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**I STAND AND KNOCK.**

I stand and knock at morning and at noon  
Oh, happy then is he,  
Who, knowing well the Shepherd's voice,  
Opens the door to Me;  
The evening meal with him I'll hold,  
And heavenly light and grace unfold.  
I stand and knock.

I stand and knock. Without it is so cold;  
The snow lies o'er the land;  
Like crystal columns, tall and straight,  
The icy fir trees stand,  
And frozen are the hearts of mortals.  
Who will unloose the tight-barred portals?  
I stand and knock.

I stand and knock. Oh, couldst thou but  
look once  
Into My very face!  
Couldst thou behold the crown of thorns,  
The bloody nail-prints trace?  
So long have I been seeking thee,  
My steps lead from the accursed tree.  
I stand and knock.

I stand and knock. The evening is so calm,  
So quiet; near and far  
The wide earth sleeps; from yonder heaven  
Looks down the evening star.  
In such still, sacred hours of night,  
To many a heart I've given light,  
I stand and knock.

I stand and knock. Say not, "It is the  
wind  
Rustling the branches here;"  
Thy Saviour 'tis, thy Lord, thy God, my  
child;

Ah, close not now thine ear;  
Though now I speak in whispers mild,  
Too soon, perchance, in storm blasts wild!  
I stand and knock.

I stand and knock. Now would I be thy  
guest;  
But when this house of thine  
A ruin lies, then think, O soul,  
That thou shalt knock at mine.  
Then if thou hast welcomed Me,  
I'll open heaven's gates to thee,  
I stand and knock.

—New York Observer.

**The Sabbath-School.****INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.**

[FROM PELOUBET'S NOTES.]

**FIRST QUARTER.—Lesson 8.—Feb. 21.**  
**THE SECOND TEMPLE.—Ezra i. 1-4;**  
**iii. 8, 13.**

**GOLDEN TEXT.—They praised the Lord, be-**  
**cause the foundation of the house of the**  
**Lord was laid.—Ezra iii. 11.**

**I. THE CAPTIVITY.** The captivity  
of the Jews was begun B. C. 604, by  
the capture of Jerusalem by Nebu-  
chadnezzar.

Their treatment seems to have  
varied in different localities and at  
different times, but, at least in the  
earlier years, the iron of slavery en-  
deared deeply into their souls. Grad-  
ually, however, matters improved.  
Many were allowed to live in the  
capital, where a happier lot was of-  
fered. Bitterness gradually sub-  
sided, and they began to fall into their  
place as a recognized portion of the  
general community.

Probably not more than 100,000  
were carried away to Babylon; but  
doubtless there was a large increase  
during the seventy years.

**THE EFFECT OF THE EXILE.** It  
broke the charm idolatry had hith-  
erto exercised. Henceforward, through-  
out all the future, they and their de-  
scendants were fierce haters of all  
idols. It led to renewed study of  
the sacred scriptures. It had also  
the grand result of leading men to  
set increasing value on the spiritual  
services of religion, as contrasted  
with the merely ritual. Without  
prince, prophet, leader, burnt offer-  
ing, incense or place of sacrifice, men  
now hoped to be accepted, even  
without them, when they knelt with  
a contrite heart and a humble spirit  
before the Unseen God.

**THE LENGTH OF THE EXILE** was  
exactly 70 years, as foretold by  
Jeremiah. It was a due punishment  
for the neglect of God's law—one  
year of exile for each of the sabbatic  
years in which the people had re-  
fused to rest (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21;  
Lev. xxvi. 33-35). And the exile  
could not come to an end till the af-  
fliction had so far accomplished its  
moral work on the people as to give  
assurance that they would not fall  
back into their former sins.

**II. THE DECREE OF CYRUS.**  
Vers. 1-4. 1. *In the first year of*  
*Cyrus. His first year as king at*  
*Babylon. For two years after the*  
*capture of Babylon (538) Darius*  
*was king of Babylon under Cyrus.*  
*Now (B. C. 536) Cyrus reigned at*  
*Babylon, and this was his first year*  
*of direct sovereignty over the Jews.*  
*That the word of the Lord by the*  
*mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled*  
*(See Jer. xxv. 12; xxix. 10.) This*  
*word was the promise that, after 70*  
*years, the Lord would bring his peo-*  
*ple back to Palestine. The Lord*  
*stirred up the spirit of Cyrus. By*  
*the direct influence of his Holy*  
*Spirit upon the king's mind. There*  
*is good reason to accept the Jewish*  
*tradition that Daniel, occupying a*  
*high position in the court of Cyrus,*  
*brought to his attention the prophe-*  
*cies of Isaiah, which even name*  
*Cyrus as God's servant (Isa. xxxiv.*  
*26-28, and xxxv. 1-4). Made a*  
*proclamation. This was an official*  
*document.*

2. *The Lord (Jehovah) God of*  
*Heaven. The word Jehovah was*  
*probably the Hebrew translation of*  
*"Ormuzd," the Persian Supreme*  
*Being. Hath given me all the*  
*kingdoms of the earth. Of course*  
*this is a somewhat extravagant boast*  
*of Cyrus. But he did possess a*  
*large part of the most prominent*  
*countries. He hath charged me to*  
*build him a house at Jerusalem. It*  
*is reasonable to conjecture that the*

king's attention was drawn by Daniel  
to the prophecy of Isaiah (xxxiv.  
28.) Cyrus probably accepted this  
prophecy as a "charge" to rebuild  
the temple.

3. *Who is there among you? The*  
*edict was not compulsory, but granted*  
*full permission to the Jewish ex-*  
*iles, in every part of his kingdom, who*  
*chose to return to their own coun-*  
*try. Let him go up. Jerusalem was*  
*on a much higher level than Baby-*  
*lon. He is the God. The great,*  
*living, supreme God.*

4. *Whoever remaineth in any*  
*place where he sojourneth. And*  
*with regard to all those who remain*  
*in any part of the country where*  
*they have their temporary abode.*  
*Let the men of his place help him.*  
*Assist with money, cattle and other*  
*commodities, in order that none may*  
*be hindered by poverty from joining*  
*the band of emigrants on their re-*  
*turn to Jerusalem. Besides the free-*  
*will offering. The "offering" here in-*  
*tended is probably that made by*  
*Cyrus himself. (See vers. 7-11).*

**III. THE RETURN.**—A large num-  
ber of the Jews went up to Pale-  
stine. The total was just about  
50,000 (Ezra i. 64-67), so that more  
remained than went. They had  
435 camels, 736 horses, and 6965  
beasts of burden. Cyrus sent with  
them the treasures taken from the  
temple, numbering 5400 vessels of  
gold and silver (Ezra i. 8-11). Their  
personal property must have amount-  
ed to considerable, for on their ar-  
rival at Jerusalem they contributed  
\$400,000 in gold and silver for the  
rebuilding of the temple. Their  
leader was Zerubbabel, of the royal  
line of David. Their journey must  
have taken over four months (Ezra  
vii. 9).

**IV. SETTLING IN PALESTINE.**—On  
their arrival the exiles proceeded  
first of all to their several cities,  
their first duty being to settle down  
in homes of their own. The state  
of Palestine was far from inspiring.  
The new colony was thus hemmed  
in on all sides by other races.

They made a great offering of  
property for the temple, 61,000  
daries of gold = \$275,000, and 5,000  
minas of silver = \$135,000.

In September, they went up to  
Jerusalem, and restored the old altar  
of burnt offerings and established  
religious services.

Then they made their preparations  
for the re-building of the temple, send-  
ing for materials as far as Lebanon  
and Joppa by the sea (Ezra iii. 7).

**V. LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS OF**  
**THE TEMPLE.**—Vers. 8-13. 8. *In*  
*the second year of Cyrus, and also of*  
*their return, B. C. 535. In the second*  
*month. Joshua, the same as Joshua.*  
*He was the high priest. And all.*  
*Not only priests, but all those who*  
*returned, joined in this work. And*  
*appointed the Levites. Those left*  
*of the tribe of Levi, including*  
*priests. Twenty years old and up-*  
*ward. According to the rule of*  
*David (1 Chron. xxiii. 24) and the*  
*example of Moses (Num. viii. 24).*  
*All went to work who were well*  
*grown and able.*

10. *The builders, i. e. Joshua and*  
*Zerubbabel, who were at the head*  
*of affairs (see ver. 2). Priests in*  
*their apparel. With trumpets. After*  
*the ordinance of David. See 1*  
*Chron. xv. 16-21. David first or-*  
*ganized choirs and music for the*  
*temple services.*

11. *And they sang... by course.*  
*This probably means alternately or*  
*responsively. He is good, etc. And*  
*all the people shouted with a great*  
*shout. To express their joy.*

12. *Many... ancient men. They*  
*must have been at least 80 or 90*  
*years old to have remembered the*  
*former temple, destroyed 70 years*  
*before. Wept with a loud voice.*  
*The weeping was not because the*  
*new temple was smaller than the*  
*first, for it was at least one-third*  
*larger in every dimension (compare*  
*Ezra vi. 3; 1 Kings vi. 2); but in*  
*magnificence of structure and ad-*  
*ornment it promised little in com-*  
*parison (Hag. ii. 3; Zech. iv. 10).*  
*The ark of the covenant, the sacred*  
*fire on the altar, the Urim and*  
*Thummim, were absent. All the*  
*associations that gathered around*  
*the old temple were wanting in the*  
*new. Many shouted for joy. The*  
*younger were joyful that they had*  
*any temple.*

There is a trait of human nature  
beautifully illustrated here. Even if  
the new temple had been as glorious  
as the first, the old men would have  
wept. The old man is forever look-  
ing back; nothing will ever be so  
great as what he used to see. The  
young man is forever looking for-  
ward; nothing has ever been so  
great as what is going to be.

**VI. COMPLETION OF THE TEMPLE.**  
—While the work was going on,  
there arose a strong opposition from  
the other dwellers in Palestine.  
These adversaries succeeded in delay-  
ing the work for many years, till  
Darius, the son of Hytaspes, came  
upon the throne. After 14 years,  
to B. C. 521, Haggai and Zechariah  
stirred up the people to action. The  
decree of Cyrus was found and en-  
forced, and in four years more the  
temple was completed, and was de-  
dicated on the 3rd of Adar (March),  
B. C. 515, 20 years after the return.

**THAT STRANGE VOICE.**

In a recent sermon preached in  
New York a learned bishop related  
a strange incident. When the Rev.  
Dr. Tyng, who died a few months  
ago, was a young man, some one  
wrote him a very provoking letter.  
After reading it the Doctor wrote a  
reply, filled with sharp and bitter  
words. He then started to mail his  
letter. On his way he heard a voice  
as if some one spoke to him, saying:  
"Stephen, that won't do!" Who  
spoke that sentence? Who gave  
that warning? Was it some kind  
friend who knew the young rector  
was out of humor, and that he had  
written some hasty words—words  
he would not write when cool or free  
from passion? Or was it some bird  
in the air, or some angel in the sky?  
How was it, boys and girls? Whence  
came that strange voice? Who can  
tell?

I can almost hear some of you  
answer, "conscience." That is ex-  
actly right. But what is that  
strange thing about us—that "in-  
ward monitor," which is called "con-  
science?" It is very hard to tell.  
We do not know exactly what it is.  
But we do know it is something that  
belongs to us—a part of ourselves.

Let me tell you a little story just  
here. An aged Christian was once  
asked by a scoffer (that is one who  
mocks at the Bible), "Where is your  
heaven, and how far is it from this  
world?" "Well," replied the grey-  
haired pilgrim, "I cannot tell just  
where it is, nor just how far from  
this world, but I can tell you one  
thing about it which I think is a  
great thing, and the main thing."  
"What is that?" asked the scoffer.  
"Well, sir," was the answer, "I  
can send up a prayer and get an  
answer in three minutes!"

Wasn't that a good answer? "O,  
yes," you say. So it was. It is  
much the same with conscience. If  
we are even going to do wrong we  
shall get an answer quicker than  
three minutes! Yes, before we do  
the wrong act a thumping will be  
felt in the breast—a sort of knock  
at the door so that we almost speak  
right out, and say, "Who is that?"  
But we must give heed to this voice,  
or after a while we will not hear it  
at all.

What do you think the young  
preacher Tyng did? Why, he just  
turned round, walked back to his  
study, fell upon his knees and asked  
the Lord Jesus to help him write a  
more soothing letter. And He did!  
Yes, in less than three minutes, his  
prayer reached the throne of grace  
—passing sun and moon and stars  
in its rapid flight. And the answer  
came back almost as quickly as a  
thought.

Now, boys and girls, take good  
care of your conscience. It is to be  
your daily and hourly attendant  
through life—a kind of "body-  
guard." Night and day, at home  
or abroad, sick or well, this will be  
your guide. Don't betray this friend.  
If treated well, you will have no  
better adviser. If treated ill—what  
shall I say? Why, just this: he  
will not advise, nor warn you at all.  
He will let you rush on to ruin.  
In the Bible (Hosea iv. 17) you  
will find this verse: "It is dreadful,  
but true: Ephraim is joined to  
idols; let him alone!" And that  
means, if anyone is bent on his own  
ruin, and prefers to go that way, let  
him go on. But it is better to stop  
and listen to the voice of conscience.  
Better still to get down upon your  
knees and ask Jesus to keep you  
from all evil.—N. Y. Observer.

**DIVINE SYMPATHY.**—"I know  
their sorrows."—Exod. iii. 7. Man  
cannot say so. There are many  
sensitive fibers of the soul the best  
and tenderest human sympathy can-  
not touch. But the Prince of suffer-  
ers, he who led the way to the path  
of sorrows, "knoweth our frame." When  
crushing bereavement lies  
like ice on the heart, when the dearest  
earthly friend cannot enter into  
the peculiarities of our grief, Jesus  
can, Jesus does. He who once bore  
my sins, also carried my sorrows.  
That eye now on the throne was  
once dim with weeping. I can  
think, in all my afflictions, "He  
was afflicted,"—in all my tears,  
"Jesus wept."—N. Y. Observer.

**BUY THE TRUTH.**

Once a Sabbath-school teacher  
remarked that he who buys the  
truth makes a good bargain, and  
inquired if a scholar recollected an  
instance in the Scriptures of a bad  
bargain.

"I do," replied a boy. "Esau  
sold his birthright for a mess of  
pottage."

A second said: "Judas made a  
bad bargain when he sold his Lord  
for thirty pieces of silver."

A third boy observed: "Our  
Lord tells us that he makes a bad  
bargain who, to gain the whole  
world, loses his own soul."

I could travel in perfect peace but  
for this one thing! These railroads  
have got up their sleeping cars and  
their mail and baggage and express  
cars, and they just lack one more car.  
I want them to put on a carrying car  
and put in all these blackmouthed,  
traveling scoundrels.

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