. Rev. xxii. 10-21. 13. Dec. 28.—Fourth Quarter Review.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 1.

- 1. One weeping for her children dead, And none could stay the tears she shed? 2. Who gave his privilege away, Forgetful of the future day? 3. Who consecrated all his days With frequent prayers and holy praise? 4. Who passed in fiery car to heaven, Completed all the work God-given? 5. Who sinned when Time its course began, And brought all woe on guilty man? 6. Who gave the laws that Israel broke, When God 'mid Sinai's thunders spoke? 7. Who saw the vision of a "Child"—Of "God and mercy reconciled"? 8. Who warned the world of punishment For wasted years, and called, "Repent!" 9. A name of scorn once borne by Him Whose glories time can never dim? 10. Who in the happy days of youth! The lessons learned of lasting truth? 11. Who saw when struck by dire disease The shadow alter ten degrees? 12. The place where first the tempter's art Lured woman from the "better part"? 13. A word that tells of doom profound, The balance weighed, and wanting found? 14. An heir of promise, through whose race Came first the news of God's rich grace? 15. Who saw of men the greatest age Recorded in the sacred page? 16. Where dwelleth He who reacheth down To make the contrite heart His own? A New Year's motto here behold; It might be blazoned forth in gold: The initials take, and day by day The precepts thus disclosed obey.

HOW TRANSLATED.—It is stated on good authority that in the Bible Revision Committee on the rendering of baptize and baptism there has been no division. But in all the passages where the Greek is "in water," as distinguished from those where the Greek is a simple dative, and may therefore be translated "with water," the Company divided. A very respectable minority of the English Company and a majority, we are informed, of the American Company, voted for "baptized in water," as "in Jordan;" and in the end that rendering was put as an alternative one in the margin. It is supported, we need scarcely add, by the Vulgate and some other versions, and has been warmly defended by Campbell and Meyer.

Select Serial.

Ponape; or, Light on a Dark Shore.

BY MRS. HELEN S. THOMPSON.

CHAPTER I.—The Stevens Family.

"I do not believe father and mother will give their consent, and I cannot go without it, Edward."

"Do not say that, Mary; your parents love the dear Master and his cause too well to hold you back from such a service. Besides, have they not promised that you should be my wife, and in doing that given you to whatever lot we shall choose?"

"Yes; but my mother, my dear mother; she never dreamed of this; and it would break my poor old father's heart. Have I a right to bring upon them such a trial?"

"Dear Mary," replied the young minister, gently taking the hands which were working convulsively in the lap of their owner, "do not feel like this. I do not undervalue the gift received at their hands, and in proportion to its worth to me can I appreciate its loss to them; but I am confident that your parents will esteem it the highest privilege of their lives to consecrate you on the altar of missionary labor, to the service of him who gave his life a ransom for them. Have you forgotten the reply of that noble mother who, on being asked how she could give her only child to the heathen, said, 'I wish I had twelve children, and I would give every one of them to the missionary cause, and thank God that I was counted worthy to offer so precious a gift?'"

"What does your mother say, Edward?"

"You know she is aged and infirm, and, since my father died, has looked upon me as her staff and support; but as she sees my soul go out to the perishing heathen, she says, 'God forbid that I should deny my Saviour this test of love; for has he not said, 'He that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me'? Do you think for my own selfish comfort I would rob you of one of those "stars" which shall be set in your crown of glory? Nay, my son; may the Lord be praised for giving you a heart to go!"

"Noble woman!" whispered Mary, who was weeping now from excessive feeling.

"Mary, if it is such a sacrifice for you to leave home and comforts and prospects to carry 'glad tidings' to a people sitting in darkness, let me remind you of those cheering, stimulating words of our Lord, 'No man hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold in this life, and in the world to come eternal life.' Do you think, dear Mary, when we stand on the other side, amid a band of redeemed ones, who with glad voices say, 'From thy lips we heard of Jesus' love, and thine the hands that led us to his feet,' and the pierced hand of him we love shall set upon our heads those 'gems of liquid light,' we shall regret this hour?"

"Oh no, indeed!" replied the weeping girl; "such bliss would compensate for all losses and crosses a thousand times. Can it be that the Master-builder will deign to use such instruments as we for the erection of his spiritual 'temple'? Dear Edward, I want to feel aright—to be willing and able to say, 'Here, Lord, am I; use me as thou wilt;' 'the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Pray, Edward; won't you? That is our best resource."

Kneeling by the side of the fair girl, the young man did pray with an unction and fervor that inspired their hearts with confidence and peace.

"There is no time to be lost, and this question must be decided at once," said Mr. Hammond, "if we are to sail this spring for India."

"When will you talk with father and mother about it?" asked Mary Stevens. "To-morrow, dear, if you please. Do not sigh so deeply, Mary; 'God loveth a cheerful giver,' you know."

"It is not that, Edward, but my parents; I cannot feel as confident as you do of their consent. But come over to an early tea, and I will see that you have an uninterrupted hour with father;" and with mutual "Good-nights" and a "God bless you!" the young people separated.

The families to which these young people belonged were educated under a very different system of religious culture. In one, religion was first and all, paramount to every other object; while in the other, it was considered a very necessary and proper adjunct. Mr. Hammond the elder lived to see his family of nine children all walking in heavenly paths, while only one of Mr. Stevens—the one whom we have introduced to the reader—had as yet cast in her lot with the people of God. The parents of these children, most worthy and interesting people, wondered why their family should be a little "fast" and slightly skeptical, and deplored it, while the cause was apparent in their own worldliness and inconsistencies. Mary, the second daughter, was possessed of strong character and fine intellect, and was much doted upon by her parents. Three years before, while attending school in Rochester, during a work of grace in the church which she attended, she had devoted herself to her Master, even, Jesus, and since that time had sincerely asked, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" At this period she became acquainted with the young theological student, whom she found to possess such devotion to the Master and his fellow men, combined with such talents and disposition, that it seemed easy to her to walk where he should lead, with the prospect of being only a poor minister's wife all her days. Her parents found no fault with this, and indeed were fond and proud of the new son in prospect; but there were other friends who, having had some fond schemes of their own set aside, were not slow in bemoaning her prospects, and saying that "Mary might have done better than ride in a one-horse chaise all her life."

But none of these things could touch a heart blossoming under the sunlight of love; and so her life put on new beauty, and wove into its texture new threads of force and usefulness. The time had arrived for Mr. Hammond's ordination, and the marriage-day was set for two weeks later. The probable field of labor was the South-west, which with the facilities for traveling of forty years ago, seemed quite as much of an undertaking as a voyage to India now. For a few weeks past something had been weighing on Mr. Hammond's mind. That was evident enough to Mary at least, for he was grave, abstracted, and ill at ease; but not until a few days prior to the conversation given at the beginning of this chapter had he freely opened his heart and wishes. One evening he read aloud a melting appeal from India, made on account of the death and removal of three valued laborers. Mary's heart was moved by the Macedonian cry of, "Who will come over and help us?" As the darkness came on and the firelight danced its shadows on the wall, the young minister found courage to tell her of his wish to go to labor among the heathen—a wish he had felt since first experiencing the love and forgiveness of the dear Saviour, though circumstances hitherto had put a barrier in his path; but now the path was open, if she could consent to go with him.

Startled and overwhelmed, Mary could not then, nor for several days after, decide the momentous question; above all did she hesitate to break the matter to her parents. The time having come for a decision, with deep heart-searchings upon this night did she ask of her inmost soul, "Which do I love most, my country and kindred, or my Lord? my own selfish ease, or the souls of those sitting in darkness? Can I go? Is it duty? Is there not needed work at home?"

But these heart-probings enabled her to find her footing; and, resting down upon a sure foundation, she heard with confidence the voice divine: "This is the way, walk ye in it."

Among the curious things at the Paris Exhibition are two portraits made of human hair, one representing Thiers and the other the Prince of Wales. The most singular feature of these unique productions is the fact that the man whose hair was used accompanies the pictures. He has not a hair left on his head, his beard is all gone, and the artist did not entirely neglect to appropriate his eyelashes and eyebrows.

Character is a perfectly educated will.