

Sunday School Lesson---Young Peoples Topic

Edited by Wm. T. Ellis

A KING, SOME EXILES AND A HOMECOMING.

The International Sunday School Lesson for Oct. 15 is "The Return From Captivity," Ezra 1: 11; 2: 64-70.

One Persian monarch has been figuring in the newspapers of late, and he has presented rather an ignominious spectacle...

The other nation that figures in the story is the Jewish people; then, as now, a nation despite their lack of king, capital and organized government...

The prophesied exile of the Jews was almost over. The promised return had been permitted by Cyrus, who had various reasons of policy for wishing to possess the loyalty of the Jews...

"Behind the dim unknown, Standeth God within the shadow, Keeping watch above his own."

Taught by Trouble.

Experience is a schoolmaster who always carries a rod. The Jews, willing to learn their lessons in any softer school, had been sent into exile...

"Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I observe Thy word."

wrote the Psalmist. That was Israel's experience. In exile it learned that Jehovah alone is God.

A Teller and a Doer.

"Of which things also I was a part," wrote Caesar in his account of his Gallic wars. Ezra is the chronicler of the story.

Down along the Tigris river below Bagdad I saw a great shrine, which was pointed out as Ezra's tomb. The Jews believe that he returned to Babylon...

The Goers and the Senders.

The stay-at-homes helped the goers-forth. That is the universal rule. When I climbed the sacred mountain, Fujiyama, with bands of Japanese pilgrims, I learned that they were but representatives of their respective communities...

made possible by the few who go abroad and the many who stay behind.

"If you cannot go, send," was a cry raised in Babylonia by Ezra and his lieutenants nearly 2,500 years before it was heard in missionary meetings.

The Restored Treasures.

As the buried libraries of Babylonia are today being dug up to shed new light upon the beginnings of civilization, and as the tombs of Egypt are yielding up their well-kept records...

"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform."

He had made Israel a nation by the bondage in Egypt; now He had cured them of idolatry by the exile in Babylon. So He had strangely preserved for them, in the hands of their enemies, the utensils for temple use.

The return--which a later lesson will enable us to study more in detail--was in sharp contrast to the journey from Jerusalem to Babylon. Then the Jews were captives in tears and misery...

Back Home.

"Hard-headed" men would be likely to approve of the Jews who stayed in Babylon, rather than of those who went back to the ruined city of Mount Zion.

That sort of reasoning would have kept Abraham in the prosperous city of Ur of the Chaldees; and the Pill-grinders in Holland. It was the old, old choice that was offered the exiles. They could have the best, at a high price...

THE BOOK AND THE BELIEF.

Terms Comments Upon the Uniform Prayer Meeting Topic of the Young Peoples Societies-- Christian Endeavor, Etc.--For October 15, "Why I Believe the Bible," Romans, 10: 17; 15: 4.

By William T. Ellis.

In these troubled, material times, when social ills are more closely perceived than ever before, and the whole world is rocking with a strange unrest, it is well to get a firm grasp on a few definite, fundamental remedies.

I believe in the Bible because the Bible believes in man. It presents the most hopeful of all social programmes.

I believe in the Bible because I have put it to the test. That, in the long run, must be the final criterion. The book we trust is the one which has met the needs of our own personal experience.

"I believe the Bible is inspired," said Mr. Moody, "because it inspires me." What a thought-starting volume this is! Consider the mountains of books that owe their inspiration directly to its stimulus.

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Like a young bird and gulp down whatever food or medicine may be offered you? Or, do you want to know something of the composition and character of that which you take into your stomach whether as food or medicine?

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I believe in the Bible because it witnessed the work of the wondrous and mysterious Spirit of whom its pages tell, and who breathes through its words a life-giving power.

"Last eve I stood before a blacksmith's door And heard the anvil ring its vest-per-chime;

"How many anvils have you had, said I. 'To wear and batter all these hammer-gods'?"

"And so the Bible, anvil of God's word, For ages skeptic blows have beat upon it."

"Apprentice blows of ignorance, for sooth, May awe with sound and bawling sparks death whirled."

I believe the Bible because the more we know of the hidden history of contemporaneous events, the more definitely they testify to the essential correctness of even the incidental statements of this extraordinarily comprehensive Book.

I who write these lines have traveled over the Bible lands, and can testify to the correspondence between the story and its setting. Also I have seen Babylon's wastes and Assyria's ruins and the Chosen People persisting above them.

I believe the Bible because it alone among books mirrors my own heart and meets my own hidden needs.

I believe the Bible because of its own inherent evidence of a more than human origin. It testifies to itself by its correspondences, co-ordination and essential unity.

I believe the Bible because I have seen it work. "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light," I have seen souls so lightened, and cultured and purified I have seen it make bad men good, weak men strong, foolish men wise.

I believe in the Bible because of its sanity and its thorough correspondence with the facts of life. It is the best revealer of human nature.

I believe in the Bible because through its pages walks the lovely figure of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, who is more real and living and near than the next door neighbor or the man at the adjoining desk.

I believe the Bible because I have studied it; the orthodoxy of a man who knows nothing about the Book he defends is of small account.

I believe the Bible because I have

Some ill-schooled spirit is a flame Some nobler, ampler life to win, I'll stop and say, "The aids to noble life are all within."

A true life is at once interpreter and proof of the Gospel.--Whittier.

No honor, no reward, however great, can be equal to the subtle satisfaction that a man feels when he can point to his work and say, "The task I promised to perform with all loyalty and honesty to the utmost of my ability is finished."

The wonderful thing about a man is his power to become.--E. I. Bosworth.

The past and the future are shadows. The present is ours for aye. To us it is given to build our heaven in the kingdom of today.

The greatest man is he who chooses the right with invincible resolution, who resists the sorest temptations from within and from without, who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully, and whose reliance on truth, on virtue, on God, is most unflinching.--W. E. Channing.

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