

LESSONS ON THE OLD TESTAMENT

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Lessons on the Old Testament by George Ware Briggs

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GEORGE WARE BRIGGS

**LESSONS ON THE
OLD TESTAMENT**

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By Ephraim Peabody

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GENERAL DIRECTIONS.

IN this course of Christian instruction, there are eight text-books, bearing the following titles:— Early Religious Lessons; Palestine and the Hebrew People; Lessons on the Old Testament; Life of Christ; Books and Characters of the New Testament; Religious Duties and Christian Morals; Doctrines of Scripture; Scenes from Christian History.

The first of these is designed to be used—though not to the entire exclusion of other text-books for that period—by all pupils under ten years of age. As children enter the Sunday School at different ages, it seems necessary to leave them, up to a certain period, without a very rigidly determined order of instruction, and more than afterwards under the direction of the individual preferences and judgments of their teachers, in regard to their methods of study. The first manual, consisting of selected passages of Scripture and simple illustrative verses,

is offered to these teachers as an aid to their work. The object here is not so much connection between the parts, as to fasten in the child's mind certain sacred words and truths, fraught with hallowed associations, which may prove a treasury of comfort and suggest themes of devout meditation through the whole of life. *Each exercise is to be thoroughly fixed in the pupil's memory.* It may then be explained and illustrated, according to the teacher's pleasure or opportunity.

At the beginning of each school year, all the pupils within the school, that have arrived at the age of ten within the year preceding, are to be arranged in classes of convenient size, and to be occupied one school year — not more nor less — with Manual No. 2, — “Palestine and the Hebrew People.”

All pupils that have become eleven years old within the year preceding, are to study for one year Manual No. 3. No. 4 is for scholars between the ages of twelve and thirteen. No. 5 is for those between thirteen and fourteen. No. 6 is for those between fourteen and fifteen. No. 7 is for those between fifteen and sixteen. No. 8 is for those between sixteen and seventeen.

The order of succession in the subjects of study will be observed, and the obvious reasons that prescribe it. The success of the plan, in any given

school, will probably depend much on a strict adherence to this system.

Most of the text-books contain only about thirty lessons each. Room is thus provided for the vacation that is introduced into some Sunday Schools, for unavoidable interruptions within the year, and for a review of the book.

The lessons are of such length that they may be fully recited in about half an hour; and, to do them justice, not less than that amount of time should be left free from all other occupation in every Sunday School exercise.

The design is that each subject, in the order, shall be thus thoroughly mastered and *understood* by the class; that, at the close of the year, they may be as well fitted for examination in it, as the classes of our common schools are in their several branches of study. It is earnestly recommended to parents, teachers, and pastors, that they require of the young committed to their charge, and pursuing this course, so much time and application as will accomplish this end. The result, to say nothing of spiritual impressions, would be the possession of a body of Christian information of the utmost value, and such as no youth can remain ignorant of, in a community like ours, without cause for deep reproach.

The names of the writers, arranged alphabetical-

ly, and not according to the order of the books in the course, are as follows:—

- Rev. GEO. W. BRIGGS,
- “ S. G. BULFINCH,
- “ RUFUS ELLIS,
- “ EDWARD E. HALE,
- “ F. D. HUNTINGTON,
- “ JOHN H. MORISON,
- “ EPHRAIM PEABODY.

INTRODUCTION.

IN preparing this catechism, the single object kept in view has been, to make the pupils who may use it acquainted, as far as may be, with the prominent facts recorded in the Old Testament. There are many questions relating to the authority and authorship, the inspiration and interpretation of its different books, of great importance in themselves, and of great interest to those more advanced in life. A discussion of them, however, would be altogether out of place in a catechism for the young, and they have therefore been avoided. Indeed, the first step towards the understanding of these questions is a knowledge of what the books actually contain. And to gain this knowledge is the first business of a class in the Sunday School.

There are several difficulties to be overcome in preparing a satisfactory catechism on the Old Testament. One arises from the extent of the ground over which the scholar is expected to go, in a limited time. Another arises from the different degrees of capacity and intelligence among the scholars. To meet these difficulties, as far as may be, a brief answer to the questions is given in the catechism itself. This may generally be thought to be sufficient; but in case the book should be used by older scholars, references have been made to those passages of Scripture where a fuller answer may be found. When a class is composed of scholars sufficiently advanced to adopt the latter course, many questions will occur to the teacher, besides