

do You Want Consumption?

are sure you do not. But it comes many thousands every year. It is a disease that is raw, and the lining of the lungs are inflamed. Stop your cough at first appears, and you will avoid the great danger of this trouble.

Walter's Cherry Pectoral

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## The Sabbath-School.

### INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Fourth Quarter, Lesson 4, Oct. 22, '99

EZRA'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM.—Ezra 8: 21-32.

Read Chapters 7, and 8: 15-36.

Commit Verses 21-23.

Golden Text.—The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him.—Ezra 8: 22.

#### HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—Ezra left Babylon in March, B. C. 458, and reached Jerusalem four months later, in July.

It was seventy-eight years after the first caravan of return, under Zerubbabel, and fifteen years after the deliverance through Esther.

Places.—Babylonia and Jerusalem. Rulers.—Artaxerxes I., called Longimanus, the Long-handed, king of Persian Empire, son of Xerxes. Ezra, the scribe, governor of Judea.

THE GENERAL CONDITION OF THE JEWS AT JERUSALEM when Ezra left Babylon on his mission. Seventy-eight had passed since the first caravan of the exiles had returned to the home land, fifty thousand strong. The temple had been built, but the opposition had been so great that the walls had not been restored. The vision of sudden glory and greatness had faded away. They had expected a vast influx of their brethren, from Babylon and other lands. The country was pillaged in open day, and many Jews carried off into slavery. At first the Jews were very exclusive. They would not allow even the Samaritans to aid them, lest the purity of their race and their religion be defiled. But poverty, oppression, hardship, and disappointment had settled down on the little Jewish community, which now found itself far worse off than the captives at Babylon. They thought the policy of the last sixty or seventy years had been a mistake. They began to make alliances with the Gentiles, first by contracting marriages with them. The rulers began, and the common people followed. The spiritual life declined, the ideals faded, the Sabbath was desecrated.

CONDITION OF THE EXILES IN BABYLON.—The effect of the exile on those who remained in foreign lands was exactly the opposite. Having no material basis for the national life, they "clung all the more tenaciously to those spiritual possessions which alone gave the nation a title to existence." There was an increasing strictness of doctrine and practice. The Sabbath was observed most strictly as a solemn day of rest and prayer. Scribes, the learned men of the nation came into prominence, and the age became one of intense literary activity. The work which the warriors had striven to accomplish by the power of the sword, and the prophets by the power of abstract ideas—the work of welding the people into one compact whole, was now being accomplished, by the power of a book, the Book of the Law. The men exalted the book, the book exalted the men.

EZRA'S PURPOSE AND PLAN.—Ezra, the scribe, had grown up under the two influences referred to above, which were preparing for a great religious revival under the power of God's Holy Spirit.

(1) The experience of captivity, with its humiliation and loss. (2) The influence of the revival of letters in Babylon. Ezra no doubt, knowing the condition of things in Jerusalem, had not only "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it," but he planned to go up to Jerusalem and "teach in Israel statutes and judgments," and to take so many trained people, and so much pecuniary aid, as would enable him to accomplish his purpose.

THE PERSIAN PERMIT AND AID.—Nothing could be done on an effective scale without permission from the Persian government. The capricious character of Xerxes prevented any move during his reign. In the year 465 B. C., Artaxerxes I. reigned in his stead. He granted the desired permission to Ezra, (1) perhaps because of his natural ability (2) because of the powerful Jewish influence at the court where he was trained. Mordecai, Esther, Nehemiah, and probably others had been favorites.

Ezra needed three things,—"men, money, and authority." The king gave the latter two, and permitted the men to volunteer. His decree is given in Ezra 7: 11-26.

THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM.—Vs. 21-32. The starting point was (x. 34) at the river Ahava. The place is unknown, but it was probably one of the canals near Babylon, flowing into the Euphrates.

The assembly consisted of about 1,200 persons, including heads of families, priests, Levites, and 220 Nethenim, or the servants who assisted in the work about the temple.

The Fast. Then I proclaimed a fast. Fasting is the expression of deep sorrow for sin. The object was (1) that we might afflict our souls before our God. It was an expression of repentance for sin and submission. (2) To seek of him a right way. The fasting was accompanied by prayer (v. 23) and was used "as the means of intensifying religious fervor in prayer through the restraint laid upon physical appetite." For I was ashamed to require of the king, etc.

There were many dangers on that four months' journey, particularly from "the robbers and Bedouins of the desert." They had a large amount of treasure with them. Ezra had told the king that God was with his people, and against their enemies; and, therefore, to ask a guard of soldiers might seem to the king to contradict his assertions. And he was entreated of us. Ezra has the assurance that his prayer had been heard. I separated twelve, etc. He committed the treasure into the hands of twenty-two persons, ten chief priests and ten Levites, of whom the first two are named. These men would take special charge and be responsible for the safe keeping of the treasure. And weighed unto them the silver, etc. The silver and gold were in bars or ingots, and not in coined money. The Persians had coined money at this time, but the treasury kept the bulk of its stores in bars. Six hundred and fifty talents of silver. A talent of silver was about \$1,600. Of gold a hundred talents. Gold is usually worth about sixteen times as much as silver. The whole treasure was worth \$1,000,000 or \$5,000,000. Dracms, dracms, worth about an English sovereign, or \$5.00. A freewill offering unto the LORD God. The money was for religious purposes, and would be a great help to the people at Jerusalem as well as smooth the way of Ezra to the needed reforms. The chambers of the house of the LORD are the rooms placed on either side of the main building (1 Kings 6: 5), partly as chambers for the priests, partly as storerooms (Neh. 13: 5) Deposited... on the twelfth day of the first month, Nisan, about the time of the Passover, or our Easter, in March or April. The hand of God. His power; his care. And we came to Jerusalem. On the first day of the fifth month, in July.

THE WORK OF EZRA.—(1) He brought the Book of the Law into prominence. (2) He reinforced the ritual of the temple and the order of the priests. (3) The chief reform of Ezra was the abolishment of mixed marriages with the surrounding heathen. After fasting and prayer, at a public solemn meeting, the nobles, the priests, and the people put away the heathen wives. It was a very solemn and very sad occasion.

(a) The course of the Israelites was ruining and degrading the nation. The mixed race of Jews and Samaritans, with their half-heathenish customs, was a living warning of the result of their course. There was only one alternative,—to purify the church, or to let it go to ruin.

(b) The suffering caused by this course was the fruit, not of Ezra's work, but of the wrong-doing. The physician is not to blame for the bitterness of his medicine, nor the surgeon for amputating the limb.

(4) The deeply religious spirit of Ezra is notable. His one ambition was to glorify God and to be of service to his nation. Consider his prayer before the assembled people (Ezra 9: 6-15).

(5) What Ezra did was at great cost to himself. It required an heroic spirit.

(6) Ezra is regarded as having had much to do in collecting, arranging, and revising the Old Testament, and in bringing the knowledge of the Bible to the people.

(7) His work, with that of Nehemiah, was a turning point in the history of Israel. The Jewish church was firmly established.

#### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS &c.

In great reforms two elements must combine, the zealous spirit of reform, the fixed conscientious purpose of making right at all costs; and the providence of God.

There is more than one way of expressing our confidence in God. Ezra refused to ask an armed guard for his journey. Nehemiah, with equal faith, did accept the convoy. So Muller showed his faith in God for his orphanages; the great missionary boards show an equal faith by pursuing other messages.

The world progresses in morals and religion through hard work, persistent courage, untiring zeal, complete consecration, in spite of many obstacles.

Ezra had (1) a consciousness of the divine presence and guidance. (2) Strong convictions of duty. (3) A willingness to die rather than do wrong.

The Christian never has to count his cash to find out how much he has to be thankful for.

## Frightening Children.

Little Arthur R., while visiting his grandaamma, came screaming from the yard where he was playing and throwing himself into grandaamma's arms, sobbed out; Please, don't let him have me, grandaamma.

What do you mean, dear? What has frightened you so? and grandaamma held the quivering child closer to her bosom, fearing he would go into spasms with fright.

Oh, grandaamma, the old black dog has come for me; mamma said he would if I was bad, and I broke your plate this morning. Oh, don't let him have me, please don't.

No, no, darling, he shan't have you; I will hold you tight. Where is he?

Out in the yard, quite close to me when I run to you.

Well, we will shut the doors and keep him out, and then you can come to the window and show him to me.

Arthur suffered himself to be led to the window, but the sight of the small black dog running round the yard renewed his terror, and grandaamma had to quiet him by assuring him again and again that the dog could not get in while the doors were shut.

After he had slept off some effects of his fright, and the dog had been driven out of sight, grandaamma tried to undo the evil wrought by his thoughtless young mother by telling Arthur the dog was too small to carry off such a big three-year-old boy. But it was several days before his nervousness wore away enough to allow him to enjoy a play in the yard unless some one went with him to keep off the black dog.

How many children, like little Arthur R., suffer from the dread of bugbears of every kind that can be imagined by their thoughtless mothers and nudes! Their nerves are injured, and, what is far worse, they lose the sweet faith and trust which is childhood's heritage as soon as they learn they have been deceived. Would it not be much better to retain their loving confidence at any cost? It may take more time and trouble to secure obedience by firm and loving discipline, yet it is much better for both child and parent.—Aunt Jean in Christian Observer.

## Lightning and Rubbers.

The one thing which a woman most dreads—barring of course a mouse and being out of style—is a thunder shower. Many most estimable women of character and force who can lead great crusades and revolutionize society, go all to pieces at a clap of thunder—and a good many men, too, for that matter.

It is not agreeable to be struck by lightning. Nor is it at all necessary. There is a sure preventive—as sure as it is simple, inexpensive, and always acceptable—a pair of rubbers.

If a woman will simply put on a pair of rubbers when the lightning begins to flash and the thunder to roar, and will stand on the floor, so that she touches nothing else, she will be as safe as if she was sealed in a glass cage.

Rubber is a non-conductor of electricity, and if the lightning has to go through a sheet of rubber to get at you it will leave you alone and take some hing else. In other words, when you have on a pair of rubbers, and are not in contact with anything, you are perfectly insulated.

It might be well to add that a pair of rubbers to be effective against lightning must be sound and whole. Do not put on an old pair with a crack in the toe, because electricity will get out of a very small hole when it is cornered, and a pair of defective rubbers will do you no good.—The Bulletin.

## Truth vs. Falsehood.

Truth lives forever. Falsehood must die sooner or later. A truth, as it is more clearly revealed, only shines the brighter. A lie becomes uglier and uglier the more it becomes known to be a lie. Do you wish your words to live? Then speak the truth. Do you wish your words to die, rot, and stink? Then lie. Do you wish your character to shine brighter and brighter as you become better and better known? Then always speak, write, and act the truth. Do you wish your character to become blacker and blacker the longer you live, then speak, write, and act lies. Show us the boy who is always truthful, and we will show you the making of a man whom his parents will ever love and whom all good people will delight to honor. Show us the boy who lies, and we will show you the making of a man who will fill his parents' heart with sorrow, and whom the world will gulf with scorn and contempt. Truth, truth, glorious truth! How it ennobles and elevates character. Lies, lies, wicked, damnable lies! How they drag boys and men down

to the level of him who is the father of lies, and hurl them into the place prepared for the devil and his angels!—The Telescope.

## An Incident.

Grandma had heard that our new neighbor, instead of being supremely happy over the advent of her first sick baby, was homesick. So she took her knitting and went across the street, to call on the new baby.

She found Mrs. Bliss sitting up with Baby on her lap, but looking quite weary and burdened with her new responsibility.

After a little chat about the new home and the baby, Mrs. Wolcott found that the subject of the old home was a sensitive one, and a ventured suggestion of the heavenly Father's care brought no response.

Then she drew attention to the beautiful view from the window by which she was sitting. It was only a bit of valley with a low hill beyond, but the bright sunset suggested the remark.

How favored you are in this west window! To me it is so restful to watch the sunset clouds. You can see they are far, far beyond the hill-top.

Did you ever think what a big world yours is, compared with baby's? She can scarcely find your face as you bend over her, while you can see to the sunset clouds. And your worlds of thought and of sound are just as large. She did not hear the fluttering curtain which led you to close the window a moment since.

She does not understand your gentle, soothing words, though she will soon learn to feel the love in them. Why don't you wait till she can appreciate them before you do all these little, careful things?

Why, Mrs. Wolcott, it is only natural that a mother should use her larger world for her child, was the surprised answer.

Ah, little mother, you do not understand what a mother-love means—this self giving love. Does it not help you to understand what father-love—our heavenly Father's love may mean? May we not think of him as using his great world of resource—his immense outlook, abroad, above, beyond—for the welfare of his children?

The suggestion that he takes a sort of bird's-eye view of me and mine—can see beyond my horizon—has given me a world of comfort.

But even if God is so great, how can we be sure he cares? asked Mrs. Bliss, the tremble in her voice showing how much she needed to believe in the 'care.'

Why, dear, and grandaamma's eyes grew moist, I am sure that nothing less than an almighty mother-love could have given us these words, 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.'

Whittier believed this when he wrote: I know not where His islands lift Their fringed palms in air, I only know I cannot drift Beyond His loving care.

And as Mrs. Wolcott rose to leave she added, And I believe he is just as happy in giving comfort and care as you and I are.—The Advance.

## A Round Robin.

Two young correspondents ask the meaning of the phrase round robin. The term originated from an old-time French practice of signing petitions or protests in a circle, so that no name should head the list. This distributed the responsibility equally and avoided the identification of the ringleader in case the subject matter of the document gave offense. The term round robin is a corruption of rond ruban (round robin). It was first adopted by the officers of the Government as a means of making known their grievances.

The phrase has come to be used to describe any kind of protest or petition signed by a number of persons associated together in a common cause when addressed to a person having authority over the signers. The formality of signing in a circle is seldom adopted now, however, as little attention is paid to the order in which the signatures run. The circle afforded little protection to the ringleaders, for where superiors chose to take offense they were seldom at a loss to locate ringleaders whenever their names figured in the circular device.—E. worth H. raid.

A Magic Pill.—Dyspepsia is a foe with which men are constantly grappling but cannot exterminate. Subdued, and to all appearances vanquished in one, it makes its appearance in another direction. In many the digestive apparatus is as delicate as the mechanism of a watch or scientific instrument in which even a breath of air will make a variation. With such persons disorders of the stomach ensue from the most trivial causes and cause much suffering. To these Parnell's Vegetable Pills are recommended as mild and sure.

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