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A Bible Reading on 'Rock of Ages.'

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
—Ps. 62 : 5-8.
Let me hide myself in thee,
—Ex. 33 : 22.
Let the water and the blood,
—I. John 5 : 6.
From thy riven side which flowed,
—John 19 : 34.
Be of sin the double cure,
—II. Kings 2 : 9, 10.
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.
—Isa. 1 : 18.

Not the labor of my hands
—John 5 : 30.
Can fulfill the law's demands :
—Matt. 5 : 17. 18.
Could my zeal no respite know,
—Ps. 69 : 9.
Could my tears forever flow,
—Ps. 6 : 6.
All for sin could not atone,
—Heb. 10 : 5, 6
Thou must save, and thou alone.
—Heb. 10 : 8 10.

Nothing in my hand I bring ;
—Isa. 55 : 1.
Simply to thy cross I cling ;
—Gal. 6 : 14.
Naked, come to thee for dress,
—Rom. 13 : 14.
Helpless, look to thee for grace ;
—Phil. 4 : 13.
Foul, I to the fountain fly ;
—Ps. 51 : 7.
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.
—John 13 : 8.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
— Ps. 103 : 15, 16.
When my eyelids close in death,
—Eccl. 12 : 3-7.
When I soar to worlds unknown,
—John 14 : 2, 3.
See thee on thy judgment throne,
Matt. 25 : 31.
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
—I. Cor. 10 : 4
Let me hide myself in thee.
—Ps. 17 : 8.

—Selected by Rev. Charles Arthur Jones for Young People's Paper.

The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter, Lesson 12, Sept. 17, '99

POWER THROUGH THE SPIRIT.—Zechariah 4: 1-14.

Read the Chapter

Compare Ezra 6: 14-22.

Commit Verses 8-10.

Golden Text.—Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of hosts—Zech 4 : 6.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—Zechariah began to prophesy November, B. C. 520, between the second and third prophecies of Haggai. The prophecy of the lesson was spoken on the morning of the twenty fourth day of the eleventh month, therefore some time in March, 519, five months after the people began anew their work on the temple.

Place.—Jerusalem.

Prophets.—Zechariah and Haggai.

Rulers.—Darius Hystaspes, king of Persia: Zerubbabel, governor of Judea.

THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH AND HIS MISSION.—Zechariah was the son of Barachiah and grandson of Iddo, who was one of the heads of the twelve courses of priests He was a priest as well as a prophet. He was probably born in Babylon, and went to Jerusalem when quite young, with Zerubbabel and Joshua. He began to prophesy about two months after Haggai in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, and continued to prophesy for two years (7: 1)

Zechariah's mission was to awaken and encourage the Jews in their great work of rebuilding the temple and renewing the religious life of the people.

But there was much to discourage their hearts and dampen their ardor. The people were few and poor. Their enemies were persistent and cruel. Drought and mildew had ruined their crops.

The aged Haggai had aroused enthusiasm and the work on the temple begun. It had been going on but few weeks when Zechariah came to his aid. He made a brief address at first. Then one night, three months later, March, B. C. 519, God sent to Zechariah a series of eight visions—which the prophet rehearsed to the people the next morning.

The Jews, we are told, "prospered through the prophesying" (Ezra 6: 13); and in about four years the temple was finished.

A SERIES OF OBJECT LESSON VISIONS.—We cannot, in the space allowed, describe all these visions, but we give some examples.

First Vision (1: 8 17). The horses of various colors, among the fragrant myrtle trees with their starry blossoms, were God's messengers from all parts of the earth. God has an interest in every portion of the earth. He knows what is taking place. Jerusalem is not forgotten. God is managing everything so as to carry out his plans for her.

The second Vision (1: 18-21) is that of four horns, symbols of power to destroy and conquer, representing the great nations of vast extent, of enormous strength, of mighty military organizations, which had torn and destroyed Jerusalem, and were still arrayed against her.

The angel guide shows the prophet four awful, spectral forms silently filing at these horns. They represent God's moral forces, righteousness, justice, conscience, providence, which are undermining the great world powers for their fall. God with all his universe is on the side of his prophet and right, whatever the appearances to the contrary.

The third Vision (2: 1-13) represents a man with a measuring line. The angel bids the man stop surveying, for no measuring line is long enough to express the extent of the future city of God.

The fourth Vision. The question naturally arises whether the past can be undone. They were suffering for the sin of the nation,—can that sin be forgiven? This question is answered by the vision of the high priest, clad in filthy garments. These garments are removed, and in place of them there is put upon him the glorious raiment of the high priest as he worships God in the temple.

Other Visions. The fifth vision is the special subject of our lesson for to-day. Two other visions, The Flying Roll, and the woman in the Ephah Measure, express the assurance that the nation should be purified by the destruction or removal of the incorrigibly wicked. Crime, oppression, dishonesty, selfishness, shall be banished from the kingdom. No evil thing can enter then.

THE VISION OF THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK — Vs 1 3. This vision was to give courage and hope to the people by the assurance that they were yet like God's precious golden candlestick, whose work was to illumine the world with the divine light and life, by being the willing, obedient instrument of God, filled with his Spirit, living his life, upholding the truth. *The angel*, who had explained the other visions. *And waked me.* He had slept after the first series of visions. This was the beginning of a new series, during the same night. *Behold a candlestick all of gold.* Like the seven-branched candlestick of Solomon's temple (Ex 25: 31 37). *With a bowl upon the top.* For a reservoir of oil. *And two olive trees.* These were the living, perennial sources of oil *Knowest thou not?* Implies surprise that the prophet did not see through the symbols.

First. The Jewish nation was God's candlestick Its business was to shed abroad the light of God. There was only one lamp stand, denoting the unity of God's people; but it had various branches and lamps, denoting their multiplicity in unity; and the number was seven, the symbol of their completeness.

The Christian church is Christ's golden candlestick (Rev. 1: 20). The business of Christians is to hold up the true light, till the whole world is flooded with the light of heaven The church, each branch of the church, each heart, should be a "candle of the Lord," lighted by him; burning continually, because continually fed from the beaten oil of the sanctuary; shining in the dark places.

Second The Holy Spirit is symbolized by the sacred oil which keeps the lamps burning and shining. *Not by might* Not by any governmental power or power of numbers, or of wealth, or valor. And not *by power*: not by physical or bodily strength. Not by the lamp, whether it be of gold or of clay, but by the oil in the lamp *But by my Spirit.* As that candlestick gave forth its light in silent, ceaseless splendor, unfed and untended by human agencies, so the work in which Zerubbabel was engaged would be acomplished by the Spirit of God. God can put new life and energy into the people. He can control enemies History is full of examples of how a few persons, filled with courage and perseverance and consecration, can overthrow stupendous evils, can work marvelous changes. *Who art thou, O great mountain?* A figure representing the vastness of the work to be done, the immense difficulties in the way,—Satan of the previous vision, the Persian Empire, the bitter opposition of the Smaritans. *Thou shalt become a plain.* Be wholly removed. At that very time God was influencing Darius to give his favor to Jerusalem (Ezra 6) He inspired the people with patriotism and zeal and energy.

Compare what the gift of the Holy Spirit did for the early church; how it transformed common men into apostles, how it removed the mountains of pride and prejudice, of organized power, and rank, and wealth, and armies, of ignorance and idolatry, the selfishness of the human heart entrenched in the society of the day.

Spiritual Multipliers. Everything great the good, and powerful among men is the result of common, simple things multiplied by spiritual forces. A tree is the product of a few common elements multiplied by the forces of life, of chemistry, of light. A saint is a common man multiplied by the Spirit of God, by self-denial, consecration and piety.

The bowls were reservoirs of the oil. No one can do his best unless he has a reserve supply. The man of energy must have more than he needs to use at any one moment Every man needs to have a resorvoir of character, power, knowledge, goodness, patience.

The Conductors. The pipes conducted the oil to the lamps. The supply was useless unless it could be brought to the flame. The pipes could not create the oil, but they could conduct it. The power of God's people is not in wealth or numbers of forms or beautiful buildings or outward attractions. But God will use these things as instrumeuts of his Spirit. If God can use our ignorance, how much more our knowledge; if our poverty how much more our wealth. It is blessed to be the channel of God's blessings to men.

The olive trees, one on each side of the lamp, express the scource of supply. The trees represent an inexhaustible fountain. Just as the rivers receive their supply from the ocean through the cloud chariots, and therefore never fail, but flow on forever, so the supply of God's Spirit to his church is inexhaustible. *And he shall bring forth the headstone* of the temple. The crowning grace that completed the building. His work should succeed. *With shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.* With great rejoicing should the temple be completed. *Zerubbabel ....his hands also shall also finish it* It is quite probable that the people were dissatisfied with Zerubbabel in some way. He belonged to the day of small things. He appeared like a common man rather than like a great ruler. *For who hath dispised the day of small things?* Small beginnings, a small people, a small kingdom, small wealth. *They....shall see the plummet.* The symbol of the architect or head builder. He shall complete the building, for with him are *those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord.* Referring back to 3: 9. The people should rejoice, because the providence of God, reaching everywhere in the world, is with their leader.

Positive Teaching.

BY WILLIAM T. ELLIS, IN S S TIMES

It is a mistaken notion for the Sunday school teacher to believe that he must spend the time of the lesson in minutest analysis or hypercritical comment. A Sunday school class is not a class in a theological seminary. The fine distinctions in words the opinions of various schools of scholarship, and needle point exegesis are out of place in the average Sunday school class The members are not specialist ; they do not need exact knowledge on debated biblical points as much as they need the message of the Word for their daily lives. What God says to them through the Book is far more important than what critics say to them about the Book.

Sunday school teaching should be practical and positive. It is a grave mistake to give up this hour, intended for instruction, to arousing in the minds of the scholars all manner of questions and doubts that they are neither qualified nor required to consider. Untold harm has been done by this style of teaching and preaching.

A soldier with whom I once talked on the subject of religion, a cultured and noble man, said to me this, in substance: "I am not a Christian; in fact, I don't believe in Christianity. I respect those who do, and never try to break down their faith, nor do I ever obtrude my disbelief. My parents and brothers and sisters are all Christians, and I admire them. I've tried hard, but I cannot believe as they do." Later I learned, in the course of our conversations, that the preaching of his own pastor had unsettled his faith, arousing doubts and objections which he believed the pastor did not and could not meet He himself could not answer them after studying the whole subject. The man had been made an infidel by negative preaching.

Sunday-school teachers may let the theologians battle over disputed subjects; for themselves they know more positive truth than they have time or ability to teach. Therefore we should stick to it. Let us tell to our classes the things that we know. Give to them the decided messages that will build up their characters, and lead them to a fuller knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is the Sunday school teacher's mission.

THE MOST POPULAR PILL —The pill is the most popular of all forms of medicine, and of pills the most popular are Parmelee's Vegetable Pills, because they do what it is asserted they can do, and are not put forward on any fictitious claims to excellence. They are compact and portable, they are easily taken, they do not nauseate or gripe, and they give relief in the most stubborn cases.

Our Daily Bread.

A little girl in a wretched attic, whose mother had no bread, knelt down by the bedside and said slowly :

Give us this day our daily bread.

Then she went out into the street and began to wonder where God kept his bread. She turned around the corner and saw a well-filled baker's shop; so she entered confidently and said to the baker :

I've come for it.

Come for what?

My daily bread, she answered, pointing to the tempting loaves. I'll take two, if you please, one for mother and one for me.

All right, said the baker, putting them into a bag and giving them to his little customer, who started at once to go into the street.

Stop, you little rogue, where is your money?

I haven't any, she said, simply.

Haven't any! he repeated· You little thief, what brought you here, then?

The hard words frightened the little girl, who, bursting into tears, said :

Mother is sick and hungry. In my prayers I said, Give us this day our daily bread, and then I thought God meant me to bring it, and so I came.

The rough but kind hearted baker was softened by the child's simple tale, and instead of chiding her he said :

You poor, dear girl! Here, take this to your mother. And he filled a large basket for her.—Selected.

A Misleading Half-Truth.

There may be a good deal of the doubtful in the old saying, When you are in Rome do as the Romans do. The phrase is one of those many half-truths which are dangerous because misleading. By it the convictions of a young person are often overcome and he is induced to to play or dance or smoke or drink just because others are doing so. The spirit of this saying is at the foundation of the evil custom of treating. When one dedicates himself to God after the Pauline pattern there will be no troublesome hankering for questionable amusements or un-Christian practices for the sake of rapid advancement in business or profession. Jotham became mighty because, in a wicked age, he ordered his ways before the Lord; and Daniel, though humiliated at first, made his mark in the world through refusing to do in Babylon as the Babylonian princes did. To be superintendent of a street railway in Detroit, Mr. S. R. Break was obliged to work on Sunday. That was a red letter day with him, when he said, though he was ambitious to succeed in business, he would never do it if Sabbath work was a necessary condition, and resigned his position.

Better forego any pleasure that may possibly lead another into evil companionship to satisfy his passion for that pastime; better see your business fail than succeed by methods the only defense for which is. They all do it.—Rev. C. H. Smith.

Stand Out O' My Sunshine.

Standing or kneeling on the sidewalk was a group of boys intent upon a game of marbles. One little urchin, with knuckles on the chalked line, suddenly raised his head to call out to a companion :

Stand out o' my sunshine, can't ye! I can't half see what I'm aiming at when you shut off the light.

We went our way, laughing at his earnestness, yet with a wish in our sore hearts that his admonition would reach a wider circle. For, in the great game of life that busies us all—this tangled, complex life—there are so many who are barring the light.

If we cannot help, at least let us stand out of the sunlight, and not throw our shadow over those who need clear vision and a steady hand for the task before them.

There are many people, good people, of whom if their friends dared to ask what they most desired, it would be : Stand out of our sunshine, and don't shut off the light.—Epworth Herald.

The saddest ignorance in this world is not to know the pleasure that comes from self-sacrifice.

The preacher who has to go to Europe to get idea, has not entered the infinite field of truth.

If you notice your child grinding the teeth during sleep, picking the nose, eating ravenously but not seeming to gain flesh, you may be sure worms are present and should not delay giving Dr Low's Pleasant Worm Syrup, Price 25c.

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