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The Stick of Judah and the Stick of Joseph, Part III

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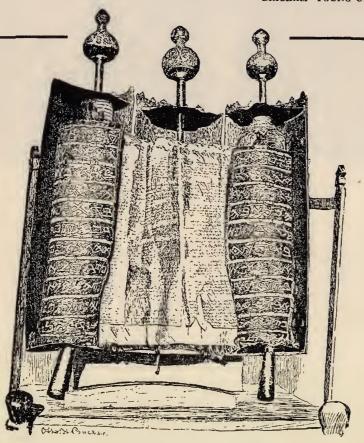
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The Stick of JUDAH and the Stick of JOSEPH — Part III

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The Roll of the Law. Palestine.

How Do the Sticks Become One?

The prophet is very emphatic on one point: No matter how many sticks there were originally, they become one in the hand of the Lord—"And bring them together to thee for one stick... and they shall become one stick, and shall be one in my hand." What is the strange manipulation by which one and one make one? We are reminded of the miraculous rod of Aaron that ate up the wooden rods of Pharaoh's priests and still became no larger, 66 but a far more practical explanation is at

hand. First of all, there is, of course, the binding of the sticks into a ritual bundle, by which the many become one: Ezekiel duly explains that as the sticks become one so "I will make them one nation." The Septuagint of Ezek. 17:7 reads, "and thou shalt fit them together for thyself, into a single staff of tying themselves, and they shall be one in thy hand." The Greek is as bad as the English, but it is clear that the staves become one by being fitted together first (synapseis), and then held fast by tying (tou desai). We have already had occasion to note the ritual tying of the bundle; what interests us here is

the fitting together, on which Ezekiel

lays peculiar stress.

We have noted the Jewish tradition that all the tribal rods were originally cut from a single staff, and that ancient commentators remind us that the rods naturally belong together because they were all shoots from a single stock.67 Both in the Old World and the New, divination and identification rods "in their original form consist of split arrow shaftments, and are marked both inside and out with bands of ribbonings."68 What is behind this splitting and rejoining of the stick may be best explained by the example of the ancient institution of tally sticks.

A tally, to follow the definition of the principal authority on the subject, is "a stick notched and split through the notches, so that both parties to a transaction may have a part of the record."69 In the ancient world, according to the same source, "the tallystick, split or unsplit, is widely used: instances of it have been noted all over England and Europe, indeed all over the world, and in all kinds of trades."70 In England, where tallies may best be studied, their use was required in all business transactions with the royal exchequer from the twelfth century (though they are much older) to the nineteenth, when their place was taken by paper bills and indentures, though the word "bill," meaning a stick of wood, still recalls their use,71 as does indenture, meaning a dent in the wood. A rod of hazelwood or willow was cut according to strictly prescribed rules into two parts, one with a notch on the end called a stock, the smaller piece being the foil. The stock

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went with the payer, the accountant: the exchequer kept the foil."72 Being cut with scratches and notches before the parts of the stick were separated, the tally furnished a foolproof control over both parties, for no two pieces of wood in the world would fit together perfectly to match mark for mark and grain for grain unless at their original marking they were one stick. When in 1297 one William de Brochose tried to cheat the king's treasury by adding a notch to his half of the wood, he was promptly detected and sent to prison.73 The fact that both parties held parts of the tally is fundamental, "implying a check on both rather than a debit on one."74 Thus while the king held his half as a foil on any attempt to cheat him, the other party held the stock (stick) by which he could prove his exact status in the contract: from this the word stock is still retained in the business world,75 while the old expression "lot and scot" betrays the original role of the arrow shaft in the transmission of property. 75

The great advantage of the tallystick was that it gave parties to a contract a sure means of identification and an authoritative claim upon each other no matter how many miles or how many years might separate them. When, however, the final payment was made and all the terms of the contract fulfilled, the two pieces were joined together at the exchequer, tied as one, and laid up forever in the vaults of the royal building-becoming as it were "one in the king's hand." So great was the heap of such sticks in the basement of the old Houses of Parliament, that when they were ordered burned the ensuing conflagration, "according to the well-known story . . . caused the fire which destroyed the Houses of Parliament in 1834."77 At any rate "the exchequer exacted a return of the stock at audit," and only when the sticks had been united as one was the standing of the debtor cleared.76

The analogy with Ezekiel's story of the sticks is at once apparent. But was the system of tallies really ancient, and did the Jews have them? It is interesting in this regard to note that all exchequer tallies had to be written on in Latin, the official language of the state, with the notable exception of an important class of tallies in which the names, dates, places, etc., are noted down in



Tally Sticks. The shorter sticks are the "stocks," and the larger ones the "foils" to which the stocks were fitted to "become one stick."

(Reproduced from "Archaeologia" Vol. 74 (1925), Plate lxv.)

Hebrew, while the Jewish Plea Roll furnishes the best evidence for the use of private tallies.78 Now though a great deal of tally-business was carried on between the king and foreign parties (e.g. the great Flemish merchant Henry Cade), the only foreign language found on the tallies is Hebrew. Not even English is allowed. 79 Had the Jews adopted tallies for the first time when the government did, they would like everybody else have been required to adopt the official method of marking them; so the remarkable exception made in their case, persecuted and unpopular as they were, certainly implies that they had their own tradition of tally marking, which they were allowed to retain.

In this respect, it is strange that the commentators while consistently identifying the sticks of Ezekiel 37 with tribal rods, never refer to the cutting of the rods in Zechariah 11.80 We have noted that the breaking of a rod signifies in Jerusalem and Ezekiel the destruction of a nation; but the cutting of a rod has quite another symbolism. Thus Zechariah 11:10: "And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant* which I had made with all the people . . . v. 14: "... then I cut asunder mine

*(Italies author's)

other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel." When the rod is cut in two, instead of being broken, Judah and Israel are not destroyed but separated; the bond that binds them together (and that is the meaning of the strange name Bands) is loosened, and the two go their separate ways. As the tie between nations is broken, so the mightier bond between God and men, the staff Beauty, is broken when the staff is "cut in two." This is the obvious reversal of the process of bringing the two divided sticks together, as described by Ezekiel, to renew the very covenants here broken -those between Judah and Israel, and those between God and "all the people." The technique of the tallystick as a means of establishing a covenant and bringing parties together in normal contract is here plainly indicated.

We need not establish the antiquity of the tally-stick by working back through the records of the Middle Ages, for the institution is met fully developed in the earliest records of antiquity. This may be illustrated by the archaic feasting-tickets of the Greeks and Romans. Originally little rods, these tokens, which everyone had to present for admission to the great public feasts, took various forms and went by the name of tesserae. In

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the Roman usage, the guest who came to the banquet would be stopped by an official or servant and asked to show his token; this would be fitted against a like token kept at the house of the host, and if the two pieces matched perfectly the guest would be recognized as one who had entered in a contract of hospitium with the host and duly admitted to the feast.81 One is strongly reminded of the "white stone" that is borne by those who "eat of the hidden manna" in Revelation 2:17. The act of placing the two tokens side by side (on which Ezekiel is so insistent) gave the feasting-token among the Greeks its name of symbolon, meaning to place (or shoot) two things together. From it comes our word symbol. A symbolon is by definition something that has value only when placed beside something else to show just what is "symbolized." It is simply a very ancient tally-stick—how ancient may be judged from the use of wooden divining-sticks at the prehistoric Italian shrine of Praeneste and the Greek Delphi.82

That the tribal rod, herald's staff, or scepter is a glorified tally-stick appears in its nature an exact copy of God's own staff,83 and in the provision that it is only on earth as a temporary loan, to be taken back in due time into the hand of God, where it rightfully belongs.83

Ezekiel, then, is talking sense when he speaks of the two sticks that become one. It is not merely that the ancients had such sticks, but that they used them specifically in the situation described by Ezekiel for a summoning and gathering of the nation and for the establishment of identity and the renewing of contracts. The scattered tribes of Israel are described as apparently lost for good, smashed, dispersed, forgotten, nay, dead-dry bones. This all looks to a far future time, for the dry bones show us not a sick nation, not dying one, nor even one now dead, but one that has been dead for a long, long time. That the nations are depicted as scattered far and wide, having lost their identity and disappeared from history, is noted by the commentators-hence the need for a miracle of resurrection, hence the need for a sure means of identifica-

tion, symbolized by the identification sticks. The "extinct" nations are summoned to the Great Assembly by the Lord's herald, who takes their marked rods and places them side by side; they fit together perfectly to become one stick as the herald performs the joining before the eyes of all the people. (Cf. Num. 17:9.) Judah and Joseph are thereby recognized beyond a doubt as parties to the original covenant long after separation and the original unity of the Covenant People is thereby restored. The united scepter is then returned to the hand of the king (Ezek. 37:19, 22-44) where it is to remain forever, all outstanding debts, the price of sin and transgression, having at last been paid off and all old scores settled.

WERE THE STICKS BOOKS?

But now we come to the crux of the matter for Latter-day Saints. Can the sticks of Ezekiel, along with everything else they represent, be understood to be books? Strictly speaking, they were nothing else. A book, says Webster, is "specifically: A formal written document; esp., a deed of conveyance of land; a charter." The tribal rods were just that, no matter how brief the writing on them, while the whole Old Testament, in spite of its length and complexity, is a "book" in exactly the same sense: a "testament," a single binding legal document. But the identity of rods and books goes much farther than this.

Books and Sticks-From the very

YOU HAVE A FRIEND

By Georgia Moore Eberling

SOMEWHERE along the journey of the

Years
Each soul will find a lonely, shaded, road
That he must walk, pursued by grief and fears,

Cast down beneath the burden of life's load.

Remember then, you have a Friend at hand. If you but call upon him, he will speak And comfort you and give you power to

He offers might and courage to the weak. God has not promised man an easy way, But there will be a rock and cooling spring, And always strength sufficient for the day, While in the midnight hour you hear hope sing.

God said, "I will not leave you comfortless.

His love abides to succor and to bless.

first the significance of message-staffs and tribal rods lay in what was written on them—signs that had to be read and recognized. This cutting and divining of marks led to the reading and writing of books.84 To this day the word book recalls the box- or beech-wood staves (cf. Ger. Buchstabe, Oldslav. buky, bukva, "letter"), or sticks scratched with runes which were the first books in the North.85 Even the Latin word codex, now venerated for its association with books of the law everywhere, means simply a slip of wood, while the classic liber means wood-pulp.86 The oldest laws of the Greeks and Romans were kept on tablets and sticks (axones), which Freeman actually compares with the sticks mentioned in Ezekiel.87 "It is noteworthy," says Ginzberg, "that the tablets and the rod of Moses were not only of the same weight (60 seah), but also of the same material."88 The equating of sticks with tablets is, as we have seen, found among early Jewish commentators on Ezekiel 37, and is explained by Keil as a natural result of the emphasis which Ezekiel places on the writing on his sticks. The celebrated rod of Moses might well be taken for a writing tablet, for it had engraved on it "in plain letters the great exalted Name, the names of the ten plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians, and the names of the three Fathers the six Mothers, and the Twelve Tribes of Jacob," in other words, for every function it performed, it had to bear a specific writing, making a total of no less than thirtytwo separate inscriptions in all.89 How many words does it take to make a book? In the ancient world, length was no object, and a single word could contain a whole sermon in itself. This is seen in the early use of the words logos and logographoi, which refer to a writing of any length as a separate opus or book.

Many commentators are convinced that the text of Ezekiel contains the actual words that the prophet was ordered to write on the sticks. Thus Kautzsch translates in his critical edition: "Take for thyself a staff of wood and write upon it: 'Judah and the Israelites that are Associated with Him," the last phrase being the actual words put upon the staff. Cooke

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would be given military aid along the route of the Oregon Trail.

The year 1849 was a momentous one in the history of the fort. It marked the mad rush of the "gold army" over the Oregon Trail to California. The estimated number who passed the fort was forty thousand men, women, and children, an emigration without parallel in any age. These wayfarers, faces alight with desire and hope, came from practically every town, village, and hamlet in the United States and from many countries abroad. With shovels and pickaxes lashed to their creaking ox carts, they followed the mirage of their hopes until it ended in success or despair.

(To be concluded)

The Stick of Judah and the Stick of Joseph

(Continued from page 152) simplifies this to the bare names of "Judah" and "Joseph."90 But such a rendering completely ignores the preposition 1-, "to" or "for," which precedes the names of Joseph and Judah every time the writing is mentioned: "take a staff of wood and write on it for Judah," etc.91 The 1means that Ezekiel was not to write simply "Joseph" or "Judah" on the stick, but that he was to write something to or for them. It was to be a writing that somehow concerned them. No more obvious means of connecting Joseph and Judah with the sticks could be imagined, of course, than that of simply putting their names on the wood. But that is just the point: why in such an obvious situation does Ezekiel not do the obvious thing and put the names on the. sticks? That is the way it was normally done: "write thou every man's name upon his rod," "write the Ineffable Name upon it," "write thy name upon it," etc. But what Ezekiel writes on the rods is not "Joseph" or "Judah," but "for Joseph" and "for Judah," or, according to some interpreters, "Joseph's" and "Judah's." The wide variety of translations shows that we are not concerned here with a mere writing of names. Property is not marked this way: Names found on ancient seals are in the nominative case, not in

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The Stick of Judah and the Stick of Joseph

(Continued from preceding page) the genitive. When Kautzsch wants to make it appear that the names of Joseph and the others were actually written on the rods, he must render the inscription in the nominative, which Ezekiel conspicuously avoids. Hebrew uses no quotation marks, and so when the text reads "write on the wood for Joseph," it should be left as it stands, for when we introduce our own punctuation and translate, "write on wood, 'For Joseph'" we are employing a type of inscription that was used to dedicate votive offerings to deities but not to denote possession.92 Ezekiel tells us of a writing for Judah and another for Joseph, both writings to perform certain important functions; but he does not, as some suppose, give us the text of the writings.

However eloquent or informative the single rod or staff may have been, it presented serious limitations of space when a lengthy communication was in order. The obvious solution to this problem was simply to add more rods, and it is in this multiplication of sticks to form a ritual bundle that Culin sees the origin of the book in some parts of the world. "The ancestry of the book in Eastern Asia," he says, "may be traced, not only to the engraved strips of bamboo (Chinese ch'ak), but, in the opinion of the writer, to the bundle of engraved or painted arrow-derived slips used in divination. The folding fan of China and Japan is not unlikely to have originated from these tanzaku or writing slips, which the nobles carried in order to make memoranda when in the presence of the sovereign."93 The Orientals would cut a piece of wood into strips notched on the sides like tally-sticks, which could be "fanned out" to present a larger writing surface, and when not in use folded together perfectly to make "one stick" in the hand of the nobleman who inscribed upon them the words of majesty. The method recalls the legendary cutting of the twelve rods of Israel from a single stock, but more important is the use of the bundle of twelve rods to determine the fortunes of the nations. These tribal bundles of which we spoke above, were always used as books of divination from which the past and present and future history of the people was determined. As census-books they made up a "Book of Life" "opened at the foundation of the world" to tell the history of the coming age: if one's name were missing from this book, he was "cut off from among the people" and had no part in the life of the race.94 The modern card deck is derived from a bundle of tribal rods, fifty-two in number, used in divination all over the world: Individually each token has a message; together they make up a book which is read by the adept with as much confidence as if it were in writing.95 It is thus quite possible for the staves of "Judah and his associates," as well as "Joseph and his associates" to represent books containing the census and history of these nations.

Sticks and Scrolls:-When a rod or staff serves as a token of authority and identification, it is important

WEATHER RETORT

By Leonard K. Schiff

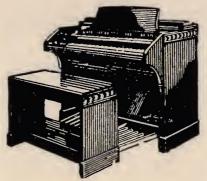
Somehow I can't be debonair When, after battling snow and sleet, I'm greeted with an icy And asked if I have wiped my feet.

that no copy or duplicate of it be allowed to circulate.96 In that case the multiplication of message-staffs is impossible. What is to be done if a longer message is to be sent? This problem and its solution are actually met in the ancient North, where only one royal summons-arrow was legal, and no others could be cut.97 To make room for a long message, a piece of parchment was attached to the staff and was rolled around it.98 To this day in Tibet the summonsarrow is sent out exactly as it once was among our northern ancestors: "A mobilization order is sent on a piece of red cloth attached to an arrow. The arrow is dispatched by a special rider who gallops to the nearest headman and hands it over to him. The headman takes note of the contents of the order and immediately dispatches a fresh rider to another headman."99 On festival assembly days the ancient Japanese warriors would bind strips of holy

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THE STICK OF JUDAH AND THE STICK OF JOSEPH

(Continued from preceding page)

paper bearing written texts on their arrows, "inscribed sacred paper for the gods."100 The Ojibwa may substitute for the painted rod or arrow shaft, that serves as an invitationstick "a piece of birch-bark bearing characters."101 Here we have a natural scroll, as anyone who has tried to write on tough, curling birchbark can attest, and we are reminded that the word birch is closely related to beech, box, and book, and also

that liber originally meant bast or

Whether the ancient scroll originated in one or many places, its attachment to a stick certainly betrays its origin; for the stick is by no means necessary to a scroll—it is in fact an inconvenience, used by the ancients only in ritual and very valuable literary text, a quaint, old-fashioned sur-

Latter-day Saints often interpret the word stick in Ezekiel 37 to refer to the stick or rod around which a scroll was wrapped. The interpretation is perfectly possible. As Gregory the Great observed long ago, the Hebrew word etz wood can mean almost anything in the Old Testament, depending entirely on the context in which it is used. 103 Sometimes etz must be translated as tree, sometimes as branch, image, musical instrument, framework, idol, house, ax, plow, spear, beam, stalk of flax (1) rod, gallows, etc., etc. When one tills with wood, it is rendered not wood but plow; when one plays music on it, it is no longer mere wood, but an instrument; when one worships, it it is an idol, and so forth. Now what is the specific use to which the wood is put in Ezekiel 37? It is used, as Keil insists, to be written on, and for that purpose only. It is hence not surprising that the early Jewish commentators on the passage rendered wood here as tablet, but Keil cannot accept this because the sticks in Ezekiel are not treated at all as tablets would be. On the other hand, Keil finds it very significant that the prophet deliberately avoids calling the sticks rods or staffs, as if that, too, would give the wrong impression.105 How can a stick be a book?

(To be continued)

REFERENCES

66 Ginzberg, op. cit., III, 335.

⁶⁷Medieval commentators unite everything in the Rod of Aaron: Mary is the Rod of Aaron (PL CXLIV, 721, 760; CLXV, 883), the flowering rod from the root of Jesse (Tertullian, PL II, 788); Christ is also the Rod of Aaron (PL CXLIV, 730), as well as the Rod of Moses (PL CLXXI, 686; CXCV, 1061). The rod of Moses represents the Cross of Christ and his power (PL CLXVII, 641). It represents also the congregation of the righteous (PL CXII, 1081), and even the whole human race (PL CXCI, 684). The blossoming rod is the humanity of Christ, who is the blossom on the rod from the root of Jesse (PL CLXVII, 584). The rod is naturally the symbol of divine judgment (PL CLXX, 339) and of dominion (L, 738).

88S. Culin, Games of the North American

Indians (Washington, 1907), p. 46.

"Hilary Jenkinson, "Exchequer Tallies,"
Archaeologia LXII (1911), p. 367.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 386.

¹¹H. Jenkinson, "Medieval Tallies, Public and Private," Archaeologia 74 (1924), p.

⁷²Jenkinson, op. cit., 1911, pp. 373f, 370. The foil is sometimes called the contratallia, the counter-tally, p. 374.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 374.

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74 Jenkinson, op. cit., 1924, p. 318.

75 Ibid., p. 292; on "lot and scot," Nibley, op. cit., pp. 331f, 334, where the technical term for marking an arrow (skera ör upp) is the same as that for marking tallies, Jenkinson, loc. cit. The length of the tallies is determined exactly as the Indians determine the length of gaming-sticks cut from arrow shafts, by measuring from the tip of the forefinger to the tip of the extended thumb.

⁷⁶Jenkinson, op. cit., 1911, p. 374; 1924, p. 315.

²⁷Idem, 1911, p. 369. So complete was the destruction that all knowledge of the institution of tally-cutting was completely lost in England after the fire, ibid., p. 371.

⁷⁸Idem, 1911, p. 378; 1924, pp. 313f, 293. ⁷⁸Of all the surviving tallies, only two bear writing in English, idem, 1924, p. 314.

⁵⁰The one exception is G. A. Cooke, Book of Ezek., p. 400: "The symbol evidently made a lasting impression, for it is imitated in Zechariah 11:7, where, however, the two staves (a different word) are given names but not inscribed."

⁸¹The operation has been studied by Theod. Mommsen, Römische Forschungen (1864) I, 338-348, and in the Historische Zeitschrift I, 339-342, cited by Nibley in the Classical Journal XL (1945), p. 538.

⁸²Nibley, op. cit., pp. 537f. The oldest known symbolon was the messenger-staff given by Apollo to his missionary Abaris; Abaris used it as a feasting ticket and sign of authority wherever he went, Nibley Wst. Pol. Qt. II, p. 332.

88"It is the arrow of the summus deus, held on loan by an earthly king as a gage of divine support, that everywhere gives the latter his earthly power and authority," Nibley, op. cit., p. 334.

84 Ibid., pp. 338f.

⁸⁵See Oxford Dictionary, article "book."

88 Frd. Blass, in Ivan von Mueller's Handbuch der kl. Altertumswissenschaft (Munich, 1892), Vol. I, 334: "In Italien muss in alter Zeit vielfach auf Bast geschrieben sein, da das Wort liber noch bei Vergil dies bedeutet. . . . Der Gebrauch des Holzes aber ist in beiden Laendern alt. Im Lateinischen stammt daher das Wort codex = caudex."

⁸⁷Freeman, Handbook of Bible Manners, etc., No. 583.

88Ginzberg, Legends, etc., VI, 54.

89 Ibid., III, 19.

⁹⁰ The prophet is . . . to inscribe one with the name Judah, and the other with the name Joseph," p. 400.

"" 'For Judah . . . his companions.' The stick, emblem of the royal sceptre, was to be inscribed with those words." Fisch, Ezekiel, p. 249.

⁹²Numerous examples of seal inscriptions and dedications may be found in A. Deimel, Sumerische Grammatik (Rome, 1924), and in H. Frankfor, Cylinder Seals (London: Macmillan, 1939). Publications of collected Oriental seals are very numerous.

S. Culin, in National Museum Rept.,

[™]Nibley, Class. Jnl. 40 (1945), 536ff.

86Nibley, Wst. Pol. Quart. II, 337. Even MARCH 1953

in Egypt the 52 arrow shafts of divination "drifted down to the vulgarity of playingcards," according to W. M. F. Petrie, Scarabs and Cylinders with Names, etc. (Univ. of London, 1917), p. 4.

⁹⁶W. H. Ward, The Seal Cylinders of Western Asia (Washington, 1910), pp. 3ff.

⁹⁷The only time that two arrows were sent was when one (a wooden shaft) went by land and the other (of iron) by sea, according to Q. Weinhold, in Sitzungsbericht d. Akad. d. Wiss. zu Berlin 1891 (Phil.-Hist. K1.) XXIX, p. 536.

⁰⁸Ibid., p. 548. ⁰⁹G. N. Roerich, Trails to Inmost Asia (Yale Univ., 1931), p. 352.

100 Japanische Volksmärchen (Jena: Diederich, 1938), p. 43; see my note on documents of this type, Wst. Pol. Qt. II, 342, n. 80.

101G. Mallery, "Picture-writing of the American Indians," Bur. Ethnol. Rept. X (1888-9), 367, fig. 375.

102Blass, in von Mueller's Handb. d. Aw., I, 335. The first genuine ancient scrolls ever to be discovered intact are the Dead Sea scrolls, none of which have sticks to them.

108In Patrol. Lat. LXXV, p. 394.

¹⁰⁴Zorell, Lexicon, p. 618.

105Keil, Commentary on Ezekiel II, 130.

Functional beauty teams with economy for new recreation center



Architect: Fetzer & Fetzer Mason Contractor: Thomas Child

HERE's beauty with a purpose in the walls of the new Park Stake Recreation Center, shown under construction in the picture above. Upper walls are self-insulating, sound-absorbing and highly decorative Buehner Red-Lava Blocks, Lowwalls are smooth-surface Buehner Hone-Tex

Units, which were developed especially for use in gymnasiums, classrooms, and recreation halls . . . wherever the protective safety of a smooth surface must be combined with attractive appearance, durability, and economy.

