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SABBATH-SCHOOL

LESSON QUARTERLY

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Whose Debtors We Are

THERE are millions in China, Japan, Africa, and India, dying for want of the Bread of Life which God has given Christians to dispense to the hungry. Christ has purchased us that we might be linked with Him in saving others. Therefore, as was Paul, we are "debtors both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." Rom. 1:14.



Mission Staff of Native Teachers, British Central Africa

Sabbath-School Lessons

on the

Book of Nehemiah

Senior Division

Third Quarter, July 1, 1908

General Notes

The book of Nehemiah was anciently connected with the book of Ezra, being a continuation of the account of the return of the exiles from Babylon and the restoration of Jerusalem. Ezra restored the temple and began a spiritual reform; Nehemiah built the walls; and together they joined in a second spiritual reformation.

This book is the last of the historical records of the Old Testament. At this time it appears that Ezra the scribe gathered together all the books which now comprise the Old Testament (except Malachi) and compiled the Scriptures, dividing them into three parts, first, The Law; secondly, The Prophets; and thirdly, the Hagiographa, *i. e.*, the holy writings. To these divisions our Saviour apparently made reference when He said, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things might be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me."

The life of Nehemiah is a worthy example. He gladly left a position bringing both honor and wealth for one of arduous toil and persistent opposition, because the cause of God needed him. He was a skilful organizer, and a zealous worker; a man

of great integrity, and sound faith; who could neither be frightened by the threats of the enemies of the Lord nor seduced by their flatteries. He relieved the oppressed, but punished the oppressor.

A proper study of this book will help us to stand for the same reforms at this time,—a separation from the world, a strict observance of the true Sabbath, the conscientious payment of our tithes and offerings, a tender care for the poor and distressed,—and give us courage in the face of our enemies to be fearless of their threats but fearful of their blandishments.

LESSON I.—Prevailing Prayer.

JULY 4, 1908.

Questions.

1. How many years intervened between Ezra's going up to Jerusalem, and the opening of the book of Nehemiah? Compare Neh. 1:1; 2:1 with Ezra 7:7.

2. Where was Nehemiah? Neh. 1:1. Note 1.

3. From whom did Nehemiah learn of the situation in Jerusalem? Verse 2. Note 2.

4. Describe the condition of Jerusalem at this time. Verse 3.

5. How did Hanani's report affect Nehemiah? Verse 4.

6. What did he connect with his prayers and how did he address the Lord? Verses 4, 5.

7. How continuous was this prayer? Verse 6.

8. In what characteristic did Nehemiah's prayer resemble the prayer of Daniel and Ezra? Compare Dan. 9:3-15 with Ezra 9:5-15. Note 3.

9. What promise did Nehemiah plead? Neh. 1: 8, 9; Deut. 4: 25-31.

10. In thus pleading, what scripture did he follow? 1 Kings 8: 47-50.

11. By whom did the Lord save His people in a great crisis? Hosea 12: 13.

12. How does Nehemiah speak of his brethren? Neh. 1: 10.

13. Whose prayer does Nehemiah pray that God will hear? Verse 11. Note 4.

14. What was his position before the king? Same verse.

Notes.

1. Shushan, the capital of Elam, was a very ancient city. It is mentioned in the inscriptions of Asshur-bani-pal as captured by him, about B. C. 650, and a plan of the city is given. It passed into the hands of the Babylonians at the division of the Assyrian Empire between Nabopolassar of Babylon and Cyaxares of Media. In the third year of Belshazzar Daniel was at Shushan "on the king's business," when he beheld "the vision of the ram and the he-goat," Dan. 8: 1, 2, 27. The conquest of Babylon by Cyrus transferred Shushan to the Persians, and it became the capital and chief residence of the Achæmenian kings, being cooler than Babylon and more central than Ecbatana and Persepolis, their summer resorts. Darius Hystaspes founded at Shushan the grand palace referred to in Esther as occupied by his son and successor Xerxes, Esther 1: 2, 5. Nehemiah was at Shushan when he received from Jerusalem the intelligence that led him to seek leave from Artaxerxes to rebuild the walls of the holy city. Neh. 1: 1-28. As Susa, Shushan is often mentioned by classic authors as the Persian capital, the province of Elam being called Susis or Susiana, and also Cissia. The city retained its eminence till the Macedonian conquest, when Alexander found there treasure worth £12,000,000. After this period Susa declined and Babylon increased. It was taken by Antigonus, B. C. 315.—"*Dictionary of the Bible*," Published by American Tract Society. Article "Shushan."

2. Hanani was the brother of Nehemiah. Neh. 7: 2.

3. It will be noticed that each of these godly men counted himself as being guilty of the sins that brought upon Israel the great calamity. Their attitude is very different from that of those who think they have not sinned. Daniel and Nehemiah were both men of God, and beloved of the Lord.

4. One special point in Nehemiah's prayer was that God would hear the petition of those who fear His name, and would prosper his undertaking and grant him mercy in the sight of the king. He recognized the fact that many others were praying, and he believed that God would hear their prayers.

LESSON II.—Preparation for a Great Work.

JULY 11, 1908.

Questions.

1. How much time elapsed between Nehemiah's hearing of the situation at Jerusalem and his conversation with the king upon the matter? Compare Neh. 1:1, 2 with Neh. 2:1 and Zech. 7:1. Note 1.

2. What was Nehemiah's usual appearance in the king's presence? Neh. 2:1.

3. What reason did the king suggest for his sad countenance, and how did it affect Nehemiah? Verse 2. Note 2.

4. What response did Nehemiah make? Verse 3.

5. Give the king's reply. Verse 4.

6. What did Nehemiah do before he answered the king? Verse 4. Note 3.

7. What request did Nehemiah make? Verse 5.

8. What is there in the king's reply that shows how

he was regarded by both the king and queen? Verse 6:
Compare Prov. 22: 11.

9. What further request did Nehemiah make? Verses
7, 8.

10. Who influenced the king to grant the request?
Verse 8, last clause.

11. Who accompanied Nehemiah when he delivered
the king's letter to the governors? Verse 9.

12. What troubled Sanballat and Tobiah? Verse 10.

13. In what way did Nehemiah acquaint himself with
the extent of the city's ruins before he began any work?
Verses 11-13.

14. In what condition did he find the city? Verses
13-15.

15. Who were still unacquainted with the object of
Nehemiah's visit to the city? Verse 16.

Notes.

1. The year of Artaxerxes' reign did not coincide with the sacred year of the Jews, but commenced *in* the sacred year *between* the months Nisan and Chislew; consequently the interval between Chislew of Artaxerxes' twentieth year and Nisan of the same year is to be determined by counting *forward* from Chislew of the sacred year of the Jews to the Nisan of the following sacred year.

2. One who acted as cup-bearer to the king was expected always to be cheerful. He had it in his power to take the life of the king, and if he looked unhappy the king might suspect some plot and he be killed; for this reason Nehemiah was "sore afraid" when the king noticed his sad countenance.

3. "In the sight of men the self-sufficient worker may seem to be moving the world, but in the sight of God, the humble wrestler moves heaven. The hosts of God are interested in the humble, praying man, who dares not make a move without first coming in prayer into the presence of God to counsel with the Omnipotent."—Mrs. E. G. White in "Review and Herald," July 4, 1893.

LESSON III.—Working with Difficulties.

JULY 18, 1908.

Questions.

1. As soon as Nehemiah understood the condition of the city, what did he urge his brethren to do? Neh. 2:17.

2. When Nehemiah told of the favors granted to him how did it affect his brethren? Verse 18.

3. Who opposed the work of rebuilding? What accusation did they bring against the Jews? Verse 19.

4. Although Nehemiah was a faithful servant of the Persian king, yet who did he say was his master? Verse 20. Note 1.

5. How did the high priest and the rulers cooperate with Nehemiah? Neh. 3:1.

6. Who failed to bear any responsibility in this work? Verse 5.

7. Whose daughters took part? Verse 12.

8. In what spirit did Baruch work? Verse 20.

9. Where did many work? Verses 10, 23, 28-30. Note 2.

10. What different occupations were represented in building the wall? Verses 8, 31, 32. Note 3.

11. What work will the people of God do in the last days? Isa. 58:12, 13. Note 4.

12. How did the successful progress of the work affect the enemies of the Jews? Neh. 4:1.

13. What did Sanballat say? Verse 2.

14. Give Tobiah's opinion of the work. Verse 3.

15. To whom did the Jews appeal? Verses 4, 5.

Notes.

1. Nehemiah did not consider his commission as governor of Jerusalem as his greatest authority for building. When questioned by the Samaritans, he frankly told them that he trusted in a higher power than earthly kings for help to carry forward the work.

2. Some built "over against" their own houses. In this is a lesson for those who can not leave their homes to labor in the Lord's work. There is always something to do by their own homes.

3. There was but one class mentioned that did not engage in the work of rebuilding. This was the Nobles of the Tekoites. All others including the priests, rulers, goldsmiths, apothecaries, and merchants, entered heartily into the work of building the wall. This was the first thing to be done, and it was that which many years before their enemies had accused them of undertaking. Ezra 4: 12, 13. Under Nehemiah the work was accomplished.

4. Jerusalem had been laid in ruins, because "they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy. Therefore He brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age; He gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil three score and ten years." 2 Chron. 36: 16-21.

The Lord through the prophet Daniel had foretold that "the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." Dan. 9: 25. Some of the experiences passed through in fulfilment of this prophecy are studied in these lessons.

Now, as in the days of Nehemiah, the true people of the Lord are entrusted with a special and an important work. A real city is not to be rebuilt and a real wall restored, but a spiritual restoration is to be accomplished. The foundation of many generations

is to be raised up, and the breach made by apostasy in the law of Jehovah is to be restored. The rubbish of error must be removed, and the truths of God's word restored to the people. The Sabbath of the Lord, long hidden beneath the traditions of men, is to be restored to its proper place in the Decalogue. In "troubulous times" the law of God is to be reared up to stand as a wall of defense for the people of God in the last days. No work ever accomplished called for greater earnestness, zeal, and consecration than this.

LESSON IV.—Difficulties Overcome.

JULY 25, 1908.

Questions.

1. Did the work of rebuilding Jerusalem stop because of opposition? Why did it go forward under these adverse circumstances? Neh. 4:6. Note 1.

2. When the enemies of the Jews heard that the walls were being built, how did they feel about it? Verse 7.

3. What did they do? Verse 8. Note 2.

4. What course did Nehemiah and the Jews pursue? Verse 9. Note 3.

5. What difficulties did Judah see in the way? Verse 10.

6. From what standpoint did he look that he saw such difficulties? Neh. 6:17, 18.

7. What was the enemy doing? Neh. 6:19. Compare Prov. 26:20. Note 4.

8. What plan was laid? Neh. 4:11.

9. What message was sent to Israel ten times? Verse

12. (According to the Revised Version the message was, "Ye must return unto us.")

10. What precaution did Nehemiah take? Verse 13.

11. With what words did he encourage them to go forward with the work? Verse 14.

12. How many kept at the work? Verse 15.

13. How were Nehemiah's servants employed? Verse 16.

14. Describe the way in which the builders worked. Verses 17, 18.

15. How should the builders in God's work be equipped if they would not be driven from the work by the enemy? 2 Cor. 10:4-6; Eph. 6:12-18.

16. What plans were laid for united resistance against the enemy? Neh. 4:19, 20.

17. How long did they labor each day? Verse 21.

18. How was their zeal further shown? Verses 22, 23. Note 5.

Notes.

1. When God's people "have a mind to work" and go forward trusting in the Lord, the work of God always prospers.

2. At every advance step in the work of God, Satan has been alarmed. He sees divine agencies at work preparing the way, and he raises up his agents to prevent the accomplishment of the work if possible. The same opposition shown at the building of the walls of Jerusalem will always be seen in connection with the work of God. The same spirit of animosity manifested by the Ammonites, the Horonites, and the Arabians will always appear when God's work is going forward. These three nationalities were represented in Jerusalem, under the names of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem.

3. In Neh. 4:8, 9, is revealed the reason why we often meet with such miserable defeats after great victories. When the enemy sees a great victory gained, he becomes angry and gathers his forces to hinder the work. If we always do as Nehemiah did,

pray and watch day and night, we shall escape the snares of Satan and go from victory to victory.

4. Judah thought the laborers were overworked and were weak, and there was much rubbish. The reason for this was that he was in communication with the enemy and not true to God and His work. One who is compromising to-day with the enemies of God's work, thus betraying it, will see difficulties in the way and will hinder rather than hasten the Lord's work.

5. God has regard for the man or woman who in a time of crisis will sacrifice every comfort and even life itself to carry forward the work of the Lord. "The life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man."

LESSON V.—*New Difficulties.*

AUGUST 1, 1908.

Questions.

1. Who made complaint against the Jews? Neh. 5: 1.
2. What was the ground of their complaint? Verses 2-4.
3. How did this condition affect their relation one to another? Verse 5.
4. How did the situation affect Nehemiah? Verse 6.
5. Whom did he rebuke? In what words? Verses 7-9.
6. What did he command them to do? Verses 10, 11.
7. How was the matter finally adjusted? Verses 12, 13.
8. What instruction of the Lord had they been disregarding? Lev. 25: 35-37; Ex. 22: 25-27. Note 1.
9. How long did Nehemiah continue to act as governor? Neh. 5: 14.

10. How did his course compare with that of former governors? Verse 15.

11. What additional burden did Nehemiah carry while governor? Verse 16. Note 2.

12. What liberal spirit did he manifest, because of his regard for the people and the work? Verses 17-19.

13. How are such sacrifices regarded by the Lord? Heb. 6:10; Phil. 4:16-18. Note 3.

14. What encouraging promises are made to those who give freely? Luke 6:38; 2 Cor. 9:6; Prov. 11:25. Note 4.

15. What warning is given against withholding? Prov. 11:24; 13:7.

Notes.

1. Usury on money, or on anything used to relieve the unfortunate and the oppressed, seems to have been strictly forbidden in the word of God. Ps. 15:5. Under certain other conditions, however, they were permitted to take usury. Deut. 23:19, 20. We will do well to prayerfully study the principles involved, for it is no doubt as applicable to us to-day as to Israel anciently.

“In the view given me in Rochester, N. Y., Dec. 25, 1865, I was shown that the subject of taking usury should be considered by Sabbath-keepers. Wealthy men have no right to take interest from their poor brethren, but they may receive usury from unbelievers.”—*Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, page 534.*

2. Although Nehemiah held the high position of governor, and no doubt had many opportunities to enrich himself if he so desired, yet he did not do so. He continued to work on the wall, and to set before all a splendid example of sacrifice. His example contains a lesson which is well worthy of study at this time. No people should be more willing to sacrifice than those upon whom the end of the world has come.

3. The Lord is not unmindful of the little sacrifices made in behalf of His servants who are carrying burdens in His work. The giving of a cup of cold water is not forgotten. Matt. 10:42. It is the little things in life which settle our destiny. With this thought in mind, read Matt. 25:34-46.

4. "Whenever God's people, in any period of the world, have cheerfully and willingly carried out His plan in systematic benevolence and in gifts and offerings, they have realized the standing promise that prosperity should attend all their labors just in proportion as they obeyed his requirements. When they acknowledged the claims of God, and complied with His requirements, honoring Him with their substance, their barns were filled with plenty. But when they robbed God in tithes and offerings, they were made to realize that they were not only robbing Him but themselves; for He limited His blessings to them, just in proportion as they limited their offerings to Him."—"*Testimonies for the Church*," Vol. 3, page 395.

LESSON VI.—*The Controversy Intensified.*

AUGUST 8, 1908.

Questions.

1. When Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem found they could not frighten Nehemiah, what new plan did they devise? Neh. 6:1, 2.

2. What reply was made to their proposal? Verse 3. Note 1.

3. How many times did they seek to have this conference? Verses 4, 5.

4. Give the substance of Sanballat's letter. Verses 6, 7.

5. How did Nehemiah meet these accusations? Verse 8.

6. How did Sanballat's procedure affect the nobles? Verse 9.

7. What did Shemaiah urge Nehemiah to do? Verse 10.

8. What reply did Nehemiah make? Verse 11.

9. What did Nehemiah discover in regard to Shemiah's course? Verses 12, 13.

10. How did Nehemiah regard the act of being turned from his purpose? Verse 13.

11. How did he pray concerning Tobiah and Sanballat? Verse 14.

12. When was the wall finished? How long had they been building it? Verse 15.

13. What did even their enemies perceive when they saw the finished wall? Verse 16.

14. What relation existed between Tobiah and the nobles of Judah? Verses 17-19. Note 2.

Notes.

1. It was a time of greater peril to the work when the adversaries tried to make friendly overtures than when they were openly fighting against it.

2. The nobles of Judah had mingled with the company of Tobiah until they could not discern spiritual things. History repeats itself, and "Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands, and conformed to worldly customs, will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time, the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy, will then go out in darkness.—"*Testimonies for the Church*," Vol. 5, page 81.

LESSON VII.—*The Purification of the Priesthood.*

AUGUST 15, 1908.

Questions.

1. After the walls were finished what was the next step in the work of reformation? Neh 7:1.

2. Why was Hanani placed in charge of Jerusalem? Verse 2.

3. What precaution was taken to protect the city? Verse 3.

4. What was the condition of the city? Verse 4.

5. What did Nehemiah then do? Verse 5.

6. What was done with the priests that could not find their genealogy? Verses 63, 64.

7. In what way could this decision be changed? Verse 65. Note 1.

8. How many did the congregation number at this time? Neh. 7:66, 67.

9. What donations were now made by the governor and chief of the fathers? Verses 70, 71.

10. Did the people also have a part in this donation? Verse 72.

11. When was the work completed so that the people could return to their own cities? Verse 73. Note 2.

12. How many months since Nehemiah had first planned to go to Jerusalem? Compare verse 73 with Neh. 2:1.

13. What other leader of the people was still in Jerusalem? Neh. 8:1.

14. How long since Ezra had gone up to Jerusalem? Compare Ezra 7:7, 8 with Neh. 2:1.

Notes.

1. The Urim and Thummim gave the direct mind of the Lord in the matter, and therefore was higher authority than the governor. Ex. 28:30; Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 28:6. Read chapter 30 in "Patriarchs and Prophets."

"At the right and left of the breastplate were two large

stones of great brilliancy. These were known as the Urim and Thummim. By them the will of God was made known through the high priest. When questions were brought for decision before the Lord, a halo of light encircling the precious stone at the right was a token of the divine consent or approval, while a cloud shadowing the stone at the left was an evidence of denial or disapprobation."—"Patriarchs and Prophets," page 351.

2. The Jews were engaged in a steady work of reform, and the whole plan of their enemies was to divert them from their work. First they sought to frighten the Jews, and when they would not be frightened, efforts were made to arrange a conference with them, reporting things that were not true. This conference was sought under the pretense of friendship, but war was in the hearts of their enemies continually.

LESSON VIII.—*The Reading of the Law.*

AUGUST 22, 1908.

Questions.

1. When the people were gathered together what request did they make of Ezra? Neh. 8:1.
2. Who attended the reading of the law? Verse 2.
3. How long did the reading continue? Verse 3.
4. Upon what did Ezra stand while reading? Verse 4.
5. When Ezra opened the book what did the people do? Verse 5.
6. When he blessed the Lord what did the people say? Verse 6.
7. What part did those who assisted Ezra act? Verse 7.
8. What was done in order that the people might comprehend the instruction in the book of the law? Verse 8. Note 1.

9. Who besides the Levites assisted Ezra in speaking to the people? Verse 9.

10. At the close of the reading what special instruction was given to the people? Verses 10, 11.

11. How did they show their thankfulness for an understanding of the word? Verse 12.

12. For what purpose did the people assemble the second day? Verse 13.

13. What instruction did they find? Verses 14, 15.

14. What did the people do? Verses 16, 17.

15. How often was the law read during the feast? Verse 18.

16. Of what was the Feast of Tabernacles a type? Note 2.

Notes.

1. The marginal reading of this verse in the Revised Version is as follows: "And they read in the book, in the law of God, with an interpretation; and they gave the sense, and caused them to understand." Owing to a difference in language it was necessary that some one should interpret the reading to the people so that they might understand it. This verse has no special reference to the excellence of the reading in the ordinary sense.

2. "The Feast of Tabernacles was not only commemorative, but typical. It not only pointed back to the wilderness sojourn, but as the feast of harvest, it celebrated the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and pointed forward to the great day of final ingathering, when the Lord of the harvest shall send forth His reapers to gather the tares together in bundles for the fire, and to gather the wheat into His garner. . . . The people of Israel praised God at the Feast of Tabernacles, as they called to mind His mercy in their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, and His tender care for them during their pilgrim life in the wilderness. They rejoiced also in the consciousness of pardon and acceptance, through the service of the day of atonement, just ended. But when the ransomed of the Lord shall have been safely gathered into the heavenly Canaan,—forever delivered from the bondage of the curse, under which 'the whole

creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,—they will rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christ's great work of atonement for men will then have been completed, and their sins will have been forever blotted out."—"*Patriarchs and Prophets*," pages 541, 542.

"Well would it be for the people of God at the present time to have a Feast of Tabernacles—a joyous commemoration of the blessings of God to them. As the children of Israel celebrated the deliverance that God had wrought for their fathers, and His miraculous preservation of them during their journeyings from Egypt, so should we gratefully call to mind the various ways He has devised for bringing us out from the world, and from the darkness of error, into the precious light of His grace and truth."—"*Patriarchs and Prophets*," pages 540, 541.

LESSON IX.—*Israel Continues to Seek God.*

AUGUST 29, 1908.

Questions.

1. What did Israel do on the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month? Neh. 9:1.
2. What work of reform followed the reading of the law? Verse 2.
3. How much of each day was spent in reading the law? How much of each day was spent in confession and worship? Verse 3.
4. What did the Levites say to the people? Verses 4, 5.
5. To what phase of God's power did they call especial attention? Verse 6.

6. Of what covenant did they remind the Lord? Verses 7, 8.

7. What deliverance did they next mention? Verse 9.

8. Mention some of the wonderful things God did for His people at that time. Verses 10-12.

9. What was given them at Sinai? Verses 13, 14.

10. How was their hunger and thirst supplied? Verse 15.

11. Notwithstanding these great manifestations of the power of God what course did they pursue? Verses 16-18.

12. In what ways did the Lord still show His love for His people? Verses 19, 20.

13. How long did He sustain them? What special miracles are mentioned? Verse 21.

14. Name some of the ways in which the Lord blessed them in temporal matters. Verses 22-25.

15. In what five ways did they show their disregard for God's love and care? Verse 26.

16. Relate God's dealings with them even when they cast His law behind their backs. Verses 27-30.

17. Why did He not destroy them? Verse 31.

18. What confession followed this rehearsal of God's mercies to ancient Israel? Verses 32-38.

19. What lesson should we learn from the experience of Israel in the wilderness? 1 Cor. 10: 6-11.

LESSON X.—Reform in Worship.

SEPTEMBER 5, 1908.

Questions.

1. Whose name headed the list of those who renewed their consecration to the Lord? Neh. 10:1.

2. In what solemn way did the people pledge themselves to faithfulness to God's law? Verses 28-30.

3. With what strictness were they to observe the Sabbath? Verse 31.

4. What is meant by the expression, "Leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt"? Ex. 23:10, 11; Deut. 15:1, 2.

5. What provision was made to defray the expenses of the regular offerings of the sanctuary? Neh. 10:32, 33.

6. How was the wood to keep the altar-fires burning provided year by year? Verse 34.

7. Where were the first-fruits brought? Verses 35-37.

8. After provision was made for defraying the expenses connected with the sanctuary service, what other fund was spoken of? Verse 37, last clause. Note 1.

9. For what purpose was the tithe to be used? Num. 18:21.

10. Were the Levites instructed to pay tithes? Neh. 10:38.

11. How did the people regard those who willingly left their homes to dwell in Jerusalem? Neh. 11:1, 2.

12. What was the rank of the men who had charge

of the outward business of the house of the Lord? Neh. 11:16.

13. In arranging the temple service what instruction did Nehemiah follow? Neh. 12:24. Note 2.

14. What course had they pursued that made them familiar with God's instruction regarding the service of the temple? Neh. 8:3; 9:3.

Notes.

1. There are many things here worthy of study. A systematic arrangement was made to supply all the expenses connected with the temple service. The tithe was sacredly kept for the use for which God designed it.

2. It is evident that the people so thoroughly studied the law and the worship of the sanctuary arranged by David and Solomon that they were familiar with every feature that God had ordained. It was one of the most thorough reforms of which we have any Bible record. It fitly illustrates what will finally be accomplished under the third angel's message.

LESSON XI.—*Dedication of the Wall.*

SEPTEMBER 12, 1908.

Questions.

1. What part did the Levites act in the dedication of the wall? Neh. 12:27.

2. Who else gathered themselves together for the dedication? Verses 28, 29.

3. How many companies were formed on the wall? Verse 31.

4. Who went before the company that went on the right hand upon the wall? Verse 36, last clause.

5. Who went with the other company? Verse 38.

6. Where did the two companies meet? Describe the service. Verses 40-43.
7. What provision was made properly to care for the tithes and offerings? Verses 44-47.
8. What did they learn from the reading of the law on the day of dedication? Neh. 13:1.
9. Why were the Ammonites and Moabites excluded from the house of God? Verse 2. Note 1.
10. What was the result of hearing the word of God? Verse 3.
11. Who had charge of the chamber where the tithes and offerings were stored? Verse 4.
12. Where was Tobiah living? Verses 4, 5.
13. Where was Nehemiah while these changes were taking place? Verse 6. Note 2.
14. How long was Nehemiah in Jerusalem before he returned to Babylon? Verse 6; Neh. 2:1.
15. What did Nehemiah do with Tobiah's household stuff? Neh. 13:8.
16. What command was given in regard to the tithe chamber? Verse 9.
17. What did Nehemiah perceive concerning the tithe? Verse 10.
18. What did he do to correct this matter? Verse 11.
19. What was the result? Verse 12. Note 3.
20. What provision was made for a proper and careful distribution of the tithe? Verse 13.

Notes.

1. The Ammonites and Moabites were not excluded from the congregation simply because they belonged to those nations, but because of their evil character. Tobiah retained the character

of his ancestors who did evil in the sight of the Lord. Deut 23: 3, 4; but Ruth, the Moabitess, who loved the Lord and chose His service, was the honored great grandmother of David and is reckoned in the genealogy of Christ. Ruth 4: 10, 13, 17.

2. After the wall was dedicated and the various reforms in the temple service introduced, it seems that Nehemiah fulfilled his promise to the king and queen and returned to Babylon. Neh. 2: 6. How long he remained in Babylon is not recorded.

3. "The work of God, which should be going forward with tenfold its present strength and efficiency, is kept back, like a spring season held by the chilling blast of winter, because some of God's professed people are appropriating to themselves the means that should be dedicated to His service. Because Christ's self-sacrificing love is not interwoven in the life practises, the church is weak where it should be strong. By its own course it has put out its light, and robbed millions of the Gospel of Christ."—"*Review and Herald*," Oct. 13, 1896.

"Let the church appoint pastors or elders who are devoted to the Lord Jesus, and let these men see that officers are chosen who will attend faithfully to the work of gathering in the tithe. If the pastors show that they are not fitted for their charge, if they fail to set before the church the importance of returning to God His own, if they do not see to it that the officers under them are faithful, and that the tithe is brought in, they are in peril. They are neglecting a matter which involves a blessing or a curse to the church. They should be relieved of their responsibility, and other men should be tested and tried."—"*Review and Herald*," Dec. 1, 1896.

LESSON XII.—*Proper Sabbath Observance.*

SEPTEMBER 19, 1908.

Questions.

1. When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem what did he find the people doing on the Sabbath day? Neh. 13: 15, 16.

2. What promise had they previously made the Lord concerning this matter? Neh. 10: 31.

3. How did Nehemiah regard their slackness in Sabbath-keeping? Neh. 13:17.

4. Why had they been carried into captivity? Verse 18.

5. When did Nehemiah close the gates of the city? Verse 19.

6. What is the day before the Sabbath called? Ex. 16:5; Luke 23:54.

7. What preparation for the Sabbath should be made on this day? Ex. 16:22, 23. Note.

8. What further instruction is given us concerning the proper observance of the Sabbath? Isa. 58:13.

9. How did Jesus emphasize the importance of keeping the Sabbath? Matt. 24:20.

10. What charge of breaking the Sabbath was brought by the Pharisees against the disciples upon a certain occasion? Matt. 12:1, 2.

11. What reply did Jesus make to the accusation? Verses 3-8.

12. What did the Lord of the Sabbath say was proper to do upon the Sabbath day? Verses 9-12.

13. What example has been left us by the Saviour in reference to keeping the Sabbath? Luke 4:16.

14. Among what evils does the Lord place a desire for the Sabbath to close that we may attend to business? Amos 8:4-7.

15. What did Nehemiah say to those who came on the Sabbath to sell their wares? With what result? Neh. 13:20-22.

Note.

“God requires that His holy day be as sacredly kept now as in the time of Israel. The command given to the Hebrews should be regarded by all Christians as an injunction from Jehovah to them. The day before the Sabbath should be made a day of preparation, that everything may be in readiness for its sacred hours. In no case should our own business be allowed to encroach upon holy time. God has directed that the sick and suffering be cared for; the labor required to make them comfortable is a work of mercy, and no violation of the Sabbath; but all unnecessary work should be avoided. Many carelessly put off till the beginning of the Sabbath little things that might have been done on the day of preparation. This should not be. Work that is neglected until the beginning of the Sabbath should remain undone until it is past. This course might help the memory of these thoughtless ones, and make them careful to do their own work on the six working days.”
—“*Patriarchs and Prophets*,” page 278.

LESSON XIII.—Separation from the World.

SEPTEMBER 26, 1908.

Questions.

1. What other evil besides Sabbath-breaking did Nehemiah find among the Jews? Neh. 13:23.
2. What solemn promise had they made some time before concerning this matter? Neh. 10:29, 30.
3. What reason was given why they should not marry strange wives? Deut. 7:3, 4.
4. What similar instruction is given to us? 2 Cor. 6:14, 15. Note 1.
5. What evil results followed intermarrying with the heathen? Neh. 13:24. Compare Lev. 24:10-14.

6. How did Nehemiah deal with those who had married strange wives? Neh. 13:25.

7. How highly was Solomon regarded by the Lord? How was he led into sin? Verse 26. Compare 1 Kings 11:1-3.

8. In what strong words is the evil of marrying strange wives set forth? Neh. 13:27.

9. Into what family had one of the priests married? How did Nehemiah deal with the matter? Verse 28.

10. What is the last recorded work of Nehemiah? Verses 29-31.

11. How complete should be the separation between God's people and the world? 2 Cor. 6:17, 18; 7:1. Note 2.

12. In prayer what request did Jesus make for His people touching this point? John 17:15.

13. What does God call those who have friendship with the world? James 4:4.

Notes.

1. "It is a dangerous thing to form a worldly alliance. Satan well knows that the hour that witnesses the marriage of many young men and women closes the history of their religious experience and usefulness. They are lost to Christ. They may for a time make an effort to live a Christian life; but all their strivings are made against a steady influence in the opposite direction. Once it was a privilege and a joy to them to speak of their faith and hope; but they become unwilling to mention the subject, knowing that the one with whom they have linked their destiny takes no interest in it. As the result, faith in the precious truth dies out of the heart, and Satan insidiously weaves about them a web of skepticism."

"Spiritual declension commences the moment the vow is made at the altar; religious fervor is dampened, and one stronghold after another is broken down, until both stand side by

side under the black banner of Satan. Even in the festivities of the wedding, the spirit of the world triumphs against conscience, faith, and truth. In the new home the hour of prayer is not respected. The bride and bridegroom have chosen each other, and dismissed Jesus."—"*Testimonies for the Church,*" Vol. 4, pages 504, 505.

"Hundreds have sacrificed Christ and Heaven in consequence of marrying unconverted persons. Can it be that the love and fellowship of Christ are of so little value to them that they prefer the companionship of poor mortals? Is Heaven so little esteemed that they are willing to risk its enjoyments for one who has no love for the precious Saviour?"—*Ib.*, page 507.

2. "Then my eyes were taken from the glory, and I was pointed to the remnant on the earth. Said the angel to them, 'Will ye shun the seven last plagues? Will ye go to glory, and enjoy all that God has prepared for those that love Him, and are willing to suffer for His sake? If so, ye must die that ye may live. Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye must have a greater preparation than ye now have, for the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. Sacrifice all to God. Lay all upon His altar,—self, property, and all, a living sacrifice. It will take all to enter glory. Lay up for yourselves treasure in Heaven, where no thief can approach, or rust corrupt. Ye must be partakers of Christ's sufferings here, if ye would be partakers with Him of His glory hereafter.'"—"*Early Writings,*" pages 56, 57.

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