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1924

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E. A. ELAM, Editor

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In preparing the lessons of this book and his Bible lessons for twenty-five years past, the author has drawn valuable information from all available commentaries, histories, dictionaries, chronological tables, etc., and has endeavored to give due credit in proper form for all direct quotations; but he wishes further to acknowledge his indebtedness to all these for information he has expressed in his own language.

Above all, he is greatly indebted and most grateful to that thoroughly conscientious and most profound teacher of the word of our God, Brother David Lipscomb, now resting from his labors, while his work lives after him.

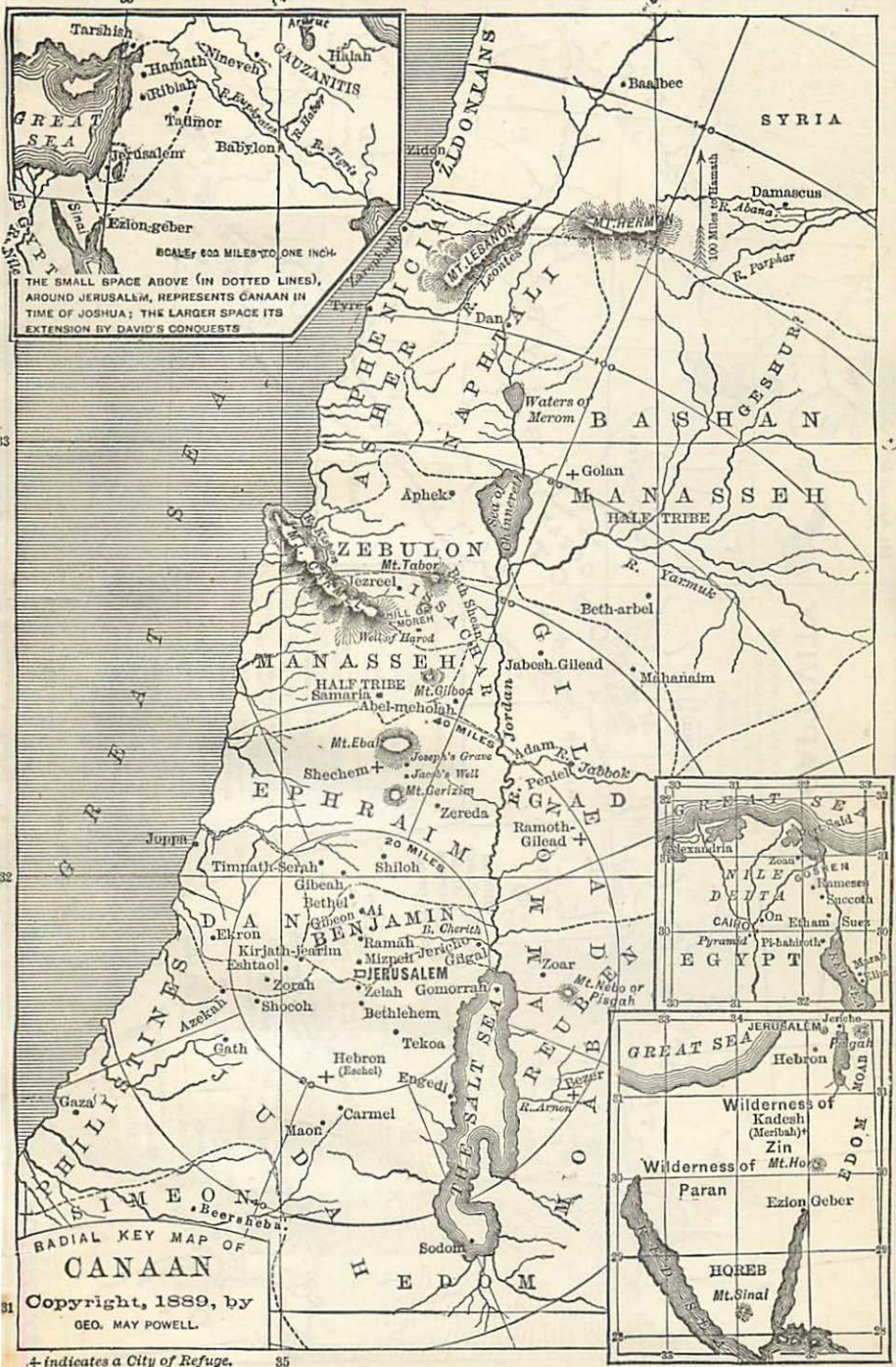
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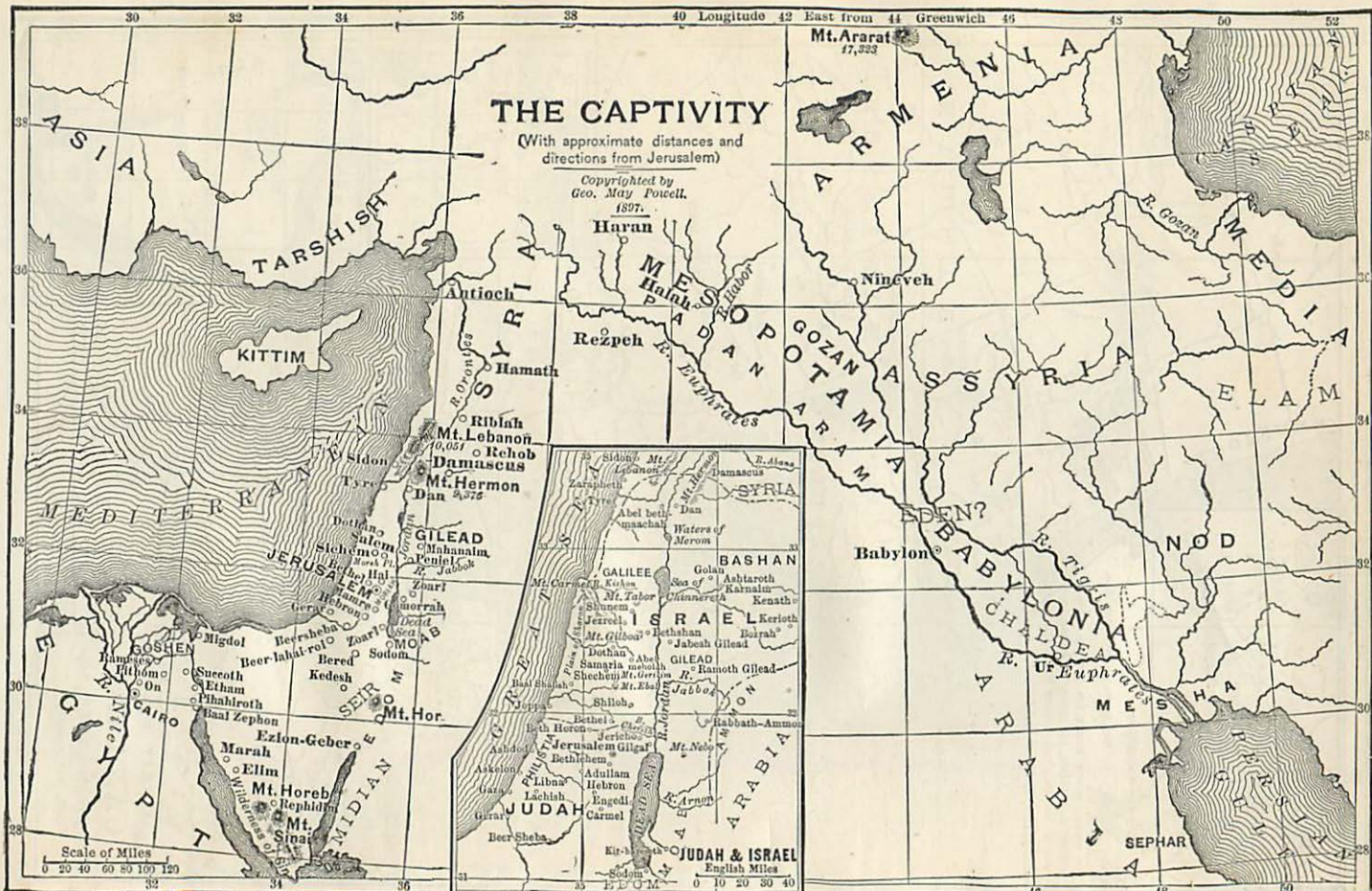
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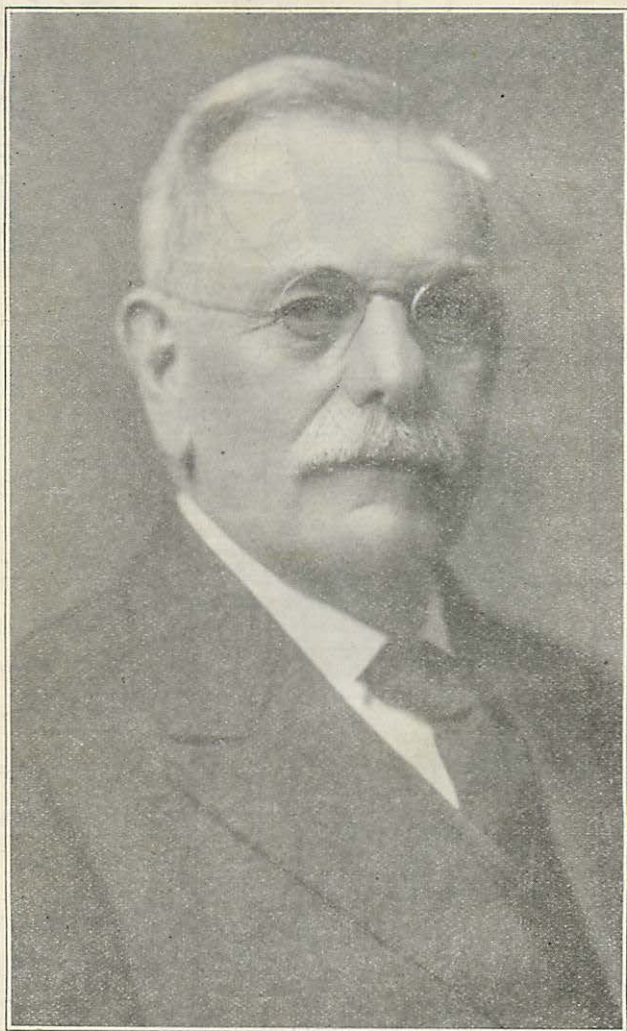
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E. A. Elam.

1924 LESSONS

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*Indicates the continuation numbers of this course.

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*Indicates the continuation numbers of this course.

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ACCORDING TO USSHER'S CHRONOLOGY

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| | 3875 | Death of Abel | Gen. 4: 8 |
| | 3874 | Birth of Seth | Gen. 5: 3 |
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| | 2234 | Building the tower of Babel | Gen. 11: 1-9 |
| | 1998 | Death of Noah | Gen. 9:29 |
| | 1996 | Birth of Abraham | Gen. 11:26 |
| III From the Call of Abraham to the Exodus | 1936 | Removal of Abraham from Ur to Haran | Gen. 11:31 |
| | 1921 | Abraham called to Canaan | Gen. 12:1-5 |
| | 1913 | Abraham's rescue of Lot | Gen. 14: 1-24 |
| | 1910 | Birth of Ishmael | Gen. 16 |
| | 1897 | Renewal of God's covenant with Abraham | Gen. 17, 18 |
| | 1897 | Destruction of Sodom | Gen. 18, 19 |
| | 1896 | Birth of Isaac | Gen. 21: 1-5 |
| | 1871 | Abraham's faith tested | Gen. 22: 1-19 |
| | 1859 | Death of Sarah | Gen. 23: 1, 2 |
| | 1856 | Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah | Gen. 24 |
| | 1836 | Birth of Jacob and Esau | Gen. 25: 24-26 |
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| | 1746 | Birth of Joseph | Gen. 30: 22-24 |
| | 1729 | Joseph sold into Egypt | Gen. 37 |
| | 1716 | Joseph honored in Egypt | Gen. 41 |
| | 1706 | Jacob's removal to Egypt | Gen. 43-47 |
| | 1689 | Jacob's death | Gen. 49 |
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| | 1574 | Birth of Aaron | Exod. 6: 20 |
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| | 1491 | Moses commissioned to deliver Israel | Exod. 3, 4 |
| | 1491 | Crossing the Red Sea | Exod. 14, 15 |
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| | 1452 | Death of Aaron | Num. 20:27-29 |
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| | 1055 | David made king of Judah | 2 Sam. 2: 4 |
| | 1048 | David made king of all Israel | 2 Sam. 5: 1-5 |
| | 1033 | Solomon's birth | 2 Sam. 12: 24 |
| | 1015 | Solomon made king | 1 Kings 1 |
| | 975 | Revolt of the ten tribes | 1 Kings 12 |

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| | 955 | Asa | |
| | 954 | | Nadab |
| | 953 | | Baasha |
| | 930 | | Elah |
| | 929 | | Zimri |
| | 929 | | Omri |
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| | 897 | | Ahaziah |
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NOTE: Old Testament dates cannot be given with exactness. Some of the dates are uncertain.

From the Birth of Christ to His Ascension and Harmony of the Gospels

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| | " GOOD SHEPHERD..... | "..... | | | | x. 11 |
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| | Christ's oneness with the Father..... | "..... | | | | x. 30 |
| | Christ's retreat across the Jordan..... | Peraea..... | | | | x. 40 |
| | Christ's raising of Lazarus..... | Bethany..... | | | | xi. 1 |
| | Christ's retreat to Ephraim..... | Ephraim..... | | | | xi. 54 |
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| | The Lost sheep and piece of silver..... | "..... | | | | |
| | " Prodigal son..... | "..... | | | xv. 1 | |
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| | " Dives and Lazarus..... | "..... | | | xvi. 19 | |
| | *The ten lepers..... | Samaria..... | | | xvii. 11 | |
| 28 | Parables:—Importunate widow..... | Jerusalem..... | | | xviii. 1 | |
| | Pharisee and publican..... | "..... | | | xviii. 9 | |
| | Rich young man..... | "..... | xix. 16 | x. 17 | xviii. 18 | |
| | Labourers in the vineyard..... | "..... | xx. 1 | | | |
| | Ten pounds..... | "..... | | | xix. 12 | |
| | *Healing blind Bartimaeus..... | Jericho..... | xx. 29 | x. 46 | | |

*As an interval of nearly three months occurred between the Feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication, some place the events marked * in that interval, and vary their order, putting the "healing of the ten lepers" immediately after the "repulse by the Samaritans."

| A.D. | EVENTS. | LOCALITY. | MATT. | MARK. | LUKE. | JOHN. |
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| | The father and two sons..... | Jerusalem..... | xxi. 28 | ----- | ----- | ----- |
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| | The wedding garment..... | "..... | xxii. 1 | ----- | ----- | ----- |
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| | " Widow's mite..... | "..... | ----- | xii. 41 | xxi. 1 | ----- |
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| | Warning of the betrayal..... | Bethany..... | xxvi. 1 | ----- | ----- | ----- |
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| | Judas' betrayal..... | "..... | xxvi. 14 | xiv. 10 | xxii. 3 | ----- |
| 29 | Preparation of the Passover..... | Jerusalem..... | xxvi. 17 | xiv. 12 | xxii. 7 | ----- |
| | Washing the apostles' feet..... | "..... | ----- | ----- | ----- | xiii. 1-17 |
| | The breaking of bread..... | "..... | xxvi. 26 | xiv. 22 | xxii. 19 | ----- |
| | "One of you shall betray me"..... | "..... | ----- | ----- | xxii. 21 | xiii. 18 |
| | "Is it I?"..... | "..... | xxvi. 22-25 | xiv. 19 | ----- | ----- |
| | The giving of the sop. "That thou doest, do quickly"..... | "..... | ----- | ----- | ----- | xiii. 26, 27 |
| | Departure of Judas..... | "..... | ----- | ----- | ----- | xiii. 30 |
| | Peter warned..... | "..... | xxvi. 34 | xiv. 30 | xxii. 34 | xiii. 36 |
| | The blessing the cup..... | "..... | xxvi. 28 | xiv. 24 | ----- | ----- |
| | The discourses after supper..... | "..... | ----- | ----- | ----- | xiv.-xvi. |
| | Christ's prayer for His apostles..... | "..... | ----- | ----- | ----- | xvii. |
| | The hymn..... | "..... | xxvi. 30 | xiv. 26 | ----- | ----- |
| | The agony..... | Gethsemane..... | xxvi. 37 | xiv. 33 | xxii. 39 | xviii. 1 |
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| | Betrayal by Judas..... | "..... | xxvi. 47-50 | xiv. 43, 44 | xxii. 47 | xviii. 2-4 |
| | Peter smites Malchus..... | "..... | xxvi. 51 | xiv. 47 | xxii. 50 | xviii. 10 |
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| | The high priest's adjuration..... | "..... | xxvi. 63 | xiv. 61 | ----- | ----- |
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| | Simon of Cyrene carries the cross..... | " | xxvii. 32 | xv. 21 | xxiii. 26 | |
| | They give Him vinegar and gall..... | Golgotha | xxvii. 34 | xv. 23 | xxiii. 36 | |
| | Nail Him to the cross..... | " | xxvii. 35 | | xxiii. 33 | xix. 18 |
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| | APPEARANCES OF CHRIST AFTER HIS RESURRECTION. | | | | | |
| | 1. To Mary Magdalene..... | The Garden | | xvi. 9, 10 | | xx. 14 |
| | "All hail! Fear not. Touch me not"..... | " | xxviii. 9 | | | xx. 17 |
| | 2. To the women returning home..... | " | xxviii. 9 | | | |
| | "Go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee; there shall they see me."..... | | | | | |
| | 3. To two disciples going to Emmaus..... | Emmaus | | xvi. 12 | xxiv. 13 | |
| | (Exposition of prophecies on the Passion)..... | | | | | |
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| | APPEARANCES OF CHRIST AFTER HIS RESURRECTION—Cont'd. | | | | | |
| | 5. To ten apostles in the upper room. "Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit," &c. | " | ----- | ----- | xxiv. 36 | xx. 19 |
| | 6. To the eleven apostles in the upper room. "Peace be unto you." To Thomas. "Reach hither thy finger," &c. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." | " | ----- | xvi. 14 | ----- | xx. 26 |
| | 7. To seven apostles at the Sea of Tiberias. To Peter. "Feed my sheep. Feed my lambs." | Tiberias | ----- | ----- | ----- | xxi. 1-24 |
| | 8. To eleven apostles on a mountain in Galilee (1 Cor xv. 5). "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." | Galilee | xxviii. 16 | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| | 9. To five hundred brethren at once (1 Cor. xv. 6). | Galilee, or Bethany | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| | 10. To James (1 Cor. xv. 7). | Bethany | ----- | xvi. 19 | xxiv. 50, 51 | ----- |
| | 11. Ascension | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| | 12. To Paul (1 Cor. xv. 8). | Damascus (?) | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |

Supposed Chronology of the Acts and Epistles

| A. D. | |
|-------|--|
| 30 | Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles (i. 1-14). |
| 30-35 | Events till the appointment of deacons (i. 15-vi. 6). |
| 35-40 | " " conversion of Cornelius (vi. 7-x.). |
| 40-43 | " " establishment of the Church at Antioch (xi. 1-26). |
| 43-46 | " " end of Paul's first missionary journey (xi. 27-xiv. 28). |
| 46-54 | " " second missionary journey (xv. 11-xviii. 22). |
| 55-60 | " " Epistles:—1 Thess. (52); to Thess. (53). |
| | " " end of Paul's third missionary journey (xviii. 23-xxvi.). |
| | " " Epistles:—1 Cor. (57); 2 Cor., Gal. (57); Rom. (58). |
| 60-63 | Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea and voyage to Rome (xxvii, xxviii.) |
| 61 | James' General Epistle to Jewish Christians. |
| 62 | Paul writes his Epistle to Ephesians. |
| | Timothy and Epaphroditus arrive at Rome, bringing tidings from Colosse (Col. i. 1-7). |
| | Paul's Epistle to Colossians. |
| 63 | " " Philemon, on behalf of Onesimus, his runaway slave. |
| 63 | " " the Phillippians. |
| | the Hebrews, explaining how the Old Dispensation is developed into the New |
| 63 | Timothy liberated (Heb. xiii.). |
| 63 | Paul visits Crete; leaves Titus in charge of Church there. |
| 63 | Peter writes his first Epistle to Jews and Gentiles scattered abroad and persecuted. |
| 64 | Paul goes to Macedonia. |
| 64 | " " writes first Epistle to Timothy, at Ephesus (1 Tim. i.-vi.). |
| | " " Epistle to Titus. |
| | " " winters at Nicopolis, Dalmatia, Troas. |
| 65(?) | Jude writes his Epistle. |
| 65 | Peter writes his second Epistle to Jewish and Gentile Christians scattered through Pontus. |
| 65 | Paul's second imprisonment in Rome; tried before Nero. |
| 66 | Paul's second Epistle to Timothy, summoning him to Rome. |
| | martyrdom. Peter's martyrdom at Rome. |
| 71 | Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. |
| | John writes his three Epistles. |
| 75(?) | Jude writes his Epistle. |
| 96 | John writes the Book of Revelation. |
| 97 | " " his Gospel. |



ELAM'S NOTES

ON

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE FOR 1924

INTRODUCTION

Importance of Studying the Old Testament

In the lessons for the next six months we are to study the Old Testament.

Some say they regret when the lessons are in the Old Testament. This is a serious mistake; and the writer indulges the hope that, when we shall have studied all the lessons of this six months, all will with him realize that it is a great mistake not to study the Old Testament.

God would not have preserved it and so connected it with the New Testament if he had not intended for us to study it now. He exhorts us to study it. (See 2 Pet. 3: 1, 2.)

"The sacred writings" which Timothy knew from childhood were the Old Testament Scriptures, which make "wise unto salvation," in that they lead to faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God. (2 Tim. 3: 15-17.) Paul and Apollos reasoned from the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. (See Acts 17: 1-3; 18: 27, 28.) These Scriptures testify of Jesus. (John 5: 39-46.)

We cannot understand various references in the New Testament to passages, principles, and facts of the Old Testament without studying the Old Testament.

Occasionally one will say that one has not time to study the Old Testament; if so, one has not time to obey God.

Others say that they cannot become interested in the study of the Old Testament. That is because they are not interested in the works of God—his dealings with the nations of the earth; the history of his people; his purposes, promises, and prophecies concerning the redemption of the race; and his evidences that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ; and it is because they do not read it enough to understand its characters and history.

To become interested in its study, one should read it regularly and sufficiently to become familiar with its places, characters, histories, facts, and purposes. Consult the maps; learn what prophets, kings, and other prominent persons were contemporary; read both the Old Testament and the New Testament through consecutively, reading some in each every day; when reading the New Testament, look up all the references made to the Old Testament, for in this way the study of the Old Testament will soon become both interesting and profitable.

The Bible is a unit, or one historic whole. Genesis opens with the beginning—the only correct account of the creation of all things—and states the cause of all that which follows; while Revelation gives the conclusion—the grand and glorious consummation of all—"a new heaven and a new earth," wherein the righteous will dwell forever.

We cannot understand the New Testament without the Old Testament.

The best way and the best time to study the Old Testament are other considerations, but it must be studied.

A volume could be written on the literature of the Old Testament—its romances, tragedies, biographies, sublime poems, grand descriptions, glorious visions, and holy principles. Above all, as David says, we should lay up the word of God in our hearts, that we may not sin against him (Ps. 119: 11); and, as Paul exhorts: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." (Col. 3: 16.)

A glory gilds the sacred page
Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age;
It gives but borrows none."

—Cowper.

"Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord!
Star of Eternity! The only star
By which the bark of man could navigate
The Sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
Securely."

—Pollok.

FIRST QUARTER

OUTLINE OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY FROM ABRAHAM TO SOLOMON

(First Half of a Six Months' Course)

LESSON I—JANUARY 6.

A CHOSEN LEADER AND A CHOSEN LAND

Read: Gen. 12: 1—25: 10. *Lesson Text:* Gen. 12: 1-7; Gen. 18: 17-19.

GENESIS 12. 1 Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee:

2 and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing:

3 and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

4 So Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

7 And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto Jehovah, who appeared unto him.

GENESIS 18. 17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do;

18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

19 For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Golden Text—In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. (Gen. 12: 3.)

Time—B.C. 1921 and B.C. 1898.

Places—Ur, Haran, and the Land of Canaan.

Persons—God and Abraham.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 23.

Home Reading—

Dec. 31. M. A Chosen Leader. Gen. 12: 1-9; 18: 17-19.

Jan. 1. T. A Chosen Land. Gen. 13: 12-18.

2. W. Abram and Melchizedek. Gen. 14: 17-24.

3. T. The Covenant Confirmed. Gen. 15: 7-18.

4. F. Abraham the Intercessor. Gen. 18: 23-33.

5. S. God Tries Abraham. Gen. 22: 1-14.

6. S. The Lord our Leader. Psalm 23.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

"The chosen land" was "the land of Canaan." This land is frequently so designated in the Bible. The word "Canaan" means "low lands," and first denoted the seacoast, but afterwards embraced all Palestine. It received its name from Canaan, the Son of Ham, by whose descendants it was inhabited. (See Gen. 10: 6-20.)

The Canaanites were noted for their artistic skill, were famous merchants and seamen, and by trade and war became rich. In Joshua's time, when the time of their iniquity became full, they were overwhelmed in the immorality and darkness of idolatry. The chief objects of their worship were Baal and Ashtarte.

Palestine was the land of the Philistines, but later was the same as the land of Canaan. The Bible frequently speaks of "the land of Philistia." (Ex. 15: 14; Isa. 14: 29, 31; Ps. 108: 9; Joel. 3: 4, etc.)

This country is also called "the land of the Hebrews" (Gen. 40: 15); "the land of Promise" (Heb. 11: 9); and "the land of Israel." Later, the territory occupied by the ten tribes was called "the land of Israel" (Ezk. 27: 17), while that occupied by the other two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, was called, "the land of Judah."

Canaan, or Palestine, was bounded on the north by Syria and the Lebanon mountains, on the west by the Mediterranean, on the south by Edom and the deserts of Sin and Paran, and on the east by the Arabian desert. It was a small country, being upon an average about 140 miles from north to south and 50 miles from east to west. Its extreme length is placed by some at about 180 miles and its extreme width at about 65 miles.

"Ur of the Chaldees" was the capital city of Chaldea; it was about six miles west of the river Euphrates and about 125 miles from its entrance into the Persian Gulf. (See Map.)

"Clearer knowledge has been obtained as to the position of Ur of the Chaldees, now represented by the mound of Mukeyyer, in Southern Babylonia, about six miles from the Euphrates, on the western bank. Indubitable evidence has been afforded of the advanced state of literature and commerce in the old 'Chaldee' or Babylonian Empire in the time of Abraham, including writing on bricks and tablets in the conventional cuneiform characters." (Oxford Teachers' Bible "Notes.")

Haran was a city of Mesopotamia, and was about 500 miles north of Ur. (See map.) From Haran to Canaan was about 300 miles. A mistake as to these distances was made in former lessons embracing them. This was the city of Nahor (Gen. 24: 10), whence Rebekah went to be the wife of Isaac. There Laban lived when Jacob went to him. (Gen. 27: 43; 28: 10; 29: 4.)

INTRODUCTION

I. Previous History

Since these lessons for the first six months give an outline of Old Testament history from Abraham to the end, why not begin with "the beginning."

It is well to study this expression, "the beginning," as used in the Bible. "In the beginning" stands for no definite period, but is used

sometimes to express that eternity which was before the creation of "the heavens and the earth." The following are instances: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." (John 1: 1, 2.) "Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the beginning of the dust of the world," etc. (Prov. 8: 22-36.)

The Bible speaks also of "the beginning of the creation." (Mark 10: 6; 13: 19; 2 Pet. 3: 4.) "Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth." (Heb. 1: 10.)

Time began when God created the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars, which mark time.

Then it must be remembered that God does not count time as men count it. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet. 3: 8.) The eternal past and eternal future are one eternal present with God.

We should study the account of the Creation of "the heavens and the earth" in Gen. 1, and especially the creation of man.

First, man's creation is stated as a fact with other facts of creation. Then the historian returns to it and enlarges upon it. Gen. 2: 7 states the fact that "Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul"—not only a being with animal life, but with intelligence and a Spirit or Soul. With Gen. 5: 1 begins "the generation of Adam"—not all his descendants, but the one in each generation which links him with Abraham, from whom sprang, first, the Israelites; then Jesus, the Savior.

"Let us" and "our" must refer to God, "the Word," and the Holy Spirit. In holy consultation they decided to make man, the crowning piece of their divine workmanship; and their decision was to create man in God's "own image"—"in our image, after our likeness." "Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam ('or man'—margin), in the day when they were created."

This is the only intelligent, correct, and divine account of the origin of man, and we believe it with the whole heart.

If Jehovah could evolve man from a very low, unintelligent, order of animal life (or if any power could do this), could he not in all wisdom and all power create man upright and in his own image to begin with? This He did, and thus we start with man's history in the Bible.

Gen. 4 and 5 give the story, too, of Cain and Abel and the descendants of Adam to Noah; while Gen. 6, 7, 8 and 9 give the account of man's exceeding wickedness, the flood, God's blessings upon Noah, and the covenant of the rainbow.

II. Abraham's Genealogy

By a simple calculation on the lives of the patriarchs it will be seen that Adam lived to see the ninth generation, living fifty-six

years with Lamech, Noah's father, and died only one hundred and twenty-six years before Noah was born.

Adam and Noah were contemporary with six of the patriarchs—Adam, the first part, and Noah, the last part, of their lives. They were Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Methuselah and Lamech. Methuselah died the very year of the flood. Noah was contemporary with his father five hundred and ninety-five years; with Methuselah, his grandfather, six hundred years; with Jared, his great-grandfather, three hundred and sixty-six years; with Mahalalel, two hundred and thirty-four years; with Kenan, one hundred and seventy-nine years; and with Enosh, eighty-four years. Again, Shem, Noah's son, was contemporary with Lamech ninety-three years; with Methuselah, ninety-eight years; with his father, four hundred and forty-eight years—ninety-eight years before the flood and three hundred and fifty years after it; after the flood, with Abraham, one hundred and fifty years; and with Isaac, fifty years. Jacob, Isaac's son, was contemporary with Abraham fifteen years, and a number of years with his own son, Joseph; and Joseph died only forty or fifty years before Moses was born.

Thus we can easily see how Methuselah could have learned all the account of the creation and the fall of man from Adam; Noah, from Methuselah. Then there were but few links between Noah and Moses. How easily the wonderful story of the creation, also the flood and the beginning of new life on the earth after the flood, could have been handed down to Moses! Still, he wrote by inspiration.

Making a further calculation, this time from the ages of the ancestors of Abraham in Gen. 10, it will be seen that over four hundred years elapsed between the flood and this lesson. "Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years" (Gen. 9: 28), and died two years before Abraham was born.

After the flood the world was populated by the three sons of Noah (Gen. 10), Abraham being a descendant of Shem.

Gen. 11: 1-9 gives an account of the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel and the dispersion of the people "upon the face of all the earth." The remainder of Gen. 11 gives the genealogy of Abraham. He was the tenth generation from Noah.

Abraham was the son of Terah and was born in "Ur of the Chaldees." Terah was one hundred and thirty years old when Abraham was born, because he was two hundred and five years old when he died (Gen. 11: 32) and Abraham was then seventy-five years old. (Gen. 12: 4; Acts 7: 4.) Terah died at Haran.

Abraham had two brothers, Nahor and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot, and died in Ur of the Chaldees. (Gen. 11: 28.)

Abraham married Sarah, his half-sister, before he left Ur. (Gen. 11: 29; 12: 11-13; 20: 12.)

III. From Abraham's Call to the Exodus

From the call of Abraham to the exodus, or giving of the law, was four hundred and thirty years (Gal. 3: 17; Ex. 12: 40, 41); from the birth of Isaac to the exodus was four hundred years, supposing Gen. 15: 13, 14, to refer to the birth of Isaac; hence it was thirty years from the call of Abraham to the birth of Isaac. Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born (Gen. 21: 5);

therefore he was seventy years old when he was called and left Ur and went to Haran. But he was seventy-five years old when he left Haran for the land of Canaan (Gen. 12: 4); hence he was five years at Haran. He was one hundred and seventy-five years old when he died (Gen. 25: 7); hence he sojourned in Canaan one hundred years.

From the giving of the law to the end of Solomon's reign (the time embraced by the lessons of this quarter) was about 516 years.

Since the flood, the call of Abraham is the greatest event in the religious history of the world. His father and kindred were idolatrous. (See Josh. 24: 2, 14, 15; Gen. 31: 19.) God separated Abraham from his father's house, that the worship of the one true and living God might be kept pure. "Your fathers dwelt of old time beyond the River, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac." (Josh. 24: 2.)

IV. Abraham's Character

Abraham was one of the grandest men, and his character one of the very noblest, of all history. "He was called the friend of God" (James 2: 23) and God's "friend forever" (2 Chron. 20: 7), of whom God said: "Abraham my friend." (Isa. 41: 8.) Jesus calls his disciples "friends." (John 15: 14.) "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt. 12: 50.)

Abraham is called "the father of us all." (Rom. 4: 16.) "And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3: 29.)

His name was changed by the Lord from "Abram" to "Abraham" because "Abraham" means "father of a multitude." (See Gen. 17: 4-6.)

"Abraham's bosom" was used to designate the place of rest of the faithful after death. (Luke 16: 22.)

Abraham was all this because of his great faith in God and his obedience to God's will; yet he was a human being and made mistakes. He did not at first separate himself from his kindred and his father's house as completely as God directed; for while he left Ur of the Chaldees in obedience to God, he took his father and brother (it seems) and Lot, his nephew, with him. He was detained, it seems, five years at Haran, until the death of Terah, when God again called him to go into Canaan; and yet he took Lot on with him, leaving Nahor at Haran. (Gen. 24: 10; 11: 31, 32; 29: 4, 5.)

Finally, however, he separated from Lot, and God then more fully renewed his promise. "And Jehovah said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then may thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through

the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give it." (Gen. 13: 14-17.)

Twice Abraham lied about Sarah. She was, as he explained, his half-sister; but she was also his wife, which fact he concealed, and in concealing this fact he made the wrong impression, and, therefore, lied; also by his course in this matter, but for the intervention of God, he would have brought upon himself and wife the very trouble he desired to avert. (See Gen. 12: 14-20; 20: 1-18.)

From this we learn that to tell only a part of the truth and to withhold the rest in order to make a false impression is to lie, and that to speak the truth is always right and best. God was patient with Abraham, gentle and kind toward him, and led him on into full and implicit obedience.

So God is merciful toward all and patient with all who are striving to serve him, although they may make mistakes.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Original Call

1. This was not the original call. The first call of Abraham is not recorded in Genesis. Stephen says: "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee." (Acts 7: 2, 3.)

II. By Faith Abraham Obeyed God

This was a fertile country, but Abraham was called upon to leave it for one he knew not of. Had he been told he was to go to a land flowing with milk and honey, even to a better country than the one he was leaving behind, it would have been different; but he went, not knowing whither he went. He was to leave his kindred and father's house, his home and friends, and go among strangers in a strange land.

Abraham did this by faith, at once obeying God. "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11: 8-10.) This was a severe test of his faith, but he "obeyed" God.

He did not obtain possession of the land in his lifetime. As a "sojourner" he dwelt in it, "as in a land not his own." His descendants were to have it in full when the "iniquity of the Amorites" was full. (Gen. 15: 16.) "And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: and he promised that he would give it to him in possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child." (Acts 7: 5.) Abraham had to purchase the cave of Machpelah from Ephron, the Hittite, as a burying place. (Gen. 23: 2-20.)

III. Abraham's Faith Looked to the Future

Abraham served God and waited, because he "looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Jesus says: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." (John 8: 56.) Abraham's faith looked beyond an earthly country and temporal blessings to the heavenly Jerusalem and spiritual blessings. "For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith." (Rom. 4: 13.)

When the new heaven and new earth appear and the city of God comes down, then fully and forever will Abraham's seed inherit the world. Abraham and his descendants "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." If they had been so disposed, they could have returned to "that country from which they went out;" but by remaining in Canaan they said they desired "a better country, that is, a heavenly." (Heb. 11: 13-16.)

In Gen. 18 we learn how "the God of glory" appeared to Abraham. The Lord spoke to him in an audible voice, and plainly told him what to do. As Abraham, by the word of God we are called to leave our kindred and lands if in any way they interfere with our serving God. We must forsake all for Jesus. (Matt. 10: 37-39; Luke 14: 33.)

IV. Abraham Made Great and a Blessing to Others

2, 3. In obedience to God, Abraham gave up his fertile country, home, and kindred. God promised to bless him as follows: (1) To make him a great nation; (2) to bless him; (3) to make his name great; (4) to make him a blessing to others; (5) to bless those who blessed him; (6) to curse his enemies; and (7), the greatest of all, to bless the families of the earth through him. God blessed him personally and greatly "in all things." (Gen. 24: 1-35.)

His name is greater than that of any earthly king, emperor, ruler, or warrior. God blessed Abraham's friends. It is a great thing to be a friend to a friend of God.

Abraham and his descendants were blessings to the world in other ways. Through them the knowledge of the true God was preserved and the Scriptures have come to us. A good man is a blessing to any community. Abraham was the father of multitudes—(1) in the flesh, (2) in the spirit. (Gal. 3: 29.)

V. As Abraham Continued to Learn Obedience to God, God Multiplied His Blessings

4. Abraham had not fully obeyed God when at Haran; he had not fully separated himself from his kindred. Here God called upon him to go farther. As he further obeyed God, there followed larger promises and fuller developments of God's purposes through him. So God works through men to-day as they go on in self-sacrifice and obedience and become more capable of accomplishing good.

5. It would have been better had Abraham left Lot behind here. Lot caused him no little trouble afterwards. How much better now for Christians to leave all behind that should not be carried along, to live separate from the world, to be whole-hearted servants of the

Master, and to go all the way where Jesus leads! The world is wicked, and Christians are crucified to it and it to them. (Gal. 2: 20; John 17: 14, Rom. 12: 1, 2; 1 John 2: 15, 16.)

"Sarai" was afterwards changed to "Sarah" (Gen. 17: 15)—"a princess." She was ten years younger than her husband. (Gen. 17: 17.)

"The souls that they had gotten in Haran" were servants and the children of these servants, of whom a few years later there were three hundred and eighteen well-trained ones, besides their wives and children. (Gen. 14: 14.) "Their substance" consisted in flocks and herds and other possessions. Abraham "was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." (Gen. 13: 2; 24: 35.)

6. Abraham entered Canaan on the north and journeyed toward the south to Shechem. (See Gen. 33: 18-20; 34; Josh. 24: 32.) This place is mentioned frequently in the Bible. (See the map.) "Unto the oak of Moreh." "Moreh" may perhaps be the name of some man. Some think it means "archer." Clarke's "Commentary" says it signifies "teacher." The Canaanites inhabited the land, who, for their iniquity, were driven out finally. (Ex. 33: 1, 2; 34: 11.)

7. Here Jehovah again appeared to Abraham. "Unto thy seed will I give this land." It was given finally, indeed, to his seed; but he had no "inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on." (Acts 7: 5.) God promised it to Abraham's seed, while as yet Abraham had no child. At this, his first resting place, Abraham built an altar and worshiped "Jehovah, who appeared unto him."

VI. God's Blessings or Curses Are Not Arbitrary

(Gen. 18: 17-19.)

We must omit the separation of Abraham and Lot and Lot's choice to live in Sodom.

Gen. 18: gives Abraham's pleading with Jehovah for Sodom. Its destruction was pending. It was here that Abraham declared his faith in both the mercy and justice of God when he asked: "Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked?" And: "Shalt not the Judge of all the earth do right?" God assured Abraham that he would not destroy the righteous with the wicked. God's law is: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." In the final judgment God will separate the bad from the good.

17, 18. Jehovah said, since Abraham was to become a great and mighty nation and all nations of the earth should be blessed in him, he would not hide from Abraham his purpose to destroy Sodom.

19. God did not arbitrarily bless Abraham or curse his enemies. God is neither partial nor a "respector of persons." Of Abraham he said: "For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." If Abraham had not obeyed God and had not trained his children to do the same, God could not have blessed him. "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. 22: 18; see also Gen. 26: 4, 5.)

Christ is the promised "seed" through whom "all nations of the earth" are blessed. (Gal. 3: 16.)

To be blessed through Christ is to accept him as the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and to obey him in faith, as Abraham obeyed God—that is, to believe in him with the whole heart, to repent of all sins, to be baptized in his name, and to humbly follow him till death

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place, and Persons.

What does "Canaan" mean?
What did the land of Canaan embrace?

What is the origin of the name "Palestine?"

By what other names is the country called?

Give its boundaries and size.
What was Ur of the Chaldees?

Where was it situated?
What and where was Haran?

What is meant by "the beginning?"

What is said of the different accounts in the Bible of man's creation?

What is the only intelligent and correct account of man's creation?

What do Gen. 4 and 5 contain?
What do Gen. 6, 7, 8 and 9 contain?

What generations did Adam live to see?

With whom were Adam and Noah contemporary?

How could the story of creation have reached Moses?

By what, however, did Moses write?

How long did Noah live after the flood?

How many years were there between his death and Abraham's birth?

By whom was the world populated after the flood?

Of whom was Abraham a descendant?

Who was Abraham's father?
How do we find how old Terah was when Abraham was born?

Where was he born?
What is said of the literature and commerce of Abraham's day?

What was the distance from Ur to Haran?

Who died there?

What relation was Lot to Abraham?

Who was Abraham's wife?

How do we find how old Abraham was when he left Ur, and how long he remained at Haran?

How old was he when he died?

How long was he in Canaan?

What does "Abraham" mean?
What does "Abraham's bosom" represent?

Why was Abraham so great?
What mistakes did he make?

1 Where did Abraham receive his first call to leave home and kindred?

What did he leave?
What prompted him to do so?

In what way was this such a strong test of his faith?

Did Abraham receive the land as an inheritance?

To whom and what did his faith look?

When will his seed inherit "the world?"

Why did he not return to his native land?

What, like Abraham, must all now do?

2, 3 What blessings did God promise Abraham?

What reasons does God give for blessing Abraham?

How did God bless the world through Abraham?

In what ways was Abraham the father of multitudes?

4 What followed as Abraham more fully obeyed God?

How does God bless and use men now?

5 Why would it have been better had Abraham left Lot behind?

What should Christians leave behind?

To what was the name "Sarai" changed?

What does "Sarah" mean?

How much younger was she than Abraham?

What souls had they gotten in Haran?

In what did Abraham's wealth consist?

6 At what place did Abraham first stop in Canaan?

7 What promise did God here make to Abraham?

What did Abraham build at this place?

How did Abraham show his faith in the justice and mercy of God?

17, 18 Why did God reveal his purpose to Abraham?

19 What shows that God did not arbitrarily bless Abraham?

LESSON II—JANUARY 13.

THE LONG SOJOURN IN EGYPT

Read: Genesis, Chapters 37—50. *Lesson Text:* Genesis 47: 1-12.

GENESIS 47. 1 Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen.

2 And from among his brethren he took five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh.

3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and our fathers.

4 And they said unto Pharaoh, To sojourn in the land are we come; for there is no pasture for thy servants' flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.

5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee:

6 the land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any able men among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

8 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How many are the days of the years of thy life?

9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the presence of Pharaoh.

11 And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

12 And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.

Golden Text—Jehovah will keep thee from all evil; he will keep thy soul. (Psalm 121: 7.)

Time—B. C. 1706.

Place—Egypt.

Persons—Joseph, his brethren, and Pharaoh.

Devotional Reading—Psalm 124.

Home Reading—

Jan. 7. M. The Long Sojourn in Egypt. Gen. 47: 1-12.

8. T. Joseph's Dreams. Gen. 37: 1-11.

9. W. Joseph Sold into Egypt. Gen. 37: 28-36.

10. T. Joseph Made Ruler of Egypt. Gen. 41: 33-44

11. F. Jacob Journeys to Egypt. Gen. 46: 1-7.

12. S. The Growth of Israel in Egypt. Ex. 1: 1-12.

13. S. God's Care for his Own. Psalm 124.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Beersheba was forty or fifty miles south from Jerusalem, and means "the Well of the Oath."

We have learned something about Shechem, Bethel, Bethlehem, Hebron, and "the land of Canaan."

Rameses was the metropolis of the land of Goshen. Goshen was called "the land of Rameses," from this city. Goshen was the best land of Egypt (Gen. 47: 6, 11), was suitable for flocks and herds (Gen. 46: 28-34) and was next to Canaan, being east of the Nile and of the lower part of Egypt.

INTRODUCTION

I. Egypt

The history of Egypt is most interesting for many reasons, one of which is its connection with the history of God's people. "Although Asia was the cradle of the human race, the cradle of civilization was in the Nile Valley, which, from the island of Elephantine, in the Nile, northward to the Mediterranean Sea, a distance of five hundred and twenty-six miles, was the seat of ancient Egypt, the mother of the arts and sciences. In Egypt we first find a civil government and political institutions established; and although Egypt may not be the oldest nation, Egyptian history is the oldest history. The monuments, records, and literature of Egypt are far more ancient than those of Chaldea and India, the next two oldest nations. While the progress of other nations from ignorance and rudeness to art and civilization may be easily traced, Egypt appears in the earliest twilight of history a great, powerful, and highly civilized nation; and her gigantic architectural works are the most wonderful as well as the most ancient in the world, showing a skill in the quarrying, transporting, carving, and joining of stones which modern architects may admire, but are unable to surpass." ("Library of Universal History.") The most influential caste in Egypt was the priests. They were "the power behind the throne." Next to them was the military caste. It was beneficial to Joseph and the children of Israel to come in contact with the civilization of Egypt—its culture, arts, and sciences.

II. Connecting Links

Since these lessons are "an outline of Old Testament history," we should have the connecting links between Abraham and Joseph.

Isaac, a child of promise, was born at Beersheba, about a year after the destruction of Sodom. He was a quiet, peace-loving, but true and faithful man. He suffered wrong rather than enter into contention and strife for his individual rights. The most important event in his whole life was his being willing as a young man to be offered up by his father as a sacrifice to God, and in which he was a type of Jesus.

Jacob follows as Isaac's son and twin brother to Esau. He loved his mother and home, tended his flocks and herds, was the greatest and most successful shepherd who has ever lived, was selfish, a "supplanter," practiced deception, but so grew in character as to become "a prince with God," or Israel. Many are the interesting,

changing, and wonderful events in his life—his experience with Esau, his marriages and experiences with his father-in-law, his return to Canaan, his sojourn in Egypt, and his parting blessings upon his children.

III. The Story of Joseph

The story of Joseph is a beautiful and pathetic one. It is interesting always to young and old, and who can read it without tears? It is most valuable in that it shows us how God's providence rules over all, even the envy and wickedness of people, famine, and plenty, for the good of those who serve him. The envy and wickedness of his brethren and the apparent misfortunes of Joseph were stepping-stones to his goodness and greatness. His environments were not always favorable to piety and purity. His older brethren in many things set him a bad example. The partiality of his father was not good for his disposition, and yet his character approached perfection as nearly as any in the Old Testament.

If, like Joseph, we will so serve God that he can work out his plan and purpose through us; if we truly love him, then he will be with us as truly as he was with Joseph in the pit and the prison, and will cause all things to work together for our good. "If God is for us, who is against us?"

Joseph's dreams with most apparent signification aroused the hatred and excited the envy of his brethren against him. Their cool and deliberate conspiracy, their unprincipled and ferocious determination to shed innocent blood stirs our hearts. The horribly wicked deed of nine strong, grown men [Reuben had planned to restore Joseph safe to his father] conspiring to bury a live, a helpless and defenseless lad by casting him into a gloomy pit to die of starvation and anguish, while in distress of soul he plead for his life (Gen. 42: 21), presents one of the saddest and most cruel pictures which the imagination can draw.

Joseph was seventeen years old when he was sold into Egypt (Gen. 37: 2), and thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh (Gen. 41: 46) and interpreted his dreams. Hence he was for thirteen years either a slave or a prisoner, and none the less a slave while a prisoner. These were thirteen years of hard schooling for Joseph, but a thorough preparation for the great work God had for him to do. Learning obedience as a slave fitted Joseph the better to govern others. Discipline developed him, and from every different temptation his character came out shining like gold tried in the fire.

We may all learn from this how faithfulness, trueness, pureness, and patient service of God under severe tests is the only sure way of deliverance from evil and the only right way of elevation. It is the same old and true story of faithfulness in little things and the discharge of present duties which fit one for greater usefulness.

It is not where we are or what we are, whether master or slave, but what we do and the way we do it, that makes our character and shapes our destiny.

Thus Joseph was not only elevated and many saved from the famine through him, but thus God fulfilled his own prediction to Abraham: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them

four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterwards shall they come out with great substance." (Gen. 15: 13, 14.)

Others were imprisoned for right's sake. Jeremiah was in prison (Jer. 38: 5-13); the Hebrew children were cast into the fiery furnace (Dan. 3); Daniel was cast into the lion's den (Dan. 6); John the Baptist, Peter, Paul at different times, and others were imprisoned. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3: 12.)

Joseph's advice to Pharaoh and preparation for the family; his being made ruler over Egypt, second only to Pharaoh on the throne; his meekness and God-fearing faithfulness as ruler; the reaping on the part of his brethren the harvest of trouble from their sad sowing; Judah's sublime speech in behalf of Benjamin; and Joseph's forgiveness of his brethren are all most instructive and helpful.

IV. Jacob and His Family Go Into Egypt

Pharaoh, when he heard Joseph's brethren had come, told Joseph to remove his father and his brethren and all they had into Egypt, with the promise that they should have "the good of the land" and should "eat of the fat of the land." He also told Joseph to send wagons from Egypt sufficient to transport the families of his father and brethren and all they had, and say to them not to regard their "stuff"—that is, what they would leave behind and lose in removing—"for the good of all the land of Egypt" was before them. (Gen. 45: 15-20.)

Joseph then gave to his brethren and sent to his father the rich presents specified in Gen. 45: 21-23 and "provision for his father by the way." When his sons reached home and told Jacob that Joseph was yet alive and "ruler over all the land of Egypt," "his heart fainted, for he believed them not;" but "when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him," his "spirit . . . revived," and he said: "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die." (Gen. 45: 25-28.)

At Beersheba, on his way into Egypt, Jacob offered sacrifices unto God. God spoke to him, encouraged him to go, and promised to go with him and to make of him a great nation.

"All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, that came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six." Counting Jacob, Joseph, and Joseph's two sons, "all the souls of the house of Jacob, that came into Egypt, were threescore and ten." (Gen. 46: 26, 27.) Judah's wife was dead (Gen. 38: 12); Simeon's also, we suppose, since Shaul is mentioned as being "the son of a Canaanitish woman" (Gen. 46: 10); Joseph's wife was already in Egypt. Hence, adding the nine wives who actually went down from Canaan to the sixty-six, we have seventy-five, corresponding to Stephen's statement: "And Joseph sent, and called to him Jacob his father, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls." (Acts 7: 14.)

Judah was sent before unto Joseph and to show the way unto Goshen.

Joseph then went to meet Jacob, "and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while." Jacob expressed himself as ready to die, since he had seen Joseph once more. (Gen. 46: 28-30.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Joseph Before Pharaoh

1. Joseph first said to his brethren and father that he would go and report to Pharaoh that they had come, that they were shepherds, and that they had brought all their flocks and herds. He instructed them that when Pharaoh should ask their occupation they should say: "Thy servants have been keepers of cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and our fathers." The reason for this was: "That ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." (Gen. 46: 31-34.)

Joseph would carry two points in this way—(1) he would settle his father and brethren in a country suitable to their occupation, and (2) separate them as much as possible from the Egyptians. In this land the Israelites would have pasturage; and since shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians, they would be where they would not disturb the Egyptians and they themselves would not be disturbed in their worship.

Joseph then, according to this arrangement, told Pharaoh that his father and brethren had come and were in the land of Goshen.

2. Joseph presented five of his brethren to Pharaoh. Probably these were five principal men to represent the rest. At a later time the children of Dan chose five "men of valor" to search a further inheritance of them. (Judges 18:2.)

3. When Pharaoh asked their occupation, they answered according to Joseph's instructions.

4. They also stated why they had come into Egypt—namely, "for there is no pasture for thy servants' flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

5, 6. Pharaoh granted this request. He had already promised to Joseph, as we have seen in the Introduction, "the good of the land" and "the fat of the land," and Joseph had already promised them the land of Goshen. (Gen. 45: 10.) Pharaoh instructed Joseph to select the men of activity and strength among his brethren and make them rulers over his "cattle." Ex. 9 speaks of the cattle of the Egyptians and the plagues which destroyed them.

II. Jacob Before Pharaoh

7-9. Joseph then presented his father to Pharaoh, "and Jacob blessed Pharaoh." Jacob saluted and blessed Pharaoh—that is, pronounced good upon him. God blesses men when he speaks good for them, and men bless God when they speak well of him in praise and honor. Pharaoh asked Jacob's age, and Jacob said: "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimages." As the margin says, "pilgrimage" means "sojournings."

Abraham and Isaac had been "sojourners" in Canaan, as Jacob then was, and had been all his life, as his different journeys show. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that

they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb. 11: 13.) Abraham did not have so much of the land of promise as "to set his foot on." (Acts 7: 5.)

Christians are called "sojourners and pilgrims." (1 Peter 2: 11.)

Jacob was one hundred and forty-seven years old when he died (Gen. 47: 28); Isaac, one hundred and eighty; and Abraham, one hundred and seventy-five.

10. Again "Jacob blessed Pharaoh" and went from his presence.

III. The Happy End

11. Joseph then settled his father and brethren, their families and flocks and herds, in Goshen, "the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded." Goshen, as stated above, was called "the land of Rameses" from the city Rameses, the metropolis of the country.

12. There were yet five years of famine to follow (Gen. 45: 11), and in Goshen during these years Joseph nourished his father and brethren and their households.

The Israelites were active and energetic people. They prospered in Goshen—they got possessions, "were fruitful, and multiplied exceedingly."

Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years. Before he died he exacted a promise from Joseph to carry his body back to Canaan for burial. "By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff." (Heb. 11: 21.) He blessed Manasseh and Ephraim, "crossing his hands wittingly" (margin) as he placed them on their heads, giving Ephraim the preeminence. Jacob also pronounced a prophetic blessing upon every one of his sons, placing the descent of the "promised seed" in the tribe of Judah.

Accordingly, having embalmed him and the days of his mourning having passed (Gen. 50: 1-4), Joseph obtained permission of Pharaoh to carry out his father's request, and he and his brethren buried Jacob in the land of Canaan. Joseph, after the death of his father, again assured his brethren that he had forgiven them and would not take vengeance, but that he would nourish them and their little ones. He reminded them that they "meant evil against him; but God meant it for good." The good was "to save much people alive."

Joseph was a great blessing to Egypt, to other countries, and especially to his own people; but that God overruled the crime of his brethren to this great good did not lessen their guilt. God leaves men entirely free to choose and to act for themselves; yet he overrules their wickedness to his glory and the good of his people, and evildoers suffer the just desert of their sins. God was with Joseph in the pit, as a slave, in prison, and as ruler over Egypt, because he was ever faithful to God.

It is better far to be in the pit with God than out of it with Satan. The humble, suffering lad in the pit; the faithful, virtuous slave; the godly prisoner, was mightier then and wielded a far greater influence to-day than his wicked brethren, his profligate mistress, and his heathen king. A willing instrument in God's hand, faithfully

serving God's purposes and working out God's plan, any man today is a power.

Joseph, as we have learned, was seventeen years old when sold into Egypt, thirty when taken out of prison and made ruler of Egypt, thirty-nine when Jacob went into Egypt, fifty-four when Jacob died, and one hundred and ten when he died. Although Joseph was dead and the lives of many people had been preserved, the further purpose of God of disciplining and training his people, the exodus, the journey through the wilderness, and the establishment of them into a nation was at work, still

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time, place, and persons.
Where and what was Goshen?
In what was Egypt in advance of other nations?
What is the oldest profane history?
What are the most wonderful works of Egypt?
In what ways were the Israelites benefited by being in Egypt?
What are the connecting links between Abraham and this lesson?
Give what is said of Isaac?
Give what are the most interesting features of Jacob's life.
Give the facts in Joseph's life to the present lesson.
What command did Pharaoh give Joseph concerning his father and brethren?
What were they to have in Egypt?
What was done to help them to remove to Egypt?
What convinced Jacob that all this was true?
What did Jacob do at Beersheba?
What did God do there for him?
How many were there in Jacob's family in Egypt?
Why did Jacob express himself as ready to die?
- 1 What arrangement did Joseph make for approaching Pharaoh?
What two points would Joseph gain in this way?
 - 2 Whom did Joseph first present to Pharaoh?
 - 3 What reply did they make to Pharaoh's question concerning their occupation?
 - 4 Why had they gone into Egypt?
- 5, 6 What instruction did Pharaoh give Joseph concerning his brethren?
 - 7-9 Whom next did Joseph present?
What did Jacob do?
What is it to "bless" one?
What question did Pharaoh ask Jacob?
What was the reply?
Why did Jacob refer to his life as a pilgrimage?
What is said of the pilgrimage of Abraham and Isaac?
What are Christians?
How old were Isaac and Abraham when they died?
By what great principle did all live and die?
 - 10 What again did Jacob do for Pharaoh?
 - 11 What did Joseph then do for his brethren and father?
Why is Goshen called "the land of Rameses?"
 - 12 What did Joseph do for his brethren and his father and their families during the remainder of the famine?
How long did Jacob live in Egypt?
What did he do for Joseph's sons before he died?
Why did he cross his hands?
What did he do for all his sons?
In what tribe was the promised seed placed?
How old was Jacob when he died?
What was his request concerning his burial?
After his father's death, of what did Joseph assure his brethren?
For what did they mean this selling of him?
What good did God bring out of it?

LESSON III—JANUARY 20

MOSES CALLED TO DELIVER ISRAEL

Read: Exodus, chapters 1:1—12:36. *Lesson Text:* Exodus 3:1-12.

EXODUS 3. 1 Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb.

2 And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

3 And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

4 And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

7 And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

8 and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.

9 And now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

11 And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

Golden Text—By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Hebrews 11: 24, 25.

Time—B.C. 1491.

Place—Near Mount Horeb—Sinai.

Persons—God and Moses.

Devotional Readings—Psalm 130.

Home Reading—

Jan. 14. M. Moses Called to Deliver Israel. Ex. 3: 1-12.

15. T. The Birth of Moses. Ex. 2: 1-10.

16. W. Moses' Flight to Midian. Ex. 2: 11-25.

17. T. Moses Faces Pharaoh. Ex. 5: 1-9.

18. F. The Last Plague Threatened. Ex. 11: 1-10.

19. S. The Passover. Ex. 12: 1-11.

20. S. The Cry of the Captive. Psalm 130.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

"Horeb" was probably the name of a group of mountain peaks or the district; "Sinai," that of the peculiar one on which God met with Moses and from which the law was given. (Ex. 19: 20-24; Hebrews 12: 18-29; Gal. 4: 25.)

INTRODUCTION

I. Exodus

Exodus is the second book of the Pentateuch, and, therefore, of the Old Testament. "Exodus" means "going out," or "departure;" and this book is so named because it gives the account of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt.

Moses wrote the Pentateuch. Jesus, in quoting from this book, ascribes its authorship to Moses. (See Mark 12: 26; Luke 20: 37.) Genesis ends with the death of Joseph, and Exodus begins where Genesis ends, continues the history of the Israelites for one hundred and forty-five years, and closes with the completion and erection of the tabernacle at the foot of Sinai.

The book is introduced with the names of the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, showing who went into Egypt, and that they were comparatively few, but that when they departed they were a great multitude.

II. The Time of the Israelites' Bondage

From the call of Abraham to the giving of the law, which was shortly after the exodus, was four hundred and thirty years (Gal. 3: 17; Ex. 12: 40, 41); and from the birth of Isaac, or about the time Ishmael mocked and was cast out with his mother (Gen. 21: 10; Gal. 4: 19), which was about thirty years after, was four hundred years. (Gen. 15: 13; Acts 7: 6.)

The children of Israel were not really in Egypt four hundred and thirty years, but were strangers and pilgrims so long, dwelling in tents, and even in the land of promise had no inheritance, not so much as to set foot on. (Acts 7: 5.) From the covenant made with Abraham at Haran, when he was seventy-five years old (Gen. 12: 4), to the time when Jacob went down into Egypt, was two hundred and fifteen years. We get this from the ages of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Hence from the time Jacob went to Egypt to the exodus was two hundred and fifteen years; so the children of Israel were really in Egypt only that long.

Jacob remained in Egypt seventeen years, and Joseph survived him fifty-six years; hence the children of Israel were in Egypt about one hundred and thirty-two years after the death of Joseph.

Another period of interest mentioned in the Bible in this connection is that from the exodus to the building of the temple at Jerusalem, which was four hundred and eighty years. (1 Kings 6: 1.)

After the death of Joseph and his brethren, the Israelites increased in Egypt rapidly in numbers and power. Ex. 1: 7 says they "were fruitful," "increased abundantly," "multiplied," "waxed exceeding mighty," "and the land was filled with them." God said to Jacob: "Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation." (Gen. 46: 3; see also Deut. 26: 5.)

III. Efforts to Check the Increase of the Israelites

Pharaoh thought the rapid increase and progress of the Israelites should be checked, saying they "are more and mightier than we." He pointed out the dangers to which they subjected themselves in allowing the Israelites to continue as they were: (1) lest in time of war they should ally themselves with the enemies of Egypt and fight against the Egyptians, and (2) depart from Egypt.

In order to check this increase and progress of the Israelites it was determined to set over them "taskmasters to afflict them with burdens." The purpose in this was twofold: (1) to get the work, and (2) to destroy the Israelites. This affliction was great. (See Ex. 2: 23; 3: 7; 5: 4-19; 6: 7.)

But the more the Egyptians made the Israelites to serve with rigor, the more they increased. As in Joseph's case, that which was intended for evil God overruled for good. The Egyptians did this to keep the Israelites in Egypt, and God's purpose was served to keep them from ever returning.

It has been said, too, that this was an industrial and training school for the Israelites. It brought them into the use of the mechanical arts of Egypt; it solidified them as a nation and kept them separate from the Egyptians; it made them feel their dependence upon God and cry for help; it made them long for the promised land as they had never done before. It was hard enough, after all, to wean them from Egypt.

Egyptian bondage represents the bondage of sin. There is no taskmaster so hard and bitter, no tyrant so cruel and abusive, no burdens so heavy to bear as one's own passions and sins. A sinner is a veritable slave.

When hard work and oppression did not repress the rapid increase of the children of Israel, the cruel Pharaoh issued an edict to the Hebrew midwife to kill all the male children born unto the Hebrew women; but these "midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive." They would not commit murder. They did not lie to Pharaoh, but stated the truth, when they said: "Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively [vigorous, active, and strong,] and are delivered ere the midwife come unto them." For this God "dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty."

Then in another way Pharaoh sought to destroy the male children: "And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive." (See verses 15-22.)

IV. The Deliver Born: Saved by Faith

Amram and Jocebed were the parents of Miriam, Aaron, and Moses. Aaron was three years Moses' senior (Ex. 7: 7), and Miriam was several years older than Aaron. Aaron was born probably before this edict of the king was made to destroy all the male children born unto the Israelites.

The life of Moses is filled with romance, beauty, truth, and sublimity. His character is one of the grandest which shines forth from the pages of holy writ. He is in more respects than one the type of Jesus.

To become familiar with the Bible statements concerning his life is the best thing both young and old can do in studying his history.

When he was born his mother saw that "he was a goodly child." Stephen says "exceeding fair" (Acts 7: 20), the margin says "fair unto God," and Heb. 11: 23 says "he was a goodly child." He was perfect and well formed physically, and beautiful, which to his parents was a sign of divine favor. He was nourished three months in his father's house. In some way his parents saved him this long from the cruel command of the king. The key to all this is stated in Heb. 11: 23: "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." Their faith in God made them not afraid of this commandment. They bent in admiration and love over their new-born child, whose comeliness was a prophecy of his future usefulness, with an assurance born of faith in God that his life would be preserved.

"And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterwards shall they come out with great substance." (Gen. 15: 13, 14.)

This and the promises repeated to Isaac and to Jacob must have been handed down from one to another and cherished especially at this time. They must have counted up the time and found that the four hundred years had almost expired, and that they would soon realize the promise: "And afterwards shall . . . come out with great substance."

We are familiar with the facts of "the ark of bulrushes," Pharaoh's daughter's finding and making this babe her own, Miriam's watchcare and wisdom, and Moses' training by his own mother.

He was trained in the religion of the true God in a religious home. She repeated to him over and over the rich promises God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the story of their oppression; and the cherished hope of their deliverance. This good seed, planted thus early in his heart, grew with his growth and ripened into fruit with his years.

As the oak is in the acorn, what great possibilities are wrapped up in one child! From a hut, a slave's family, an ark of bulrushes, came forth one of the greatest benefactors of mankind. Here we are reminded of the training of young Timothy and how the faith of mother and grandmother was implanted in his heart. (2 Tim. 1: 1-5; 3: 14-17.)

There is no home so poor but that its children should be trained for God and hence for usefulness. We do not know just how old Moses was when his mother returned him to Pharaoh's daughter.

V. Human Efforts and God's Providence Work Together

The mother must do her best to protect her child by concealing it as long as possible; she must do this trusting in God; she must prepare an ark of papyrus and make it waterproof and place the precious treasure therein; the sister must do her part in watching him; yet God is in the whole plan overruling all. There are no common things with God. He uses a religious home, a babe and its tears, a

little girl, an ark of bulrushes, the incidental going of the king's daughter to the river, to redeem a nation of oppressed and groaning people. Every seemingly common thing of life may be God's means of doing us good if we will only allow it to be. We are commanded to do all we do, in word or deed, in the name of Christ, and every servant to perform his daily duties heartily unto God, and not unto men. (Col. 3: 23, 24.)

VI. Moses' Choice

Up to this time Moses' life had been spent as the son of Pharaoh's daughter—spent in school, in the king's court, and in performing deeds of interest and wisdom. (See Acts 7: 22.) Thus for forty years he was instructed and trained. "He was mighty in his words and works." (Acts 7: 22.) His wisdom and works up to this point in his history have not been recorded in the Bible. "When he was well-nigh forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel." (Acts 7: 23.) Ex. 2: 11 says, "when Moses was grown up." His faith led him to visit his brethren. "He went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens." (Ex. 2: 11.)

He knew he could not help them and deliver them unless he should give up his position as the son of Pharaoh's daughter and ally himself with them. Thus in mature years, when he was able to weigh matters and look consequences in the face, he deliberately made this decision. He did this by faith. "By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." (Heb. 11: 24-27.) He did up to this time six things by faith—(1) "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;" (2) chose "rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;" (3) accounted "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt;" (4) "looked unto the recompense of reward;" (5) "forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king;" (6) "endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Later he ate the passover and crossed the sea by faith. He cherished the word and promises of God until they produced this faith. (Rom. 10: 17.) "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." (Heb. 11: 1.)

We must remember Moses' life in the wilderness—his marriage to Zipporah, Jethro's daughter; the birth of his two sons, Gershom and Eliezer; his keeping his father-in-law's sheep. Also we must call to mind the increased bondage and groans of the children of Israel until the propitious time for their deliverance came, which is this lesson.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Angel of God's Presence

1. Moses' father-in-law is called "Reuel" (Ex. 2: 18), "the Kenite" (Judg. 1: 16), and "Jethro." He was a priest, worshiped God, and advised Moses by the command of God. (See Ex. 18.) This shows that others worshiped the true God then as well as the Israelites.

The Midianites descended from Midian, one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah. They were a wandering people, dwelling in no place long at a time. In Moses' day they dwelt somewhere near Mount Horeb, for "he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb."

It is said that the people stood before Jehovah "in Horeb." (Deut. 4: 10; 5: 2; 18: 16; 1 Kings 8: 9; Mal. 4: 4.) Moses was on the mount twice, forty days at a time. (Ex. 24: 18; 34: 28; Deut. 9: 9.) Elijah was there forty days. (1 Kings 19: 8.) For these reasons it is called "the mountain of God."

2. "The angel of Jehovah appeared unto him." This was the angel of God's presence. "So he was their Savior. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them." (Isa. 63: 8, 9.) When "the angel of Jehovah" appeared to Hagar, she called his name, "Thou art a God that seeth." (Gen. 16: 7-13.) In blessing Joseph's sons, Jacob says: "The angel who hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." (Gen. 48: 16.) This angel brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. (See Num. 20: 16.) "And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them." (Ex. 14: 19.) God promised that this angel should guide them through the wilderness, even into the land of promise, saying: "I send an angel before thee: . . . for my name is in him. . . . Mine angel shall go before thee." (Ex. 23: 20-23.) This angel is called God's "presence." "My presence shall go with thee." (Ex. 33: 14.) God also said this angel would drive out the inhabitants of Canaan. (Ex. 33: 2.) This angel stood before Joshua with drawn sword, saying: "As prince of the host of Jehovah am I now come." (Josh. 5: 13-15.) Verse 4 says God spoke to Moses, and verse 14 gives his name. God spoke through the angel of his presence, and God's "name" was "in him."

Who was this angel of God's presence? Was it not Christ before he was made flesh and dwelt among us? Malachi (3: 1) says: "The Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger [angel] of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts." This "angel of the covenant" refers to Christ. This angel appeared to Moses "in a flame of fire in a bush." (Acts 7: 30.) God was a pillar of fire by night to the children of Israel. (Ex. 14: 24.)

II. God Spoke to Moses Out of the Burning Bush

God spoke to the children of Israel "in Horeb out of the midst of the fire." (Deut. 4: 15.) We have no way of ascertaining what kind of bush this was. That it should not be consumed was the wonder which attracted Moses' attention. We do not know that the Lord intended to teach anything by this fact. Israel passed through fiery trials and was not consumed, and so did the church of Christ at different times; but this unconsumed bush only reminds us of these facts. Some make the fire a symbol of God and at the same time a symbol of fiery trials. The principal purpose of this was to attract Moses.

3. So Moses turned aside to ascertain why the bush was not consumed.

4. His attention gained, "God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses." He was at once convinced of the

presence of God and in submission replied, as did Abraham (Gen. 22: 1): "Here am I." He was at the post of duty, and busy. People who are busy, who have something to do, and who know how to do it, are the ones God calls to do greater work. He never calls idlers; there are no places for drones in his work. The men who do faithfully their present duty are the ones who are prepared and who are called to wider fields and greater work.

One who cannot lead and feed a flock of sheep cannot take care of God's people; one who does not rule well his own house is unfit to take the oversight of a church. (1 Tim. 3: 5.)

5. "Put off thy shoes." From this circumstance, it has been suggested, sprang the custom of the people of the East taking off their shoes when they enter their temples and sacred places. They take off their shoes as we take off our hats. The Lord told Joshua at Jericho to take off his shoes, for the reason given to Moses. (Josh. 5: 13-15.)

God's presence made the ground holy. Afterwards the mountain was called "holy" (Ex. 19: 23); so was the mount of transfiguration (2 Pet. 1: 18); Jerusalem was called "the holy city" (Matt. 27: 53) because God's presence was there.

6. To assure Moses, to give him confidence, to strengthen his faith, the Lord said: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." He was the God who appeared to these and delivered to them the promises. (Gen. 15: 1-21; 26: 2-5; 35: 1-12.) Jesus refers to this declaration in his discussion of the resurrection with the Sadducees. (Matt. 22: 32; Mark 12: 26; Luke 20: 37.)

"Moses hid his face," and "was afraid to look upon God," because he was overawed by the presence of God. So in the transfigured presence of Jesus, Peter, James, and John "fell on their face, and were sore afraid." (Matt. 17: 6.) How will it be with sinners when they stand in the judgment before God, who "is a consuming fire?" (Heb. 12: 29.)

7-9. In these verses God declares that he had seen the affliction and oppression of the children of Israel and had heard their cry. (See Ex. 2: 23-25; 5: 13, 14; Neh. 9: 9; Ps. 106: 44.) To deliver them he had now appeared to Moses. Moses and all that he did were the means God used in delivering the Israelites. God also intended to bring them "unto a good land and a large." It was large compared to the land of Goshen, where they were. "Flowing with milk and honey" is a frequent and proverbial expression of the Bible descriptive of the abundance of the land. For a beautiful and poetic description of this country, see Deut. 8: 4-18. This is called "the land of Canaan" because the Canaanites lived there.

The Canaanites were descendants of Canaan, a son of Ham; the Hittites descended from Heth (Gen. 23: 4, 5, 10; 25: 9), the second son of Canaan; the Amorites, Jebusites, and Hivites also descended from Canaan; other tribes also descended from him. (Gen. 10: 15-20.) The Jebusites were a mountain tribe and inhabited Jerusalem. (Josh. 10: 1, 5, 25; 12: 10; Judg. 19: 10.) It was taken by Judah. (Judg. 1: 8.) We have read about the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. (2 Sam. 24: 21-23; 1 Chron. 21: 18-27.) The origin of the Perizzites is not known. They are frequently mentioned among the inhabitants of the land of Canaan.

10. This verse states why God thus appeared to Moses. "Pharaoh," as we have learned, was a title of the king of Egypt.

11. Humbly Moses thought this an impossible task for him now. His first effort forty years previous to this had failed. Indeed, this would have been an impossible undertaking but for God's help. Moses' humility and meekness were essential qualifications for this great work. There is a great difference between Moses now and Moses forty years previous to this.

Jealousy and envy and not meekness and humility stand now in the way of success wherever they exist.

12. God removed this difficulty by promising to go with Moses, as we have seen above. "And this [the burning bush and God's presence in it] shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee." As further encouragement, God promised that Moses should come out of Egypt with the children of Israel and worship him upon that mountain.

III. God's Memorial Name

Read verses 13-15. Moses asked God what he must say when the children of Israel should ask the name of him who sent him, "and God said unto Moses, I am that I am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you." The margin puts it, "I am, because I am;" or, "I am who am;" or, "I will be that I will be." This means God is an eternal and self-existing Being. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." (Ps. 90: 2.) "And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt they say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Moses suggested other difficulties, which God at once removed. (See the remainder of the chapter.)

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the Time, Place, and Persons.

What is said about Horeb and Sinai?

What does "Exodus" mean?

Who wrote this book?

What does it contain?

What does the period of 430 years, and the one of 400 years embrace?

How long were the children of Israel really in Egypt?

How long were they pilgrims and strangers?

How long were they in Egypt after Joseph's death?

Why did Pharaoh think the rapid increase of the Israelites should be checked?

In what way first did he seek to do this?

What purposes of both Pharaoh and of God were thus served?

When this purpose failed to check

this increase, to what more cruel and wicked ways did the king resort?

Who were Moses' parents?

What other children had they?

Why probably was Aaron not thrown in the river?

With what is the life of Moses filled?

What is meant by his being "a goodly child?"

What did his parents do to preserve his life?

What was the main spring of all their actions?

How did this faith become so strong?

In what was Moses taught and trained by his parents?

What should be done in every home?

How do human efforts and God's providence work together?

Where and how were the first forty years of Moses' life spent?

What did he know was necessary for him to do in order to deliver his people?

What things did he do by faith?

What can you relate of Moses' life in the wilderness?

- 1 Give the name of Moses' father-in-law.

Who were the Midianites?

What character of people were they?

Why is Horeb or Sinai called the "mountain of God?"

Name the different things which occurred there.

- 2 Who appeared to Moses?

What was this angel called?

What did he do for the children of Israel?

Who was this angel?

In what did the angel appear?

At what other time did God appear in fire?

What kind of a bush was this?

Why was it not consumed?

- 3 Why did Moses turn to it?

- 4 What did God say?

What reply did Moses make?

What did he mean by that?

Whom does God call to his work?

What fits one for greater usefulness?

- 5 What did God tell Moses to do?

Why do this?

Who else was commanded to do this at a different time?

What other places are called "holy?"

What do people of the East now do on entering their temples, etc.?

- 6 Of whom was Jehovah the God?

Why did he say this?

What use does Jesus make of this declaration?

Why did Moses hide his face?

- 7, 9 What had God seen and heard?

What had he come to do?

To what kind of land did he intend to take them?

Why is it said to flow with milk and honey?

Why is it called the "land of Canaan?"

Who were the Canaanites?

Who were the Amorites?

Who were the Jebusites?

Who were the Hittites?

Who were the Hivites?

What city did the Jebusites inhabit?

What is said of the Perizzites?

- 10 To whom did God send Moses?

What was Pharaoh?

For what purpose did God send Moses to Pharaoh?

- 11 What did Moses say?

What did he mean by that?

What is the difference between Moses now and forty years ago?

- 12 How did God meet this difficulty?

What did God say should be a sign?

What other difficulties did Moses suggest?

How did God meet them?

What question did Moses ask God concerning who God is?

What answer did God make?

What is meant by "I am that I am?"

What is God's memorial name forever?

"I count this thing to be grandly true,
That a righteous deed is a step toward God,
Lifting the soul from its common clod
To a purer air and a clearer view.

Heaven is not reached by a single bound,
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit *round by round*."

—J. G. Holland.

LESSON IV—JANUARY 27.

ISRAEL SAVED AT THE RED SEA

Read: Exodus 12: 37—18: 27. *Lesson Text:* Exodus 14: 21-31.

EXODUS 14. 21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

22 And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

23 And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

24 And it came to pass in the morning watch, that Jehovah looked forth upon the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians.

25 And he took off their chariot wheels, and they drove them heavily; so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for Jehovah fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

26 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.

27 And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

28 And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so much as one of them.

29 But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

30 Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore.

31 And Israel saw the great work which Jehovah did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared Jehovah: and they believed in Jehovah, and in his servant Moses.

Golden Text—Jehovah is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation. (Ex. 15: 2.)

Time—B. C. 1491.

Place—Shores of the Red Sea.

Persons—The Israelites and the Egyptians.

Devotional Reading—Psalm 106: 1-9.

Home Reading—

Jan. 21. M. Israel Saved at the Red Sea. Ex. 14: 21-31.

22. T. Israel Pursued by Pharaoh. Ex. 14: 1-9.

23. W. God Promises Deliverance. Ex. 14: 10-20.

24. T. Song of Moses and Miriam. Ex. 15: 1-11.

25. F. Song of Moses and Miriam. Ex. 15: 12-21.

26. S. The Triumph of Faith. Heb. 11: 23-29.

27. S. Thanksgiving for Deliverance. Psalm 106: 1-9.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Pihahiroth, Migdol, and Baal-zephon were places close together and near which the Israelites encamped before crossing the Red Sea. They encamped "before Pihahiroth and "before Baal-zephon," but "between Migdol and the Sea." (Ex. 14: 2.)

INTRODUCTION

I. Lesson Connection

We should read carefully all the chapter intervening between the last lesson and this one and keep the facts before us.

At the burning bush God met Moses' every difficulty, and sent him to deliver the Israelites.

Moses was now eighty years old.

On the way Moses was reproved for not having circumcised his son, which was then done. (Ex. 4: 18-26.)

His wife and children were sent back to his father-in-law to await the deliverance. (Ex. 18: 1-8.)

The men in Egypt who sought to kill Moses were dead.

The Lord sent Aaron to meet Moses. Moses reported to him all the Lord had said. Both then returned to Egypt. They first reported to the elders all God had done and said, performed the miracles directed, and the people believed and rejoiced. (Ex 4: 1-9, 27-31.)

Moses and Aaron boldly presented themselves before Pharaoh and demanded the release of the Israelites. He haughtily said: "Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go." (Ex. 5: 2.) Pharaoh indignantly drove Moses and Aaron away, accusing them of causing idleness, and increased the burdens of Israel.

The Israelites blamed Moses; just as all now, who stand for truth and right, are accused of causing trouble, strife and division. God encouraged Moses.

Then followed the ten plagues, which were:

(1) Water turned to blood, (2) frogs, (3) lice, (4) flies, (5) murrain upon cattle, (6) boils and blains, (7) hail, (8) locusts, (9) darkness, and (10) death of the firstborn. (Ex. 11.) These plagues were directed against the idolatry of the Egyptians in order to show both them and the Israelites the power of the only true God. The magicians, such as Jannes and Jambres (2 Tim. 3: 8), withstood Moses; but the power of God was clearly manifested over them and to their shame, until they confessed to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God" (Ex. 8: 19); and they could not stand before Moses (Ex. 9: 11). When the plagues of flies came and the following ones, God separated the Israelites from the Egyptians to confirm the Israelites in their faith and to make the Egyptians know he was God. (Ex. 7: 5.) These plagues are called "God's wonders in Egypt" and his "wondrous works in the land of Ham." (Ps. 106: 7, 22.) Solemnly warning Pharaoh against the death of the first-born, Moses left his presence "in hot anger" (Ex. 11: 8), to appear before him no more (Ex. 10: 29).

II. The Passover

Exodus 12 gives detailed directions for the observance of the passover; another the observance of it on that terrible night when there was a dead person in every Egyptian home.

God said unto Moses and Aaron: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." (Ex. 12: 2.) This was the month of the passover. It became the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, and corresponds to the last of our March and first of April. This was the month of Abib (Ex. 13: 4), or Nisan (Esther 3: 7.) The civil year began with the seventh month.

This day has been called "the birthday of the Jewish nation" as the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus has been called "the birthday of the church." Preparation for the exodus had been made before this, and preparation for the church had been made before Pentecost.

III. "By Faith"

Faith in God was the mainspring of these great deeds; it led to this great deliverance. "By faith he [Moses] kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up." (Heb. 11: 28, 29.) Through faith in God they did what he commanded.

All who in faith obey God now are saved by faith.

For fifteen hundred years the passover commemorated this event, until Christ, "our passover," died on the cross. (See 1 Cor. 5: 7.)

For almost two thousand years the Lord's Supper has commemorated deliverance from sin and the grave through the body and blood of Christ.

None but God could have foreseen and prearranged all this so that one was the type of the other; none but God can erect monuments of events before they transpire. Human wisdom would not have selected the simple lamb and unleaven bread, and, in case of the Lord's Supper, the loaf and fruit of the vine; it would have selected more enduring, time-defying, and costly substances. But man's ways are not God's ways. (See Isa. 55: 8, 9.)

"And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle." (Ex. 12: 37, 38.)

God claimed the firstborn of man and beast because he thus saved the firstborn alive. (Ex. 13: 1-16.) Later he took the Levites in lieu of the firstborn. (Num. 3: 1-51.)

Since the Israelites went out of Egypt by faith, they went by God's directions. He "led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt; but God led the people about, by the way of the wilderness by the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt." (Ex. 13: 17, 18.)

IV. The Waterless Way Not by Faith

By consulting a map you will readily see how it was nearer to Canaan by the Philistine way, and that in that way there was no sea—no water—to cross; but that was not God's way. The Israelites could not have gone that way by faith.

According to Joseph's direction, which was also given by faith, his bones were carried out of Egypt by Moses. (Ex. 13: 19; Heb. 11: 22.)

From Succoth they journeyed to Etham, which was east or north-east from Succoth (consult the map), "in the edge of the wilderness." (Ex. 13: 20.)

Here the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night is first mentioned. This was given that the Israelites might know the way God wanted them to go and that they might travel by night. (Ex. 13: 21, 22.) They had started the wrong way out of Egypt, but the way human wisdom would suggest.

Just so men sometimes start to heaven the wrong way—the way human wisdom suggests; but such is not God's way and wisdom.

At Etham, God turned the Israelites back; and they traveled southward, in an opposite direction from Canaan, and encamped "before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-zephon." (Ex. 14: 1.) This was between the mountain and the sea in a kind of pocket, or trap, from which there was, seemingly, no escape but to return the way they went into it. Read Ps. 77, 78; Num. 33.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. "Stand Still, and See the Salvation of Jehovah"

(Vs. 10, 13, 14.) On the day after the passover the Egyptians were busy burying their dead (Num 33: 3, 4); but when Pharaoh heard where the Israelites were, he thought they had lost their way and were "entangled in the land" and the "wilderness" had "shut them in." Repenting that he had let them go, he at once made ready "six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt," and pursued them.

This greatly frightened the Israelites, and they "cried out unto Jehovah," for they saw no way of escape. Their faith in God was not sufficiently strong, and there their murmurings began. They should have known God could have delivered them. Moses said to them: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. Jehovah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Moses trusted in God, believed God would save the Israelites, and spoke to them as above.

Their duty was to "stand still," or patiently wait in faith, until God should give further directions. "Rest in [be still before]—margin] Jehovah, and wait patiently for him." (Ps. 37: 7.) To "stand still," when God commands that, is as much obedience to him as to go forward, when he commands that.

God said to Moses: "Wherefore criest thou unto me, speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground." (Verses 15, 16.) One must obey God as well as pray. In this way

God saved the Israelites and in this way he fought for them. He opened up the way, and they had to obey him.

II. How Did God Harden Pharaoh's Heart?

"I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians." God said also he would "harden Pharaoh's heart." (Verse 4; 11: 10.) It is also stated that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. How was it done?

God saves men now. How does he do that? He saves them through Jesus—the life, death, blood, and resurrection of Jesus; he saves them through the gospel. (Rom. 1: 16, 17.) Also, men save themselves. (Acts 2: 40; Phil. 2: 12.) How do they do it? By obedience in faith to God's will. (Acts 2: 38-41; Phil. 2: 12; 1 Pet. 1: 22.) So God hardens men and they harden themselves. All his threatenings and warnings, means of grace and salvation in which many rejoice, serve only to harden the hearts of all who reject them. "To the one a savor from death unto death; to the other a savor from life unto life." (2 Cor. 2: 16.)

The signs and means which increased and strengthened the Israelites' faith and saved them hardened Pharaoh's heart and the heart of the Egyptians. Thus God saved the Israelites and hardened the hearts of the Egyptians; thus, too, the Israelites saved themselves and the Egyptians hardened their hearts. The Egyptians were left to choose their own course, and their choice to resist God and God's means hardened their hearts.

"And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have gotten me honor upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen." The Egyptians acknowledged that God fought for the Israelites when he discomfited them and took off their chariot wheels (verses 24, 25), and he got honor upon them when he destroyed them all in the sea.

III. How God Saved Israel

Ex. 13: 21 says: "And Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light." The angel of his presence saved them. (Isa. 63: 9.) "And sent an angel, and brought us forth out of Egypt." (Num. 20: 16.) This angel led them into Canaan. (Ex. 32: 34, 33: 2.) The angel of God's presence was in the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire. Thus God went before them. His presence was clothed with this pillar of cloud and pillar of fire. This pillar removed when the angel removed. The angel removed from before the Israelites and went behind here to protect them from the Egyptians. (Verses 19, 20.)

Comments on "the angel of God's presence" have been made in Lesson III under verse 1, which see.

21, 22. As God had commanded him, Moses stretched out his hand, with the rod in it, over the sea. This rod had done wonders before when stretched out in obedience to God. What he has placed in our hands, God would have us use to his glory. "And Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night." "And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were piled up, the floods stood upright as a heap; the deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea." (Ex. 15: 8.) God "clave the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as a heap" (Ps.

78: 13); so that, indeed, "the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left," and the Israelites "went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground."

This was a miracle. The waters "divided" when Moses stretched out his rod over the sea; and, again, when he stretched his hand over the sea, it "returned to its strength." (Verse 27.) So the inspired writers of the Bible ever speak of it.

23. The Egyptians thought where the Israelites went they could go, and so pursued in their folly.

24. "The morning watch," it is said, at that time was from two o'clock until sunrise. Jehovah saw the Egyptians at all times; but the expression, "looked forth upon the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud," must mean the destruction he visited upon them, for he "discomfited" them.

25. God caused the Egyptians' chariot wheels to run off, "and they drove them heavily." They dragged in the sand. The Egyptians recognized the hand of God in this and confessed it was useless to pursue the Israelites further.

26, 27. The Israelites safe on the other side. God commanded Moses to stretch forth his hand over the sea, which he did, and the waters at once returned and overflowed all the Egyptians. They "fled against it," but could not escape; "and Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea."

28-31. This was done when the "morning appeared." "And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so much as one of them." Ps. 77: 16-20 describes a fearful storm of rain, whirlwind, lightning, and thunder which swept down upon the Egyptians. From all this the Israelites were protected. The cloud which covered them was not a rain cloud. "Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians. . . . And the people feared Jehovah: and they believed in Jehovah and in his servant Moses."

Then followed the happy and triumphant song of deliverance. (Ex. 15: 1-19.) The victory was ascribed to Jehovah. Jehovah "triumphed gloriously:" he threw "the horse and his rider" "into the Sea:" Jehovah was the strength and salvation of Moses; Jehovah was his God, his fathers' God. For these reasons Moses praised and exalted him.

IV. This is a Type of Salvation from Sin

This was God's salvation. He was the author of it. In this way he saved Israel. But he saved them only when they went forward in obedience to him. Paul says they "were all under the cloud, and all passed through the Sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the Sea." (1 Cor. 10: 1, 2.)

All this was a type of our deliverance from the bondage of sin through Christ. God sent Moses to deliver Israel, he sent Jesus to deliver us; Moses worked miracles to convince Israel that God had sent him (Ex. 4: 27-31). Jesus worked miracles to convince the world that God had sent him (John 3: 2: 5: 36; 14: 11: 20: 30, 31); the Israelites believed in and followed Moses, all must believe in and follow Jesus; the Israelites turned away from Egypt, all must repent of all sins and turn away from the world; the Israelites fol-

lowed the way God led and were "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," all must follow where God leads and be baptized "into Christ." (Gal. 3: 26, 27.) Jesus says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16: 16.) To those who believe in Christ the Holy Spirit says: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2: 26-38.) To the believing, penitent, praying Saul, God said: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22: 16.) "And he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened." (Acts 9: 18, 19.)

When the Israelites obeyed God in following his guidance and were baptized "unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," it was said, "Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day;" and when people now believe in Jesus as the Christ of God, repent of all sins, turn away from the world, and are baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in obedience to God, he forgives their sins, or saves them. Thus God saves people from the bondage of sin. This, too, is God's salvation. Jesus Christ is "unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5: 7-9.)

The shortest route to Canaan and the one which did not lead through baptism "unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" was not God's way; the promise of salvation from sin short of obedience to God in baptism through faith in Jesus Christ is not God's way, not God's salvation.

After obeying God as above came the song of deliverance; after obeying God now comes the song of deliverance. The enunch "went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8: 39); and the jailer "rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God." (Acts 16: 24.) After Paul was baptized he "took food and was strengthened." (Acts 9: 18, 19.)

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place, and Persons.
What were Pihahiroth, Migdol and Baal-zephon?
Did you read the intervening Chapters?
How old was Moses at this time?
Why was Moses reproved?
What became here of his wife and children?
Who was sent to meet Moses?
What caused the elders to believe God sent Moses?
What did Pharaoh say to Moses and Aaron?
Who blamed Moses?
Who are blamed today?
Give the ten plagues.
Who withstood Moses?
But what were they forced to confess?
What are these plagues called?
What was here instituted?
What did this month become?
What was the mainspring or source of all these deeds?

What two things done by faith are here specified?
Who are saved by faith today, or how are we saved by faith?
How long did the passover continue?
Who is our passover?
What commemorates Christ's suffering and death?
When is it observed?
Show in the passover and the Lord's Supper the differences between human wisdom and God's wisdom.
How many went out of Egypt?
What did they take with them?
Why did God claim the first born?
What did he take in their stead?
Give the route in which God led the Israelites.
Why did God choose this route for them?
In what way did they start?
Where and why did the pillar of cloud appear?
Where did they encamp?
(Verses 10, 13, 14)—What were

- the Egyptians busy doing on the day after the passover?
 When Pharaoh saw the situation of the Israelites, what did he do?
 What effect did this have upon the Israelites?
 What did Moses say to them?
 What then was their duty?
 Repeat Ps. 37: 7.
 What did God ask Moses and command him to do?
 How did God harden Pharaoh's heart and how did Pharaoh do it?
 How did God get honor for himself upon the Egyptians?
 What angel led the Israelites?
 How was this done?
 21, 22 What do different passages say God did to the sea?
 23 What did the Egyptians do?
 24, 25. What did God do to the Chariots of the Egyptians, and what did they confess?
- 26, 27 How were the Egyptians destroyed?
 28, 31 State the difference between the storm which came upon the Egyptians and the cloud which protected the Israelites?
 State in full how God saved the Israelites.
 Why did they believe in and fear God?
 What song followed?
 What was ascribed to God?
 Of what was this salvation a type?
 Name the points of likeness between Moses and Jesus?
 Name the points of likeness between what the Israelites did and what people must do now to be saved from sin.
 What is God's way of salvation now?
 What now corresponds to the song of salvation?

I said, "I will walk in the fields." God said,

"Nay, walk in the town."

I said, "There are no flowers there." He said,

"No flowers, but a crown."

I said, "But the fogs are thick, and clouds
 Are veiling the sun."

He said, "But hearts are sick, and souls
 In the dark undone."

I said, "But the skies are black; there is
 Nothing but noise and din."

And He wept as He led me back—"There is more,"
 He said, "There is sin."

I said, "I shall miss the light, and friends will
 Miss me, they say."

He said, "Choose you tonight if I must
 Miss you, or they."

I plead for time to be given. He said,
 "Is it hard to decide?"

It will not seem hard in heaven to have
 Followed the steps of your Guide."

—George MacDonald.

LESSON V.—FEBRUARY 3.

WHAT ISRAEL LEARNED AT SINAI

Read: Exodus 19: 1—24: 8; Leviticus, Chap. 19; Deut. 4: 32-40.

Lesson Text: Deut. 4: 32-40.

DEUTERONOMY 4. 32 For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?

33 Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?

34 Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that Jehovah your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

35 Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that Jehovah he is God; there is none else besides him.

36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he made thee to see his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.

37 And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out with his presence, with his great power, out of Egypt;

38 to drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as at this day.

39 Know therefore this day, and lay it to thy heart, that Jehovah he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else.

40 And thou shalt keep his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days in the land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, for ever.

Golden Text—Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. (Deut. 6: 5.) Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. (Lev. 19: 18.)

Time—B.C. 1451.

Place—Plain of Moab.

Persons—Moses and the children of Israel.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 95: 1-7.

Home Reading—

Jan. 28. M. What Israel Learned at Sinai. Deut. 4: 32-40.

29. T. Moses Meets God in the Mount. Ex. 19: 16-25.

30. W. The Commandments, Showing our Relation to God.

Ex. 20: 1-11.

31. T. The Commandments, Showing our Relation to Others.

Ex. 20: 12-21.

Feb. 1. F. Sabbaths and Feasts. Ex. 23: 1-17.

2. S. Jehovah's Covenant at Sinai. Ex. 23: 20-31.

3. S. Praise to Jehovah. Psalm 95: 1-7.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

"The Plain Moab" was east of the Jordan, opposite the city of Jericho, and was, it is said, nine miles long and six miles wide.

Horeb and Sinai are spoken of as the same mountain. (See Ex. 19: 1, 10-14; Heb. 12: 18-21; Deut. 1: 6; 4: 10, 15; 5: 2.) Sinai was in Arabia. (Gal. 4: 25.) Horeb was probably the mountain range and Sinai the peak on which God appeared.

So with Abarim, Pisgah, and Nebo. Abarim was the name of the range of mountains. (Num. 33: 47, 48.) Nebo and Pisgah were peaks of this range. Pisgah was the highest peak, for "Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho." (Deut. 34: 1.)

INTRODUCTION

I. The Book of Deuteronomy

This lesson is in this book. "Deuteronomy" means "repetition," "resume," or "recapitulation," and is a restatement of the law and commandments of God.

We shall see the importance of a recapitulation of these commandments and ordinances when we remember that the generation of grown people which left Egypt had all died in the wilderness, except Joshua and Caleb, and that it was necessary for the younger generation to hear them. Some of the generation to whom Moses spoke were only children when God gave the law forty years previous from Sinai, and many had been born since. Many of them had not witnessed some of the wonderful occurrences in the wilderness, and to them Moses must repeat the principal events of the forty years and impress in a solemn manner the precepts and principles of the law and the importance of faithful and loving obedience to God.

Moses began to deliver these farewell addresses on the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year after the Israelites left Egypt (Deut. 1: 3), and continued until his death, which occurred some time in the first week of the twelfth month of the same year. These addresses were delivered at different times: "And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel; and he said unto them, Set your heart unto all the words which I testify unto you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, even all the words of this law. For it is no vain thing for you; because it is your life, and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over the Jordan to possess it." (Deut. 32: 45-47.)

II. Important Intervening Events

It was forty years since the children of Israel left Egypt to the time of this lesson (Deut. 2: 7); and thirty-eight years since the report of the spies at Kadesh-Barnea, when God turned them back to wander in the wilderness "until all the generations of the men of war" should die. (Deut. 2: 14.)

Let us note here some important events which occurred between crossing the Red Sea and the turning back from Kadesh-Barnea; namely, complaints or murmurings up to the tenth time, sweetening the water, sending quails, giving the manna, bringing water from the rock, war with the Amalekites, the appointment of judges to assist

Moses, giving the law, making and worshiping the golden calf, constructing the tabernacle, and sending the spies and their report.

Through lack of faith the Israelites "rebelled against the commandment of Jehovah," and "believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice," at Kadesh-Barnea (Deut. 9:22-24), and God turned them back for thirty-eight years of wandering in the wilderness. God did this to "humble" them and "to prove" them; "to know" what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments or not. (See Deut. 8: 2-5.)

God is training and developing his children now in the church, the school of Christ, for the heavenly Canaan; and they should not complain and murmur, as Israel of old. (1 Cor. 9: 23 to 10: 13.)

The most important events which occurred between Kadesh-barnea and this lesson are as follows:

The Sabbath breaker was stoned to death. (Num. 15: 32-36.)

The rebellion of Korah, the Levite, and Dathan, Abiram, and On, sons of Reuben, with "two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation, . . . men of renown," against Moses and Aaron, and the destruction of the two hundred and fifty by fire, while the earth swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their families and goods.

The plague which destroyed fourteen thousand and seven hundred. (Num. 16.)

To hush the murmuring and to settle forever the question of Aaron's priesthood, God commanded that twelve rods—one for each of the tribes—be laid up in the tent of meeting before the testimony, and he whose rod should bud was the one God had chosen; and on the morrow, when Moses looked at the rods, Aaron's rod budded, produced blossoms, and bore ripe almonds. This rod was then put back by the command of God "before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the children of rebellion," to put an end to the murmurings against God. (Num. 17.)

After thirty-seven years' wandering, they returned to Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, although this was only eleven days' journey from Mount Horeb. (Deut. 1: 2.)

At Kadesh, Miriam died "in the first month" of the fortieth year after they left Egypt. (Num. 20: 1.)

Here the people again complained that they had no water, and here occurred the sad mistake of Moses and Aaron of failing to sanctify God in the eyes of the children of Israel and of rebelling against his word because they believed not in him. (Num. 20: 2-13; 27: 12-14.)

The Edomites refused to allow the Israelites to pass through their land, and the Israelites had to go around, or compass, "Mount Seir many days." (Deut. 2: 1-8; see also Num. 20: 14-21.) The Edomites were the descendants of Esau.

Aaron died on Mount Hor, "by the [western] border of the land of Edom," at the age of one hundred and twenty-three years. (Num. 20: 22-29; 33: 38, 39.)

Coming in contact with King Arad, who led the Canaanites against them, the Israelites overcame him, made a vow to destroy the Canaanites, and pursued their journey around the land of Edom. (Numbers 21: 1-4.)

Much discouraged because of the way, the people again mur-

mured against God and Moses, when God sent the fiery serpents and destroyed many of them. Upon the confession of their sin and praying God for forgiveness, he directed Moses to erect on a pole the brazen serpent in the midst of the camp and healed all who looked upon it. (Num. 21: 5-9.)

We are familiar with the lesson Jesus draws from this. (John 3: 14, 15.)

III. The Victories of the Israelites Over Sihon and Og

After the children of Israel had rounded the southern border of Edom they journeyed north along the eastern border of Edom to Pisgah.

They were not allowed to vex the land of Moab and Ammon because the Moabites and Ammonites were descendants of Lot.

They overcame Sihon, the king of the Amorites, "and possessed his land from the Arnon unto the Jabbok."

They next overcame Og, king of Bashan, at Edrei, and took all his cities—"threescore cities"—and "all the region of Argob." Og was the only one left of the giants called "Rephaim." He had an iron bedstead, which was nine cubits long and four cubits wide—at least thirteen and one-half feet by six feet.

Hearing of these victories, the king of Moab, with Midianites, sent to Mesopotamia for the false prophet, Balaam, to come and curse the Israelites; but when he came, God turned his curse into blessing. But he taught Balak, the king of the Moabites, to cast a stumbling-block in the way of the Israelites and to induce them to commit fornication and to offer sacrifices to idols; and when they did this, God himself slew twenty-four thousand of them.

Again God commanded that the number of the Israelites be taken, and there were six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty men twenty years old and upward, except the Levites.

Then the children of Israel were avenged upon the Midianites, when Balaam also was slain.

The tribe of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh were promised possessions east of the Jordan upon condition that they would go over Jordan and help the others to drive out the inhabitants of the land.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Moses on Sinai

32, 33, 36. Let us consider the facts of these verses together. In this speech and in recounting the wonderful things God had done for the Israelites, Moses asks them to look over the past, since man had been created, and see if any such thing had ever been done for any people. "For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man on the earth, and from the one end of the heaven to the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it." "This great thing" was hearing "the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire," causing the people "to hear his voice" "out of heaven," and yet they were not destroyed. This was wonderfully great.

"Moses went up unto God," and God talked with him out of the mountain; then he came down and related to the people all that God had said.

God reminded them of what he had done to the Egyptians, and how he had borne them "on eagles' wings" and brought them unto him to make them his "own possession from among all peoples" and to make them "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation," if they would obey his voice and keep his covenant.

The people said: "All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do."

When Moses reported the words of the people to God, he said to Moses: "I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may also believe thee forever."

Moses was to sanctify the people and have them "ready against the third day." "Bounds" were set about the mountain that nothing should touch it. The man or beast that touched it must be slain.

On the morning of the third day "there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud." Then "Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof was as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." (Read carefully Ex. 19.)

No wonder Moses said: "I exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. 12: 21.) The mountain quaked, the people quaked, and Moses quaked.

Amid such awe-inspiring surroundings Jehovah spoke to the people. He spoke the ten commandments out of the cloud in the hearing of the people, "which voice they that heard entreated that no word more be spoken unto them." (Heb. 12: 19.) "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you, that ye sin not." (Ex. 20: 19, 20.) "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven." (Ex. 20: 22.)

While Jehovah spoke "out of the midst of the fire" and the people heard the voice of his words they "saw no form." They "saw no manner of form," lest they should make any image or figure of any thing in the heavens, or on the earth, or in the seas, and be drawn away and worship them. (Deut. 4: 12-20.)

II. The Origin of Man

The expression, "since the day that God created man upon the earth" shows that man was created, that there was a day when he was created, that God created him, and that he was created upon the earth. In Isaiah 45: 12 God says: "I made the earth and created man upon it." This is the way man came into existence, and when. "And God created man in his own image, male and female created he them." (Gen. 1: 26, 27; See Gen. 5: 1; 9: 6.) Man begat children in his own likeness, after his image." (Gen. 5: 3.) Man "is the image and glory of God." (1 Cor. 11: 7; James 3: 9.) To man, upright, intelligent, created in the image of God, God gave dominion over the whole earth and told him how to use it. (Gen. 1: 24-30.)

III. What God Did for the Israelites

34, 38. These verses state what God had done for the Israelites. He had never done so much for any people. He had taken them out from another nation, or had delivered them from the hard and cruel bondage of a nation mightier than they, and had made them a nation unto himself, and, furthermore, had promised to drive out nations before them greater than themselves and to give them the land of these nations for an inheritance. They knew this, because they had seen it with their own eyes, and should remember it. God had done this "by trials, by signs, and by wonders and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors." (See, also, Deut. 7: 17-26.)

IV. Why God Did This

35. God came down upon Mount Sinai in the thick cloud, covered it with darkness and fire, and spoke to the people from heaven and out of the fire that they might see all this and hear his voice, that he might instruct them, that they might know that Jehovah is God, and "that there is none else beside him." Even then it was impossible to keep the majority of them out of idolatry.

37. He did this also, because he loved their fathers and had chosen their seed after them. For this reason he had brought the ones to whom Moses spoke out of Egypt and through the terrible wilderness "with his presence."

Showing that not all the children of Israel had forgotten God's mercies, Isaiah (63: 7-9) rejoices in the loving kindness, great goodness, and multitude of blessings God had bestowed upon them in their afflictions, had made them his people, and by "the angel of his presence had saved them."

Much is said in this connection about "the angel of God's presence." "The angel of Jehovah" called unto Abraham "out of heaven" and stopped him when about to slay Isaac (Gen. 22: 11); "the angel of Jehovah" spoke to Moses from the burning bush (Ex. 3: 2); "the angel of God" was in the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, protecting and guiding the children of Israel (Ex. 13: 21, 22; 14: 19, 20); God promised that his "presence" should go with Moses. (Ex. 32: 34; 33: 2, 12-16.) Note what is said in Lesson III about "the angel of God's presence."

39. With all this plain and powerful teaching, with these signs and demonstrations, and with this multitude of loving kindness and continued mercy, the children of Israel should know and lay it to heart that Jehovah "is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath," and that there is no other.

But in view of God's love for us what should we know and do? We should be moved and led to repent (Rom. 2: 4); constrained to serve Christ (2 Cor. 5: 14); present our bodies living, holy, and acceptable sacrifices to God (Rom. 12: 1); and love and obey him. (John 4: 19; 5: 2, 3.)

40. Jehovah being the only true and living God, there being no other, and because of all his loving kindness—all he had done for the children of Israel—they are commanded to "keep his statutes and his

commandments," which they had heard at Sinai and which had been repeated by Moses.

They were forbidden to add to them or to diminish from them. This was impressed by the destruction of thousands at Baalpeor. (Deut. 4: 1-8.) This is repeated in Deut. 12: 32 and in different ways from one end of the Bible to the other. It is strongly impressed concerning the gospel of Christ. (1 Cor. 2: 1-5; Gal. 1: 6-9; 2 John 9; Rev. 22: 18-20.)

The "statutes" and "commandments" of God embrace the service and worship of God and all duties to man.

"That it may go well with thee and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days in the land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, forever." No nation had statutes and commandments "so righteous as all this law." God's laws are just and righteous always. In keeping them is wisdom. This would show the Israelites to be "a great nation" and "a wise and understanding people." (See Deut. 4: 5-8.)

No man, no family, no congregation is so wise, has so great understanding, and enjoys so much peace as the one that keeps God's commandments in all things.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the Time, Place, and Persons.

Where and what were Horeb and Sinai?

What does "Deuteronomy" mean?

Why the necessity for repeating the commandments and ordinances of God?

What was it to the children of Israel to obey God's commandments?

How long had it been since they had left Egypt and since they had left Kadesh-Barnea?

Name the important events which occurred between leaving Egypt and leaving Kadesh-Barnea.

Why did God turn the children of Israel back at Kadesh-Barnea, to wander around in the Wilderness for thirty-eight years?

Name the events which occurred from Kadesh-Barnea until the children of Israel met Sihon and Og.

Why were they not allowed to disturb the Moabites and Ammonites?

Who were Sihon and Og?

How did the king of Moab and the Midianites think they could overcome the Israelites?

What was the result?

What tribes settled east of the Jordan, but upon what condition?

32, 33, 36. What did Moses call upon the people to consider?

What were these things?

What did the people promise to do?

How was the mountain and people sanctified?

What appeared on the mountain?

What effect did all this have upon the people and Moses?

What did God speak to the people?

What request did they make of Moses?

Why did God not allow the people to see any manner of form?

What is stated here concerning the origin of man?

34, 38 What had God done for the Israelites more than for any people?

35 Why did God thus come down on the mountain?

37 In what does Isaiah rejoice?

What is said in the Bible about the angel of God's presence?

39 What should the children of Israel know by what God had done for them?

What should we know and do?

40 What should the children of Israel do and what were they forbidden to do?

What would make them wise and give them understanding and prosperity?

LESSON VI—FEBRUARY 10.

THE FAILURE AT KADESH

Read: Num. 13: 17—14: 45; Deut. 1: 26-40. *Lesson Text:* Num. 14: 1-10.

NUMBERS 14. 1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would that we had died in this wilderness!

3 And wherefore doth Jehovah bring us unto this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be a prey: were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

6 And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were of them that spied out the land, rent their clothes:

7 and they spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceeding good land.

8 If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it unto us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

9 Only rebel not against Jehovah, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is removed from over them, and Jehovah is with us: fear them not.

10 But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tent of meeting unto all the children of Israel.

Golden Text—Jehovah is with us: fear them not. (Num. 14: 9.)

Time—B.C. 1490.

Place—Kadesh-Barnea.

Persons—Moses, Aaron, the spies, and the Israelites.

Devotional Reading—Rom. 8: 31-39.

Home Reading—

- Feb. 4. M. The Failure at Kadesh. Num. 14: 1-10.
- 5. T. The Spies Sent to Canaan. Num. 13: 17-24.
- 6. W. The Report of the Spies. Num. 13: 25-33.
- 7. T. Moses' Intercession. Num. 14: 11-19.
- 8. F. Results of the Failure. Num. 14: 26-35.
- 9. S. Moses' Final Charge. Deut. 32: 44-47.
- 10. S. "More than conquerors." Rom. 8: 31-39.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Kadesh-Barnea was a town in the wilderness of Paran, near the border of the promised land at the southeast corner (Josh. 15: 3.) and in the border of Edom. (Num. 20: 16.)

Its former name was En-mishpat. (Gen. 14: 7.)

There the angel appeared to Hagar. (Gen. 16: 14.)

The spies were sent from and returned to it. (Num. 3-26.)

Miriam died and was buried there. (Num. 20: 1.)

There the people murmured. (Num. 20: 3.)

There Moses struck the rock when God commanded him to speak

to it, and thus showed his lack of faith in God. (Num. 20: 7-13.)

The Israelites remained there "many days." (Deut. 1: 46.)

The wilderness of Paran extended along the Southern border of Canaan.

"The South" was the Southern border of Canaan.

Hebron was about twenty miles (in round numbers) south of Jerusalem and was one of the oldest towns in the world, having been "built seven years before Zoan in Egypt." (Num. 13: 22.) It now has 10,000 inhabitants.

Hamath was a Syrian town, the northern limit of the country assigned to the Israelites.

Rehob was a town in the tribe of Asher, which tribe possessed the northwestern corner of the land of promise.

"The wilderness of Zin" was the southeastern border of the land of promise.

We see from these places how thoroughly the spies did their work.

INTRODUCTION

I. Connecting History

Many important events in the history of the Children of Israel occurred between the last lesson and this one—namely, the awe-inspiring appearance of Jehovah upon Sinai, the wonderful scenes upon that mountain, the giving of the law, the building of the tabernacle, the giving the laws of the various offerings, the services of the priest, and all the enactments in the book of Leviticus, and the journey to Kadesh-Barnea.

The Israelites reached Sinai in the third month after they left Egypt (Ex. 19: 1, 2), and on the twentieth day of the second month of the second year they left there, taking "their journey according to the commandment of Jehovah by Moses" (Num. 10: 11-16.) God commanded the Israelites when to leave Horeb and the way to go until they reached Kadesh-Barnea. (Deut. 1: 6-19.) From Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea was eleven days' journey. (Deut. 1: 2.)

The report of the spies—of the ten and then of Joshua and Caleb—is given in chapter 13. To understand the lesson, this chapter must be studied.

II. The Spies Sent

These spies were sent at the request of the children of Israel, which, says Moses, "pleased me well." (Deut. 1: 22, 23.) God approved this, and commanded Moses to do it. "Of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a prince among them. . . . All of them men who were heads of the children of Israel." There were, then, twelve spies—none from the tribe of Levi, but one from the tribe of Ephraim and one from Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph. Their names are given. They were to go "by the South, and . . . into the hill country."

These spies were to report on the condition of the land, whether productive or not and whether timbered or not; on the cities, and how they were fortified; and on the people and their strength.

It "was the time of the first ripe grapes"—about the last of summer or first of fall.

The spies went "and spied out the land from the wilderness of

Zin unto Rehob, to the entrance, of Hamath. And they went up by the South, and came unto Hebron."

The spies viewed the land from one extremity to the other, and came "unto the valley of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it upon a staff between two." Perhaps the chief reason for carrying this cluster so was to prevent crushing it. Clarke's "Commentary" speaks of grapes as large as plums and of a bunch at Damascus which weighed more than forty pounds. Bunches in other places have been found to weigh twenty pounds, and even more. This valley was called "Eshcol" from this circumstance, because "Eshcol" means "a cluster." Those who know say the fruit of this valley was very fine. The spies carried also figs and pomegranates.

The spies were forty days in doing this work.

III. The Good Report

Having done their work, the spies returned to Kadesh, in the wilderness of Paran, where the children of Israel had remained while they were gone. They reported unto Moses and Aaron, "and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land," and said: "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us; and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it."

We shall learn more of this good land from Joshua and Caleb.

IV. The Evil Report

The word "howbeit" turned the attention of the people from the good report above to the evil report which follows. They presented four reasons why they could not take the country: (1) The people are strong; (2) the cities are fenced and very great; (3) there are giants there; and (4) these different nations occupy the country in these different parts.

Amalekites were the descendants of Esau. (Gen. 36: 9-12.) They were roving people. The Israelites had already overcome them, and God had already declared unceasing war with Amalek. (Ex. 17: 8-16.)

All these nations fainted or "melted away" before Joshua. (Josh. 2: 9.) Jericho, one of the walled cities, fell down by faith, even if the Israelites did not possess battering-rams to tear it down. (Josh. 6.) Joshua also destroyed the Anakim.

The children of Anak were giants. Some were left in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. (Josh. 11: 21, 22.) "Goliath, of Gath," was "six cubits and a span," or over nine feet tall. The Canaanites descended from Ham (Gen. 10), and from them the country received its name.

"And they brought up an evil report." It was evil because, in part, they misrepresented the country. "A land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof." They must have meant by this that it was not healthful, or, more likely, that the contending nations devoured one another. The report was also evil in the rebellious effect it had upon the people. "The Nephilim, the sons of Anak," were giants, beside whom the Hebrews were "as grasshoppers." This, doubtless, seemed so to these cowardly spies.

Of the Amorites the Lord says: "Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was

strong as the oaks." (Amos 2: 9.) The inhabitants of the land were strong, robust, warlike people.

V. Joshua and Caleb

This report greatly aroused the people; but Caleb, one of the spies, "stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." Joshua, another one of the spies, joined Caleb in this. Caleb, doubtless, spoke first. Caleb is called a "Kenizzite," and it is said of him "that he wholly followed Jehovah, the God of Israel." (Josh. 14: 14.) Othniel, his brother, is called "the son of Kenaz." It is also said, in dividing the country between the tribes: "And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a portion among the children of Judah." (Josh. 15: 13.) Hence it is thought by some that Caleb was a proselyte who became identified with the tribe of Judah. He drove out from Hebron "the three sons of Anak: Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai." (Josh. 15: 14.) Thus he demonstrated his declaration in our lesson.

The other ten spies replied to him that they were "not able to go up against the people," giving the reason: "For they are stronger than we."

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Effect of the Evil Report

1-3. These verses give the effect of this evil report upon the people and the result of their rebellion. They "cried" and "wept that night." Then "all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said, . . . Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would that we had died in this wilderness!"

Only two magnanimous spirits, with courage worthy of their cause, stood out against these murmurs and complaints.

In complaining against Moses, their God-appointed leader, and against the way God had commanded, they complained against God.

II. God Revoked His Promise

4. They said: "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." They knew Moses would not do this. Nehemiah (9: 17) says: "And in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage."

5-10. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the people; and Joshua and Caleb, in distress, rent their clothes and replied to the evil report of the spies. They said it was an exceedingly good land; if the Lord delighted in them, they could take it; instead of being devoured by the inhabitants, the inhabitants would be food for them; and that the defense of the inhabitants had departed. The congregation would have stoned Joshua and Caleb but for the sudden appearance of the glory of Jehovah in the tabernacle before all the children of Israel.

God again said he would destroy that rebellious nation and make of Moses one greater and mightier; but again Moses interceded for the people, and God heard his prayer. However, the Lord said all the grown men, save Joshua and Caleb, should fall in the wilderness; but

the little ones, whom they said God had brought out of Egypt to destroy should go into the land of promise.

God said he would show them his "alienation" (verse 34,) or would revoke his promise to take that generation into the land of promise and they should turn back and for forty years, counting from the time they left Egypt—a year for every day the spies were gone—they should wander in the wilderness. God confirmed this by sending a plague which killed the ten spies. God would not allow Joshua and Caleb to be stoned, but himself slew the other ten. Then in rebellion the people declared they would go and take the country, but suffered defeat.

III. An Evil Heart of Unbelief

Ten times God says the Israelites had tempted him. This was the tenth time. God says, too, it all came from unbelief. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long will this people despise me? and how long will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them?" This people believed in the existence of God, but did not believe in God because they did not believe his word and obey his commandments. There is a great difference between believing that God exists and believing in God. To believe in God is to trust him, to rely upon his promises, and to obey him for that reason. It is very necessary to learn this.

Through lack of faith the Israelites "rebelled against the Commandment of Jehovah," and "believed him not nor hearkened to his voice." (Deut. 9: 22-24.) For this reason God turned them back to wander in the wilderness. God did this "to humble" them, and "to prove" them; to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments or not. (Deut. 8: 2-5.)

God is now training and developing his children in the church, or school of Christ, for the heavenly Canaan; and they should not complain and murmur, as Israel of old.

When people distrust God's means and think his way will not work or is inadequate, it is because they do not believe in God. Christians are now warned against an "evil heart of unbelief." (Heb. 3: 12.) They are journeying to the heavenly Canaan, and the only way to reach it is to follow God's directions. He has given us the church, "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3: 15); the gospel, his power unto salvation (Rom. 1: 16, 17); Jesus, the bread of heaven and the water of life; the pure, simple, and humble worship in the church; and the Bible as our guide; and those who think these are not sufficient or will not produce the desired results are affected with evil hearts of unbelief—they do not believe in God.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place, and Persons.
Tell all about Kadesh-Barnea.
What and where was the wilderness of Paran?
What was the South?
Tell what you know of Hebron of Hamoth?
Of Rehob.
What shows the thoroughness of

the work of the spies?
Name the important event which transpired between the last lesson and this one.
At what time did the Israelites reach Sinai and how long were they there?
According to what did they journey?
How many days' journey was there between Horeb and Sinai?

From what place were the spies sent?
 Who suggested the sending of the spies?
 What was God's will concerning it?
 How many spies were sent?
 How were there twelve if one was not sent from the tribe of Levi?
 What was the mission of these spies?
 At what time of the year was it?
 When did Israel possess the country between these extremities?
 Where was Hebron?
 On their return, what did the spies bring with them?
 From what place was this fruit taken?
 Why was this valley called "Eshcol"?
 What is said of the abundance of this land in Deut. 8: 7-10?
 How long were they gone?
 What good report did the spies make?
 To what was the attention of the people next called?
 What four reasons were given why they could not take the land?
 What became of these nations, cities, and giants when the Israelites did enter the land?
 Who were the Canaanites?
 Who were the Amalekites?
 What had God declared concerning them?

What effect did this evil report have upon the people?
 Who spoke in reply to this?
 What was said?
 Who was Caleb?
 Whom did he conquer later on?
 What reply was made to Caleb?
 In what respects was this report evil?
 Who were the Nephilim?
 How did the Hebrews compare with them?
 What is said of the size of the Amorites?
 1, 3 What then did the Israelites do?
 What did they think would become of their wives and children?
 4 What did they propose to do?
 5, 10 What did Moses and Aaron do?
 What reply did Joshua and Caleb make?
 How did this reply effect the people?
 What prevented them from stoning Joshua and Caleb?
 What did God say he would do with that nation?
 What prayer did Moses offer?
 Who did God say should perish in the wilderness?
 What became of the ten spies?
 What then did the people propose to do?
 How many times had they tempted God?
 What led them away from God?
 When do people believe in God?
 Against what are Christians warned?

"I would not ask Thee that my work
 Should never bring me pain nor fear;
 Lest I should learn to work alone,
 And never wish thy presence near.

* * * * *

"But I would ask Thee still to give
 By night my sleep, by day my bread,
 And that the counsel of thy word
 Should shine and show the path I tread.

"And I would ask a humble heart,
 A changeless will to work and wait,
 A firm faith in Thy providence,
 The rest—'tis Thine to give or take."

LESSON VII.—FEBRUARY 17.

JOSHUA AND THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

Read: Joshua, Chapters 1—11, 23, and 24. *Lesson Text:* Joshua 1: 1-9; 23: 1-3.

JOSHUA 1. 1 Now it came to pass after the death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Moses.

4 From the wilderness, and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border.

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land which I swore unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

JOSHUA 23. 1 And it came to pass after many days, when Jehovah had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, and Joshua was old and well stricken in years;

2 that Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders and for their heads, and for their judges and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and well stricken in years:

3 and ye have seen all that Jehovah your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for Jehovah your God, he it is that hath fought for you.

Golden Text—Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which Jehovah your God spake concerning you. (Joshua 23: 14.)

Time—Spring, B. C. 1451.

Place—The plain of Moab.

Persons—The Lord and Joshua.

Devotional Reading—Psalm 47.

Home Reading—

Feb. 11. M. Joshua and the Conquest of Canaan. Josh. 1: 1-9.

12. T. Moses and Joshua. Deut. 31: 1-8.

13. W. Joshua Commissioned. Deut. 31: 14-23.

14. T. The Fall of Jericho. Josh. 6: 12-21.

15. F. Caleb's Inheritance. Josh. 14: 6-15.

16. S. Joshua's Farewell. Josh. 24: 14-18.

17. S. God, the King of the Earth. Psalm 47.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

"The plain of Moab"—see Lesson V.

The River Jordan is formed by the confluence of three very large springs. One flows from the western side of the hill on which Dan was built, another, from the northern side of the ancient city of Caesarea Philippi; and the third, further north by several miles, from the western side of Mount Hermon. From their sources, flowing south and together, these streams fall about 1200 feet and spread out into a small lake called "the waters of Merom." Thence about ten miles into the sea of Galilee, which is about 680 feet below "the waters of Merom"; thence into the Dead Sea, 610 feet below the Sea of Galilee. From its sources to its mouth the fall of the Jordan is about 2,400 feet. This fall makes it a very swift and strong stream; but its velocity is broken by its very many turns, or crooked course, which form many eddies. In its serpentine course it is over two hundred miles long; but on a straight line from its origin to its mouth the distance is not half so far. Its ordinary width varies from nine feet to one hundred feet; at its mouth it is one hundred and eighty feet wide. Its depth varies from three to twelve feet.

INTRODUCTION

Read the chapters intervening between the last lesson and this one.

This is called "the book of Joshua" because it gives an account of his exploits and works as a leader of Israel and because it is supposed he wrote it.

This book opens with the beginning of Joshua's work as a leader, gives an account of his conquering the seven Canaanitish nations and dividing the land by lot, and closes with his death and burial. (Josh. 24: 29-31.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Moses, the Servant of Jehovah

1. The expression, "Now it came to pass after the death of Moses, the servant of Jehovah," shows that the history of the children of Israel is continued. In verse 2 God says, "Moses my servant is dead." All who obey God are his servants, but Moses was God's servant in more than an ordinary way. He was always ready to do God's will; but his famous choice against the pleasures of sin and all the wealth and glory of Egypt (Heb. 17: 24-29) to serve God and the relation he sustained between God and the people as prophet and interceder, lawgiver and mediator distinguished him as the Servant of God from others, and made him the type of Jesus Christ that he was. Jesus is called God's Servant in the highest and deepest sense and in the peculiar sense of being the Savior of the world. (See Acts 3: 26; Matt. 12: 18; Isa. 42: 1; 43: 1-13; 53: 11.) Jesus is "that prophet" like unto Moses. (Deut. 18: 18, 19; Acts 22-26.)

A prophet is called "a man of God" (1 Sam. 2: 27; 9: 6; 2 Kings 5: 8) because God revealed his will through the prophet and he represented God to the people. This was especially true of Moses (Deut. 33: 1; Joshua 14: 6.) God gave the law through Moses.

"Servant of Jehovah" and "man of God" were not titles.

What a blessed thing it is that all, in faith and service to God, can so live as to hear Jesus say in the end: "Well done, good and faithful servant!" What a glorious truth it is that all who will come out from the world and keep unspotted from it can become "Sons and daughters" of "the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 14 to 7: 1), children of God, men and women of God!

II. Joshua

It was after the children of Israel had wept for Moses thirty days (Deut. 34: 8) "that Jehovah spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses minister."

Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim, one of the sons of Joseph; and his name at first was "Hoshea" ("help," or "salvation"), but Moses changed it to "Joshua." (Num. 13: 8, 16.) "Joshua" means "saviour," or "God is salvation." In Neh. 8: 17 he is called "Jeshua." The Greek form of this name is "Jesus." He is first mentioned as leader of the Israelites against the Amalekites at Rephidim (Ex. 17: 8-16) soon after the Israelites left Egypt. He was one of the twelve spies sent from Kadesh-Barnea to view the land of Canaan and one of the two who had the courage to say they could take it. (Num. 14: 6.) He is called "Moses' minister" because he was Moses' attendant and served him in his work as lawgiver and leader. Thus he was better prepared for his great work afterwards. He was one hundred and ten years old when he died. (Judg. 2: 8.)

If the events narrated in the book of Joshua cover, as is thought, a period of twenty-six or twenty-seven years, he was eighty-three or eighty-four years of age at the time of our lesson, and forty years younger when he left Egypt, where he was born.

It is said he "wholly followed Jehovah." (Num. 32: 12.) He was a very faithful and dutiful man, and, as a leader and conqueror, a type of Jesus, our Captain and Leader against the hosts of Satan.

His most distinguishing characteristic was courage, both physical and moral. Regardless of the choice others should make, it was he who said: "But as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah." (Josh. 24: 15.) Moral courage is necessary to make a true man or woman at any time.

No one can be sincere, true, dutiful, and faithful who does not act upon the principle of right, regardless of consequences, and, therefore, what others may think or do. When one will do right for right's sake, he can be trusted anywhere and at all times.

III. God's Purposes Will Never Fail

2. "Moses my servant is dead." Before the death of Moses, Joshua had been appointed to this position of leader. (See Num. 2: 15-23; Deut. 3: 28; 31: 7, 8, 14, 23; 34: 9-12.) Thus we see that God's work goes on, although Moses is dead. Great and good men may die, but the work continues. God's purposes will never fail. He always finds men to carry on his work, although he may go to bulrushes and mangers for them.

By his forty years' service in the wilderness Joshua was developed

into a leader. Faithful in little, he became ruler over much; and to him who had, more was given.

The time had come to "go over this Jordan" and possess the land so long promised to the children of Israel. "Arise, go over this Jordan." Joshua was not to lead the people over without the preparation mentioned in verses 10, 11. "Thou, and all this people." There were six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty men, "twenty years old and upward," besides the tribe of Levi. (Num. 26: 51, 57, 62.) Verses 2-9 contain what God said to Joshua.

IV. God's Blessings Are Not Unconditional

3. "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon" within the limits mentioned in verse 4. God repeats here to Joshua what he had spoken "unto Moses."

This was not an unconditional gift. "For if ye shall diligently keep all this commandment which I command you, to do it, to love Jehovah your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; then will Jehovah drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves." (See Deut. 11: 18-25.) If they should not remain faithful and obedient to God, they could not conquer these nations and possess this land. While God had promised to bring them into the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to give to them cities which they did not build, houses full of good things which they did not fill, cisterns full of water, which they did not dig, and vineyards and olive yards which they did not plant (Deut. 6: 10-15), yet they must go over the Jordan, dispossess these wicked nations, till the land, cultivate the fruit, occupy the cities, and inhabit the houses.

God blesses us now "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1: 3), but we must enter into Christ in order to receive and enjoy these blessings. If we refuse to accept Christ, we reject these blessings. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3: 26, 27.) We believe in Christ, repent of all our sins, and are "baptized into Christ," and thus come into the enjoyment of "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." So "the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6: 23); but this "free gift of God" is not out of Christ, and hence not unconditional. And having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5: 9.) It is not enough to say eternal life must be received; we must show people how to receive it, as God showed the Israelites how to receive the land of promise. All God's blessings must be received in compliance with whatever conditions he imposes.

V. The Boundaries of Canaan

4. This verse gives the boundaries of the land of promise. "The wilderness" through which they had passed was the southern limit; "this Lebanon" which they could see was the northern limit; "the river Euphrates," the eastern limit; and "the great sea" (the Mediterranean Sea), the western limit. This extent of country God promised to Abraham. (Gen. 15: 18-21.)

The Israelites did not conquer this land at once, and they really came in possession of it only in so far as they conquered its inhabitants; and they did not rule in peace over the whole of it until the days of Solomon. (See 1 Kings 4: 21-25; 2 Chron. 9: 26.)

The Hittites descended from Heth. Gen. 10: 15-18 gives the descendants of Canaan, the father of the Canaanites, from whom the land of Canaan received its name; while verse 19 gives "the border of the Canaanite." The Hittites dwelt about Hebron in the time of Abraham. (Gen. 23.) They were not all subdued at once. Uriah, in David's day, was a Hittite. (2 Sam. 11: 3; 23: 39.) Solomon used their service, as he did the service of other Canaanitish nations "whom the children of Israel were not able utterly to destroy." (1 Kings 9: 20, 21.) There were kings of the Hittites in the south. (1 Kings 10: 29; 2 Kings 7: 6.) They still existed after the return of the Jews from captivity. (Ez. 9: 1.)

Also, God cast out these nations "by little and little," lest the wild beasts should increase upon the Israelites. (Deut. 7: 22-24.)

VI. Be Strong and of Good Courage

5. "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life"—in war, or as an enemy. At the beginning of Moses' work to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt, God promised to be with him (Ex. 3: 12); and through many trials, over many difficulties, and in many battles God had led him to success and victory. Joshua knew what God had done for Moses, and hence God could give him no greater assurance.

God magnified Joshua before the Israelites by performing miracles through him to show them that he was with Joshua as he had been with Moses. (Josh. 3: 5.)

God promises to be with his people to-day and never to leave or forsake them, and he repeats the promise as often as he repeated it to Moses and Joshua.

6. This exhortation to "Be strong and of good courage" is repeated four times in this chapter. (Verses 6-8, 18.) God began to encourage Joshua through Moses. "But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see." (Deut. 3: 28; see also Deut. 1: 37, 38; 31: 6-8.) Joshua needed both strength and courage, will power and wisdom, to conquer the opposing nations and to rule Israel. (See Deut. 6: 17-21.)

So Christians to-day, to be successful, must cultivate and exercise will power, use their wisdom, manifest moral courage, and put forth every energy against sin. God encouraged Joshua by promising him "good success."

This land is called here an "inheritance" because God had long before promised to give it to Abraham's seed.

7. Strength and courage can be cultivated; they grow through exercise. Joshua would gain strength and courage by observing "to do according to all the law, which Moses . . . commanded." He was to turn neither to the right hand nor to the left hand. "that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest." This promise embraces very much indeed.

VII. Wisdom and Good Success

8. The condition upon which this promise is to be enjoyed is repeated: "Observe to do according to all that is written therein [the law]: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Prosperity and success are promised always upon faithful obedience to God.

In order to observe all the law, it should not depart from Joshua's mouth; and he was to "meditate thereon day and night." "Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." (Deut. 4: 6.) "Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do." (Deut. 29: 9.) Read here Ps. 1 and Col. 3: 16. "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Prov. 9: 10.)

True "success" to-day is to fear God and keep his commandments. "He that would love life, and see good days," should live now as God directs. (1 Pet. 3: 10-13.) God would have his people now "lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity." (1 Tim. 2: 1, 2.) This is "success."

9. "Have not I commanded thee?" That God has said this is enough. Whatever he says will come to pass. Joshua should "be strong and of good courage," and neither be affrighted nor dismayed; for God promised to be with him.

VIII. Faith Unwavering

The command given in verses 10 and 11 to the officers shows that Joshua believed God. Although the Jordan lay between them and the land of promise and was then out of its banks, yet Joshua and the children of Israel raised no question as to how they would cross it and expressed no doubt.

The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh reminded Joshua of the promise Moses had made to give them an inheritance on the eastern side of the Jordan, renewed their declaration to pass over and help the others conquer the nations, and promised to obey Joshua as they had hearkened to Moses. (Verses 12-18.)

Chapter 2 gives an account of the visit of the spies to Jericho and Chapter 3 the entrance into Canaan.

IX. Joshua's Speech to All Israel

Josh. 23: 1-3. We should read chapters 23 and 24. The three verses embraced in this lesson give the account of the rest Jehovah gave unto all Israel from their enemies, of Joshua being now old, of his assembling all Israel including their elders, judges and other officers, and of his recounting all that Jehovah had done for them.

It is not stated where this assembly was held. The one of chapter 24 was held at Shechem.

This lesson, when we include chapters 23 and 24, brings us to the triumphant end of a true, pure, heroic and eventful life. Joshua

passed through many trials and powerful temptations, but his character was not marred by sin; it stands out before the world clean, bright, beautiful, and admirable.

How old was Joshua when he died?

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place, and Persons.
Describe the plain of Moab?
Describe the river Jordan, giving its source, its course, its average width and depth, its descent, and into what it empties.
How much lower is the Dead sea than the sea level?
Did you read the chapters mentioned?
How many years since last lesson?
What is the first important event mentioned after the last lesson?
What is the second event?
What became of the two hundred and fifty?
What became of Korah, Dathan and Abiram?
What followed this?
How was the question of Aaron's priesthood settled?
Where was this rod placed?
To what place did they come after thirty-eight years?
Who died there?
What else occurred there?
Why did the Israelites have to compass Mount Seir?
Relate the story of the brazen serpent.
When and where did Moses die?
In what distinguishing ways was Moses "the servant of Jehovah" and "the man of God"?
Were these titles?
In what book is this lesson?
Who wrote it?
Of what does it give an account?
1. Of what is the book of Joshua a continuance?
What is Moses called in this verse?
In what way was Moses a servant of God?
Repeat Rom. 6: 16.
When did God speak this to Joshua?
Where was Joshua born?
What was his name at first?
Who changed it?
What do these names mean?
When is Joshua first mentioned?
What was he to Moses?
In what way was he "Moses' minister"?
How was he trained for his greater work?
- How old was he when he left Egypt?
To what extent did he follow Jehovah?
In what respects was he a type of Jesus?
What was his most distinguished characteristic?
Repeat Josh. 24: 15.
For what is moral courage necessary?
What person may always be trusted?
2 To what had Joshua been appointed before the death of Moses?
What goes on, although good and true men die?
What did God command Joshua to do?
What preparation was necessary before going over the Jordan?
How many people were there?
3 What promise does God repeat here?
Upon what condition could they receive this gift?
Upon what condition do we receive all spiritual blessings in Christ?
Upon what condition do we receive eternal life and enter heaven?
What is now necessary to explain to people?
4 Give the boundaries of the promised land.
Why did God not cast the nations all out at once? (See Deut. 7: 22-24.)
Then to what extent did they possess the land?
When did they rule in peace over the entire country?
Who were the Hittites?
Mention the descendants of Canaan. (Gen. 10: 15-18.)
5 What promises did God make in this verse to Joshua?
How was God with Moses?
How did God show he was with Joshua as with Moses?
What does God promise to do for his people today?
6 What did God exhort Joshua to be?
How often is this repeated in this chapter?
When did God begin to encourage Joshua?
Why did Joshua need encouragement and strength?

- What must Christians cultivate?
 How did God encourage Joshua?
 Why is this land called an "inheritance?"
- 7 How could Joshua gain strength and courage?
 What did God promise if he should obey God?
- 8 Upon what condition could Joshua receive and enjoy success?
 What must he do in order to be able to observe all the law?
 What is wisdom?
 What is true success?
- 9 Why should Joshua be strong and of good courage and fear nothing?
 What shows that Joshua believed God?
 What obstacle lay in the way of their going into the land?
 Why did they raise no question about crossing the Jordan?
 (Josh. 23:1-3)—What do these verses state?
 What is said of Joshua and his character?

GOD'S HAND IN THE LIFE OF NATIONS

Read again Josh. 23 and 24.

The hand of God stands for his power. God smote Egypt with his hand. (Ex. 3: 20.) He delivered Israel from Egypt by the strength of his hand (Ex. 13: 3), by his mighty hand (Ex. 14: 8), and by "a high arm." (Acts 13: 17.) The Bible speaks of people being destroyed by the hand of the Lord, of "the good hand of God," of "the hollow of his hand," of his "right hand" doing "valiantly" and being "glorious in power." "Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand." (Ps. 89: 13.)

How beautiful the expression concerning Israel, and none the less concerning spiritual Israel: "The eternal God is thy dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he thrust out the enemy from before thee, and said, Destroy." (Deut. 33: 27.)

God rules still among the nations of the earth. He is "Lord of heaven and earth;" he himself gives to all "life, and breath, and all things;" he "made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have out being;" as certain of the Athenian poets have said, "For we are also his offspring." (Acts 17: 24-28.)

Christ to-day is "the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1: 5), "the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6: 15). "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the lowest of men." (Dan. 4: 17.) "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4: 34, 35.) "And he changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that have understanding; he revealeth the deep and secret things; he knoweth what is in the dark, and the light dwelleth with him." (Dan. 2: 21, 22.)

God teaches Christians to make "supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, for all men; for kings and for all that are in high places;" but not all Christians seem to know or to regard the

reason which God himself gives for making these "supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings." They pray as though the rulers are the only ones to be benefited by such prayers and they also tell the Lord what they expect him to do for rulers. This is not prayer, but dictation to God. They overlook, if they do not seemingly ignore the very thing for which God commands them to pray—namely, that themselves—all Christians—"may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity." (1 Tim. 2: 1-4.)

God commands all Christians every where to lead this "tranquil" life, this "quiet" life, and to do so, not in part, but "in all godliness and gravity." The emphasis is on "all." He commands them to "study [to make it their aim (Rom. 15: 20), or 'be ambitious'—margin] to be quiet" as well as to discharge all other Christian duties. (1 Thes. 4: 11, 12.) So their aims and prayers must be directed to this life. So intent must they be on leading this life that they pray God to overrule all lawmakers in civil governments so that they will enact such laws as will not interfere with his people leading the life which he commands them to lead.

While God "would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth," all who ignore or overlook the reason he gives for praying for civil rules do not pray according to his will; hence they do not pray in faith and submission.

"This"—to pray, to offer thanksgivings, to make supplications and intercessions "for all men" and for kings and other civil rulers, and for the reasons which God himself gives—"is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."

But God cannot answer these prayers if he does not rule in the kingdom of men, give it to whomsoever he will, and over-rule lawmakers so as to protect his children.

Then, it is as clear as light that God will not protect his children and lead them into ways of pleasantness and paths of peace unless they delight in such a life and desire his guidance into it. People do not pray for what they do not desire.

So I raise the question, do all who claim to be Christians desire, make a constant effort, and pray to "lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity?" And do they really believe that God can over-rule civil authorities so that they may really lead this life? I am rejoiced to say many do.

Jesus said to Pilate: "Thou wouldst have no power ['authority'—margin] against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." (John 19: 11.) This made a deep impression upon Pilate.

Believing in and implicitly submitting to God his children rejoice in that tranquility, contentment, quietness and gravity which are undisturbed by the turmoil, strife and upheavals of the world, for they possess "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" which guards their hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4: 4-6.) If we desire it and comply with the conditions this peace will be ours.

"The hand of God is in it all."

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you—not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

LESSON VIII—FEBRUARY 24.

THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES

Read: Judges, chapters 2—16. *Lesson Text:* Judges 2: 16-18; 7: 2-8.

JUDGES 2. 16 And Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them.

17 And yet they hearkened not unto their judges; for they played the harlot after other gods, and bowed themselves down unto them. they turned aside quickly out of the way wherein their fathers walked, obeying the commandments of Jehovah; but they did not so.

18 And when Jehovah raised them up judges, then Jehovah was with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented Jehovah because of their groaning by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

JUDGES 7. 2 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

3 Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whoso ever is fearful and trembling, let him return and depart from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

4 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and Jehovah said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

7 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thy hand; and let all the people go every man unto his place.

8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets; and he sent all the men of Israel every man unto his tent, but retained the three hundred men: and the camp of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

Golden Text—I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him. (Hos. 14: 4.)

Time—Probably twenty or twenty-five years after the death of Joshua, or about B.C. 1405. Adam Clarke says: "I have my doubts whether the author of this book ever designed to produce the subject in a strict chronological order."

Place—The land of Canaan.

Persons—The judges and the Israelites.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 32: 1-7.

Home Reading—

- Feb. 18. M. The Period of the Judges. Judges 2: 16-18; 7: 2-8.
19. T. Barak and Deborah. Judges 4: 1-10.
20. W. Gideon Visited by the Angel. Judges 6: 11-22.
21. T. Gideon and his Three Hundred. Judges 7: 1-14.
22. F. Samson and the Philistines. Judges 15: 9-20.
23. S. Samson Dies with his Enemies. Judges 16: 20-31.
24. S. Forgiveness and Trust. Psalm 32: 1-7.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Bochim was probably near Shiloh; the word means "weepers," because the people wept there at what the angel said.

The Place of Gideon's Battle

Encouraged by the miracles of the previous chapter, "Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and encamped beside the spring of Harod: and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley." "By far the most important of the inland plains is Esdraelon. . . . In shape it is an irregular triangle, bounded on the north by the Galilean hills; on the east, by the hill of Moreh and the mountains of Gilboa; and on the south and west, by the hills of Samaria and the range of Carmel." This triangular plain is said to be about fourteen miles on the north, about eighteen miles on the east, and about twenty miles on the southwest. From this plain go out three arms, or valleys—"one, to the northeast, between the hills of Nazareth and Moreh; another, running eastward . . . into the Jordan valley, between the hill of Moreh and Mount Gilboa; and the third, stretching southward toward Engannim. The middle arm is, in the strict sense of the term, the ancient valley of Jezreel, the town from which it took its name, standing at the northwestern end of Mount Gilboa." "The hill of Moreh" was north, and Mount Gilboa south, of the valley of Jezreel. This plain has been called "the great battlefield of Palestine." King Saul fought his last battle on Mount Gilboa, and in this plain King Josiah was slain. (2 Kings 23: 29.) Those who have traveled in Palestine tell us that at the eastern end of Esdraelon and at the foot of Mount Gilboa, on the north, near its western end, bursts forth a spring, flowing east down the valley of Jezreel in a stream about fifteen feet wide and two feet deep. This must be "the spring of Harod." Gideon's army was on the south of this spring, while the Midianites were encamped on the north, "in the valley."

HINTS AND HELPS TO TEACHERS**I. The Book of Judges**

The time of the judges, including that of Eli and Samuel, covered a period of more than three hundred and fifty years. It is not known who wrote this book. Some suppose Samuel wrote it. Its events cover a period of nearly three hundred years. "It is a most remarkable history of the long-suffering of God toward the Israelites, in which we find the most signal instances of his justice and his mercy displayed. The people sinned, and were punished; they repented, and found mercy. Something of this kind we meet with on every page, and these things are written for our warning. None should presume, for God is just; none need despair, for God is merciful." (Clarke.)

God commanded Israel to drive out all these nations, to make no covenant with them, to have no mercy upon them, to make no marriages with them whatever, and not to serve their gods, but to break down their altars and to burn their graven images. (Ex. 23: 31-33; Deut. 7: 1-6, 16.) If they should fail to do these things and should in any way cleave unto the nations and make marriages with them, etc., then these nations would prove a snare and a trap to them, pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides; and then God would do to them what he had said he would do to these nations. (Num. 33: 55, 56; Josh. 23: 12, 13.)

This book of judges shows us how this became true. God used these nations to punish the Israelites.

II. The Church Must Be Separate from the World

God would have the church now separate from the world. (James 1: 27.)

"Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness, And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 6: 14 to 7: 1.)

It is dangerous now for Christians to marry any but Christians, and Christians are forbidden to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. They are forbidden to love the world or the things of the world. (1 John 2: 15, 16.) They are not of the world, as Jesus was not of the world, but have been chosen out of the world. (John 15: 18, 19; 17: 14.)

All lusts, passions, and sins must be overcome; if not, they will remain in the heart, like so many Canaanites, to destroy the soul finally.

III. The Place of Weeping

Judg. 1: 1, 2 says that after the death of Joshua the children of Israel inquired of God who should go up for them against the Canaanites, and God told them Judah should do so. While Judah succeeded to a very great extent, the chapter shows that the Canaanites were not completely driven out of the country.

Chapter 2: 1-5 states the result of this failure. "The angel of Jehovah came up from Gilgal to Bochim." This was, doubtless, "the angel of God's presence," because he speaks as Jehovah. He said he had brought the Israelites out of Egypt into that country, as he had sworn to their fathers, and said he would never break his covenant; but they had broken the covenant themselves in not breaking down the altars of the nations of the land, in not refusing to make covenants with them, and in not driving them out. Therefore, God

said he would not drive out these nations, but would allow them to indeed become thorns in their sides and a snare. Then the people wept.

We have our places of weeping. Sin and sorrow cause us to weep.

Our own mistakes, faults, and failures and sometimes the mistakes and faults of others bring us to tears. We are to confess our faults one to another and pray one for another that we may be healed. (James 5: 16.)

IV. The People Soon Fell into Idolatry

The author of the book of Judges introduces in chapter 2 the account of Joshua's death to show that the following generation (verse 10) did not obey God, and, therefore, suffered the consequences.

"The people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Jehovah, that he had wrought for Israel." But they did not serve God so well afterwards. During Joshua's lifetime some had their idols, but just before his death they promised in a most solemn manner to serve God wholly.

This shows the power of a godly life. It was not only after the death of Joshua, but after the death of the elders contemporary with him, that Israel fell into such idolatry. The influence and works of good men live after them. (Heb. 11: 4.)

The elders were the leaders among the people. (See Num. 11: 16, 17; Deut. 1: 12-17.)

These elders and none of this generation were as much as twenty years old when they left Egypt. If Joshua was forty years old when he left Egypt, he was eighty when he entered Canaan, and hence lived in Canaan thirty years. We do not know his exact age when he left Egypt. If one of these elders was only a year old when he left Egypt, he was forty years old when he entered Canaan and was sixty-five or seventy when Joshua died. Some of these elders died before, some died after, Joshua's death, and the ones who lived the longest could not have survived a great many years—twenty or thirty years.

Some of this generation had seen the wonders God wrought in dividing the Red Sea, giving the manna, bringing water out of the rock, the solemn scenes of Mount Sinai, dividing the Jordan, etc. They had not, it seems, sufficiently impressed these things and God's commandments upon their children.

God had commanded them to teach his word diligently to their children. So he commands us.

V. Baal

They did evil "and served the Baalim." "Baal" means "lord" or "ruler." "The word 'Baalim' is plural and signifies 'lords'."

"Their false gods they considered supernatural rulers, or governors, each having his peculiar district and office; but when they wished to express a particular Baal, they generally added some particular epithet—as 'Baal-zephon,' 'Baal-poer,' 'Baal-zebub,' 'Baal-shamayim,' etc.—as Calmet has well observed. The two former were adored by the Moabites; Baal-zebub, by the Ekronites. Baal-berith was honored at Shechem; Baal-shamayim, the lord, or ruler, of the heavens, was adored among the Phenicians, Syrians, Chaldeans, etc.; and whenever

the word 'Baal' is used without an epithet, this is the god that is intended; and probably among all these people it meant the sun." (Clarke.)

"The worship of Baal among the Jews seems to have been appointed with much pomp and ceremony. Temples were erected to him (1 Kings 16: 32; 2 Kings 11: 18); his images were set up (2 Kings 10: 26); his altars were very numerous (Jer. 11: 13), were erected particularly on lofty eminences (1 Kings 18: 20) and on the roofs of houses (Jer. 32: 29); there were priests in great numbers (1 Kings 18: 19) and of various classes (2 Kings 10: 19); the worshipers seem to have been arrayed in appropriate robes (2 Kings 10: 22); the worship was performed by incense (Jer. 7: 9) and offering burnt sacrifices, which occasionally consisted in human victims (Jer. 19: 5). The officiating priests danced with fanatic shouts around the altar, and cut themselves with knives to excite the attention and compassion of their god. (1 Kings 18: 26-28.) . . . The narrative (Num. 25) shows clearly that this form of Baal worship was connected with licentious practices." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) They bowed the knee and kissed the image in worshipping Baal. (1 Kings 19: 18.)

VI. Ashtaroth

"They forsook Jehovah, and served Baal and the Ashtaroth." "Ashtaroth," the plural of 'Ashtoreth,' as 'Baalim' of 'Baal,' and probably for the same reason, represented all female deity. 'Ashtoreth'—'most happy, or fortunate; the supreme source of happiness'—was the female deity corresponding to Baal; the moon or the planet Venus, as Baal was the sun. . . . She was the goddess of sexual passions, and was worshiped with licentious rites." (Peloubet.) The worship of this goddess was connected with prostitution and the most impure rites.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Lapses and Restorations

(See verses 14, 15.)

"The anger of Jehovah was kindled against" them, "and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers." These were marauding bands of Canaanites, who took away their cattle, crops, etc., and sold them into bondage as slaves. God was no longer for them, but against them. God's promises to curse or destroy are as sure as his promises to save and bless. (See Lev. 26; Deut. 28.) They realized their weakness and their sins. God punished them to humble and chastise them, to correct and discipline them.

II. God Raised up Judges

16. Then when they repented, "Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand" of their enemies. These were not judges in the ordinary meaning of that term, but generals, leaders, and governors. This book gives an account of most of these judges. God raised them up in the ways mentioned in this book and in Samuel.

17-18. After God raised up a judge and delivered them, they then turned back quickly, served other gods, "and dealt more corruptly than their fathers," until Jehovah said he would "not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations that Joshua left," that by

them he might prove Israel, whether they would obey him or not. (Verses 19-23.)

III. Intervening Facts

Instead of driving out these nations, the Israelites formed marriages with them, which God had forbidden, served their idols, and joined them in their religion.

Chapter 3: 1-6 gives the nations that were left.

Chapter 1: 1-21 relates the fact that Judah and Simeon fought the Canaanites, and states the result; but Othniel was the first judge. He was the nephew and son-in-law of Caleb, and was a brave man. How did he win Caleb's daughter? Othniel delivered Israel from Cushanrishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, whom they served for eight years. The land then had rest for forty years. (Judg. 3: 7-11).

The second judge was Ehud, a left-handed man, who slew Eglon, king of Moab. (Judg. 3: 12-30.)

The third judge was Shamgar, who slew six hundred Philistines with an ox goad. (Judges 3: 31.)

The fourth judge was Deborah.

Chapters 4 and 5 give the account of the victory of Barrak over Sisera, "the captain of Jabin's army," and the song of Deborah.

Read Judges 6, which gives the account of the oppression of Israel by the Midianites and the beginning of Gideon's work, who Gideon and his father were.

Israel was delivered by the hand of Jehovah "unto the hand of Midian seven years."

The Midianites were descendants of Midian, the son of Abraham and Keturah. (Gen. 25: 2.) They were a wandering people, like Bedouins, dwelling in tents, occupying the desert south of Palestine and the frontiers east of it. While related to Israel, they were Israel's inveterate enemies. Before this they joined the Moabites in casting a stumblingblock before Israel by inducing Israel to engage in the impure rites of idol worship and in eating sacrifices offered to idols (Rev. 2: 14), for which God slew twenty-four thousand of Israel (Num. 25) and, later, almost exterminated them. (Num. 31.) The Midianites are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. At the time of this lesson they had sorely oppressed Israel for seven years.

The Amalekites were also enemies of Israel. We read of "the country of the Amalekites" in Gen. 14: 7. "Amalek was the first of the nations" at one time. (Num. 24: 20, 21.) Amalek "fought with Israel in Rephidim" soon after the deliverance from Egypt, when Joshua gained a signal victory and God declared that he would make "war with Amalek from generation to generation." (Num. 17: 8-16.) Amalek followed Israel, smiting the feeble and faint and weary who could not keep up. God declared that "the remembrance of Amalek" should be blotted out "from under heaven." (Deut. 25: 17-19.) Before the time of this lesson the Amalekites invaded Canaan with other enemies of Israel. (Judg. 3: 13; 5: 14.) King Saul was sent to destroy them (1 Sam. 15), and David smote them (1 Sam. 27: 9; 30: 17).

"The children of the east" were probably Ishmaelites, since Judg. 8: 24 states that earrings taken as prey were from Ishmaelites. (See also Judg. 7: 12; 8: 10.) The Old Testament speaks of "the children

of the east" (Gen. 29: 1; 1 Kings 4: 30; Job 1: 3) who were not Ishmaelites.

IV. The Faithful and the Fearful

(Comments on 7: 2-8)

This was a victory gained by faith, as the walls of Jericho fell down, and not one of physical might, and was designed to teach the people to trust in God and to cleave to him. Therefore, Jehovah wanted to make all realize this; so he said to Gideon: "The people . . . are too many, . . . lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me."

God says he drove out the nations and gave the land to Israel, not because of the righteousness of Israel, but because of the wickedness of the nations of the land. (Deut. 9: 4, 5.)

God made the proposition for the "fearful and trembling" to return. This resulted in the departure of twenty-two thousand, leaving only ten thousand. Over two-thirds of this army were cowards.

This was in accordance with God's directions through Moses that "the fearful and faint-hearted" return, lest they cause others to fear and tremble. (Deut. 20: 8.) One coward will make others, while a brave, true man will encourage others.

Many who profess to be in the church to-day as soldiers of the cross are "fearful and faint-hearted." They lack confidence in God's means and ways. Some do not hesitate to say God's way is a failure. The church would be much better off if all the worldly-minded, pleasure-loving, cowardly members would go back, or repent and be faithful.

After the departure of the twenty-two thousand, God said: "The people are yet too many. God tried them, or separated them. All who 'lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, . . . putting their hand to their mouth'—thus taking up water with the hand, as a dog does with his tongue—were set by themselves, and all who knelt and drank were set by themselves. There were only three hundred of the former and nine thousand seven hundred of the latter.

Some try to find a reason why God gave this test. God does not give the reason why he used this way of separating them.

"By the three hundred" God said he would save Israel. The three hundred "took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets;" the rest went "every man unto his tent." They would be needed later on.

V. Three Hundred and Victory

As stated in verses 9-15, God encouraged Gideon by sending him down to the camp of the Midianites that he might hear what the Midianites had to say. Read the Midianite's dream. The interpretation was from God. Gideon was the barley cake. The Midianites, Amalekites, and Ishmaelites (Judges 8: 24) "lay along in the valley like locusts for multitude, and their camels were without number, as the sand which is on the sea shore for multitudes." There were at least one hundred and thirty-five thousand "that drew sword" (Judges 8: 10), besides the multitude which did not. Gideon's army now was only three hundred. But "into his hand God had delivered Midian and all his host." Gideon worshiped, "returned into the camp of

Israel, and said, Arise; for Jehovah hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian."

Verses 16-21 state how Gideon gained the victory.

"The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon" is significant. God did the work through Gideon. Gideon and the three hundred must use the means God placed in their hands.

VI. The Lesson for Us

See the further results of the battle in chapter 8. When the fight was over and peace was restored to the Israelites, in their gratitude they offered to make Gideon king; but it was not God's way of government, and he refused, neither would he allow his sons to be made kings. Gideon was humble and true. He made a mistake in making the ephod mentioned, after which "all Israel played the harlot," and which "became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house."

If we could only be content to do at all times all that God commands, and no more, all would be well!

Under Gideon, Israel had rest forty years, and the Midianites "lifted up their heads no more." Gideon "died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulcher of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites."

The one great lesson taught us by these facts, as brought out in Heb. 11: 32-40, is faith and trust in God. The three hundred may represent "the faithful few" who make the sacrifices and do all the work, while the multitudes who followed on when the Midianites had been put to flight may represent those who enjoy the work of the faithful and self-sacrificing and who would take charge of it and control it.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the Time, Place, and Persons.

Where was Bochim and why so-called?

Describe the plain of Esdraelon, telling where it is, and giving its dimensions.

Give the three arms of this plain. Where was "the spring of Harod?"

Give the position of the Midianites and of Gideon's army?

What period does the time of the judges cover?

Who is supposed to have written the book of Judges?

What are some of the remarkable features of this book?

What were God's commandments concerning all these Canaanitish nations?

If the Israelites should not obey God in these particulars, what would befall them?

From what would God now have the church separate?

What is meant by not being yoked together with unbelievers?

When does God promise to receive us?

Why is it dangerous for Christians to marry sinners, or people not in the church?

Why should Christians not love the world?

After Joshua's death, who went up against the Canaanites for Israel?

Were the Canaanites entirely driven out?

To what place did the angel of God go?

What did he say to Israel?

What did they do?

Why did the people weep?

Why is the death of Joshua introduced here?

How long did the people serve Jehovah after Joshua's death?

What shows Joshua's influence over the people?

Who were the elders?

How long did some of these elders probably live after Joshua's death?

What had that generation witnessed?

In what had they failed?

What was Baal and the Baalim?

How was Baal worshiped?
 Of what were images of Baal made?
 (Bring out all the features of Baal worship.)
 What was Ashtareth and Ash-taroeth?
 How was this goddess worshiped?
 What was kindled against Israel?
 To whom were they delivered?
 What did the spoilers do for them?
 What had God sworn unto them?
 Why did he punish them?
 Why did God allow some Canaanites to remain in the land?
 16, 18 Whom did God raise up when they repented?
 What did these judges do for them?
 What did the Israelites do instead of obeying God?
 Name the Judges who preceded Gideon?
 Give the history of Othniel.
 Who were Jabin, Sisera, Deborah, and Barak?
 What account does Judges 6 give?
 How long was Israel in the hand of Midian?
 Who were the Midianites?
 Where did they live?
 What had they done before this to the Israelites?
 How were they punished?
 Who were the Amalekites?
 What had they done to Israel?
 What had God declared against them?
 Who were "the children of the east?"
 Who were Ishmaelites?
 What devastation had these enemies wrought?
 What did Israel do in this deep distress?
 Whom did God raise up for them?

How was Gideon convinced that God was with them?
 2, 8 Why did God say he drove out these wicked nations?
 Why did God say there were too many with Gideon?
 How many returned?
 How many were left?
 Without whom would the church be better off?
 To what test were those who remained put?
 How many were chosen?
 By whom did God say he would deliver Israel?
 What did the three hundred take in their hands?
 When would the rest be needed?
 To what place did God direct Gideon to go?
 How had God delivered the Midianites into Gideon's hand when Gideon had yet done nothing and the Midianites were still in camp?
 How numerous were the Midianites, and those with them?
 Relate the Midianite's dream and give the interpretation.
 What effect did this have on Gideon?
 How did Gideon divide and arrange his army?
 What is the significance of "the sword of Jehovah, and of Gideon?"
 How did this succeed?
 What did the rest of Israel do in pursuing Midian?
 Why did Gideon refuse to be made king?
 How long did the land have rest?
 What sin did Gideon commit?
 How long did he live?
 Where was he buried?
 What lesson do we get from these facts?
 Whom may the three hundred represent?
 Whom may the rest represent?

The Fight of Faith

Workman of God! lose not heart,
 But learn what God is like;
 And in the darkest battle-field
 Thou shalt know where to strike.

Thrice blest is he to whom is given
 The wisdom that can tell
 That God is on the field when he
 Is most invisible.

LESSON IX—MARCH 2.

THE REVIVAL UNDER SAMUEL

Read: 1 Samuel, chaps. 1—7. *Lesson Text:* 1 Sam. 7: 5-13.

1 SAMUEL 7. 5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah: and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel; and Jehovah answered him.

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us.

13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel: and the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

Golden Text—Direct your hearts unto Jehovah and serve him only. (1 Sam. 7: 3.)

Time—About B.C. 1904.

Place—Mizpah

Persons—Samuel, the Israelites.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 51: 1-10.

Home Reading—

Feb. 25. M. The Revival under Samuel. 1 Sam. 7: 5-13.

26. T. Samuel's Vision and Call. 1 Sam. 3: 1-10.

27. W. Bringing up the Ark. 1 Sam. 7: 1-4.

28. T. A Revival under Josiah. 2 Kings 23: 1-14.

29. F. A Revival in Ephesus. Acts 19: 8-20.

Mar. 1. S. The Waiting Saviour. Rev. 3: 14-22.

2. S. A Prayer for Pardon. Psalm 51: 1-10.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Kiriath-jearim means "city of trees," and was about six miles north-west from Jerusalem.

"Mizpah" means "watchtower." It is a hill north-west from Jerusalem about six miles, farther toward the north than Kiriath-jearim. From Mizpah all central Palestine can be seen.

Locate on the map Ramathaim-Zophim, Bethshemesh, Ramah, and Shiloh.

HINTS AND HELPS FOR TEACHERS

I. The Books of Samuel

This lesson is in 1 Samuel. We do not know who wrote the books of Samuel. Samuel probably wrote parts of them. (1 Sam. 10: 25.) There were the books of Nathan and Gad. (1 Chron. 29: 29.) The books of Samuel may have been compiled from all these writings. They are called after Samuel because he is the leading character in them. The two books of Samuel were originally one book, the present division having been made in the Septuagint translation. Samuel was the last of the judges. God "gave them judges until Samuel the prophet." (Acts. 13: 20.)

II. The Tabernacle at Shiloh

Shiloh was about twenty-five miles north of Jerusalem, "on the north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the South of Lebonah." (Judges 21: 19.) The tabernacle had been there since it was removed from Gilgal by Joshua. (Josh. 18: 1.) There all the males assembled three times in the year to keep the feasts and to worship God. The women also were permitted to attend. Eli was the priest and judge at the time of our lesson. He judged Israel forty years (1 Sam. 4: 18), and died at the age of ninety-eight years. (1 Sam. 4: 15.)

III. The Birth of Samuel

Samuel was the son of Elkanah and Hannah.

His name means "asked of God" (1 Sam. 1: 20), because God gave him in answer to his mother's prayer.

He was born at Ramathaim-zophim ("double hills of the watchers"), about four miles northwest from Jerusalem.

Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah, which then was not a sin; but it was not best. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none. These wives went with Elkanah to Shiloh to worship God. "He gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions; but unto Hannah he gave a double portion." He loved Hannah. Peninnah sorely provoked Hannah and fretted her because she had no children. Peninnah did this "year by year" when she went up to worship God. Hannah wept and did not eat.

At Shiloh, Hannah, in the bitterness of her soul, prayed and wept sorely. She vowed to God that if he would give her a son she would give him to God all the days of his life. In her distress Eli thought she was drunken, and reproved her; but she explained to him her condition, and he assured her that God would answer her prayer.

In due time Samuel was born. Hannah remained at home with him until he was weaned, and then she took him to Shiloh and gave him, as she had vowed, to God. (1 Sam. 1.) At that time she uttered the prayer of thanksgiving in 1 Sam. 2: 1-10. She left the child at Shiloh, and he ministered, or served, before God under Eli's direction.

He wore a linen ephod—made, doubtless, after the pattern of the one worn by the priests.

Every year his mother visited him and carried him a linen robe (the garment worn under the ephod).

Samuel was attentive to Eli, who was old and half blind. Thus he was developed in true service and prepared for greater usefulness

IV. Samuel's Call

1 Samuel: 3 gives an account of Samuel's call, with which all should be familiar.

For the first three times God spoke to Samuel he thought it was Eli who had called him, and he readily responded, saying, "Here am I." By this he meant his readiness to do Eli's bidding.

After God had called Samuel for the third time Eli discovered that it was God who was calling Samuel and he told Samuel to lie down and if the Lord should call him again to say: "Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth." So when God called the fourth time, this time calling Samuel's name twice, Samuel made this answer.

By this Samuel declared himself a servant of God, ready to do God's will.

Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah, each, said: "Here am I." Saul of Tarsus in surrender said: "What shall I do Lord?"

It is useless and pretense to say: "Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth," when one does not mean, as did Samuel, Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, and Paul, to do just as God directs and really to continue to serve him.

To "hear" God is to implicitly obey him.

This call of Samuel should not be so perverted as to lead children and even grown people to believe that in some secret, mysterious way, or by a voice direct from heaven, they are now "called of God;" God does not now speak in an audible voice from heaven to individuals. Paul states how people are called now: "Where unto he called you through our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2: 14.) Those who will not "hear" the gospel would not "hear" were God to speak in an audible voice from heaven.

V. Samuel's Growth

Samuel grew, "and Jehovah was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground"—that is, established him as a prophet. "All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah. God continued to reveal himself to Samuel in Shiloh.

VI. "The Wages of Sin is Death"

The facts stated in 1 Sam. chapters, 4, 5, and 6—the capture of the ark of the covenant by the Philistines; the death of Eli's sons; Eli's death; the death of Phinehas' wife; and God's declaration that the strength of Eli's house should be cut off, that none in it should become old or should "die in the flower of their age," and every one left should become a beggar—all show that "the way of the transgressor is hard" and "the wages of sin is death."

VII. The Ark Returned by the Philistines

The Philistines kept the ark seven months.

God visited upon them such severe plagues that they returned it, with golden images of their tumors and of the mice which marred the land. It was received by the men of Beth-shemesh, thence re-

moved to Kiriath-jearim, and placed in the house of Abinadab, whose son, Eleazar, was sanctified to keep it.

The ark remained at Kiriath-jearim until it was removed by David to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6; 2 Chron. 13)—that is, during a part of the time Samuel judged Israel and during all the reign of King Saul. The "twenty years" of the second verse of this chapter were the twenty years from the time the ark was removed to Kiriath-jearim until the events of this chapter.

For forty years had Israel been oppressed by the Philistines. (Judg. 13: 1.)

VIII. Conditions of Deliverance

(Verses 1-4.)

"All the house of Israel" were burdened with their sins and longed for the prosperity and religion of former days, and "lamented after Jehovah." The margin says were "drawn together" after Jehovah.

Samuel told the people upon what conditions God would deliver them "out of the hand of Philistines." They must put away their "foreign gods and the Ashtaroth" from among them and return unto God with all their hearts. They must repent indeed. To give up their idols was to revolt really against the Philistines.

Idolatry had its attractions—its wealth, its easy living, its licentious festivals, and its popularity. All this must be given up.

"And direct your hearts unto Jehovah." They must search their hearts and set them upon God, "and serve him only."

It seems that Samuel preached this from place to place and taught and aroused the people before they assembled at Mizpah. They did repent and "put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only."

We have learned that "the Baalim" is plural and embraces their male gods, and "Ashtaroth" is plural and embraces their goddesses.

To-day people must love God supremely and set their affections upon things above, and not upon things on earth. (See Col. 3: 1-3.) God is ever ready to bless when people repent, put away their sins, and return to him.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Assembly at Mizpah

5. "Gather all Israel to Mizpah." The purposes for assembling all Israel are expressed in this verse and the next one—that Samuel might pray for them, that they might worship God, and that Samuel might judge them. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." (James 5: 16.)

Samuel was a man of prayer. When Israel did wrong, Samuel took it to God in prayer. (See 1 Sam. 8: 6; 12: 17-19, 23; 15: 11; Ps. 99: 6; Jer. 15: 1.) He is classed with Moses as an interceder for the people. Moses (Ex. 32: 11-14, 30-35; Num. 12: 13), Elijah (1 Kings 18: 36-38; James 5: 17, 18), Ezra (Ez. 9: 5-15), Samuel, and other such men, are examples of prayerful men. The greatest of all is Jesus, who prayed much on earth and who now lives in heaven to make intercession for us. (Heb. 7: 25.)

6. "And drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah." This seemed to represent their penitence and the fact that their hearts

were poured out to God like water. Hannah poured out her "soul before Jehovah." (1 Sam. 1: 15.) David said: "I am poured out like water." (Ps. 22: 14.) "Pour out your heart before him." (Ps. 62: 8.) "Pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord." (Lam. 2: 19.)

"And fasted on that day." In their deep penitence and intense desire to learn God's will they would not eat. They did not burden themselves with food, that their minds might be clear to act. Their fasting was an expression of their sorrow for sin. They had something before them vastly more important than eating.

"We have sinned against Jehovah." When people truly repent, they are not afraid or ashamed to confess their sins; they are ashamed of their sins, but are not ashamed to confess them. The people whom John the Baptist baptized confessed their sins, the prodigal son confessed his sins, and we are all exhorted to confess our sins one to another and to pray one for another that we may be healed. (James 5: 16.)

This gathering together at Mizpah, this pouring out of water, this fasting, and this confessing their sins showed they had repented.

"And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah." He heard their troubles, righted their wrongs, and taught them how to turn to God that he might deliver them from their enemies.

II. The Effect of the Assembly upon the Philistines

7, 8. "The lords of the Philistines" were five. (1 Sam. 6: 17, 18.) They took this assembly at Mizpah as a sign of revolt and war, and "went up against Israel," intending to nip this rebellion in the bud.

It has been said truly that activity on the part of God's people arouses opposition.

The Israelites were afraid, but they did not run. Forty years of oppression and sin had weakened their courage and faith, yet they had enough to stand their ground and to ask Samuel to pray for them. They believed God would hear Samuel.

When one's weakness causes him to depend upon God, then in his weakness he is strong.

III. Prayer—The Battle—Ebenezer

9. In 1 Sam. 1: 1, Samuel is said to have descended from an Ephraimite, and in 1 Chron. 6: 22-28 he is put down as a descendant of Levi in the family of Kohath. It seems that this is right, since he served in the tabernacle and as a priest.

The "sucking lamb" must remain seven days with its mother before it could be offered as an offering. (Lev. 22: 27.) The whole of a burnt offering must be burned upon the altar. (Lev. 1.)

Samuel prayed, and God answered. "Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon Jehovah, and he answered them." (Ps. 99: 6.)

10. The Philistines attacked Israel just when they were engaged in worship. This was an attack upon Jehovah, and he resented it; for he "thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel. By this the Israelites could plainly see their deliverance was from God.

11. The Israelites smote the Philistines until they came to Beth-

car. The exact location of Beth-car is not known, but it was between Mizpah and the land of the Philistines.

12. The exact spot of Shen is also unknown. "Ebenezer" means "stone of help," for "hitherto hath Jehovah helped us." We all have occasions to sing:

"Here I'll raise mine Ebenezer;
Hither by thy help I've come,
And I hope by thy good pleasure
Safely to arrive at home."

13. "So the Philistines were subdued"—not forever (1 Sam. 21), but "the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel."

The Israelites recovered the cities which the Philistines had taken from them. Not only so, but "there was peace between Israel and the Amorites," the most powerful of the Canaanitish nations.

"Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpah; and he judged Israel in all those places." "His return was to Ramah." This was his home. There he judged Israel, and there he had built an altar to God. (Verses 14-17.)

Samuel had many temptations and passed through many difficulties. Out of them all he came better, firmer, and stronger. He was loyal to God. His one misfortune, or failure (if he was to blame for it), was that his sons were corrupt men and utterly unworthy to succeed their father.

May God bless and strengthen us all for every temptation and duty of life!

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the Time, Place, and Persons.

What and where was Kiriath-jearim?

What and where was Mizpah?

Why are the books of Samuel so called?

Where was Shiloh?

How long had the tabernacle been there?

Who judged Israel when Samuel was born?

Who were Samuel's parents?

Where did they live?

What other wife did Elkanah have?

How did Penninah Provoke Hannah?

What did Hannah do in her distress?

What answer did God make to her prayers?

Why name the child Samuel?

Why did she leave him at Shiloh?

What did he do there?

What did his mother take him every year?

Relate in your own way Samuel's call and the result?

What is meant by "here am I speak Jehovah, for thy servant heareth?"

How does God call people to-day?

What is said of Samuel's growth?

State the facts which show that the wages of sin is death?

How long did the Philistines keep the Ark?

What caused them to return it to Israel?

How long did the Ark remain at Kiriath-jearim?

How long were the Israelites oppressed by the Philistines?

What is meant by lamenting after Jehovah?

Upon what conditions would God deliver the Israelites?

What did they do and give up when they gave up idolatry?

What does directing their hearts unto God mean?

Upon what must we set our affections?

What did the Israelites do?

What were "the Baalim?"

What were "the Ashtaroth?"

5 What did Samuel direct them all to do?

What does "Mizpah" mean?

- Where was it?
 Why were all gathered there?
 What is said in the Bible about Samuel as a praying man?
 How old was he when he died?
 With whom is he classed?
 What does Jesus do for us?
 6 What does pouring out this water signify?
 What else did they do?
 Why did they fast?
 What else then did they do?
 What are all penitents ready to do?
 By what did Israel show their repentance?
 What did Samuel do in judging them?
 7, 8 How many "lords of the Philistines" were there?
 What did they do at this time?
 What effect did this have upon Israel?
- What did they do?
 9 What did Samuel offer? Then what did he do?
 In what company do we find Samuel's name?
 10 What did the Philistines do next? How did God resist this attack?
 11 What did Israel do to the Philistines?
 12 What did Samuel erect? Where?
 Why call it "Ebenezer"?
 13 For how long were the Philistines subdued?
 What did Israel recover?
 How long did Samuel judge Israel?
 What circuit did he make?
 Name his strong characteristics.
 What was his one misfortune or failure?

There are loyal hearts, there are spirits brave,
 There are souls that are pure and true;
 Then give to the world the best you have
 And the best will come back to you.

Give love and love to your life will flow,
 A strength in your utmost need;
 Have faith and a score of hearts will show
 Their faith in your word and deed.

Give truth, and your gift will be paid in kind,
 And honor will honor meet;
 And a smile that is sweet will surely find
 A smile that is just as sweet.

For life is the mirror of king and slave,
 'Tis just what we are and do;
 Then give to the world the best you have,
 And the best will come back to you.

—Madeline S. Bridges.

LESSON X—MARCH 9.

THE REIGN OF SAUL

Read: 1 Samuel, Chapters 8—15. *Lesson Text:* 1 Samuel 15: 13-23.

1 SAMUEL 15. 13 And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah.

14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what Jehovah hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Samuel said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel;

18 and Jehovah sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah?

20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah, and have gone the way which Jehovah sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God in Gilgal.

22 And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

Golden Text—Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice. (1 Samuel 15: 22.)

Time—About B. C. 1079; the exact time is uncertain.

Place—Gilgal.

Persons—Samuel, Saul, and the Amalekites.

Devotional Reading—Psalm 139: 1-12.

Home Reading—

Mar. 3. M. The Reign of Saul. 1 Sam. 15: 13-23.

4. T. Saul Anointed. 1 Sam. 10: 1-9.

5. W. Saul Chosen King. 1 Sam. 10: 17-27.

6. T. Saul's Victory. 1 Sam. 11: 1-11.

7. F. Saul's Disobedience. 1 Sam. 15: 10-16.

8. S. Saul's Rejection. 1 Sam. 15: 17-28.

9. S. God's Omniscience. Psalm 139: 1-12.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Gilgal was a town five or six miles west of the Jordan and about one and a half miles (some say farther) east of Jericho.

The Israelites had not kept the passover since they left Sinai,

and had not observed the rite of circumcision since they left Egypt forty years ago. Here God commanded Joshua to circumcise "all the people that were born in the wilderness." "And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the nation, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of that place was called Gilgal, unto this day." (Josh. 5: 2-9.) "Gilgal" means "rolling."

From this time Gilgal was an important place in the history of the Jewish nation. There the manna ceased; there was observed the first passover in the promised land; there were set up the twelve stones as a memorial of the parting of the Jordan waters; there the Israelites encamped and the women, children, cattle, and baggage were left during the Canaanitish war (Josh. 9: 6; 10: 6-43; 14: 6); there the ark was kept until it was removed to Shiloh (Josh. 18: 1); there Saul was proclaimed king (1 Sam. 10: 8; 11: 14, 15); there Saul in rebellion would offer a sacrifice to God when God had commanded him to do entirely a different thing (1 Sam. 15: 1-23); there Agag, the king of the Amalekites, was slain (1 Sam. 15: 33); and there the men of Judah went to meet David on his return to Jerusalem after the death of Absalom. (2 Sam. 19: 15.)

HINTS AND HELPS FOR TEACHERS

1. Read carefully 1 Samuel, Chapters 8-14. Note who wanted a king. "Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah." They had discussed this grave movement among themselves. They went to Samuel in a body. They gave three reasons for wanting a king—(1) "behold, thou art old;" (2) "thy sons walk not in thy ways;" (3) "to judge us like all the nations."

2. The government under judges was God's government. To change the government was to reject God as King.

3. Show the fearfulness of the sin of changing God's government and order of work and worship to-day.

4. After Samuel's solemn protest, the people said: "Nay, but we will have a king over us, that we may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles."

5. Saul was anointed king.

6. Having been anointed king, Saul was tried and failed. He "forced" himself, or presumed, to make the offering, when Samuel was the one to make it. Samuel said to him: "Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of Jehovah thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would Jehovah have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. But now shall thy kingdom not continue: Jehovah hath sought him a man after his own heart, and Jehovah hath appointed him to be prince over his people, because thou hast not kept that which Jehovah commanded thee." (1 Sam. 13: 8-14.)

7. Let us learn the enormity of the sin of presumption and the importance of implicit obedience to God. The latter springs from faith in God; the former from the lack of faith.

Uzziah, king of Judah, committed the same sin when, his heart

being "lifted up," he presumed to burn incense in the temple of God and was smitten with leprosy. (See 2 Chron. 26: 16-22.)

8. Jonathan's faith and success over the mighty army of the Philistines.

9. After Jonathan's victory over the Philistines, Saul "fought against all his enemies on every side" and "put them to the worse." While God was willing, it seems, to try Saul again, this lesson shows his further stubbornness and rebellion. One such step generally leads to another.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Amalekites and Their Sins

(Verses 1-12)

"And Samuel said unto Saul, Jehovah sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel. . . . Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."

This command is specific and direct, and could not have been misunderstood. Saul did not misunderstand it.

The Amalekites were descendants of Esau (Gen. 36: 12), and were a nomadic tribe, living mostly in the desert south of Canaan. They were ever fierce enemies of the Israelites and shamefully treated them when they first came out of Egypt. (Ex. 8: 13.) They pursued them, smiting the faint and weary, feeble and helpless, who were unable to keep up. (Deut. 25: 17, 18; see also Num. 14: 45.) They also assisted the Moabites and the Midianites against Israel. (Judg. 3: 13; 6: 3.)

For this reason God said: "I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" and "will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." (Ex. 17: 14-16.) Because of their own sins and perpetual hatred of God's people God purposed to destroy them. Saul was commanded to fulfill this purpose more than four hundred years after God had declared it. This was because the Amalekites had never repented.

God's mercy and justice are seen in the destruction of the incorrigibly wicked as well as in the salvation of the righteous.

II. Saul's Course

Because of the kindness of the Kenites they were not destroyed with the Amalekites. Saul marched against the Amalekites with two hundred and ten thousand men. Saul smote the Amalekites, but spared Agag, the king, "and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs."

Now, did Saul obey God? He did not misunderstand God's command. He did not obey God in any particular, not even in slaying the ones he did slay; for had his own judgment dictated, he would have spared them also.

III. God's View of Saul's Conduct

God's view of Saul's conduct is very different indeed from Saul's view of it. "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king." God changed his purpose as to Saul and his family and determined to set up another man over Israel as king. The reason given is: "For he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments."

To follow God is to do that which he commands. Not to do what he commands is to turn back from following him; to do something else instead of what he commands is to turn from him.

This distressed Samuel, "and he cried unto Jehovah all night;" he spent a sleepless night in prayer.

Good men now are distressed and pray to God over the sins of those who profess to be God's people—over those who "go beyond the things which are written."

"Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning," and was told by some one that Saul "came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a monument, and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gilgal." Carmel was not Mount Carmel; it was a village ten miles southeast of Hebron. Gilgal being a place where the people had met to worship and a place of sacred memories, Saul went there to sacrifice to God, as he informs Samuel later on.

IV. Saul's View

13. Samuel followed Saul to Gilgal, and Saul saluted him, saying: "Blessed be thou of Jehovah." This form of salutation was used in saluting those who had bestowed a favor or had done well. (See Gen. 14: 19; 1 Sam. 23: 21; 2 Sam. 3: 5.)

Saul said: "I have performed the commandment of Jehovah." Saul's course and contention with Samuel on this occasion go to show that he was sincere in this claim. He knew he had not performed the specific acts that God had commanded (verse 21), but he thought that what he had done and the sacrifices he intended to make at Gilgal would be more honoring and more acceptable to God. A sad mistake! A grievous sin!

V. Controversy Between Samuel and Saul

14. If Saul had obeyed God in destroying everything, then, Samuel asked, what do the bleating of these sheep and the lowing of these oxen mean?

15. Saul explained why the sheep and the oxen were brought from the Amalekites, or why he had not done exactly as God had commanded in destroying all. "The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God." If Saul intended to sacrifice to Samuel's God, why should Samuel complain? Besides, Saul laid this on the people.

This goes to show that Saul understood just what God had told him to do; but he and the people thought that something else would do not only as well, but even better than that which God had commanded. They intended, anyway, to kill all these in the end and at the same time to make a great sacrifice to God at Gilgal—a great day for Jehovah. To sacrifice to God seemed to Saul a justifiable

reason for sparing them. "And the rest we have utterly destroyed"—that is, all except the ones saved for sacrifices.

When sacrifices were offered according to God's will, they were honoring to him; and to honor God to-day is to obey him. To desire to worship God—and, therefore, to honor him—is a good and pure motive; but before God is honored by man's services and sacrifices, these must all be according to his will, not man's will.

Saul, as some think, was not trying to conceal his sin. He had not yet realized that he had sinned. He admitted that he had not done just the thing that God had commanded, but contended earnestly with Samuel that he intended to honor God.

Many religious people now seem to reason as did Saul, for they contend that it matters not so much how God is worshiped, just so he is worshiped. Saul's sin seems to have left no impression upon them.

16. When Samuel said to Saul, "Stay, and I will tell thee what Jehovah hath said to me this night [last night]," Saul replied, "Say on"—that is, "I am ready to hear it"—doubtless expecting that God would bless and honor him for what he had done since the explanation of his motive was that he intended to honor God.

17. "And Samuel said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel?" That means when Saul was humble and before he became self-conceited and presumptuous.

At first Saul was shy and humble. When he was selected as king, he "hid himself among the baggage." (1 Sam. 9: 21; 10: 22.) "For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 14: 11.) The humble man never sets aside, as did Saul, God's commandments for any consideration. "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." (Isa. 66: 2.) He who trembles at God's word never changes God's order of things, lest he should disobey him. He feels his entire dependence upon God for guidance in all things and receives his word with reverence and awe.

When Saul had this spirit, God exalted him; now that he is self-exalted, God will bring him low.

18. Having anointed Saul king, and having thus exalted him, Jehovah sent him on this journey for the purpose stated—to "utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites," etc.

19. "Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah?" For the foregoing reasons Saul was under great obligations to obey God; and because of his mercy (Rom. 12: 1, 2), goodness (Rom. 2: 4), and love (2 Cor. 5: 14; 1 John 4: 19), we are under lasting obligations to do the same.

"But didst fly upon the spoil" Saul did not hesitate, but "flew" at it, or fell upon it most eagerly.

"And didst that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah." What evil had Saul done, when his purpose was to sacrifice to God in Gilgal? He had knowingly failed to do what God had said and had presumptuously undertaken to perform as worship that which God had not commanded—a sin which many people consider lightly to-day, or a thing which some consider, not a sin at all, but an improvement upon God's will.

20. Saul, conscious of a good motive and satisfied that God would accept his offering at Gilgal, withstood Samuel to the face that he had obeyed God. He knew what God had commanded; he also knew that he had not done the specific thing; but he felt sure that his departure was unimportant, and that God would accept what he did as obedience. He insisted that he had obeyed God.

If he had used the arguments of to-day, he could have said he was honest and sincere; that he knew his own heart, and that just so his heart was right in the sight of God, it mattered not so much what he did or where he did it; or he could have said that so the work was done, it mattered not when, where, or how it was done.

The heart is right only when it loves God supremely, and it never loves him supremely in disobedience. Implicit obedience is supreme love for God. (John 14: 15; 1 John 5: 3.)

21. "But the people," etc. Again Saul laid this to the people. Adam laid his sin to Eve (Gen. 3: 12), and Aaron, when he made the golden calf, said: "Thou knowest the people, that they are set on evil." (Ex. 32: 22.) Saul was king and commander of the army, and should have controlled the people; hence he was held the more responsible.

"The devoted things" were the things which should have been destroyed. (See Lev. 27: 28, 29.)

Saul admitted that he understood God's command, and that all these should have been destroyed according to "the letter of the law;" but he again insisted that they were spared for a sacrifice, and that such a motive should justify the act.

22. Samuel answered Saul this time as follows: "Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah?"

This clearly defines the issue. Saul thought that God may be disobeyed in order to offer sacrifices to him and to more greatly honor him, and God teaches clearly to the contrary: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

To hear and obey God implicitly—or to do, therefore, just what he says and in the way he directs—is the only sacrifice and offering that he will accept. Costly and numerous sacrifices at Gilgal, when not commanded by Jehovah, are an abomination to him; great days and great displays in religion now, when not commanded by the Lord, are as idolatry in his sight. Jesus brings out the same principles in rebuking the Pharisees for rejecting God's commandments in order to keep their own commandments. (See Matt. 15: 1-20; Mark 7: 1-13.) To obey God—to do just what he commands because he has commanded it—is better than sacrifices and offerings, show and display and "big days," and is the only thing that God will accept.

VI. Conclusion of the Controversy

23 "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim." The "teraphim" were probably talismans, or small images. (See Gen. 31: 19, 30, 34; 1 Sam. 19: 13.)

Can one rebel against God and yet offer sacrifices to him? Saul did. To reject God's word is to rebel against him, it matters not what else may be done as worship or service to him.

"Witchcraft" was a kind of divination punishable with death by the law of Moses. (See Ex. 22: 18.)

Saul's sin in offering to God sacrifices which God had not required and in failing to do what God had required was as bad as witchcraft. His stubbornness in refusing to hear God's prophet was as bad as idolatry. Then one may sacrifice to God and be no better than an idolater, if his sacrifice be not that which God has specified.

Obedience to God is surrendering our will to God's will, and is, therefore, doing God's will, not our own. Would God reject one while intending to sacrifice to him? He rejected Saul. "Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

VII. The Kingdom Rent from Saul

Saul confessed that he had sinned in heeding the voice of the people, and requested Samuel to pray for him. He had rejected the word of God, and this is presumptuous sin and an impeachment of God's wisdom. (Verses 24-26.)

To turn from God's plain commandments to anything else, while even intending to honor him, is to reject his word. To set aside God's church and God's order of things now because human wisdom suggests something it considers better is to reject God's word. Samuel said he would not return to Saul to worship Jehovah with him, and that Jehovah had rejected him from being king.

"As Samuel turned about to go away, Saul laid hold upon the skirt of his robe, and it rent." Samuel said this signified that the kingdom should be rent from Saul that day and given to his neighbor, who was better than he was. (Verses 27, 28.)

Verses 29-33 state that "the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent," and the kingdom must be taken from Saul's house. For the present Samuel "turned again after Saul; and Saul worshiped Jehovah." But "Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death; for Samuel mourned for Saul: and Jehovah repented that he had made Saul king over Israel." (Verses 34, 35.)

These things have been written for our instruction, and we should learn in reverence for God's Word never to presume to improve upon his ways.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the Time, Place, and Persons.

Give the situation, meaning of the name of Gilgal, and all the events which occurred there.

When wanting a king what did the elders of Israel do?

What three reasons did the people give for wanting a king?

What did they think the king would do for them?

Why was asking for a king rejection of God?

Who was selected as king?

In what did Saul first seriously fail?

What other king committed this sin, and how?

What lesson should we learn?

What was Jonathan's success and how was it attained?

What success in battles did Saul have after this?

Why did God yet forbear with Saul?

Whom did God send Saul to utterly destroy?

Repeat God's command to him.

Who were the Amalekites?

How had they sinned continually against Israel?

What had God said should be done with them?

How long after this was it before God sent Saul to fulfill this purpose?

Why did God destroy them so long afterwards?

- In what different ways is God's mercy shown?
 Did Saul obey God?
 Did he misunderstand God's command?
 What did God say of Saul's conduct?
 What is meant by God's repenting?
 What is it now to follow God?
 What effect did Saul's sin have upon Samuel?
 What distresses good men today?
 How did Samuel learn where Saul was?
 What did Saul set up at Carmel?
- 13 How did Saul salute Samuel?
 What did Saul say that he had done?
 Was Saul sincere, believing that God would accept what he was doing, or was he trying to conceal his sin by falsehood?
- 14 What reply did Samuel make?
- 15 What explanation did Saul give of his conduct?
 What does this show?
 What motive did Saul offer for doing as he and the people had done?
 What argument on this point do many religious people make today?
- 16 What next did Samuel say to Saul?
 What reply did Saul make, and what did he mean by it?
- 17 Of what did Samuel then remind Saul?
 When was Saul little in his own eyes?
 To what man does God look?
 What does a humble man never do?
 Who shall be exalted?
 What was Saul's condition at the time of our lesson?
- 18 What did God do for Saul?
 What did he then send Saul to do?
- 19 Why should Saul have obeyed God?
 Why should we now obey him?
 What again does Samuel accuse Saul of doing?
- What does "fly upon the spoil" mean?
 What evil did Saul do when intending to sacrifice to God?
- 20 Upon what did Saul here insist?
 What reason did he have for supposing that God would accept what he had done as obedience?
 What do some people now say about the heart's being right?
 When is one's heart right before God?
- 21 To whom did Saul lay this sin?
 What did Adam and Aaron say?
 For what was Saul held the more responsible?
 What is meant by "the devoted things?"
 Upon what did Saul further insist?
- 22 Give Samuel's answer in full.
 State the real issue between Saul and Samuel.
 What is the best thing, and the only right thing, that one can do?
 Can one, then, disobey God while worshipping him?
 What sacrifices and offerings will God reject?
 What about great days and great displays in religion now?
 What was the real issue between Jesus and the Pharisees?
- 23 To what is rebellion equal?
 What is meant by "teraphim?"
 Can one rebel against God while sacrificing to him?
 How was witchcraft punished?
 What is equal to that sin?
 In what was Saul stubborn?
 What are presumptuous sins?
 May we be guilty of such sins today?
 What is it to implicitly obey God?
 Why did God reject Saul?
- 24, 26 What confession did Saul make?
 Why would Samuel not return to worship God with Saul?
 What then did Saul do?
 What did this signify?
 What do verses 29-33 state?
 What lesson should we learn from this case?

The man of pure and simple heart
 Through life disclaims a double part;
 He never needs the screen of lies
 His inward bosom to disguise.

—Gay.

LESSON XI—MARCH 16.

THE REIGN OF DAVID

Read: 1 Sam. 16—2 Sam. 24. *Lesson Text:* 2 Sam. 7: 18-26; 8: 14b-15.

2 SAMUEL 7. 18 Then David the king went in, and sat before Jehovah; and he said, Who am I, O Lord Jehovah, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far?

19 And this was yet a small thing in thine eyes, O Lord Jehovah; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; and this too after the manner of men, O Lord Jehovah!

20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou knowest thy servant, O Lord Jehovah.

21 For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou wrought all this greatness, to make thy servant know it.

22 Wherefore thou art great, O Jehovah God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem unto himself for a people, and to make him a name, and to do great things for you, and terrible things for thy land, before thy people, whom thou redeemedst to thee out of Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

24 And thou didst establish to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever; and thou, Jehovah, becamest their God.

25 And now, O Jehovah God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, confirm thou it for ever, and do as thou hast spoken.

26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, Jehovah of hosts is God over Israel; and the house of thy servant David shall be established before thee.

2 SAMUEL 8. 14b And Jehovah gave victory to David withersoever he went.

15 And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people.

Golden Text—I delight to do thy will, O my God. (Ps. 40: 8.)

Time—About B.C. 1042 or soon after David removed the ark to Jerusalem.

Place—Jerusalem.

Persons—David and Jehovah.

Devotional Readings—Ps. 24: 3-10.

Home Reading—

Mar. 10 M. The Reign of David. 2 Sam. 7: 18-26; 8:14b, 15.

11. T. David Anointed at Bethlehem. 1 Sam. 16: 1-13.

12. W. David and Goliath. 1 Sam. 17: 41-49.

13. T. David and Jonathan. 1 Sam. 18: 1-9.

14. F. David Crowned King of All Israel. 2 Sam. 5: 1-10.

15. S. David's Trust in God. Psalm 27.

16. S. The King of Glory Entering Zion. Psalm 24.

INTRODUCTION

We cannot be certain as to the order of the occurrences of events recorded here and of other events in the early life of David. Facts are recorded, not always in order, but as related to other facts.

I. David Made King

David was made king first over Judah at Hebron, where he reigned seven years and six months. (2 Sam. 2: 11.) He was then at Hebron made "king over all Israel," who "were of one heart" to make him king. The event was celebrated with a three-days' feast. (1 Chron. 12: 38-40.)

He then captured Jerusalem, "dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the city of David," and made it the seat of government.

He was thirty years old when he began to reign at Hebron. How long did he reign in Jerusalem? (2 Sam. 5: 1-10.)

David went to Hebron with two wives (2 Sam. 2: 2), but increased the number there, of whom were born to him six sons. In Jerusalem he still increased the number of his wives, to whom he also added a number of concubines; "and there were yet sons and daughters born to" him in Jerusalem. The names of the sons of his wives are given, but the names of the sons of his concubines are not given, and the name of only one daughter—Tamar (2 Sam. 5: 13-16; 1 Chron. 3: 1-9)—is given.

The events narrated in 2 Sam. after David took Jerusalem and before he removed the ark, whether in the order of their occurrence or not, are as follows: "And Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons; and they built David a house. And David perceived that Jehovah had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake." (2 Sam. 5: 11, 12.)

II. David's Victory over the Philistines

The Philistines, as God's enemies have always been, were pleased when the Israelites were divided and warring among themselves. A divided kingdom, family, or church is weak.

When the Philistines knew that David had been anointed "king over all Israel," they determined to make a united attack upon Israel; hence "all the Philistines went up to seek David." David inquired of Jehovah what he should do. "And Jehovah said unto David, Go up; for I will certainly deliver the Philistines into thy hand." David then fell upon them like a flood—"the breach of waters"—and they fled, leaving "their images [the gods they had carried to the battle] there." They made another attack, and again, by God's guidance, David gained over them a signal victory. (Verses 17-25.)

III. David Removed the Ark

This is a most interesting and significant occurrence in David's history. But first let us see what the ark was and where it was at this time.

For the dimensions and description of the ark, see Ex. 25: 10-22. The pupils will be asked to give these dimensions; they will also be asked to describe the mercy seat, the cherubim, etc. What was the size of the ark in feet and inches, if a cubit was eighteen inches? What was placed in the ark? (See Deut. 10: 1-5; Heb. 9: 3-5.) What place in the tabernacle, or temple did the ark occupy? See Ex. 26: 31-34; Heb. 9: 3.) Where did God meet and commune with Moses? (See Ex. 25: 22.) The high priest alone could go into the

most holy place before the ark, and that only once a year. (Lev. 16: 11-34; Heb. 9: 7.)

By referring to the scriptures given, the following questions can be answered: Where was the tabernacle—and, therefore, the ark—located first after the children of Israel settled in the land of promise? (Josh. 18: 1.) It remained there through all the period of the judges until the time of Samuel. (1 Sam. 1: 3.) Where was Samuel brought up? (1 Sam. 1: 24; 3: 1.) Why was the ark removed from Shiloh? (1 Sam. 4.) Who captured it? Where did they place it? What befell Dagon? How were the people afflicted? (1 Sam. 5.) How long was the ark among the Philistines? How did they send it back? To whom did they send it? What befell the men of Beth-shemesh? To whom did they send messengers concerning the ark? (1 Sam. 6.) What did the men of Kiriath-jearim do? In whose house was the ark placed? Who was sanctified to keep it? (1 Sam. 7: 1, 2.) The ark was placed in the house of Abinadab, in Kiriath-jearim, after Samuel had become a prophet and before Saul was made king. If it remained there during Saul's reign of forty years (Acts 13: 21) and during David's seven-years-and-six-month's reign at Hebron and until he removed it to Jerusalem, it was there a long time. "And it came to pass, from the day that the ark abode in Kiriath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after Jehovah." (1 Sam. 7: 2.) This probably refers to the time occupied by Samuel in reforming Israel—and not to the whole time the ark remained in the house of Abinadab.

Because Nob (not far from Jerusalem) is called "the city of the priests" and because David ate the showbread there when he fled from Saul, some have thought the tabernacle was there at that time; and so it seems. Still, it is nowhere recorded that the ark was ever removed from Kiriath-jearim. If it was ever removed to Nob from Kiriath-jearim, it was returned to this place before David could have thence removed it to Jerusalem. There is no record that the ark was ever returned to the tabernacle after Eli's wicked sons carried it out to battle from Shiloh; but the record is to the contrary, for they "sought not unto it in the days of Saul." (1 Chron. 13: 3.) Hence it was not at Nob. It must have remained, then, all the while in the house of Abinadab, at Kiriath-jearim. The tabernacle was removed at some time to Gibeon. (1 Kings 3: 4; 1 Chron. 16: 39, 40; 2 Chron. 1: 3-5.)

It was God's will for David to remove the ark, but David made a grievous mistake in the way he at first undertook to do it. How should it have been removed? What then was David's mistake? Did he see and acknowledge his mistake? Why was God's anger kindled against Uzzah, and what was done to him? What was then done with the ark? How long was it there? (See 2 Sam. 6.) What did God do for Obed-edom for taking care of the ark?

The people saw why God blessed Obed-edom and reported the same to David. David and the people had learned the important lesson that their own sin had brought this curse of God upon them. "And David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David." How did he do it this time? "Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites." (1 Chron. 15: 2; see also Num. 4:15.) Then David gath-

ered together the priests and said: "For because ye bare it not at the first, Jehovah our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not according to the ordinance." Then the priests sanctified themselves and "bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of Jehovah." (See 1 Chron. 15: 1-15.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Why David Was Not Permitted to Build the Temple

We should study 2 Sam. 7: 1-17 and note the following facts:

1. After David had built his own "house of cedar" and "Jehovah had given him rest from all his enemies round about," while the ark of God was still in curtains (verse 1; 2 Chron. 17: 1), the desire arose in David's heart to build for the ark and, therefore, for God a permanent and worthy house. This was a noble purpose, for which the Lord blessed David.

2. God approved this desire, but sent Nathan, the prophet, to David to make known his will concerning this house. He said David should not build this house, because God had not dwelt in a house since he had delivered Israel from Egypt, but had gone from tent to tent; because in all places they had gone he had never said: "Why have ye not built me a house of cedar?" And because, as David told Solomon, the Lord said to David: "Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and has made great wars: thou shalt not build a house for my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. Behold a son shall be born unto thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon ["peaceful"], and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his day: he shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father." (2 Chron. 22: 7-10; read also 1 Kings 5: 3, 4; 1 Chron. 28: 3.)

This temple was a type of God's spiritual temple or building—his church—on earth now (1 Cor. 3: 9, 16, 17; 6: 19; 1 Tim. 3: 15; Heb. 3: 4-6); and this church or spiritual house is one of peace, governed by laws of peace, the weapons of whose warfare are not carnal, whose head is "the Prince of Peace," and the establishment of which marks the beginning of the time when by all members swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks and under whose influence the nations even shall learn war no more. (Isa. 2: 2-4; Micah 4: 1-3.)

3. God permitted David to gather material in abundance and to contribute very largely of his own means toward building this house. Also God gave David in writing the plan and specification of this house and all of its vessels, etc. David gave these to Solomon. So this house was built by inspiration. (1 Chron. 28: 1-19.)

4. The tabernacle, as well as the temple, with every thing in it, was made according to god's pattern (Ex. 25: 9-39); he filled it with his glory (Ex. 40: 34-38); it was the place where he met with and blessed Israel. (Ex. 25: 21, 22; 29: 42, 43; 30: 6.) So was the church built by inspiration, all its service was arranged by inspiration, when finished it was filled with God's spirit (Acts 2), and it is his dwelling place on earth today. (Matt. 16: 18; Eph. 2: 19-22.)

5. In due course of time Solomon built the temple.
6. God promised to guide and protect Solomon; but when he sinned to chastise him "with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men." (verse 14.)

The only way that David's descendants could enjoy these promised blessings was by obedience. When they refused to obey God, they must suffer the consequences. While Solomon obeyed God, God extended Solomon's kingdom from Egypt to the Euphrates (1 Kings 4: 21); but when he sinned, God raised up adversaries against him (1 Kings 11: 1-40), and thus chastised "him with the rod of men." God used all these wicked nations to chastise Solomon and the Jews.

"And I will not take my loving-kindness away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee." This one was Saul. Saul sinned willfully and presumptuously, and God rejected him as king and his family as the royal line. God destroyed Saul's family and gave the kingdom to David and his family. He promised not to remove the kingdom from Solomon's family, as he had taken it from Saul's family. David's family should remain the royal family, and the kingdom should be sure to remain in it forever, and "his throne shall be established forever." As stated above, this was on condition that David's descendants remained loyal to God.

The earthly kingdom went down when all were carried into captivity; but the promise was fulfilled in Christ, of the seed of David, who reigns in the spiritual kingdom. Christians, the children of God today, are "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6: 16.) Christ has "the sure mercies of David." (Isa. 55: 3; see also Acts. 13: 34.)

"According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David." (1 Chron. 17: 15.) These were to David greater blessings than being permitted simply to build the temple.

II. David's Gratitude for What God Had Done for Him

18. These blessings and promises filled David with deepest and most profound gratitude. He "went in, and sat before Jehovah" and offered the thanksgiving prayer of this lesson.

Sitting before God is an act of humility and trust. These promises of God to David were great and wonderful, he seemed overwhelmed with them and was willing to wait upon God to fulfill them in his own goodness and wisdom and according to his own purpose.

We are reminded here of the expression, "His precious and exceeding great promises," which God has made through Christ to all who serve him in faithfulness.

"Who am I?" Feeling his own insignificance and unworthiness David asked this and the following question: "and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far?" David asked the same when King Saul offered to him his daughter for a wife. (1 Sam. 18: 18.) When Jehovah appeared to Moses in the burning bush to send him to Pharaoh to bring the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses said: "Who am I?" that he should be sent on so important a mission for Jehovah. Jacob said: "I am not worthy of the least of all thy loving kindnesses, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two companies." (Gen. 32: 9-12.) Abraham, the father of

the faithful, the friend of God, in whose seed all the families of the earth have been blessed spoke of himself as "but dust and ashes." (Gen 18: 27.)

What a contrast the faith and trust and humility of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Paul and others make with the self-importance, self-conceit, and self-assurance of not a few of the present generation. All should be seriously impressed with God's injunction against thinking of one's self more highly than should be done, of being wise in one's own conceits, of self-exaltation, and his command to consider others better than one's self. The men and women in all ages of the greatest faith, sublimest trust, deepest humility and most implicit obedience have always been the most useful and greatest.

By the question above David did not boast of his blood. This refers only to the past, that which God had already done for David. God states this as follows in verses 8-10: "I took thee from the sheep-cote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be prince over my people, over Israel; and I have been with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off thine enemies from before thee, and I will make thee a great name, like unto the names of the great ones that are in the earth." (See Psalms 78: 70-72.) God had guided and protected him through the vicissitudes of his eventful life. God was with him in Saul's house; when he dared to fight Goliath for God's glory; when he was hunted by Saul as one hunts ravenous wild beasts; when he hid in caves and sought protection among the Moabites and the Philistines; when he fought the Amalekites, the Philistines, and all foreign enemies; and God had cut them all off. All this God had done for him, and he felt under obligation to God for it; but God would do still more.

III. David's Gratitude for What God Promised to Do for Him in the Future

19. "And [as if] this was yet a small thing in thine eyes"—that is, all that God had done for David—; "thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come."

"I will make thee a great name, like unto the name of the great ones that are in the earth"—that is, a name as great as the names of the kings of earth. David was human and sinned through his weaknesses, as do all men; but in heart he was loyal to God and sought the honor and glory of God.

"And I will appoint a place for my people Israel." This probably means a permanent place, which he had promised (Deut. 12: 5, 11, 14) for his name and worship, where the temple was built, and to which the people could come regularly as commanded. He would also "plant them" permanently in a settled place—"their own place"—that they might "be moved no more." "Neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the first, and as from the day that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel"—that is, from the time they left Egypt until God gave David the victory over all his enemies. God had guided and directed them; and when they had sinned, he had allowed their enemies to greatly afflict them for their correction; and he had developed them into that great nation. He does not promise unconditionally, either, that their enemies shall never more afflict them.

But this is not all. "Moreover . . . Jehovah will make thee a house." (Verse 11.) David desired to build God a house, as has been seen; but God promises to build David a house—to "establish the throne of his kingdom forever." (Verse 13.) This means, not only Solomon, but that one of David's descendants should occupy the throne from generation to generation. After the kingdom had fallen down and the spiritual kingdom was ushered in, Jesus of the seed of David, was placed upon the throne; and his kingdom will never be destroyed. (Read Isa. 9: 6, 7; Amos. 9: 11, 12; Acts 13: 21-23; 15: 16.)

It is difficult to learn the meaning of this declaration: "And this too after the manner of men." The margin says: "And is this the law of man, O Lord, Jehovah?" Certainly man never made this law or these promises. They could not come from the wisdom and power—rather, weakness of man. Some think this refers to "the second Adam." There was "The first man Adam" and there is "the last Adam." (1 Cor. 15: 45.) "The last Adam" is "from heaven" and is Christ. In 1 Chron. 17: 17 these expressions are as follows: "but thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and has regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree." This certainly looks beyond the temporal kingdom which Solomon inherited. Besides, there are so many other passages which refer to Christ, if this one does not, that we know he is the one now on "David's throne" and that his kingdom shall stand forever. Peter says of David, "Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; he fore seeing this spake of the resurrection of Christ." (Acts 2: 30, 31, also verses 25-29, 34-36.) This settles the question of Jesus' being now upon the throne of David.

20. "What can David say more unto thee?" God knew David's heart—his thankfulness, his submission to God, that God could use him and his house as God should choose.

21. Not through David's own merit and worth, or that of his family, but for God's word's sake and according to God's own heart—wisdom and purpose—he had wrought all this greatness for David and David's house.

22. Therefore God is great and wonderful; there is no God like him and there is no other. He is the only true God.

23. With Jehovah as their God and considering all the great and wonderful things he had done for Israel, from Abraham to David, from Egypt to the mighty kingdom of that time, there was no nation on earth equal to that one.

24. This redeemed and now great people God established to himself to be his people forever, and to be their God. His children today, his church, are "the Israel of God." (Gal. 6: 16.) This cannot be too well understood and impressed. All the fleshly descendants of Abraham, or of Jacob, are not Israel. Neither "are they all children" because they are of Abraham's seed. (See Romans 9: 6-9.) "For ye are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise." (Gal. 3: 26-29.)

Christian Gentiles are as much Israel today as Christian Jews; and Jews who are not children of God by faith in Christ are no more "the Israel of God" than unbelieving Gentiles. "Whose house are we—God's house in which Jesus Christ is the Son—if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end." (Heb. 3: 6.) The Jews were cut off and ceased to be "the Israel of God through unbelief; the Gentiles became so by their faith." (Romans 11: 20-24.)

IV. David's Prayer

25, 26. In faith and submission, trust and hope, David prayed God to bring to pass all he had spoken concerning David and his house; to confirm it forever; to magnify his own—God's name forever. Doing these wonderful and far-reaching things would redound to the glory of God's name as it does today.

Because God had revealed all this to David and had promised to build David "a house" David found it in his heart to offer this prayer to God. Emphasis is placed on "the house" of David, which, as we have seen, embraces Christ and his reign. David expressed his faith that God would do this because his words are truth and he had promised it.

Verse 14, 15 of 2 Samuel 8 state again the victories God gave David over all his enemies and that David reigned over all Israel in righteousness and justice.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the Time, Place, and Persons.

What is said about the time of some of these events?

Over what and where was David first made king?

When was he made king over all Israel?

What became "the City of David?"

What is said of David's wives and children?

Give the events which occurred between David's capturing Jerusalem and his attempt to remove the ark there?

Over whom did David gain victories?

Who guided David in all this?

What is said about a divided kingdom, family or church?

Why was removing the Ark and David's mistake in doing so so significant?

Let the teacher turn to the paragraph in the body of the lesson where reference is made to this and ask the questions there.

Give the history of the ark from Kiriath-Jearim to Jerusalem.

Why was Uzzah destroyed?

Why did God bless Obededom?

How was the Ark removed the second time?

What house did David long to build?

What had he built for himself?

What reasons did God give for not allowing David to build the temple?

Who did God say should build it?

Why should Solomon build it?

Of what was Solomon's temple a type?

Does peace or war characterize the church?

Of what time was the establishment of the church the beginning?

What did God permit David to do for the temple?

According to whose plan and specifications were the tabernacle, temple and church built?

When finished what did God do for each one?

In what does God dwell today?

What two things did God promise to do for Solomon?

How did God chastise Solomon?

What did God promise to David's family forever?

In whom has this promise been fulfilled?

What were greater blessings to David than being permitted to build the temple?

18 Why was David so grateful?

What promises has God made to us?

- What does sitting before God mean?
 What did David and others mean by saying, "Who am I?"
 State the contrast between this and self-conceit, etc.?
 Who are always the greatest men and wisdom?
 What did David say of his house?
 What had God done for David?
 19 What more did God promise to do for David and Israel?
 What is meant by building David "a house?"
 Who is on David's throne today?
 What is meant by the expression, "and this too after the manner of men?"
 20 What did David mean by this verse?
 21 Why would God do all this for David and his house?
 22 What did David say of God?
 23 What did David say of Israel as a nation?
 24 What had God made of Israel? Who are "the Israel of God" today?
 How did the Jews cease to be "the Israel of God" and how do Gentiles become such?
 25, 26 For what did David then pray?
 What do verses 14 and 15 of 2 Samuel 8 state?

"O mothers, will you longer give your sons
 To feed the awful hunger of the guns?
 What is the worth of all these battle drums
 If from the field the loved one never comes?
 What all these loud hosannas to the brave
 If all your share is some forgotten grave?"

"If I could only surely know
 That all these things that tire me so
 Were noticed by the Lord—
 The pang that cuts me like a knife,
 The noise, the weariness, the strife—
 What peace it would afford.
 I wonder if He really shares
 In all my little human cares,
 This mighty King of kings;
 If He who guides through boundless space
 Each blazing planet in its place
 Can have the condescending grace
 To mind these petty things.
 It seems to me, if sure of this,
 Blent with each ill would come such bliss
 That I might covet pain.
 Dear Lord, my heart hath not a doubt
 That thou dost compass me about
 With sympathy divine.
 Thy love for me once crucified
 Is not the love to leave my side,
 But waiteth ever to divide
 Each care of mine."

LESSON XII—MARCH 23.

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON

Read: 1 Kings, Chapters 3-11; 2 Chronicles, Chapter 1. *Lesson Text:* 2 Chronicles 1: 7-12; 1 Kings 11: 6-11.

2 **CHRONICLES** 1. 7 In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.

8 And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast showed great lovingkindness unto David my father, and hast made me king in his stead.

9 Now, O Jehovah God, let thy promise unto David my father be established; for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude.

10 Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?

11 And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thy heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of them that hate thee, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:

12 wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee; neither shall there any after thee have the like.

1 **KINGS** 11. 6 And Solomon did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and went not fully after Jehovah, as did David his father.

7 Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, in the mount that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon.

8 And so did he for all his foreign wives, who burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

9 And Jehovah was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned away from Jehovah, the God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice,

10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which Jehovah commanded.

11 Wherefore Jehovah said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

Golden Text—The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge. (Prov. 1: 7.)

Time—B. C. 1014 and B. C. 990-975.

Places—Gibeon and Jerusalem.

Persons—Solomon, the rulers of Israel, and later Solomon's wives.

Devotional Reading—Psalm 45: 1-7.

Home Reading—

Mar. 17. M. The Reign of Solomon. 2 Chron. 1: 7-12.

18. T. The Reign of Solomon. 1 Kings 11: 6-11.

19. W. Solomon's Wise Choice. 1 Kings 3: 4-15.

20. T. The Temple Dedicated. 1 Kings 8: 54-65.

21. F. A Paternal Exhortation. Prov. 4: 1-19.

22. S. Remembering God in Youth. Eccl. 12: 1-10.

23. S. The King's Beauty and Majesty. Psalm 45: 1-7.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Gibeon was a city about six miles north of Jerusalem. It was a royal city, and greater than Ai. (Josh. 10: 2.) Its inhabitants deceived Joshua. (Josh. 9.) These inhabitants became bondmen. (Josh. 9: 23.) There Joshua defeated five kings. (Josh. 10: 16.) There Solomon prayed for wisdom. (1 Kings 3: 5.) The Tabernacle was there. (1 Chron. 16: 39; 21: 29.)

It was a hill, or famous "high place." Hills and groves were used by Jews and heathens as places of sacrifices. (1 Kings 2: 2; 2 Kings 18: 4, 22; 23: 5-9, 15; 2 Chron. 28: 4; 31: 1.) The "high place" was a hill, or raised place, for idols, or for the tabernacle and the altar of God. The Israelites were commanded to offer their sacrifices at "the door of the tent of meeting." David had placed Zadok at Gibeon for this purpose. (1 Chron. 16: 39-42.)

HINTS AND HELPS FOR TEACHERS

1. Call attention to David's dying words to Solomon. (1 Kings 2: 1-4.)

2. It cannot be too well understood upon what conditions God promised to bless Solomon and to perpetuate his kingdom. He must serve God "with a perfect heart and with a willing mind." If he sought God, God would be found of him; but if he forgot God, God would cast him off forever. (1 Cor. 28: 9, 10.)

3. God does not choose and bless people unconditionally and with no reference to fitness and character.

4. The time of the beginning of Solomon's reign is placed at B. C. 1015, and early in his reign he called this assembly at Gibeon.

4. "And Solomon spake unto all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every prince in all Israel, the heads of the father's houses. So Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tent of meeting of God, which Moses the servant of Jehovah had made in the wilderness. But the ark of God had David brought up from Kiriath-jearim to the place that David had prepared for it; for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. Moreover the brazen altar, that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, was there before the tabernacle of Jehovah: and Solomon and the assembly sought unto it." (2 Chron. 1: 2-5.)

5. This tabernacle, altar, etc., were about five hundred years old.

6. Solomon called this assembly in order to unify the nation under him as king, also and to worship God and to seek his guidance. There he offered a thousand burnt offerings to God. The burnt offering was wholly consumed, or burned, on the altar. (See the law on burnt offerings in Lev. 1.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. God Appeared to Solomon in a Dream

7. "In that night did God appear unto Solomon"—the night after these offerings were made. He "appeared to Solomon in a dream." (1 Kings 3: 5.)

God then appeared to people in dreams. He appeared in a dream to Jacob (Gen. 28: 12-17); to Joseph (Gen. 37: 5-10); Joseph in-

terpreted the dreams of the butler and the baker and Pharaoh (Gen. 40: 41); to Daniel (Dan. 2, 4, 7); to Joseph, Mary's husband (Matt. 1: 20; 2: 13-22). So Joel prophesied: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." (Joel 2: 28; see also Acts 2: 17, 18.) These dreams came through the influence of the Holy Spirit and were supernatural, or miraculous. Paul had "visions and revelations of the Lord." (2 Cor. 12: 1, 7.)

Dreams, as such, it seems, were nothing; they were only significant as the Lord gave them meaning or interpretation. (Jer. 23: 25-32.)

"Ask what I shall give thee." This privilege would reveal what was uppermost in Solomon's heart.

"And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him." (1 John 5: 14, 15.) "And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight." (1 John 3: 22.) That which we most greatly desire we are most apt to pray for; and if it is in accordance with God's will, he will most readily give it to us. God is pleased with our asking for much if we will use it to his glory. We receive not when we ask amiss that we may consume it upon our lusts. (James 4: 2, 3.)

II. Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom

8. Solomon prefaced his petition by speaking of the "great lovingkindness" God had shown David.

God had not done this for David unconditionally, but only "according as he walked before" God "in truth [sincerity and honesty of purpose], and in righteousness [justice and right to men and obedience to God], and in uprightness of heart [loyalty to God]." (1 Kings 3: 6.)

While David did wrong sometimes, he desired God's will to prevail, even if he himself must suffer the consequences. When David did wrong, God chastised him. Solomon recognized this as just and thanked God for all that he had done for David.

One's gratitude for past favors capacitates him for the reception of future blessings.

To all that God had done for David he had added "this great loving-kindness;" that he had "given him a son to sit on his throne." (1 King 3: 6). Solomon attributed his being king to God's favor, and not to his own desert.

9. "I am but a little child." (1 Kings 3: 7.) He prayed God to carry out his promises to David. Solomon was a young man about twenty years of age. As his father expresses it, he "is yet young and tender, and the work is great." (1 Chron. 29: 1.) He had the good sense to acknowledge his own unworthiness and incapability for such work and his need of wisdom. God cannot give wisdom to a fool. God blesses men as they are capacitated to receive and use his blessings. "He that hath to him shall be given." One who acknowledges himself a child in knowledge and wisdom is ready to be led by the Lord. "If any man thinketh that he is wise among you in this world, let

him become a fool, that he may become wise." (1 Cor. 3: 18.)

10. Solomon then prayed God for "wisdom and knowledge." He prayed to know how he might "go out and come in before" God's people and judge them aright. The expression, "go out or come in," was a familiar one, denoting one's conduct in public affairs. (See Num. 27: 17; Deut. 28: 6; 1 Sam. 18: 13.) That he was "in the midst" as king over the people whom God had chosen, and that God had chosen him made him feel his incompetency to lead them aright. That they were "a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude" (1 Kings 3: 8), is another reason why he felt his need of wisdom.

"Give thy servant therefore [for the foregoing reasons] an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?" (1 Kings 3: 9.) The people would have difficulties and differences among themselves to be settled, and probably there was a party opposed to Solomon as king, and he desired wisdom to "discern between good and evil." He desired to render justice to all.

It requires wisdom now "to discern between good and evil." Paul reproved the Hebrews because they were yet babes, "without experience of the word of righteousness," and had not "by reason of use . . . their senses exercised to discern good and evil." (Heb. 5: 13, 14.)

Solomon desired wisdom that he might guide the people for their own good and for the glory of God. He was actuated by no selfish motive. He sought not his own aggrandizement; he sought the good of the people and the glory of God. Whatever promotes the real and permanent good of the people also honors God, and that which honors God promotes the greatest good of the people. Solomon realized, as he exhorts others, that "wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; yea, with all thy getting get understanding." (Prov. 4: 7.)

By this choice Solomon showed what was in his heart. One's choice now shows his character and reveals his destiny. We all make some choice; we choose wisdom or folly, right or wrong, good or evil; and this choice shapes our course in life and seals our destiny. People are known by the company they keep; they choose their company. People are known by the books they read; they choose their books. Solomon's choice made him a great man.

11. "And the speech pleased the Lord." (1 Kings 3: 10.) It pleased God because Solomon was unselfish, and because, therefore, he sought the greatest good of the people and the honor of God.

Solomon could have asked for himself "long life," "riches," or "the life of" his "enemies;" but these requests would have been selfish, and selfishness is of Satan. But because he had proven himself entirely unselfish and had asked for "understanding to discern justice" God said: "Behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart."

12. God did for Solomon more than he asked. In addition to wisdom and understanding, he gave him riches and honor—that is, personal good. This shows that we are personally benefited and blessed in seeking the good of others and the glory of God. God does for us now more than we can think or ask. (Eph. 3: 20.)

God also promised to give Solomon length of days, or long life, if he would walk in God's ways, statutes, and commandments, as David had done. Solomon did not do this, and died at about sixty years of age, having reigned forty years. (See 1 Kings 11: 1-8.)

"And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream." (1 Kings 3: 15.) But God appeared to him, and he made this famous choice of wisdom. He then returned to Jerusalem, where he continued his offerings before the ark of the covenant. He "offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants."

III. Solomon's Wisdom

Many instances of Solomon's wisdom are given. One instance is his determining who was the mother of the living child. (1 Kings 3: 16-27.) Solomon's three thousand proverbs and thousand and five songs and his knowledge of natural history are other instances which show his wisdom. "So that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee." "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore." (See 1 Kings 4: 29-34.)

IV. Solomon's Wealth and Glory

The kingdom reached the zenith of its earthly splendor and glory during Solomon's reign, and from him and on account of his sins it began to decline.

"So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his tribute, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year. And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, that he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. And he ruled over all the kings from the River [Euphrates] even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt. And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the lowland, for abundance. And they brought horses for Solomon out of Egypt, and out of all lands." (2 Chron. 9: 22-28.)

Besides the temple, he built, royal palaces, fortresses, and fortified cities. (See 1 Kings 9: 15-24.) He was thirteen years in building his own house. (1 Kings 7: 1-8.)

He planted gardens, groves, and orchards, and built extensive waterworks. (Eccles. 2: 4-9.)

He had a widespread commerce over sea and land. (See 1 Kings 9: 26-28; 10: 22; 2 Chron. 8: 17, 18; 9: 21.) He was exceedingly rich. A constant stream of gold and silver poured into his treasury from tributary nations, commerce, and other sources. He had a throne of ivory overlaid with gold. It was ascended by six steps, which were overlaid with gold, with a footstool of gold. Around the seat were arms, and at each end of the seat stood a lion; on each end of every step also stood a lion. "There was not the like made in any kingdom." All of Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold. "Silver

was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon." (See 2 Chron. 9: 13-20.)

He kept a standing army. (See 1 Kings 4: 26; 10: 26-29; 2 Chron. 1: 14-17.) "He ruled over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt."

To Abraham God had promised all this territory and under Solomon the promised was fulfilled. (Gen. 15: 18.)

V. God's Word Fulfilled

As Samuel prophesied in delivering God's protest against this system and rebellion against God, this led to oppression of the people. All this earthly splendor, magnificance, wealth, and glory of Solomon's reign led to heavy and burdensome taxation. Indeed, he took the sons of the people for his army. He made the yoke of the people grievous, and he made their burdens heavy. (See 1 Kings 12: 1-5.) The kingdom which they sought to give them prestige and glory among the nations of the earth brought upon them oppression and ruin. God allowed them under protest to have the king. He allows people to do as they choose. The kingdom did exalt them among the nations, but it led to their downfall even as a nation.

God's way today is best. To depend upon him for guidance, protection, and the advancement of his kingdom is the only right, scriptural, and safe course. To seek to consolidate and organize all the congregations into one human system and government is contrary to the wisdom of God and is a rejection of his order and government. God promised to bless and to help the people in their earthly kingdom, which he did until it surpassed in earthly power and glory all the kingdoms of the earth, that they might learn the insufficiency of human wisdom and ways, and that to depend upon them is rebellion and failure.

VI. Solomon's Sins and Downfall

(1 Kings 11: 6-11.)

6. This verse states that "Solomon did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and went not fully after Jehovah, as did David his father."

Verse 4 says, "When Solomon was old." As stated above, he reigned forty years. (1 Kings 11: 42.) He was a young man about twenty years of age—when he began to reign; hence he was about sixty when he died. His decline began probably ten or twelve years before his death. He had a bright start in life and a glorious youth, but went down in old age. When he should have been in his prime physically, mentally, and spiritually, he was weak. His sensualism and other pleasures had weakened his constitution; his sins had greatly destroyed his influence; his great works and wealth were burdens to him; and, when he should have been mightiest and his hope the brightest, in premature old age his sun went down behind a cloud.

Then one may yield to temptation in old age. The promise is to him who endures unto the end.

Solomon disobeyed God in marrying heathen women: "Now king Solomon loved many foreign women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which Jehovah said unto the

children of Israel, Ye shall not go among them, neither shall they come among you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines." (1 Kings 11:1-3.)

Having so many wives with Eastern monarchs was in keeping with Solomon's wealth and worldly greatness. It was the idea in the East that it added to the ruler's greatness and fame to maintain a great number of wives.

The king of Israel was forbidden to multiply horses, silver, gold, and wives unto himself. (Deut. 17:14-17.) To do these things was the way of the world, and God's people should depend upon him and not upon worldly power and greatness.

Solomon disobeyed God in all these particulars—not all at once; his sins grew upon him.

Before they entered the land of promise God forbade the children of Israel's forming any covenant and making marriages with the nations which inhabited that country, giving as the reason that they were unclean, corrupt, idolatrous, and abominable, and would turn the children of Israel from following him to the service of their gods. The visible images and sensual services of the gods of these nations in contrast with the spiritual service of the invisible God were great temptations to fleshly passions.

On the contrary, God commanded the children of Israel to "break down the altars," "dash in pieces" the pillars, "hew down" the Asherim, and "burn" the graven images of these nations and to drive the nations themselves out of the land, and to destroy them utterly. (Ex. 23:20-32; 34:11-17; Deut. 7.)

The children of Israel did not fully do this, and these nations, as God had said they would, became a snare unto them. (See Josh. 23:12, 13; Judg. 1:21-35; 5, 6; Ps. 106:34, 35.) Many of the Israelites committed the same sin upon their return from Babylon. (See Ezra 9:1 to 10:17; Neh. 13:23-29.)

In this way Solomon fell. His "wives turned away his heart after other gods." This was not done when Solomon was young and his heart was absorbed in building God's temple and in other service to God; neither did he have all these wives then. He did not marry them all in a day.

"His heart was not perfect with Jehovah, as was the heart of David his father." (Verse 4.) That he married these women shows his heart was not perfect before God. A perfect heart is one that seeks the honor and glory of God, that is loyal to God, and that does God's will and desires it to prevail over all. God must be loved with the whole heart (Matt. 22:37); a divided allegiance is rejected by him. In his prayer to God for Solomon at the beginning of his reign, David said: "And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for which I have made provision." (1 Chron. 29:19.) David yielded to temptation and made mistakes, but his heart was loyal always to God, and it was his sole desire to see God's will prevail. David's heart went "fully after Jehovah." God says of David: "Who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes." (1 Kings 14:8.)

The heart embraces the "inner man" and contains "the issues of

life." (Prov. 4: 23; 6: 18; 17: 20; Gen. 6: 5; Matt. 15: 19; Ps. 19: 14.) Hence it must be kept "with all diligence."

With their flattery, customs, and heathen natures these foreign wives turned Solomon's heart. Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites." (Verse 5.)

7, 8. From the statement that Solomon built the high places for the gods of his wives and that they "burned incense and sacrificed unto their gods," it seems that he only aided idolatry; but from the statement that he "went after Ashtoreth . . . and after Milcom," and from the statement in verse 33 that the people of Judah worshiped these idols, it seems that Solomon did, too.

God held Solomon responsible for this idolatry among the Israelites.

Ashtoreth was the Phenician goddess, Astarte, and corresponds to the Roman Venus. The worship of this goddess is commonly named with that of Baal. (Judg. 2: 13; 10: 6; 1 Sam. 7: 4; 12: 12.) Much licentiousness was connected with the worship of Ashtoreth.

Milcom, or Molech, was a god of the Ammonites. Chemosh was a god of the Moabites. Molech was a fire god to which human sacrifices were made. (Lev. 18: 21; 2 Kings 16: 3; 21: 6; 23: 10; Jer. 19: 5.) It is said that Molech was a hollow image of brass, with outstretched arms; and that when heated red hot, the victims were thrown into these arms and slipped down into the furnace beneath and were soon burned to death. The cries of the victims were drowned by the beating of drums.

"The high places" were the mounds, or hills, upon which the altars were placed. "The mount that is before Jerusalem" is the Mount of Olives. Here Solomon also erected altars to the gods of his wives. These idols and their worship were abominable to God; hence they are said to be "the abomination of the Ammonites," "the abomination of Moab," etc.

The Ammonites and Moabites were descendants of Lot, and inhabited the country east of the Dead Sea and lower Jordan.

Solomon did this "for all his foreign wives." There was no stopping place, when once he had begun; he could not show partiality, and he had many wives. In all these ways "Solomon did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and went not fully after Jehovah, as did David his father."

9, 10. "And Jehovah was angry with Solomon." This was not an outburst of passion, but a righteous indignation against sin. "God is a righteous judge, yea, a God that hath indignation every day." (Ps. 7: 11.) Sin is always displeasing to God, and brings its evil consequences to the guilty. We have seen above how Solomon's heart was turned away from God.

"Who had appeared unto him twice." God first appeared unto Solomon at Gibeon when he prayed for wisdom (1 Kings 3: 4-15), and the second time when he dedicated the temple. (1 Kings 9: 1-9.) These appearances and blessings of God were sufficient to encourage Solomon to be forever loyal to God. "And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods." At the time of these appearances God gave this commandment (1 Kings 9: 6-9; 1 Kings 3: 14); also, Solomon had

all the previous teaching and warning of God on this subject. But with all these before him, Solomon "kept not that which Jehovah commanded."

11. "I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant." God told Solomon he would do this because Solomon had gone after these idols and had not kept his covenant and statutes. Solomon's sins and taxation had oppressed and dissatisfied the people and had prepared them for and led them to this disruption.

While God did this, it was not done arbitrarily and for division's sake. God teaches peace and overrules contention and division for the good of his people. This division was the natural consequence of Solomon's course of cruelty, oppression, and sin.

This servant was Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. He was an ambitious, wily, and gifted politician. He was an Ephraimite, a young man, industrious, and "a mighty man of valor." Solomon promoted him to the "charge over all the labor of the house of Joseph." The prophet Ahijah told Jeroboam that God would rend the kingdom from Solomon and give ten tribes to him and why God would do this. This should have filled Jeroboam with the greatest awe and reverence and determination to lead the people in the pure worship of God and to be loyal and faithful to God; but, on the contrary, he could not in his ambition await God's own time to give him the kingdom and raised his hand against Solomon. Howbeit, Ahijah had told him this would not be during Solomon's lifetime. Because Jeroboam lifted up his hand against Solomon, Solomon sought to kill him, and he fled into Egypt and remained there until Solomon's death. (See the remainder of the chapter.)

God promised Solomon that this disruption should not come until after his death because of David's truthfulness and loyalty. (Verse 12; 2 Sam. 7:13-16.) Solomon reaped benefits from his father's faithfulness; but Rehoboam, Solomon's son, suffered from his father's sins and influence.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the Time, Place, and Persons.

Where and what was Gibeon and what occurred there?

Can you give David's dying words?

Upon what conditions would God bless Solomon?

With reference to what does God choose men?

When did Solomon call this assembly?

4 What assembly did Solomon call?

Why did they go to Gibeon?

Where was the Ark?

How old was the tabernacle now?

What were the "high places?"

Where was Gibeon?

Who was priest at Gibeon?

Why did Solomon call this assembly?

What disposition was made of the burnt offerings?

How many did Solomon offer at

this time?

5 Who appeared to Solomon?

When?

Can you mention others to whom

God appeared in dreams?

Were all dreams significant?

Then, what made them significant?

What privilege did God grant to Solomon?

When does God promise to hear us?

For what are people most apt to pray?

When do we not receive?

6 Why did Solomon refer to what

God had done for David?

Upon what condition had God

done this for David?

What other great thing had he done for David?

In what did Solomon recognize the justice of God?

7 How did Solomon look at himself?

In what, to begin with, did he

- show his good sense?
 When does God bless men now?
 What does Solomon mean by saying that he knew not "how to go out or come in?"
- 8 For what further reason did Solomon realize his need of wisdom?
- 9 For what, then, did he pray?
 Why did he say he needed wisdom?
 For what is wisdom now necessary?
 What motive actuated Solomon?
 What is indicated now by one's choice?
- 10 Why did this speech please the Lord?
- 11, 12 For what could Solomon have asked?
 What did Solomon do when he awoke?
 In what ways did Solomon show his wisdom?
 How great was Solomon's wisdom compared with the wisdom of others?
 What more did God do for Solomon?
 When are we personally benefited?
 Upon what condition did God promise to give Solomon long life?
 When did the kingdom reach the zenith of its glory?
 In what did Solomon surpass all the kings of the earth?
 What buildings besides the temple did he erect?
 How long was he in building his own house?
 Give the extent of his commerce.
 Give the extent of his wealth.
 How many proverbs did he utter?
 How many songs did he compose?
 What is said of his wisdom and fame?
 Why did the Israelites want a king?
 Why was this a rejection of God?
 Why did God allow them to have a king?
 What burdens did this bring upon the people?
 To what did this kingdom reduce them?
 What lessons should this teach us?
- 6 What does this verse state Solomon did and what he did not do?
 How long did Solomon reign?
 How old was he when he died?
 State the difference in his character at the beginning and end of his reign?
- To whom is the promise?
 In what did Solomon disobey God?
 Of what was so many wives a sign?
- Why did God forbid the Israelites making covenants and forming marriages with the nations of the land of promise?
 What did God command them to do with these nations and their idols?
 Did they fully obey God in this?
 What did Solomon's wives do for him?
 Was this all done at once?
 What is the difference between Solomon's heart and David's heart?
 What prayer did David offer for Solomon?
 What is the heart?
 What is a perfect heart?
- 8 What did Solomon's wives lead him and Judah to build?
 What was Ashtoreth?
 What was Milcom and Molech?
 What was Chemosh?
 How were victims offered to Molech?
 What were the high places?
 What was the mount before Jerusalem?
 Why were these idols said to be the abominations of these nations?
 For whom did Solomon build altars?
- 9, 10 What did Solomon's sin bring upon him?
 For what different reasons should Solomon have obeyed God?
 At what places and times did God appear to Solomon?
 When did God give these commands?
- 11 What did God say he would do with the kingdom because of Solomon's sins?
 What effect had Solomon's sins on the people?
 What servant of Solomon became prominent?
 To what did Solomon promote him?
 What did Ahijah make known to him?
 What effect did this have on him?
 Why did he flee into Egypt?
 Why should the kingdom not be divided in Solomon's lifetime?
 What benefit or disadvantage is the character of parents to their children?
 Why should not all the kingdom be taken from Solomon's son?
 Why say "one tribe," when Judah and Benjamin were left?

LESSON XIII—MARCH 30

REVIEW—ABRAHAM TO SOLOMON

Golden Text—Jehovah is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness. (Psalm 103: 8.)

Devotional Reading—Psalm 138.

Home Reading—

- Mar. 24. M. A Chosen Leader and a Chosen Land. Gen. 12: 1-7.
 25. T. Moses Called to Deliver Israel. Ex. 3: 1-12.
 26. W. What Israel Learned at Sinai. Deut. 4: 32-40.
 27. T. Joshua and the Conquest of Canaan. Josh. 1: 1-9.
 28. F. The Revival under Samuel. 1 Sam. 7: 5-13.
 29. S. The Reign of David. 2 Sam. 7: 18-26; 8: 14b, 15.
 30. S. Thanksgiving for Jehovah's Favor. Psalm 138.

QUESTIONS

Pupils are asked in the Review to repeat the Golden Texts because the more of the Scriptures committed to memory the better.

Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. God's justice and mercy are stated in Ex. 34: 6, 7, which commit to memory and recite in this Review. Name the prominent men and women of the Bible between and including Abraham and Solomon.

Lesson I.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Where was Abraham's original home? What were the most prominent features of his character? What were his greatest acts of faith? What were the greatest blessings conferred upon him? What is faith?

Lesson II.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. How were the Children of Israel led into Egypt? In what way was the providence or purpose of God clearly brought out? How long were they actually in Egypt?

Lesson III.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. State the different things Moses did by faith. Where and in what way did God call Moses to deliver the Children of Israel?

Lesson IV.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who saved Israel at the Red Sea? How was this done? How like this does God save us?

Lesson V.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What does the book of Deuteronomy contain? What did the Children of Israel learn at Sinai?

Lesson VI.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Where was Kadesh Barnea? Relate the facts of the failure there on the part of the Children of Israel. Who were true and faithful?

Lesson VII.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give Jehovah's charge to Joshua. What did Joshua do for the Children of Israel? What did he rehearse to them just before he died?

Lesson VIII.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who delivered and judged the Children of Israel after Joshua died? Why were the nations of Canaan left in the land? Who was Gideon? How did he deliver Israel?

Lesson IX.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Tell the story of Samuel's birth. Give Samuel's chief characteristics. How did Samuel save Israel from the Philistines, rather, how did God do this through Samuel?

Lesson X.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Why did the Children of Israel want a king? What did God say the king would do to them? Why was Saul rejected?

Lesson XI.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Of what tribe and family was David? At what places did he reign, and how long at each place? What did he desire to build for Jehovah? Why did the Lord not allow him to build this house? What great promise did God make to David? What especially does this lesson give?

Lesson XII.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. For what did Solomon pray? What answer did God make to this prayer? What is said of Solomon's wisdom and wealth and greatness? What were his most prominent sins? To what did his sins lead?

SECOND QUARTER

OUTLINE OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY FROM THE
DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM TO THE CLOSE
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

(Second Quarter of Six Months' Course)

LESSON I—APRIL 6.

THE KINGDOM RENT ASUNDER

Read: 1 Kings 12: 1 to 16: 28. *Lesson Text:* 1 Kings 12: 12-20

1 KINGS 12. 12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him,

14 and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of Jehovah, that he might establish his word, which Jehovah spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 And when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

17 But as for the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the men subject to task-work; and all Israel stoned him to death with stones. And king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

19 So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

20 And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was returned, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

Golden Text—Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. (Prov. 16: 18.)

Time—B. C. 975.

Places—Shechem, Penuel, Bethel and Dan.

Persons—Rehoboam, Jeroboam and the people.

Devotional Reading—Psalms 131 and 133.

Home Reading—

Mar. 31 M. A Cry for Justice. 1 Kings 12: 1-5.

Apr. 1. T. The Kingdom Rent Asunder. 1 Kings 12: 12-20.

2. W. Politics Profaning Religion. 1 Kings 12: 25-33.

3. T. God's Judgment Predicted. 1 Kings 13: 1-6.

4. F. The Evil End of an Evil House. 1 Kings 15: 25-30.

5. S. The Terrors of Civil War. 1 Kings 16: 8-16.

6. S. The Beauty of Brotherhood. Psalm 133.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Shechem was an important town of Palestine. It was in Samaria, in the valley between Mount Gerizim on the south and Mount Ebal on the north, the mount of blessing and mount of cursing. (See Deut. 27.) There Abraham stopped, received the promise of God, built an altar and worshiped Jehovah. (Gen. 12: 1-9.) There Jacob and family stopped, returning from Padanaram, and had trouble with the Shechemites. (Gen. 33: 18-20; 34.) About a mile east of Shechem was the village of Sychar. (John 4: 4-12.) Shechem was made a city of refuge (Josh. 20: 7); there Joshua addressed the Israelites (Josh. 24: 1-15); Joseph's bones were buried there (Josh. 24: 32); there in conspiracy Abimelech was made king (Judg. 9: 6); there the people assembled to make Rehoboam king (1 Kings 12: 1); Jeroboam rebuilt it and made it his capital. (First see Judges 9: 45-49; then 1 Kings 12: 25.) It now has about 15,000 inhabitants.

Bethel is another prominent town of Palestine, about ten miles north of Jerusalem. Its former name was Luz. From Jacob's vision there he named it "Bethel," which means "house of God." (Gen. 28: 10-22; 31: 13.) Before this Abraham built an altar there and called upon Jehovah. (Gen. 12: 8.) Near there Deborah lived. (Judges 4: 5.) For a time the ark of God was there and Israel assembled there to ask counsel of God. (Judges 20: 26-28; 21: 2.) There Samuel judged Israel. (1 Sam. 7: 16.) There Jeroboam located one of his golden calves. (This lesson.)

Dan was a town in the northern limit of Palestine near the source of the Jordan. Its original name was "Laish." It was rebuilt by a part of the tribe of Dan and named for him. Idolatry, through the image of Micah, had long since been established there. (Judges 18: 11-31.) There Jeroboam located one of his golden calves. (This lesson.)

We are familiar with the expression, "from Dan to Beersheba," Beersheba being in the southern extremity of Palestine.

Jeroboam rebuilt Peniel. (Judges 8: 9, 17; 1 Kings 12: 25.) Jacob called the place where he wrestled with the angel "Peniel," which means "the face of God." This place was east of the Jordan and on the south side of the brook Jabbok.

INTRODUCTION

In reading the Bible several or many times through, we pass over the same things just that many times, and then do not learn all it teaches. So, in studying the same lessons from the Bible, the same scriptures, facts, and characters are used, and the comments, to be true, must be the same. In this way we learn more and more of the Bible. No one claims to know all the Bible from having read it through once or twice. This system of lessons takes us through the Bible every few years; hence that often we study practically the same lesson, and thus we learn more of the Bible than in any other way.

I. A Test

Before beginning the study of this quarter, let us answer a few significant questions, and thereby see if we need to study these

lessons. Who was Rehoboam? What were his character and work? What lessons should be learned from his course? Who was Jeroboam? What his character and work? What special and far-reaching sins did he commit? What lessons should be learned from him? What kingdom did he establish? How long did it continue? How many kings ruled over it? How many dynasties? What became of it? Who were the Assyrians? How long did the kingdom of Judah continue? How many kings did it have? How many queens? How many dynasties? What became of it? Who was Nebuchadnezzar? What was Babylon? Who were Cyrus and Darius? Who restored Judah, Jerusalem, and the true worship of God? Who were Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and what work did each do? Who was Hezekiah? What were his character and work? Who was Sennacherib? What did he do and what became of him? What can we relate of Isaiah and his work? of Jeremiah? of Ezekiel? of Hosea and Amos? Of the captivity and restoration of Judah and the true worship of God? How long before the coming of Christ was this? What great lessons from all this would God teach his people?

II. The Books of Kings

Several lessons of this quarter are in the books of Kings.

The books of Kings were originally one, the present division having been made in the Septuagint translation.

It is nowhere stated in the Bible who wrote these books; Jewish tradition attributes them to Jeremiah. For a lengthy discussion of this, see Smith's Bible Dictionary.

The history given in these books extends through about four hundred years. They give the history of the undivided kingdom through Solomon's reign (1 Kings 1-11); the history of the two kingdoms, Judah and Israel (1 Kings 12 to 2 Kings 17), to the downfall of Israel; the history of the kingdom of Judah to the Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 18-24.)

The author of these books cites other books of history and prophecy—"the book of the acts of Solomon" (1 Kings 11: 41), "the chronicles of the kings of Judah" (1 Kings 14: 29), "the chronicles of the kings of Israel" (verse 19). These histories and prophecies were written by different ones; namely, "Nathan the prophet," "Gad the seer" (1 Chron. 29: 29), "Ahijah the Shilonite," "Iddo the seer" (2 Chron. 9: 29), and "Shemaiah the prophet" (2 Chron. 12: 15). In 2 Chron. 13: 22 "the commentary of the prophet Iddo" is mentioned; 2 Chron. 24: 27 mentions "the commentary of the book of the kings;" 2 Chron. 20: 34 refers to "the history of Jehu the son of Hanani, which is inserted in the book of the kings of Israel." Isaiah wrote of Uzziah (2 Chron. 26: 22), Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32: 32; Isa. 36-38), and Ahaz (Isa. 1: 1; 7). Read all these references.

III. The Division of the Kingdom

This lesson marks the beginning of the kingdom of Israel, which continued two hundred and fifty-four years. Some put the time a few years less. The division of the kingdom, as we shall learn, was produced by Solomon's sins and the selfishness, vanity, and unwisdom of Rehoboam. The books of Kings and Chronicles give parallel histories of these kingdoms until the captivity of Israel.

These lessons, with their connections, furnish a good opportunity for studying the history of these kingdoms.

IV. Rehoboam

The lesson presents to us two prominent persons, Rehoboam and Jeroboam (1 Kings 12: 1-11)—the former, prominent for his weakness; the latter for his wickedness and rebellion.

Rehoboam was Solomon's son. His mother was "Naamah the Ammonitess" (1 Kings 14: 21), for whom Solomon built a temple for "Molech the abomination of the Ammonites," or "Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon." (1 Kings 11: 5-7.) His mother doubtless had an evil influence over him.

He is the only recorded son of Solomon; and Adam Clarke says he "was a poor, unprincipled fool." The wisest man had a fool for a son! Solomon must have realized this when he wrote: "A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him." (Prov. 17: 25; see also Prov. 10: 1; 13: 1; 15: 20; etc.) A thousand wives (1 Kings 11: 3), and only one recorded son!

It is stated that "Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign (1 Kings 14: 21; 2 Chron. 12: 13); but this is supposed to be a mistake in the record, and it must be twenty-one years. Solomon reigned only forty years; and if Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he succeeded his father, he was born a year before Solomon began to reign, which was not the case. Besides, it is said that he was "young and tender-hearted" and not able to withstand the "worthless men" and "base fellows" gathered by Jeroboam against him. (2 Chron. 13: 7.)

Solomon left his son a magnificent kingdom and great opportunities. Solomon "ruled over all the kings from the River [Euphrates] even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt." (2 Chron. 9: 26.) For a description of Solomon's wealth and resources, see 1 Kings 10: 11-29; 2 Chron. 9. There was no other nation so wealthy and whose commerce extended so far. Solomon's wisdom, wealth, glory, sins, and downfall are described in Lesson XII of First Quarter.

Many young men, like Rehoboam, with splendid opportunities, have come to naught. "Evil companionships corrupt good morals." Boys and young men may follow the advice of foolish and wicked associates or act upon the counsel of wise and older men.

The people were oppressed by "the grievous service," and were restless under "the heavy yoke" placed upon them by Solomon. They were greatly taxed and forced to labor, just as God had foretold they would be. (1 Sam. 8: 10-20.)

When Solomon died his son came to the throne. The people met Rehoboam at Shechem "to make him king," but not without first making the following request: "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." (1 Kings 12: 1-4.)

Rehoboam should have readily granted this request, but he begged three days for consideration, saying: "Depart yet for three days, then come again to me." The people did this. (Verse 5.)

Rehoboam first "took counsel with the old men, that had stood

before Solomon his father, saying, what counsel give ye me to return answer to this people?" (Verse 6.) This was a wise course, if he had only acted upon the counsel given.

Had he followed his father's example—sought counsel of God and prayed for wisdom—it would have been still better and safer for him; but he turned from him from whom alone he could receive perfect wisdom and guidance.

The old men gave him safe and wise counsel. It is said: "Old men for counsel." They advised him to lift the burdens of the people and to be lenient and generous, saying to him: "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants forever." The king should "serve" the people and seek their peace and greatest good.

This course did not suit the young king; so he turned away from the safe advice of the old men and sought the counsel of "the young men that were grown up with him and stood before him." (Verse 8.) These "young men" were his associates. "It was the custom of different countries to educate with the heir to the throne young noblemen of nearly the same age." (Clarke.) This stimulated him to greater efforts in every way and gave him a knowledge of men.

These "young men" gave Rehoboam the following dangerous advice: "Thus shalt thou say unto this people, . . . My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." (Verses 10, 11.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Message

12. After kindly, patiently, and prudently waiting the three days for Rehoboam to take counsel and consider what reply to make, the people came to him to hear upon what principles he proposed to serve them as king. They met at Shechem.

13, 14. By a prudent and wise course the young king could have preserved the unity and peace of his kingdom and won the respect and affection of all his subjects; but he answered them "roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him."

We should learn from this that rough language and harsh means are signs of weakness, not strength; of cowardice, not courage; and of unwisdom, not wisdom.

The king accepted the counsel of "the young men," which seemed to him, in his weakness and vanity, the only way to put down the threatening rebellion.

He "spoke to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." The burdens of taxation and labor which he would place upon them would be as much greater than those of his father as the loins are thicker than the little finger. (1 Kings 12: 10.) It is said "that the scorpion was a severe whip, the lashes of which were armed with iron points that sunk into and tore the flesh." (Clarke.) The rebellious were thus chastised as slaves. Rehoboam's

chastisement would be as the sting of scorpions compared to his father's whips.

15. "So the king harkened not unto the people"—that is, to make the yoke easier and the burdens lighter. (1 Kings 12: 4.) "For it was a thing brought about of Jehovah, that he might establish his word, which Jehovah spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat."

II. Sin and Division

In this way was fulfilled that which God said he would do. Solomon, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, and the people were responsible for their conduct; and this division was a result of Solomon's sins and oppression of the people and the imprudence, rashness, and vanity of Rehoboam. God at first warned the people against having a king, and clearly pointed out the oppression and suffering to which it would lead. Under Solomon the people experienced this, and under Rehoboam they revolted. Solomon's great sins led to this result. He "loved many foreign women. . . of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which Jehovah said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go among them, neither shall they come among you [see Ex. 23: 18-33; 34: 10-17; Deut. 7: 1-5; Josh. 23: 12, 13]; for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart." He turned "after other gods"—the gods of his wives; built altars and erected temples for their worship; and spread idolatry through his kingdom. (1 Kings 11: 1-8.) For this reason "Jehovah was angry with Solomon," and said he would take the kingdom from him and give it to his servant. "Notwithstanding," said Jehovah, "in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake; but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen." (Verses 9-13.)

While, then, this "was a thing brought about of Jehovah," it came as a severe consequence of sin, cruelty, and oppression. God did not thus bring about this division for division's sake. He teaches unity and peace; yet he overrules factions, divisions, and the wicked for the good of his people and to his own glory. He makes the wrath of men praise him. (Ps. 76: 10.)

Religious divisions and strife are today carnal (1 Cor. 1: 10-13; 3: 1-9); denominationalism and factions in the church are mightily opposed to "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4: 3-6); and woe is unto him who causes factions and divisions "contrary to the doctrine" of Christ. (Rom. 16: 17, 18.) Yet God overrules all this to the good of his people. By all this their faith is tested, and they are approved as loyal to him. This is the crucible in which the dross is consumed and the gold is refined. "For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. 11: 19.) The religious divisions and denominations of the world to-day are the consequences of disobedience to God and rebellion against his will; yet he overrules them to his own glory and for tests and other good of his children.

III. The People Rebelled

16. The people were determined on the course they would pursue; and as soon as they saw that Rehoboam would not grant their most reasonable request, they gave the signal for the revolt. "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse." Rehoboam was David's grandson and a descendant of Jesse.

David was first made king over Judah (2 Sam. 2: 1-4); and Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was made king over "all Israel" (verses 8-11). After seven years and six months, David was made king over all Israel and Judah" (2 Sam. 5: 1-5); and he then made Jerusalem the seat of government. There existed all along in the ten tribes this feeling against Judah, which was frequently manifested. (2 Sam. 19: 43; 20: 1, 2.) Benjamin was embraced in the kingdom of Judah.

"To your tents, O Israel." This meant for them to leave Rehoboam as their king, go home, and prepare for the consequences. In our language this means: "To arms!" (See 2 Sam. 20: 1, 2.) "Now see to thine own house, David." This means that Judah was all that was left to Rehoboam, and he must prepare to take care of that. "So Israel departed unto their tents." They went home and began to prepare to care for themselves.

17. According to the promise of God, for David's sake and for Jerusalem's sake and that David might always have "a lamb" before Jehovah (1 Kings 11: 13, 36), two tribes, Judah and Benjamin (1 Kings 12: 21), remained with Rehoboam (1 Kings 11: 35), so, as this verse states, Rehoboam reigned over the inhabitants of the cities of Judah.

18. Since Adoram was over so many workmen (see 2 Sam. 20: 24; 1 Kings 4: 6; 5: 13, 14), Rehoboam naturally supposed he could have some influence over them and sent him to them, but they stoned him to death.

19. This rebellion against the house of David was fully settled by these acts.

IV. Jeroboam Made King

20. Jeroboam was the son of Nebat of the tribe of Ephraim; his mother was Zeruah, a widow at the time of our lesson. He was also a young man, Solomon's servant, and worked on the fortifications about Jerusalem. He was a man of valor and industry, for which Solomon gave him "charge over all the labor of the house of Joseph."

One day as "Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem" he was met by the prophet Ahijah, who informed him that, because of Solomon's sins, God would take ten of the tribes of Israel out of Solomon's hands and give them to him, and that he should reign over them, promising that if he would obey God, God would establish his kingdom. Jeroboam, ambitious and destitute of reverence for God, could not await God's time for doing this, but lifted up his hand against Solomon.

Solomon became jealous, and tried to kill Jeroboam, who fled to Egypt for protection, remaining there until the death of Solomon. (See 1 Kings 11: 26-42.)

Having thus rebelled, Israel made Jeroboam king.

Rehoboam first thought of trying to put down this rebellion by

war, but when forbidden by Jehovah through Shemaiah to do this, his army returned, "according to the word of Jehovah." (Verses 21-24.)

V. Jeroboam's Transgressions

(Read verses 25-33.)

Let us study these verses; because if we do not, we will miss the great lessons all these facts teach.

God said to him: "And it shall be, if thou wilt harken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that which is right in mine eyes, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and will build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee." (1 Kings 11: 38.) By building him "a sure house" God meant that he would continue his posterity upon the throne.

Jeroboam threw away this great blessing and opportunity by turning at once from the commandments of God. He distrusted God's promise at once, and began to establish and solidify his kingdom in his own wisdom and way and in transgression of God's law (see verse 25).

He recognized in his own heart the true reason for his establishment of idolatry, but did not give this reason to the people, as 1 Kings 12: 28 shows. He knew as well as any man that Jerusalem was the place of worship.

When God led the Israelites out of Egypt, he said: "In every place where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." (Ex. 20: 24.) When they should reach Canaan, God promised to choose a place out of all their tribes to put his name there. They were to break down all the altars and destroy all the places used by the nations of that land for the worship of idols and bring their own offerings, sacrifices, tithes, etc., to the place which God should choose for his name, and there they must eat their annual feasts. They were forbidden, too, to erect an altar in every place to which they should come. (Read Deut. 12; 16: 16, 17.) God chose Jerusalem to put his name there: there the temple of Solomon, or "house of Jehovah," was built. (See 1 Kings 8: 17, 29, 43, 46, 48; 9: 3; 2 Chron. 6: 5, 6, 10, 20; 7: 1, 2, 12, 16.) Every Israelite knew this.

God promised to establish Jeroboam and his posterity upon the throne of the kingdom of Israel, and he should have believed God. God could, and would, have done this in his own way, had Jeroboam and all his kingdom gone on faithfully with the worship at Jerusalem. Like many today, Jeroboam did not see how God could accomplish this end by the means he ordained. To Jeroboam, God's way would result in complete failure. He thought that if the people continued to go to Jerusalem to worship (although this was God's command, and God had promised to establish his kingdom if he would do this), they would soon return as subjects to Rehoboam and kill him to get him out of the way. He had no more confidence in the people than he had in God.

He who has no faith in God or confidence in men is himself a bad man.

"Whereupon the king took counsel." He consulted, doubtless, with some of the leading men of his kingdom, who, like himself, placed temporal and personal success above the true worship of God. To

worship God truly, obeying him in all things, was the only way Jeroboam and his house could be established upon the throne; but to him this seemed the way of his overthrow and ruin. So he deliberately set aside God's worship and law for his own personal advantage and glory. His counselors agreed with him that this course was the only safe one to pursue.

"And made two calves of gold." In making an idol, why should they make a calf or calves? Aaron made a golden calf. It has been supposed by some that this was in imitation of the religion of Egypt. The Egyptians worshiped their god, Apis, under the form of an ox or bull. It is probable that these images were made of wood and overlaid with gold. The cherubim of the temple were made of olive-wood and overlaid with gold. (1 Kings 6: 23, 28.)

"It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem." This was the first pretext which Jeroboam offered to the people: he did not reveal to them the real motive of his heart. The margin says: "Ye have gone up long enough" to Jerusalem. Jeroboam could not see how the two kingdoms could exist with only one place and system of worship. With a rival kingdom, he must establish a rival religion and rival places of worship.

The woman at Jacob's well said to Jesus: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus replied: "Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews." (John 4: 20-22.) This woman and her fathers, like Jeroboam, were wrong. This contention over the place of worship in Christ's day shows how long a false theory and system will continue, and this woman is an illustration of how tenaciously people cling to the erroneous traditions of "our fathers."

Jeroboam persuaded the people that it was not necessary to go to Jerusalem in order to worship. Had he lived in our day, he probably would have said: "What difference does it make where we worship, so we worship? The worship is the principal thing; and so that is done, it matters not when or where it is done." It is a pleasing argument with people today that it matters not what is done in religion or how it is done, so something is done, whether that be just what God has commanded or not. Jeroboam persuaded the people that going to Jerusalem was a "non-essential."

People today are persuaded that some of God's commandments in the New Testament sealed by the blood of Jesus, are "non-essential." Jesus says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16: 16.) He himself was baptized "to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3: 15.) The Holy Spirit says to all who believe in Jesus as the Savior and desire to obey him and be forgiven: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2: 38.) Jesus sent out the apostles to teach all nations and to baptize all who would receive the teaching (Acts 2: 41) "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28: 19; see also Luke 7: 29, 30; Acts 8: 5, 12, 14, 38; 9: 18; 10: 48; 16: 33; 18: 8; 19: 1-7; Rom. 6: 3, 4, 17, 18; 1 Cor. 1: 14-16; Col. 2: 12; 1 Pet. 3: 21.) With all this before him, how can anyone say that baptism to the proper subject is a "non-essential?" Since

Jesus says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7: 21), how can any one think that any commandment of God is "non-essential?" Let no modern Jeroboam persuade you that God's commandments now or implicit obedience to Jesus (Heb. 5: 7-9) are "non-essential." It is absolutely right and safe to obey God in faith.

It was the want of faith which led Jeroboam to doubt God and to establish idolatry. It is not faith, but the want of it, which leads many now to set aside God's appointed way and substitute ways and means of their own.

"Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." These calves were to represent God to them. This is the language used by Aaron when he made the golden calf; he said: "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." (Ex. 32: 4.) Jeroboam and his people should have remembered the disastrous consequences of Aaron's effort. Like Aaron, Jeroboam did not intend to give up the worship of Jehovah altogether, but to worship him through these images. He persuaded the people that it was the same worship carried on in the way and places which "seemed best to them." (See 1 Kings 12: 32.)

"And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan." From all that had occurred at Bethel, how easy it must have been for Jeroboam to persuade the people that this was a sacred place, called by the very name of "God!" This was convenient to all on the southern side of his kingdom. An altar at Dan would be convenient to all in the northern portion of the kingdom.

"And this thing became a sin." No worship is acceptable to God except that which he has ordained; no "aid" to the worship of God which violates any principle of the gospel of Jesus is now acceptable to God. Idolatry broke the first two commandments of the decalogue. It embraced, too, obscene rites—such as adultery—and sometimes human sacrifice. "For the people went to worship before the one [the margin says, 'each of them'] even unto Dan." It was a sin because the people thus worshiped.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place and persons.

Repeat the first Psalm.

When was the book of Kings divided into two books?

Who wrote these books?

What period of time do they cover?

What history do they give?

Name the other books to which reference is made.

Who wrote these books? (See that all these books and their authors are correctly given.)

Of what does this lesson mark the beginning?

How long did the kingdom of Israel continue?

Which two tribes constituted the kingdom of Judah?

What was the relative situation

of these kingdoms?

In what books do we have a history of these kingdoms?

What two prominent men does this verse present?

Whose son was Rehoboam?

Who was his mother?

What kind of influence would you suppose she exerted over him?

What did Solomon erect for her?

How many sons did Solomon have?

What was his character?

How old was he when he began to reign?

What opportunities did Solomon leave his son?

(State the extent, wealth and condition of his kingdom.)

What have many young men, like Rehoboam, done?

- Under what were the people suffering?
 When was Jeroboam called out of Egypt?
 Where did he and the people meet Rehoboam, and for what purpose?
 What did they request of Rehoboam?
 What did he request them to do?
 Of whom did he seek counsel?
 What advice did they give him?
 Why did he not take their advice?
 Of whom did he next seek counsel?
 Who were these "young men?"
 What advice did they give him?
- 12 After three days, what did the people do?
 Where was Shechem?
- 13, 14 How did the king answer them?
 Was the people's demand a fair and just one?
 What should we learn from the king's course?
 What did he mean by saying his little finger would be thicker upon them than his father's loins?
 What did he mean by saying he would chastise them with scorpions?
- 15 Why did the king not hearken to the people?
 Were the parties responsible for their conduct?
 What had Solomon done to cause this?
 What did Rehoboam do?
 How, then, was this of God?
 What does God teach now concerning division in his church?
 How does he overrule the divisions of today for God?
- 16 When Rehoboam delivered his message, what did the people say?
 Why did they say they had no portion in David?
 What did they tell Rehoboam to look after?
- 17 Over whom did Rehoboam reign?
- 18 Why was Adoram stoned to death?
- 19 How long did this rebellion continue?
- 20 Whose son was Jeroboam?
 What was his work?
 Why did he flee into Egypt?
 When did he return?
- What prophecy did Ahijah make concerning him?
 Why and when was he made king?
 How did Rehoboam think of putting down this rebellion?
 What opportunities had Jeroboam?
 Upon what conditions would God have made him "a sure house?"
- 26 What did he say and recognize in his heart?
 What facts concerning the worship of God did he know?
 Like many today, what did Jeroboam fail to see?
 What did he think the people would do if allowed to worship God at Jerusalem?
 With whom did he take counsel?
 What was determined upon as the best course to pursue?
 Why did he make calves, and not some other idol?
 Of what were the cherubim of the temple made?
 What did Jeroboam say to the people?
 What did he do with his heart's real motive?
 What did he fail to see?
 What question did the woman at Jacob's well request Jesus to settle?
 What fact does this impress as regards the errors and traditions of our fathers?
 What did Jeroboam mean by saying: "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem?"
 What do some people say of some of God's commandments now?
 What leads people now to disobey God and to change his way?
 What did Jeroboam say when he had set up his calves?
 What did Aaron say when he made the golden calf?
 Did Jeroboam intend to turn away entirely from the worship of God?
 Where did he put his calves?
 Relate the facts concerning Bethel.
 Relate the facts concerning Dan.
 What did this become?
 What "aids" to God's service are condemned?
 In what different ways was idolatry sinful?

"The deepest hunger of a faithful heart is faithfulness."—George Eliot.

AFTER LESSONS

I. One Sin Leads to Another

One departure from God's order leads to another; one sin, to another. Jeroboam "made houses of high places." The "high places" were elevated places, or mounds, upon which idols were placed and worship was offered. Jeroboam built temples for the worship of these idols. There was the temple at Jerusalem erected by God's directions, but Jeroboam must erect others for his use. He must also imitate the worship at Jerusalem in order to satisfy the people.

He "made priests from among all the people, that were not of the sons of Levi." After God's severe reproof in 1 Kings 13, Jeroboam still pursued his rebellious way—"returned not from his evil ways, but made again from among all the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, that there might be priests of the high places." (1 Kings 13: 33.) The tribe of Levi was the priestly tribe, and Aaron and his sons were to keep the priesthood; "and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death." (Num. 3: 5-10.) For an attempt to violate this law King Uzziah was smitten with leprosy. (2 Chron. 26: 16-21.) Jeroboam and his sons cast off the Levites, "that they should not execute the priest's office unto Jehovah." They refused to serve in this idolatrous worship and still went to Jerusalem. "And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek Jehovah, the God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto Jehovah the God of their fathers." (2 Chron. 11: 13-16.)

We must now regard the distinction which the New Testament makes between true and vain worship and must cling to the true worship of God.

II. Still Another Change

Concerning the three annual feasts which God ordained for the Israelites, read Lev. 23. The feast of tabernacles came in the seventh month. (Verse 34.) These feasts were kept at Jerusalem. All the males were required to appear before Jehovah. (Deut. 16: 16.)

The feast of tabernacles was approaching, when, as usual, the people in great numbers would go to Jerusalem; and Jeroboam felt it necessary to fall upon a plan to hold them away. So he ordained a feast "like unto the feast that is in Judah," to be held, not at God's appointed time and place, but at a time "he had devised of his own heart."

Many religious people of today would have said: "We are keeping the same feast; and what difference does it make where or when we keep it, so we keep it?"

Although like it, this was not God's feast.

In all memorial institutions which God has ordained he himself has determined four things: (1) What must be done, (2) by whom it must be done, (3) when it must be done, and (4) why it must be done. In regard to the feasts of the passover, Pentecost, and tabernacles, God also named the place where they should be observed—namely, Jerusalem. Jeroboam changed God's order of things as suited his schemes and purposes best.

III. God's Condemnation of Jeroboam's Course

God said to Jeroboam: "Thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes, but hast done evil above all that were before thee." (1 Kings 14: 8, 9.) God's condemnation of Jeroboam's course and solemn warnings are expressed in the denunciation and destruction of the altar at Bethel by the prophet from Judah and in the fearful consequences which he pronounced. Yet, after all this, "Jeroboam returned not from his evil way," "And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth." (Read 1 Kings 13.) See, in 1 Kings 14: 1-18, the account of the death of Jeroboam's son, Abijah, and the most fearful consequences which God said would follow because of his great sins.

IV. The Extent of Jeroboam's Sin

The evil, idolatrous influence of Jeroboam continued through the entire existence of the kingdom of Israel, and was felt, as we have seen, in the days of Jesus. Numerous times the expression concerning Jeroboam "who made Israel to sin," is repeated in the history of Israel. One hundred years before the captivity of Judah the kingdom of Israel was carried away into captivity, never to return. Jeroboam reigned twenty-two years. "And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually." (1 Kings 14: 19, 20, 30.)

Application

A strong application of this lesson has been made above. Another is that while Christians keep none of these feasts, Jesus has ordained and left them the Lord's Supper, a great memorial spiritual feast. He has ordained: (1) What must be done—eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine (1 Cor. 11: 23-25), (2) by whom it must be observed; his disciples—not sinners, but Christians (Matt. 26: 26-29); (3) when it must be observed—on "the first day of the week" (Matt. 28: 20; Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 11: 20, 23; 16: 1, 2; Heb. 10: 25); (4) why it must be observed—in memory of him, to proclaim his death until he comes (Matt. 26: 26-28; 1 Cor. 11: 25-26); and, therefore, (5) the manner, or condition of heart, in which it must be observed—in self-examination, discerning the Lord's body, in decency and order, and not as a carnal feast (1 Cor. 11: 28-34). To change any of these things which God has ordained is, like Jeroboam, to change God's way, or order. In the worship of God we can pursue only one of two courses—do in all things just what God has directed or devise in our own hearts what we will do. Some devise that they will observe the Lord's Supper on some other day than "the first day of the week"; others devise that they will observe it once a year, or four times a year, or even twelve times a year. There is but one way to do in order not to be guilty of devising a time, and that is to meet on "the first day of the week" to break bread (Acts 20: 7)—the time God has devised, and then to do all and only all he has commanded.

LESSON II.—APRIL 13.

I. History of Israel, the Northern Kingdom

In the following four lessons we study to some extent the history of the Kingdom of Israel.

ELIJAH AND THE STRUGGLE WITH BAAL

Read: 1 Kings 16: 20 to 19: 21; chap. 27; 2 Kings 1: 1 to 2: 12.

Lesson Text: 1 Kings 18: 20-24, 36-39.

1 KINGS 18. 20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

21 And Elijah came near unto all the people, and said, How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, am left a prophet of Jehovah; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under.

24 And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening oblation, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God.

Golden Text—No man can serve two masters. . . . Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. (Matt. 6: 24.)

Time—B.C. 906.

Place—Mount Carmel.

Persons—Elijah, Ahab, Jezebel, the prophets of Baal.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 15.

Home Reading—

- Apr. 7. M. God Nurtures a New Leader. 1 Kings 17: 1-6.
- 8. T. A Widow's Charity and Recompense. 1 Kings 17: 7-16.
- 9. W. "The Troubler of Israel." 1 Kings 18: 17-24.
- 10. T. The Victory over Baal. 1 Kings 18: 36-39.
- 11. F. "A Still Small Voice." 1 Kings 19: 9-16.
- 12. S. The Translation of Elijah. 2 Kings 2: 1-11.
- 13. S. A Citizen of the Kingdom. Psalm 15.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

"Mount Carmel"—"Carmel" means "garden land." It is one of the most noted mountains of the Bible, being connected with two famous

prophets, Elijah and Elisha. (This lesson and 2 Kings 4: 25.) It extended southeast from the Mediterranean about twelve miles into the corner of Samaria, as a wall between the famous plain of Esdraelon on the north and the plain of Sharon on the south. The western end was a promontory, running almost into the sea; the highest point is about four miles from the eastern end, and is 1,728 feet above the sea. Its sides, we are told, are covered with flowers, shrubs and trees of the most beautiful and fragrant kind.

No other mention is made in the Bible of "the brook Cherith." It flowed into the Jordan. Elijah was commanded to hide himself by this brook. (1 Kings 17: 1-7.)

Zarephath was a town "in the land of Sidon." It was brought into notice by being the place where Elijah spent the latter part of the drought mentioned in this lesson and where he raised to life the widow's son. It is mentioned by Obadiah and by Jesus. (Luke 4: 26.)

INTRODUCTION

I. Previous Kings

Since we are studying the history of the kingdom of Israel, we should know its kings down to Ahab.

The last lesson gave the origin of this kingdom, Jeroboam was its first king, and reigned twenty-two years. He was succeeded by his son, Nadab, who reigned two years. Baasha, the son of Ahijah, slew Nadab and all the house of Jeroboam, and reigned twenty-four years. He reigned in Tirzah, the second capital. (1 Kings 15: 21-34.) Elah, the son of Baasha, succeeded his father and reigned in Tirzah two years. Zimri, Elah's servant, slew him and all the house of Baasha, and reigned only seven days. (1 Kings 16: 5-15.) Israel then made Omri, the captain of the army, king, and he reigned twelve years and six months. He built Samaria and made it the capital of his kingdom. Ahab, Omri's son, succeeded him and reigned twenty-two years. (1 Kings 16: 16-33.)

The kingdom down to Ahab has already had four different dynasties and has been filled with assassinations, wars, and blood.

II. The Condition of Israel

Ahab was king of Israel and the wicked Jezebel was his wife. Israel had forsaken the faith and worship of Jehovah. While Jeroboam had introduced the calves, he and other kings acknowledged Jehovah and endeavored to worship him through these calves; but Ahab had introduced the worship of Baal, the idolatry of the heathen Sidonians.

The kingdom was in the deepest and densest darkness of idolatry and wickedness, for which it was suffering this terrible drought. Jesus and James say it continued "three years and six months." (Luke 4: 25; James 5: 17.)

III. Elijah and His Character

We know nothing concerning the parentage and birthplace of Elijah, or of his early life. "He was of the sojourners of Gilead," which implies that he removed to Gilead from some other place. No reason is given for his doing this. He had the characteristics of

a Gileadite and has been called a "typical mountaineer." He manifested great physical courage and was strong and fleet.

He wore the dress of a prophet—a garment of hair and "a girdle of leather about his loins." (2 Kings 1: 8; Isa. 20: 2; Zech. 13: 4.) He wore also "a mantle" or cape. (See 1 Kings 19; 2 Kings 2: 8, 13, 14.)

In this he hid his face in reverence for Jehovah (1 Kings 19: 13); this he cast upon Elisha (verse 19); with this he divided the Jordan; this he dropped as he ascended to heaven; and with this Elisha also divided the Jordan. (2 Kings 2: 8, 13, 14.)

"Elijah the Tishbite" has been well entitled 'the grandest and the most romantic character that Israel ever produced.' Certainly there is no personage in the Old Testament whose career is more vividly portrayed or who exercises on us a more remarkable fascination. His rare, sudden, and brief appearances; his undaunted courage and fiery zeal; the brilliancy of his triumph; the pathos of his despondency; the glory of his departure; and the calm beauty of his reappearance on the mount of transfiguration—these throw such a halo of brightness around him as is equaled by none of his compeers in the sacred story. The ignorance in which we are left of the circumstances and incidents of the man who did and suffered so much doubtless contributes to enhance our interest in the story and the character." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

When we have studied Elijah's character and work, we can well see that John the Baptist came "in the spirit and power of Elijah." His dress was similar to that of Elijah. (Matt. 3: 4; Luke 1: 17.)

There is no parallel history in Chronicles.

IV. A Challenge to Baal

As "lightning from a clear sky," as we sometimes say, Elijah, in our first introduction to him, appeared before Ahab and said: "There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

God had foretold that if his people would not obey him, with other curses should come drought: "And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron." (See Deut. 28: 15-24.) This was a direct challenge to Baal, because Baal was the god of production and agriculture. Since Ahab had turned away from Jehovah to serve Baal, let Baal supply the dew and rain. If he could not, then he was nothing. God spoke through Elijah, and it did not rain except as Elijah said. God did this through Elijah to show that he was with his true and loyal prophet. He sent Elijah to Ahab to let Ahab know that it was "the God of Israel" against whom he was sinning and that God was thus chastising him and Israel.

V. A Test of Elijah's Faith

"In the third year" of the drought God commanded Elijah, saying: "Go show thyself unto Ahab." (Read here 1 Kings 18: 1-12.) He promptly obeyed God, as usual, knowing that God, who had preserved him at Cherith and Zarephath, could still save him from the wrath of Ahab. Prompt obedience to God always gives courage and strength. "And I will send rain upon the earth"—that is,

after Elijah had stood before Ahab and the contest which followed was over. God sent this famine as a challenge to Baal or his worshippers and as chastisement to the people for Baal worship.

Baal was the god of production and fertility; and if he could not send rain and cause the earth to produce rich harvests, then he was nothing and the people were worshipping a vain thing. When they learned this, they would return to Jehovah. But Ahab did not repent. In the distress of this famine Ahab directed Obadiah to go through the land in search of water and grass. He and Obadiah divided the land between themselves and went through it, one going in one direction and the other in another. When the wicked Jezebel was feeding four hundred false prophets at her table (1 Kings 18: 19) and was trying to exterminate the prophets of Jehovah, Obadiah, hid a hundred, fifty in a place, in caves and fed them with bread and water.

Passing through the country, Obadiah met Elijah. Elijah directed him to go and tell Ahab that Elijah was there. Obadiah declined, knowing that Ahab wanted to punish Elijah for the famine and thinking that God, as he had protected Elijah before, would again remove him out of Ahab's reach and Ahab would then kill him for allowing Elijah to escape. But Elijah assured Obadiah that he would not disappear. Obadiah believed Elijah, went to meet Ahab, and told him what Elijah had said. Ahab went to meet Elijah. (Read now verses 13-24.) As soon as Ahab saw Elijah, "with impudent and shameless bravado, that only disclosed his inherent weakness and contemptibleness," he said: "Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?"

With shameless boldness he made this bare attempt "to turn the tables" on Elijah by accusing him of being the criminal. The enemies of Jesus and the apostles tried this very trick of Satan. They accused Jesus of having a demon and of raising insurrection, etc.; and they accused Paul of stirring up the mobs which they had raised. (Acts 17: 5-8.) The same tactics still are resorted to. Elijah met Ahab's charge with a direct denial, saying: "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah, and thou hast followed the Baalim." These sins brought on all these troubles. Elijah reproved the sinners and announced the coming famine.

Many now turn from God's order and true worship. His faithful servants, like Elijah, oppose all such departures, and trouble and divisions arise; then those who introduce the departures accuse the ones who oppose them of causing the trouble and producing division. This charge is as bold and brazen, as weak and contemptible, and as shameless and false now as it was then. God has preserved this charge of Ahab and Elijah's reply to forever settle the question of who troubles Israel. The true servants and friends of God today are the ones who maintain God's order of things.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Elijah's Challenge

20. After denying the charge that he was the troubler of Israel and showing that Ahab had caused all the trouble by forsaking the commandments of God and maintaining the worship of Baal, Elijah then challenged Ahab to the contest of our lesson between Baal and Je-

hovah. By the majesty of right and the authority of Jehovah speaking through him Elijah issued the following order to Ahab: "Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the Asherah four hundred that eat at Jezebel's table." Ahab accepted the challenge and obeyed the order, and "sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel." It seems "the prophets of the Asherah" did not attend this contest (verses 22, 40); neither did the wicked queen. It doubtless required several days to collect this assembly.

21. Then "Elijah came near unto all the people, and said, How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The people hesitated, and were undecided between Jehovah and Baal. Clarke's "Commentary" makes the following pertinent remark: "They were halt; they could not walk uprightly; they dreaded Jehovah, and, therefore, could not totally abandon him; they feared the king and queen, and, therefore, thought they must embrace the religion of the State. Their conscience forbade them to do the former, their fear of man persuaded them to do the latter; but in neither were they heartily engaged. At this juncture their minds seem in equipoise, and they were waiting for a favorable opportunity to make their decision. Such an opportunity now, through the mercy of God, presented itself." Indecision between right and wrong is a decision in favor of the wrong. Too many now are "limping between the two sides." God's true and loyal servants, like Elijah, are decidedly and wholly for his way. Joshua put this test to the people. (Josh 24: 14, 15.) To Elijah's exhortation, "the people answered not a word."

22-24. "Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, am left a prophet of Jehovah; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under. . . . And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken."

II. The Challenge Accepted (Verses 25-35)

The above was a challenge for a fair test. This the people saw, and they accepted it. The prophets of Baal also accepted it. When the bullocks were brought, Elijah allowed them to choose one and to proceed first, for they were many. This was logically right, because Baal worship had been introduced where God's worship prevailed, and the prophets of Baal were logically bound to show the superiority of their god. They should affirm their practice was right. All people are logically bound to do the same today.

This was a contest between a false god and the true God, a false religion and the true religion, corruption and righteousness, licentiousness and virtue, four hundred and fifty false prophets on one side and one true prophet on the other side. This is one of the greatest victories of right over wrong and truth over error on record.

A thousand-fold would we rather be on Jehovah's side in this or any other struggle, although, like Elijah, alone, than to be on the popular side and wrong. He who follows the popular side to do wrong

is strongly condemned. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak [bear witness] in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest justice." (Ex. 23: 2.) So now we must choose the right and serve God truly, like Elijah, though we are alone. We must do this at all hazards.

The prophets of Baal prepared their bullock, "and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped about the altar which was made." From morning until noon they called upon Baal, but received no answer. As the time passed and they received no answer, they became more frenzied, until they "leaped about the altar." "They danced round it with strange and hideous cries and gesticulations, tossing their heads to and fro, with a great variety of bodily contortions." (Clarke.) See a description of the dance of dervishes in "Lands of the Bible," pages 422, 423.

Then Elijah, in the keenest sarcasm and the bitterest irony and with the most withering ridicule known in all literature, began to mock them, saying: "Cry aloud; for he is a god [of course it requires loud calling in order to make a god hear]: either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awakened."

They did cry aloud, and not only so, but they "cut themselves after their manner with knives ['swords,' margin] and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them." It was customary in idolatrous worship, as a kind of penance to satisfy their god, for the worshippers to punish themselves with such bodily afflictions as those just mentioned. They confess their sins, lash themselves with whips knotted with bones or iron, cut themselves with swords or lances, until, indeed, the blood gushes out.

Thus these prophets of Baal acted in wild frenzy, growing more frantic, "until the time of the offering of the evening oblation [or three o'clock in the afternoon]; but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded."

III. God Answers Elijah

(Verses 30-35)

30. After all the loud crying, wild gesticulations and frenzied bodily afflictions of the prophets of Baal for about nine hours had most signally failed, Elijah, full of faith in Jehovah and confidence which such faith inspires, called the people to him, that they might see the fairness of this whole matter. He wanted them, too, to witness the result of this test.

"And he repaired the altar of Jehovah that was thrown down." This altar of Jehovah was probably built before the erection of the temple at Jerusalem. This altar had been thrown down by the enemies of Jehovah. (1 Kings 19: 10.) This Elijah first "repaired," that his offering might be made on an altar consecrated and acceptable to God. Our services today must be rendered in a manner acceptable to God. Elijah honored God in repairing his altar and obeying his commands (1 Kings 18: 36), and we can honor God now only as we conform to his way.

31. Elijah took not ten, but twelve, stones, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. God was called "the God of Israel" after the ten

tribes revolted to show that he was still their God if they would serve him faithfully. Jacob was still the father of all twelve tribes. The name "Jacob" had been changed to "Israel"—"a prince with God." (Gen. 32: 22-32.) Jacob had been blessed by clinging to Jehovah in prayer, and Elijah was about to pray to him. This altar was to represent the whole nation, not some division of it.

32. "And with the stones he built an altar in the name of Jehovah." Elijah was there by God's command, and this altar was built by his authority to the honor of his name, and was intrusted to his care and protection. To avoid the barest possibility of any charge of deception, this trench was made about the altar to be filled with water. "As great as would contain two measures of seed," or, as the margin says, "a two-seah measure"—that is, deep and wide enough for such a measure to sit in it. This measure contained two or three gallons.

33-35. The altar erected and the trench dug, the wood was then put on it in order, and the bullock was cut in pieces and laid on the wood. This done, Elijah then directed that "four jars" of water be poured "on the burnt offering, and on the wood." These "jars" were such as maidens used to carry water upon their heads and held about three gallons.

Twelve "jars" of water were poured on; thirty-six gallons of water, in all, were poured on. The water thoroughly saturated the sacrifice and wood, running all through them and all over the altar, and it also filled the trench. This was done to show that there was no fire concealed about the altar and to preclude any possibility of any thought of deception.

36. Elijah not only built the altar according to God's directions, but the offering was made at the time the evening sacrifice was offered to God. Everything was done in strict compliance with God's law. So we must now implicitly obey God in observing his order. Then Elijah addressed God, as he is frequently called, as "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel."

God had promised to bless the descendants of these faithful men when these descendants were likewise faithful, and as the descendants of these men Elijah and the people then addressed God. Elijah wanted them near that as much as possible this might be their prayer as well as his. Elijah desired this done for God's honor. "Let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word."

This shows the faithfulness and loyalty of Elijah. In all this Elijah was proceeding only as God commanded. To hear him whom God sends is to hear God. (John 13: 20.)

37. Elijah prayed God to hear him and consume, therefore, the sacrifice for God's own glory and the salvation of the people. He prayed in a calm and trustful spirit. God wrought miracles to convince the people that he had sent his servants and was with them and to confirm the truth. (Ex. 4: 29-31; Heb. 2: 4.)

38. In answer to Elijah's prayer "the fire of Jehovah fell," consumed the burnt offering and wood, melted the stones and dust with intense heat, and "licked up the water" in the trench. God sent fire upon the altar which Moses built (Lev. 9: 24), the one David built (1 Chron. 21: 26), and the one Solomon built (2 Chron. 7: 1). See

also the cases of Abraham (Gen. 15: 17) and of Gideon (Judg. 6: 21).

39. The agreement and test was: "And the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." The people saw this, and were convinced. They hesitated no longer, "limping between the two sides." Acknowledging Jehovah as the true God, in reverence and awe "they fell on their faces," and said: "Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God."

This was the answer to Elijah's question whether Baal or Jehovah is God. (1 Kings 18: 21.) To own Jehovah as the true God, or now to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, and at the same time to refuse to obey him, is to prove false and untrue to one's convictions.

These people proved their sincerity and convictions by acting at once upon Elijah's order to "take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." All these Elijah "brought . . . down to the brook Kishon and slew them there." (Verse 40.) It was God's law that such prophets should be slain. (Deut. 13: 1-5; 18-20.) In the goodness and mercy of God for the salvation of the nation these false prophets were slain.

It seems that Ahab consented to it. The execution of these prophets was just, because God had it done, and his judgment is righteous. (Rom. 2: 5.) All idolaters, false teachers, with all who know not God and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, will be punished with "eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might." (2 Thess. 1: 7-10; see also Rom. 2: 4-11.) After the false prophets were slain there was an abundant rain. The idolatry of the king and people had occasioned the drought; and now that it had accomplished its chastening effect rain would come. (See an account on this in verses 41-46.)

QUESTIONS

The history of what kingdom are we now studying?

Give the Subject

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the Time, Place and Persons.

Describe Mt. Carmel.

What is said of the brook Cherith?

What is said of Zarephath?

What do we not know about Elijah?

What was he physically?

Describe his dress.

Tell what he did with his mantle?

Give Elijah's characteristics.

In what was John like Elijah?

Name the kings and different dynasties down to this time.

Who was king at this time?

When do we first meet with Elijah?

How was this drought a challenge to Baal?

How was this a test of Elijah's faith and courage?

What increases faith and courage?

What did God say he would send upon the earth?

In what manner did Elijah always obey God?

What then did he do?

What was the condition of Samaria?

Why did God send this famine?

What is said of the continuance of God's chastisement?

What effect did the famine have on Ahab?

Who was Obadiah?

What had Jezebel done to God's prophets?

What did Obadiah do to preserve God's prophets?

What did Ahab direct Obadiah to do?

Why must they find water and grass?

In what order did they go?

Who met Obadiah?

What did Elijah tell Obadiah to do?

What did Obadiah think would become of Elijah as soon as he himself should go to tell Ahab?

Why did he think Ahab would kill him?

What did Elijah reply?

What effect did this have on Obadiah?

- What did Ahab say to Elijah?
 What reply did Elijah make?
 Who really troubles the church today?
 Who are accused of doing it, and by whom?
 To what did Elijah challenge Ahab and the prophets of Baal?
- 20 What did Ahab do?
 Who did not attend this contest?
- 21 What question and proposition did Elijah put to the people?
 What does "limping between two sides" mean?
 What is indecision between right and wrong?
 What proposition did Joshua make to the people?
 What test did Elijah then propose?
- 22-24 Why was this an appropriate and fair test?
 Why should Baal's prophets proceed first?
 Between what was this a contest?
 How long did Baal's prophets call at first before any interruption?
 What bodily afflictions did they make?
 How then did Elijah mock them?
 How much longer did they call upon Baal?
 What bodily afflictions did they impose upon themselves?
 Why did they do this?
 What was the result?
 Why did Elijah call the people to him?
 What then was the first thing he did?
 Why had this altar and others been thrown down?
- What is necessary that our worship may be acceptable to God?
 How many stones did Elijah use?
 Why use this number?
 Why refer to Jacob and the fact that God had changed his name to "Israel?"
 What was it to build an altar in the name of Jehovah?
 Why was this trench made about the altar?
 How large was it?
 State the facts in order as Elijah proceeded.
 How much water was poured on?
 Why pour it on?
 Where could water be obtained after so long a drought?
- 36 When was the offering made?
 What did this signify?
 As what did Elijah address God?
 Why address him thus?
 Why did Elijah request God to do this?
 What shows Elijah's faithfulness and loyalty?
- 37 For what did Elijah then pray?
 What was the principal purpose of miracles?
- 38 How did God answer this prayer?
 What other offerings did God thus consume?
- 39 What did the people do and say?
 How did the people show the sincerity of their declaration?
 Why did Elijah slay these prophets?
 Why did God order such to be slain?
 What will become of all false teachers and those who obey not the gospel?
 Give an account of the rain and how it came.

"Just as God leads, I onward go,
 Oft amid thorn and briers keen;
 God does not yet his guidance show;
 But in the end it shall be seen
 How by a loving Father's will
 Faithful and true, He leads me still."

"Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,
 Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
 Our hearts in glad surprise,
 To higher levels rise."

—Longfellow.

LESSON III—APRIL 20

ELISHA: TEACHER AND STATESMAN

Read—1 Kings 19: 15-21; Kings, chaps. 2—10; 13: 14-21. *Lesson*

Text—2 Kings 6: 15-23

2 KINGS 6. 15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host with horses and chariots was round about the city. And the servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not; for they that are with us are more than they that are with them.

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, Jehovah, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto Jehovah, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

19 And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. And he led them to Samaria.

20 And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, Jehovah, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And Jehovah opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

21 And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?

22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.

23 And he prepared great provision for them; and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. And the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

Golden Text—Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. (Rom. 12: 21.)

Time—B.C. 893.

Places—Dothan and Samaria.

Persons—Elisha and the Syrians.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 34: 1-8.

Home Reading—

Apr. 14. M. Answering the Call. 1 Kings 19: 15-21.

15. T. Elisha Heals Naaman. 2 Kings 5: 1-14.

16. W. A Teacher and his Students. 2 Kings 6: 1-7.

17. T. Elisha Serves His Nation. 2 Kings 6: 8-13.

18. F. The Prophet's Mercy. 2 Kings 6: 14-23.

19. S. "The arrow of victory." 2 Kings 13: 14-19.

20. S. Jehovah our Deliverer. Psalm 34: 1-8.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Samaria was built by Omri and made the capital of the kingdom of Israel. It was in the country of Samaria.

Dothan was a small place ten miles north of Samaria and about thirteen miles north of Shechem. It was the place to which Joseph's

brethren had gone when he sought them at Shechem and near which they sold him.

Syria was a country north of Palestine, reaching from Mt. Taurus south to Tyre and from the Mediterranean to the river Tigris. Damascus was its capital.

INTRODUCTION

I. Elisha—How Elisha Became a Prophet

All the wonderful works of Elisha can not be studied in this lesson. We can learn them all by reading the lesson connections. Let us learn from Elisha's works as well as from those of Christ and the apostles that faith in order to lead to the blessings of God must be manifested.

Elisha is called "the man of God" (See verse 8 of the chapter of this lesson; also 2 Kings 4: 7, 9, 16, etc.), because God's will was revealed through him and he was God's representative to the people.

II. Disobedience and Punishment

The king of Syria was Ben-hadad II.; the king of Israel at this time was Jehoram. "The king of Syria was warring against Israel." At this time the Syrians were making incursions into the kingdom of Israel, carrying away grain, cattle, and captives. (2 Kings 5: 2.) They were making repeated attacks upon Israel. These God had raised up as adversaries (1 Kings 11: 14) to chastise Israel. Had Israel obeyed God and been faithful in his service, they would have dwelt in peace and safety in their land and God would have given them the victory over their enemies; but in disobedience and idolatry, they were weak and became a prey to the adversary. In times of sin, disobedience, and affliction God sent them prophets, "rising up early and sending them" (Jer. 25: 4; 26: 5; 29: 19; etc.), to warn them against sin, to point out the punishment, thus connecting the punishment with disobedience and the blessings with obedience. Then all this has been written for our warning, encouragement, and salvation. (Rom. 15: 4; 1 Cor. 10: 1-13.) The king of Syria took counsel with his officers and determined, according to their best military tactics, where it would be best to encamp.

III. Elisha Saved Israel

When the king of Syria would determine on a certain movement, Elisha, by inspiration, knew it at once, and would send word to the king of Israel, warning him either to avoid the place or to protect it against an attack. "For thither the Syrians are coming down." Thus the king of Israel anticipated every movement of the enemy, and was prepared to meet him.

10. Therefore "the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of; and he saved himself there, not once nor twice," but many times.

IV. The King of Syria Troubled

"And the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing." He was so often thwarted in his plans by the movements of the army of Israel that he was sure the king of Israel had been in-

formed of them, and he knew no way by which the king of Israel could receive such information except through some traitor. His defeat would naturally enrage him, and the thought of any of his trusted servants betraying his plans to the enemy grieved him. Hence he called his servants together and said: "Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?" He, no doubt, thought he would put a stop to this treachery by ascertaining who was guilty.

Some one of the servants of the king of Syria knew of Elisha's prophetic powers. Some of the Syrians had been in Israel, and all doubtless knew of Naaman's cure by Elisha. Some of these servants may have been with Naaman when he was healed. One of them, therefore, replied to the implied charge of the king of Syria that one of them at least was a traitor, by saying: "Nay, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber." Then no one of the servants of the king of Syria was a traitor, but Elisha had been revealing to the king of Israel the plans and secret thoughts of the king of Syria. That the servants of the king of Syria knew this shows that Elisha's power to prophesy and work miracles was known outside of Israel.

V. An Effort to Stop the Trouble

The king of Syria thought he would at once put a stop to this hindering work of Elisha by seizing him—not thinking, in his stupidity, that his plans to capture Elisha would as readily be known to Elisha as his aims and plans against the king of Israel. Hence he sent his servants to learn where Elisha was. They found upon inquiry that he was at Dothan, and so reported to the king. Elisha, then at Dothan, was ten miles nearer the Syrians than the capital of the kingdom of Israel. The Syrians might capture him there without arousing the army of Israel at Samaria.

To make sure of a capture, the king of Syria sent, not a marauding band, but "horses, and chariots, and a great host." This large number was sent, doubtless, to surround the city, that none might escape, and to be ready for any emergency should the army of Israel be aroused. This was done secretly and at night, that the purpose might not be discovered.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. How God Saved Israel

15. Elisha's servant—not Gehazi, who was now a leper—discovered upon rising early the next morning, the host which surrounded Dothan. It seems that Elisha as yet did not know this; God had not revealed it to him. In distress the servant said: "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" To this servant it seemed that there was no escape: they would be captured and destroyed.

16. Elisha was unmoved by such news, and his faith in God was unshaken. He also comforted his servant, saying: "Fear not; for they that are with us are more than they that are with them." How could that be, when there were only two of them, against horses and chariots and a host of Syrians? He meant, as the next verse shows, that God, who was on their side, was greater than all who could be against them. He had perfect confidence in God that an angelic

host would come at God's bidding to their relief, if necessary. This host was at hand, and it seems from his prayer below that with his spiritual vision he could see them. Jesus said to Peter: "Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26: 53.)

17. Then "Elisha prayed, and said, Jehovah, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." The servant's spiritual eyes were opened, and he saw all these. This mountain was the hill on which Dothan stood. These "horses and chariots of fire" were like the ones which carried Elijah up into heaven. (2 Kings 2: 11.) This demonstrates Ps. 34: 7: "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." These forces of God were present to defend the prophet before his eyes were opened to see them. Are there not now angels around God's people, but not visible to the natural eye? "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1: 14.) Had we our eyes opened to discern spirits and angels could we not see them?

18. When the Syrian host came down from the hills around Dothan to capture Elisha, he did not call into service these "horses and chariots of fire," but prayed God to smite the Syrians with blindness, and God did so.

19. This was not a prayer of revenge, but to show the Syrians the goodness and power of God and to impress upon the king of Israel the fact that deliverance was from God. All the host of Syria were groping their way in blindness.

"Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek." Elisha then "led them to Samaria." Dothan was not Elisha's home, but Samaria was; and he led them to Samaria and to himself in his own city; he also led them to the king of Israel and into the midst of his army. Above all, the Syrians were seeking the king of Israel, and he was in Samaria; but Elisha showed himself to them, as he said.

II. Elisha's Treatment of His Enemies

20-23. In Samaria and surrounded by their enemies, Elisha prayed God to open their eyes. He did so; and they discovered where they were and stood face to face with Elisha, whom they sought, but whom they could not take. This, no doubt, was as much a surprise to the king of Israel as to the Syrians; but seeing the Syrians were in his power and at his mercy, he said to Elisha: "My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?" Elisha replied: "Thou shalt not smite them." They were as prisoners, and to smite them would be as great a crime as to smite captives taken in battle. Instead of smiting them, Elisha commanded that food and drink be placed before them, and that, when they had eaten and drunk, they be sent back to the king of Syria. Accordingly, food and drink were abundantly supplied them, and then they were sent back. This was returning good for evil. It was magnanimous to spare the enemy when helplessly in his power. This made such a favorable impression upon the king of Syria that

the war ceased, "and the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel"—that is, for that time.

The warnings of Elisha to the king of Israel concerning the encampments and movements of the Syrians may be used to illustrate God's warnings to us against the temptations and operations of Satan. As Elisha told the king of Israel where the Syrians were and would attack him, so God tells us how Satan attacks us and where the danger is.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time, places, and persons.
When does faith bless?
When God gives laws or specifies any act of faith, what must be done before he blesses?
Who was the king of Syria at this time?
Who was king of Israel?
What were the Syrians doing to Israel?
Why were they allowed by Jehovah to do this?
When did Israel have peace and enjoy prosperity?
Whom did God send to warn and encourage his people?
Why has all this been written? About what did the king of Syria take counsel?
Why is Elisha called "the man of God?"
Of what did he inform the king of Israel?
Why did he do this?
What did the king of Israel do?
Why was the king of Syria "troubled?"
What did he do?
What reply did one of the servants make?
How did they know of the works of Elisha?
What did the king of Syria then determine to do?
Where was Elisha?

Where was Dothan?
What had occurred there?
What and who were sent to capture Elisha?
Why were so many sent?
Why were they sent at night?
15 What did Elisha's servant discover?
Did Elisha know this before?
What did his servant say?
16 What effect did this have upon Elisha?
What did he say?
What did Jesus say to Peter about angels?
17 What did Elisha pray God to do for his servant?
What did the servant see?
18 What did Elisha pray God to do for the Syrians?
Why did Elisha want this done?
19 What did Elisha then say to them?
Did he deceive them?
Where did he lead them?
20-23 What then did he pray God to do for them?
What did the king of Israel want to do to them?
Why did Elisha say they should not be smitten?
What did he order done for them?
What effect did this have upon the king of Syria?
What lessons may we draw from these facts?

"He who runs from God in the morning will scarcely find him the rest of the day."

John Bunyan.

"Life is one continuous battle—
Never ended, never o'er;
And the Christian's path to glory
Is a conflict evermore."

LESSON IV—APRIL 27.

AMOS AND HOSEA PLEADING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Read: Books of Amos and Hosea. *Lesson Text:* Amos 6: 1-6; Hosea 6: 1-6.

AMOS 6. 1 Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come!

2 Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines: are they better than these kingdoms? or is their border greater than your border?

3 —ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

4 that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;

5 that sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David;

6 that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

HOSEA 6. 1 Come, and let us return unto Jehovah; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

2 After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him.

3 And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth.

4 O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth early away.

5 Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.

6 For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings.

Golden Text—Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate. (Amos 5: 15.)

Time—About B.C. 785.

Places—Tekoa, Bethel, Kingdom of Israel.

Persons—Amos, Hosea and the people.

Devotional Reading—Isa. 55: 6-13.

Home Reading—

- Apr. 21. M. Putting away the Evil Day. Amos 6: 1-6.
- 22. T. Jehovah Pleading for Righteousness. Amos 5: 10-17.
- 23. W. Destructive Ignorance. Hosea 4: 6-10.
- 24. T. The Saving Knowledge of God. Hosea 6: 1-6.
- 25. F. Israel's Sowing and Reaping. Hosea 10: 9-15.
- 26. S. The Bands of His Love. Hosea 11: 1-9.
- 27. S. Repentance and God's Favor. Isa. 55: 6-13.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Tekoa, Amos' home, was a town in the Kingdom of Judah, about twelve miles south of Jerusalem and about six miles south of Bethlehem.

See the note on Bethel, Lesson I, of this quarter.

Hamath was a town of Syria. It was some distance north from Damascus, on the river Orantes. From it people were sent into Samaria after the downfall of the Kingdom of Israel. (2 Kings 17: 24.)

"The sea of the Arabah" was the eastern arm of the Red Sea.

The Arabah was the valley extending from Mount Hermon (locate Mount Hermon) to this sea. Except in Joshua 18: 18 the Authorized version calls this "the plain."

INTRODUCTION

I. Amos and His Book

This lesson furnishes a fine opportunity for studying the books of Amos and Hosea.

The book of Amos is direct and pointed, and can soon be read through.

Who was Amos? Why did he prophesy, When and where did he prophesy? His name means "burden." It is different from "Amoz" the father of Isaiah (Isa. 1: 1), which means "strong." The names of Amos' parents are not given. He was not a subject of the kingdom of Israel, but was sent there to prophesy. He was a true missionary.

He "was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees." (Amos 1: 1; 7: 14, 15.) He kept a sycamore orchard. The sycamore tree, not like our sycamore, was a fruit tree, whose fruit was something like the fig, but sweet and watery, and not very valuable.

Amos was a humble man, who made no pretensions to be a teacher and leader. He was the author of the familiar saying: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son." He meant, as the margin states, that he was not "one of the sons of the prophets." He never attended any of the schools of the prophets with the view of making a prophet. He was a righteous and God-fearing man, who studied God's will, loved the truth and hated iniquity. He was moved by the Spirit of God to prophesy against other nations, and especially against Israel. He said: "The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3: 8.) This is similar to Paul's expression: "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." (1 Cor. 9: 16.)

When Amos prophesied in Bethel the destruction of the king's house by the sword and the downfall of the kingdom (Amos 7: 7-11), "Amaziah the priest of Bethel" informed the king that Amos had conspired against him and the land was not able to bear his words. He also invited Amos to leave the country and return to Judah and prophesy there. It was then that Amos told Amaziah that he was not a prophet, or one of "the sons of the prophets," but that God took him from following the flock and sent him to prophesy unto Israel. He then foretold the downfall of Amaziah's family. (Verses 10-17.)

Amos prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, son of Joash, king of Israel, "two years before the earthquake." (Amos 1: 1.) The reigns of these kings are given in 2 Kings 14: 23 to 15: 12; 2 Chron. 26. The prophet Jonah preceded Amos. (2 Kings 14: 25; Jonah 1: 1.) Joel, it is thought, belonged to this period.

Amos was a brave and heroic prophet; he fearlessly pronounced God's solemn words of condemnation against Israel. He very wisely

began by prophesying against other nations—namely, Damascus (the Syrians), Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron (the Philistines); Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and Judah. This showed that God was just and impartial in his judgments.

II. Hosea and His Book

Hosea followed Amos as a prophet, although contemporary with him, prophesying (Hosea 1:1). "In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel"—not through the entire reign of all these kings.

He was contemporary with Isaiah, Micah, Amos, and Jonah (see Isa. 1: 1; Mic. 1: 1; Amos 1: 1; 2 Kings 14: 25)—in the early part of his life with some, in the latter part with others.

Hosea's reference to "our king" (7: 5) shows that he belonged to the kingdom of Israel. He prophesied chiefly to the kingdom of Israel, but warned Judah also. (Hos. 1: 11; 6: 11.)

"Hosea" is the same as "Joshua" or "Jesus," and means "Savior." Joshua's name was "Hoshea" at first. (Num. 13: 8, 16; Deut. 32: 44.)

Hosea's wife and her children are made types of the infidelity of Israel, whose husband is God. (See chapters 1, 2, 3.)

Hosea is quoted frequently in the New Testament: Hos. 1: 10 and 2: 1, 23—Rom. 9: 25, 26, and 1 Pet. 2: 10; Hos. 11: 1—Matt. 2: 15; Hos. 13: 14—1 Cor. 15: 55. Compare Hos. 10: 8; Luke 23: 30; Rev. 6: 16; 9: 6.

This is a short book and can soon be read, and should be read by all in studying this lesson. It declares the wickedness of both the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel, and shows how God warned, pleaded with, and promised to forgive both before sending them into captivity if they would repent.

III. The Financial Prosperity and Moral and Spiritual Depravity of Israel

Let us first read the following passages: "And I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, said Jehovah." (Amos 3: 15.)

"Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; they that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father go in unto the same maiden, to profane my holy name: and they lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge; and in the house of their God they drink the wine of such as have been fined." (Amos 2: 6-8.)

"Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit; that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat?" (Amos 8: 4-6.)

The wealth and extent of the kingdom under Jeroboam II were greater than they had been since the division, or the days of Solomon. "He restored the border of Israel [see 2 Kings 10: 32; 13: 25] from the entrance of Hamath under the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of Jehovah, the God of Israel, which he spake by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher." (2 Kings 14: 25.)

With this great wealth there was great sin. Covetousness, greed, drunkenness, licentiousness, debauchery, lying, and murder preyed upon the national body like cancerous sores. There was no truth or mercy or knowledge of God left in the land. (Hos. 4: 1-3.) The shameful worship of Baal and the abominable worship of Ashtoreth had supplanted the pure worship of the true God, leaving the people spiritually impoverished. Vice flourished in Bethel and Samaria as plants in a hotbed.

Other passages also show that outwardly Israel flourished, but they give us also an insight into the intemperance and wickedness of the people and especially of the leading men and rulers of the nation.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. "At Ease in Zion"

1. To be "at ease in Zion" is a most fearful condition, because those who are "at ease" realize no danger.

This was the sin of Judah as well as of Israel; it led to the downfall of Judah, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the captivity. After declaring that Judah was worse than Sodom and Samaria, the Lord says:

"As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done; thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good." (Ezk. 16: 48-50.)

The sins of Judah and Israel are frequently compared to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. (See Isa. 1, 2.)

God warns the church—that is, spiritual Israel—against such sins. (See 2 Pet. 2, and Jude.) The church at Laodicea said: "I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing." It was prosperous from the viewpoint of the world; it congratulated itself upon being in this condition, and was "at ease in Zion." But God declares that it was wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, and that without repentance it would be spewed out of his mouth. He instructed it, as he now instructs other such congregations, what to do in order to hide the shame of its nakedness, to become clothed in righteousness, to be fed on spiritual food, and to become rich toward God. (Rev. 3: 14-22.)

That foolish rich farmer, described by our Savior in Luke 12: 13-21, congratulated himself that he had much goods laid up for many years and that his soul could take its ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But that very night God said he was foolish and that his soul was required of him.

"The notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come," or rulers, felt "secure in the mountain of Samaria." The people said: "The evil shall not overtake nor meet us." (Amos 9: 10.)

All this is to be "at ease in Zion."

2. See Calneh, Hamath, and Gath on the map. They were chief cities of different countries quite distant from each other. They had not escaped punishment and Israel and Judah will not.

3. "These sinners had put far away the evil day" and had refused to consider the approaching destruction. They did not know to do right, they "stored up violence and robbery in their palaces" (Ch. 3: 10), "and caused the seat of violence to come near," and still thought their destruction would not come.

II. Lack of Ability "To Discern Good and Evil"

Sin is deceitful. It blinds, beguiles, bewilders, and, above all, hardens the heart. Paul warns the church today against an "evil heart of unbelief" and, "the deceitfulness of sin," lest any should become hardened and fall away from "the living God." (Heb. 3: 12-15.)

To be deceived by sin is to "call evil good, and good evil," to "put darkness for light, and light for darkness," to put "bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter;" to "be wise in" one's "own eyes, and prudent in" one's "own sight." (Isa. 5: 20, 21.)

Neither Judah nor Israel saw the destruction of sin and of disobedience to God, or believed his word.

But this sad condition exists to a great extent in "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6: 16) today. Thousands of church members are "without experience of the word of righteousness" and have not exercised their senses "by reason of use" "to discern good and evil." (Heb. 5: 11-14.) These, too, are the ones who "are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight." They are wiser in their own conceits "than seven men that can render a reason." (Prov. 26: 16.) They see no harm or danger in worldliness, wickedness, and rebellion against God. Many church members today indulge in many of the sins which led to the downfall of Israel and Judah.

4-6. Israel lived in great luxury and ease, drank wine from most costly vessels, used the chief or most costly oils for anointing themselves, and possessed an abundance of wealth.

III. The Musical Instruments of David

5. They sang "idle songs to the sound of the viol;" they invented "for themselves instruments of music, like David." God's woe is pronounced upon whatever was done in this verse as in verses 3, 4.

These "idle songs" with instrumental accompaniments were sung in their homes, in their courts, and their feasts or worship. (See Ch. 5: 21-24; 8: 10.)

Songs, like pictures, are educative and elevating, or impure, exciting passions, and degrading. With all their other sins these Israelites indulged in idle songs enlivened by musical instruments. This is the character of the songs heard in many homes today. These foolish, idle, evil songs cannot be elevating and refining, but are most certainly a bad sign, because they represent the emotions and sentiments of the heart. All parents, all teachers and all preachers—the

whole church—should teach against such songs and music until the very hearts of the young will demand something pure, refining and elevating. But, as just stated, these songs and musical instruments were used in their feasts and worship. David made these instruments of music to be used in the worship of God. (1 Chron. 23: 5.)

They are called "the instruments of David." It seems that after David invented them God regulated their use in his worship. (See 2 Chron. 29: 25-28.) Israel chose a king in disobedience to God, but God then directed the course of the king. Later he said: "I have given thee a king in mine anger, and have taken him away in my wrath." (Hosea 13: 10, 11.)

Under Christ in his spiritual worship God took away all these musical instruments by leaving them entirely out of his service in the church. Man dare not put into the worship of God under Christ that which God has left out. On this verse let me quote that which Adam Clarke says:

"I believe that David was not authorized by the Lord to introduce that multitude of musical instruments into the divine worship of which we read; and I am satisfied that his conduct in this respect is most solemnly reprimanded by this prophet; and I further believe that the use of such instruments of music in the Christian church is without the sanction and against the will of God; that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion and that they are sinful. If there was a woe to them who invented instruments of music, as did David under the law, is there no woe, no curse to them who invent them, and introduce them into the worship of God in the Christian church? I am an old man, and an old minister, and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and I have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity. The late venerable and most eminent divine, the Rev. John Wesley, who was a lover of music, and an eloquent poet, when asked his opinion of instruments of music introduced into the chapels of the Methodists, said, in his terse and powerful manner, 'I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither HEARD nor SEEN.' I say the same, though I think the expense of purchase had better be spared."

IV. Hosea 6: 1-6

1. This verse is an exhortation to the people to repent and "return unto Jehovah," chapter 4 and others state the fearfully wicked condition of this kingdom as well as that of Judah; but upon their repentance and return to Jehovah he would forgive and otherwise bless them. God had torn and smitten them, but he would heal and bind them up upon their return to him. Chapter 5 not only states the great sins and apostasy of Israel and God's severe rebuke and chastisement through other nations; but also that those who had bruised and torn them could not bind up and heal. Israel sent to Assyria, but it was not able to heal and cure their wounds. He could only tear and plunder and destroy. But God, who had overruled their enemies to

wound and tear them—to chastise them—could and would bind up and heal when they should earnestly seek him.

In chapter 11 Israel is told that Assyria cannot save them. Read this chapter and note its beautiful expressions and God's wonderful promises.

2. Note the declarations of this verse. "After two days will he revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live before him." This means that in a short while indeed Jehovah could save and revive Israel so that the people would live before him in his righteous blessings. Some think this refers to the resurrection of Christ on the third day. The Old Testament Scriptures foretold the resurrection of Christ; but I am not prepared to say that this passage refers to that.

3. "Let us know" Jehovah. To know Jehovah is to receive his instruction, walk in his ways, and be faithful to him. "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected" (1 John 2: 3-5.) The only way to return to God and, therefore, to salvation is to learn and obey his will. On this see Isaiah 2: 3 and Mich 4: 2. So, as Jesus declares: "It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me." (John 6: 45.)

This duty is emphasized by saying: "let us follow on to know Jehovah." This means to persevere in the study of God's will and to continue to zealously keep his commandments, or walk in his ways.

God's "going forth"—his continued blessings—"is as sure as the morning;" his blessings will continue to come "as the rain;" and "as the latter rain that watereth the earth," when the earth more greatly needs rain. These are beautiful comparisons. See the same in Isa. 55: 10, 11.

4. "Ephraim," a prominent tribe, is put for Israel. What is meant by the question asked both of Ephraim and Judah: "What shall I do unto thee?" The remainder of the verse expresses the character of both. Their goodness is as fickle or unstable as the morning cloud or as the dew which evaporates under the first rays of the morning sun. Their character is expressed in the following passages: when God would heal, or forgive and bless Israel, then their iniquity and wickedness are manifested; they steal, tell falsehoods, and raid and rob others; they drink, commit adultery, and scoff at right. (Chapter 7.) On the other hand, as they come "trembling as a bird" to God for protection he declares in compassion and love he cannot cast them off. (Chapter 11: 8-11.) In all things God does right.

In all this we exclaim with Paul: "Behold then the goodness and severity of God." (Rom. 11: 22.)

5. Because of the sins, disobedience, and instability of the people, God had "hewed them by the prophets" and had "slain them by the words" of his mouth.

By referring to Jer. 1: 10-19; 5: 14 it will be seen clearly how God did this by the prophets and his word. God placed Jeremiah "over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." -Jere-

miah was "a fortified city," "an iron pillar," "brazen walls," against the princes and kings, the people, and the whole land of Judah. How could Jeremiah do this? He could do so only as he declared that which God would do. God did all this with the nations of earth. God declared through his prophets what should be done to Israel, Judah, and all other nations. This shows that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth to whomsoever he will, and setteth over it the lowest of men." (Dan. 4: 17.)

"My [see margin] judgments are as the light that goeth forth." God's judgments are his ordinances, his will and his condemnation of the wicked. "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." (Rom. 11: 33.) His "judgments are a great deep." (Ps. 36: 6.) God delivered Israel from Egypt with "great judgments." (Ex. 6: 6.)

"As the light that goeth forth" means as swift and clear and bright as light. God's judgments are just and righteous and merciful.

6. He taught Israel goodness—that is kindness and mercy. He desired that they should be that and, hence, taught that. For lack of that he punished them, although they formally made their animal sacrifices. Jesus quoted this passage to the Pharisees who complained that he ate with Publicans and sinners (Matt. 9: 11-13) and when he and his disciples on the Sabbath, passing through the grainfields, began to pluck ears and to eat. (Matt. 12: 7.) Like Pharisees some hold a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. (2 Tim. 3: 5.) Sacrifices, such as God has ordained and for the purpose he has ordained them, must be offered and offered when and as he has ordained; but they must be offered in faith, from the heart, and in the spirit of submission to his will, and not formally or technically. By kindness and mercy and love in every way to others Christ must be fed, clothed, served in sickness, visited in prison and administered to in all conditions and places.

V. Hating Evil and Loving Good

Christians—real Christians, "not . . . in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth" (1 John 3: 18)—hate evil—hate "every form of evil" (1 Thes. 5: 22), and "love the good." They love "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." Because of the virtue and praise in these things they think on or take them into account. They do not measure these things by their own standards of things "true," "honorable," "just," "pure," "lovely," and "of good report;" but they learn and receive from Paul and see in his example the things which God himself calls "true," "honorable," "just," "pure," "lovely," and "of good report." (Phil. 4: 8, 9.) We have learned in this lesson that some claiming to be Christians have not their senses exercised to discern good and evil, but call evil good and good evil, darkness light and light darkness, bitter sweet and sweet bitter; hence, God's teaching must be the standard.

Jesus "loved righteousness and hated iniquity." "Uprightness" was the sceptre of his kingdom. (Heb. 1: 8, 9.) For this reason God anointed him "with the oil of gladness above" his fellows—exalted him

above thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers (Col. 1: 16), and gave him "the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2: 9-11.)

What are "uprightness" and "righteousness?" We know the meaning of these words. The great need of the church is to be upright and righteous. Righteousness comes from the word right, and whatever God teaches people to do and to be is his righteousness—right between man and man, right living in the home—right every where and at all times—loving neighbors and enemies as God commands—practicing the Golden Rule.

Think of this: Christ was most humble, meek, lowly, reviled not when reviled, resisted not evil; was frank, clear, and straightforward in all his teaching; in the establishment of his kingdom resorted to no political tricks, practiced no schemes, deceived no one, spoke without reserve and equivocation the whole plain truth, blessed children and the poor, relieved the afflicted and raised the dead. On the contrary, he never killed any one, never made an orphan or a widow, shed not one drop of blood, never devastated an enemy's country or ruined a single home. But he had Peter to sheathe the sword, declared to Pilate that his kingdom is not of this world and if so his subjects would fight; he is the "Prince of Peace," his gospel is "the gospel of peace," he commands his disciples to keep the peace, to seek peace, and pursue it, to follow peace with all men, and pronounces a blessing upon peacemakers. The law of love is the fundamental law of his kingdom. His spirit is the spirit or patriotism of his kingdom.

"But if any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8: 9.) How solemnly impressive is this, when we reflect that this is God's conclusion and declaration! Since this is the sceptre of Christ's kingdom, his subjects must be ruled by it. Hence, Christians hate everything unfair, dishonest, unjust, unrighteous, slanderous, untrue, unequal, iniquitous, unfaithful to Christ, and disobedient to God; they abominate all guile, hypocrisy, evil speaking, jealousy, envy, malice, unholy strife, bitterness, and all divisions contrary to the teaching of Christ. On the other hand, they love and endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Christians are grieved when brethren wrong one another or do wrong in any way, and, more so, when such brethren fail or refuse to confess their faults and to right the wrongs they have done others—

All this and more is embraced in hating the evil and loving the good.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place and persons.

What and where was Tokeo?

What do you know about Bethel?

What and where was Hamath?

Where was the Sea of the Arabah?

What was the Arabah?

What opportunity is furnished by this lesson?

What was the home, business and life of Amos at the time he was sent to Bethel?

Give a brief biographical sketch of Amos.

In what were Paul and Amos alike?

What occurred between Amos and Amaziah?

During whose reign did he prophesy?

What prophets were contemporaries?

- rary with him?
 Who was Hosea?
 When did he prophecy?
 With whom was he contempor-
 ary?
 To what kingdom did he belong?
 To whom did he prophecy?
 What does his name mean?
 What lessons were drawn from
 his wife and her children?
 What quotations from Hosea are
 made in the New Testament?
 What does the book of Hosea
 present?
 What shows the rich and out-
 wardly flourishing condition of
 the kingdom?
 Of what sins were these leaders
 and rulers guilty?
 Against what nations did Amos
 prophecy?
 1 Against whom is the woe of this
 verse pronounced?
 What is it to be at ease in Zion?
 What were the sins of Sodom and
 Gomorrah?
 What were the sins of Judah and
 Samaria?
 What is spiritually "the Israel of
 God today?" (See Gal. 3: 7, 29;
 6: 16; Rom. 9: 6-8.)
 Against what does God warn the
 church?
 What did the church of Laodicea
 think of itself?
 What did God think of it?
 What did the rich farmer of
 Luke 12: 13-21 say to himself?
 What did God say to him?
 Who were the "notable men of
 the chief of the nations?"
 In what did they feel secure?
 What did the people say?
 2 Where are the cities mentioned
 here?
 What is the point in referring to
 them?
 3 What facts does this verse state?
 4 How does this verse state the
 people lived?
 Against what does Paul in this
 lesson warn Christians?
 What do people do when de-
 ceived by sin?
 Why cannot many church mem-
 bers tell evil from good?
 5 Against what sins is God's woe
 in this verse pronounced?
 Where were these idle songs
 sung?
 What is the influence of good
 and true songs?
 State the evil influence of idle
 and foolish and wicked songs
 enlivened by instrumental mu-
 sic.
 What should parents, school and
 church teach in reference to
 such songs?
 Who invented instruments of
 music for the worship of God?
 What did God do in regard to
 them?
 How did he show his disapproval
 of them in his worship?
 What did he do with them when
 he instituted his spiritual wor-
 ship?
 Repeat what Adam Clark says
 concerning them and this
 whole matter.
 What did John Wesley say?
 HOSEA 6: 1-6.
 1 When would God forgive Israel?
 Who could not forgive or heal
 Israel?
 How had God chastised Israel?
 2 In how short a time would God
 forgive and revive Israel?
 To what do some think this verse
 also refers?
 3 What is Israel here exhorted to
 do?
 What is it to know God?
 What do the prophets say on this
 subject?
 What is meant by following on
 to know God?
 What shows God's blessings are
 sure and will continue?
 4 What question did God ask con-
 cerning Judah and Israel?
 What does this question show?
 5 What is meant by hewing people
 by the prophets and slaying
 them by the word of God?
 What are God's judgments?
 6 Give the application of the
 declaration, "I desire goodness
 (kindness and mercy), and not
 sacrifice, and the knowledge of
 God more than burnt offer-
 ings."
 When are people really Chris-
 tians?
 What do they hate?
 What do they love?
 On what do they think?
 What is the standard of such
 things?
 Why did God so highly exalt
 Christ?
 What do uprightness and right-
 eousness mean?
 What was Christ's character?
 What did he do and what did
 he not do in establishing his
 kingdom? (Tell it all.)
 What are the law and spirit of
 Christ's kingdom?
 State again what Christians hate
 and love.
 What grieves Christians?

LESSON V—MAY 4

THE ASSYRIAN EXILE OF ISRAEL

Read: 2 Kings, chapters 11-17. *Lesson Text:* 2 Kings 17: 9-18.

2 KINGS 17. 9 And the children of Israel did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah their God: and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city;

10 and they set them up pillars and Asherim upon every high hill, and under every green tree;

11 and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the nations whom Jehovah carried away before them; and they wrought wicked things to provoke Jehovah to anger;

12 and they served idols, whereof Jehovah had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

13 Yet Jehovah testified unto Israel, and unto Judah, by every prophet, and every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

14 Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their neck, like to the neck of their fathers, who believed not in Jehovah their God.

15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers and his testimonies which he testified unto them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the nations that were round about them, concerning whom Jehovah had charged them that they should not do like them.

16 And they forsook all the commandments of Jehovah their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

17 And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger.

18 Therefore Jehovah was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

Golden Text—

I will delight myself in thy statutes;

I will not forget thy word. (Ps. 119: 16.)

Time—B. C. 722.

*Places—*Samaria, Gozan, and "the cities of the Medes."

*Persons—*Hoshea and the kings of Assyria.

*Devotional Reading—*Psalm 119: 33-40.

Home Reading—

Apr. 28. M. The Assyrian Exile of Israel. 2 Kings 17: 6-12.

29. T. Israel's Doom Foretold. Amos 4: 6-13.

30. W. The Warning Ignored. Amos 5: 1-9.

May 1. T. Israel Unrepentant. 2 Kings 17: 13-18.

2. F. Foreigners Brought into Samaria. 2 Kings 17: 24-29.

3. S. Mixed Worship. 2 Kings 17: 30-36.

4. S. A Prayer for Righteousness. Psalm 119: 33-40.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

See note on Assyria in Lesson III of this quarter.

Halah was in Assyria.

Habor was a river in Gozan. Gozan was a country in northern Mesopotamia.

"The cities of the Medes" were some distance east from Assyria. See these places on the map.

INTRODUCTION

I. The Dynasties and Length of the Kingdom of Israel

In this lesson we come to the downfall of the kingdom of Israel and the final destruction of the ten tribes as a nation.

This kingdom had nineteen kings and nine different dynasties. Who can name these kings and give the time of their reign?

God promised to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, the first king, that if he would obey him and be loyal to him, as was David, he would establish his family upon the throne of Israel, as the family of David was established upon the throne of Judah (1 Kings 11: 30-40). But Jeroboam refused to obey God; and instead of his family's continuing on the throne, there were nine different families that occupied the throne.

The kingdom never turned from the calves and sins of Jeroboam, although it was much worse than that at times. According to the ordinary chronology, the kingdom continued about two hundred and fifty-four years; others put its duration a little less.

This history demonstrates that a nation, as an individual, must reap what it sows. This lesson gives the cause of the downfall and captivity of these ten tribes.

The kingdom of Judah continued after this about one hundred and thirty-six years, until the destruction of Jerusalem. (2 Kings 25.) There were nineteen kings over Judah and one queen—the usurper, Athaliah. All the kings of Judah were of the family of David, as God promised; and Christ, on the throne in heaven, was of the tribe of Judah and of the family of David. (See Acts 2: 29-36; 13: 34-36.)

II. The Cause of the Downfall of This Kingdom

(Read verses 1-8)

1. Hoshea was the last king of Israel. He began to reign "in the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah" and reigned nine years before the overthrow of his kingdom. His name is identical with that of Hosea, the prophet, and means "salvation." This was the name of Joshua at first (Num. 13: 8, 16; Deut. 32: 44) until so changed as to mean "Jehovah is salvation."

2. He was contemporary with Hezekiah six years. Hoshea "did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, yet not as the kings of Israel that were before him." (2 Kings 18: 1, 10.)

Isaiah and Micah (1: 1) were prophesying in Judah, and Amos (1: 1) and Hosea (1: 1) had delivered their prophecies against Israel, before this time. Hosea (11: 5-7; 13: 16) and Amos (8, 9) foretold the downfall of Israel.

3. While this was true, Hosea was an evil doer, and the people had reached that condition which brought upon them the final destruction of God. (See Lev. 26: 1-33; Deut. 28.)

4. Hoshea was first conquered by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria; then he conspired against Shalmaneser, and Shalmaneser "shut him

up and bound him in prison," and then invaded the country and besieged Samaria three years.

5. The two tribes and the half tribe east of the Jordan had been carried into captivity before this (see 2 Kings 15: 19, 29; 1 Chron. 5: 25, 26); now all Israel is carried away captive into Assyria and placed in the countries mentioned.

6. We can well imagine the sad and sorrowful scene of the whole population of a country—men, women, and children—with their wagons, flocks, herds, etc., driven along before their captors into foreign captivity.

7. God had saved the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, had given them the land of promise, and had greatly blessed them in every way. His goodness to Israel is frequently recited. (See Ps. 78, 79.) Jehovah—"I am that I am," the self-existing, eternal being—was their God, in whom they lived and had their continual existence, and who gave them all things richly to enjoy. Against Jehovah, their God, in the face of all this goodness and mercy, they had sinned. They "feared other gods" (worshiped idols), and walked in the statutes of the nations, whom Jehovah cast out."

8. Because of the iniquities and abominations of these nations God cast them out of Palestine and forbade the Israelites making any covenant with them or intermarrying among them. (See Ex. 23: 23-32; 34: 10-17; 1 Kings 11: 1-8; and numerous other passages.)

9. The children of Israel broke God's covenant and adopted idolatry, the licentious worship and immorality of these and other heathen nations. (Judg. 2: 11-15.) They committed the very sins for which God drove out and destroyed these wicked nations, therefore it was just and right that he should now drive them out. They also "walked in the statutes of the . . . kings of Israel," who made the calves at Bethel and Dan and who introduced the worship of Baal, with all its infamous practices. These heathen practices and customs had become law. (2 Kings 16: 3, 4.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Idolatry and Its Attractions

9. They "did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah their God." They practiced some abominable, sensual forms of idol worship in secret. They were bent on idolatry, and made an effort to conceal these practices either from God or men. Some say this means they covered their idolatry with the pretense that it was worship of God. The word "secretly" means more than that; it means they did these things in secret. They set up idols in secret. (Deut. 27: 15.)

"They built them high places in all their cities." These "high places" have already been described. "From the tower of the watchman to the fortified city." (See 2 Kings 18: 8.) These towers were built in vineyards (Isa. 5: 2; Matt. 21: 33) and other places, and in them watchmen were stationed to keep guard over crops and flocks. They were frequently in the less inhabited places. Then this expression means that in all places altars were erected for idol worship.

10-12. The "pillars" were "obelisks" (see margin), probably of rough or hewn stone; the "Asherim" were wooden symbols of the goddess Asherah or other wooden images, not simply groves. These

pillars and wooden images were set up by the altars. (Ex. 34: 13; Deut. 16: 21, 22.)

"Upon every high hill, and under every green tree." Hills and groves were especially selected for these altars and images erected to the worship of idols. Sometimes, to make high, or elevated places, mounds were thrown up. The groves became temples of the licentious and abominable worship of idols. "In all the high places" the Israelites "burned incense" as worship to these idols. They practiced all the abominations of the nations whom God drove out and "served idols, whereof Jehovah had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing." (Ex. 20: 4-6; Lev. 26: 1; Deut. 4: 15-19; 27: 15.)

Idolatry had its attractions and fascinations. What were they? It appealed to the senses and animal passions; it presented a visible image, or form, of the god worshiped. When Aaron made the golden calf, he intended it as a visible aid to the worship of God. (Ex. 32: 4-6.) In contrast with idols, Jehovah was invisible; and he called attention to the fact that when he appeared to Israel they saw no form. (Deut. 4: 15-19.) Idolatry presented a splendid sensual system of services, embracing revelry, licentiousness, and the exercise of passions, requiring no restraint, repentance, or confession of sins; but every evil thing could be practiced in the name of worship.

It appealed to the worldly and fashionable, and was supported by learning, wealth, and power. All these combined made it a mighty influence for evil and destruction. The worship of the invisible God was pure, true, sincere, righteous, and required, therefore, a forsaking and confession of sin and has always been opposed by worldly wisdom and power.

It is a sad mistake now to turn away from that worship of God in spirit and truth taught in the New Testament for any system which appeals to the senses, tastes, passions, and pride of the fashionable, worldly, and wealthy. To try to make the pure, spiritual, holy service of the true, but invisible, God tasteful and attractive, pleasant and agreeable to the refined, cultured, but unconverted, world is to prostitute it to the service of the creature rather than to make it the means of lifting the creature up to the Creator.

II. "Would Not Hear;" "Sold Themselves to do Evil"

13. God was gracious and merciful, and did not send them into captivity for the first or second transgression. He "testified unto Israel, and unto Judah, by every prophet, and every seer." Seers were those to whom God revealed things by visions. God sent to them Elijah, Elisha, Jonah (2 Kings 14: 25; Jonah 1: 1), Amos, and Hosea; besides, there were the schools of the prophets, of which we have learned; and Hezekiah, in his reform of Judah sent messengers throughout Israel, exhorting all to repent, return to Jerusalem, and worship God "as it is written." (2 Chron. 30: 5-12.) God taught them, warned them, persuaded them, and chastised them, doing everything in mercy and love to reclaim and save them. So, later on, he pleaded with Judah. (Jer. 7: 3-7; 18: 11; Ezek. 18: 31; 30: 10-16.) God pleaded with Israel, recounted his goodness, and urged them to repent (see Hos. 11-13); yet they despised his goodness. (see Rom. 2: 4.)

14. Notwithstanding all God did in teaching, warning, pointing

out their sins, and showing the consequences, "they would not hear;" but as oxen under the yoke harden their necks when they are bent on going a certain direction and will not be guided in any other direction, so they were obstinate and self-willed and stiffened their necks (Deut. 31: 27), "like to the neck of their fathers, who believed not in Jehovah."

They believed in the existence of God, but did not believe in him. To trust and obey God and to thus show confidence in him and to rely upon his ways and means is to believe in him. Instead of believing in God they "rejected his statutes," broke his covenant, "followed vanity," and "went after the nations" of the land.

Idols were called "vain things," and were dumb, lifeless, and powerless to bless and save. In following them Israel "became vain"—weak and helpless.

15-17. These verses show that Israel did not believe "in Jehovah their God." "They forsook all the commandments of Jehovah their God." They turned away from all that was right and good and followed all that was wrong.

The "molten images" mentioned here were the two calves made by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12: 28), who caused Israel to sin and from whose influence and example they never turned away; the "Asherah" was a wooden image referred to above; "all the host of heaven" was the sun, the moon, and the stars. (Deut. 4: 15-19.) This "host of heaven" was represented by Baal, the sun god, and Asherah.

They offered their children as sacrifices burned in the fire to the god Molech. (Read again Lev. 18: 21; 2 Kings 17: 31; 23: 10; 2 Chron. 28: 3; Jer. 7: 30-32; 19: 1-13.)

They "used divination and enchantments"—different methods of trying to learn future events. Consultation of wizards, witches, and those who had "familiar spirits," and the use of augury, necromancy, and sorcery were forbidden. (Deut. 18: 10-14.)

They "sold themselves to do . . . evil." This figure is drawn from the fact of men's selling themselves into slavery and giving themselves up entirely to do the will of their masters. So Israel "sold themselves to do . . . evil" and wholly served their master.

18. This verse says that because of all the foregoing sins and transgressions God "was very angry with Israel." God's indignation was aroused, and he "removed them out of his sight" to the places mentioned in 2 Kings 17: 6. They brought all this upon themselves. (See Prov. 1: 20-33.) As stated in the introduction, Judah remained for about one hundred and thirty-six years before the Babylonian captivity.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons.

How many kings did the kingdom of Israel have?

How many dynasties were represented?

How long did this kingdom last?

What promise did God make to Jeroboam?

What did Jeroboam do?

What was the cause of the na-

tion's overthrow?

How many kings in all did Judah have?

What one queen did this kingdom have?

Who was Hoshea?

With whom in Judah was he contemporary?

How long did Hoshea reign over Israel?

What was his character?

Who conquered him?

Why was he imprisoned?

- How long was Samaria besieged?
 What had become of the tribes east of the Jordan?
 What now befell all the remaining ten tribes?
 What had God done for Israel?
 Why did God drive out the nations of Palestine?
 Why now was he suffering Israel to go into captivity?
 What different sins and abominations had they committed?
 9 What did they do secretly?
 What were these "towers"?
 Where had they then erected altars?
 10-12 What were the "pillars"?
 What were the "Asherim"?
 Where were the altars and the images placed?
 To what did they burn incense?
 What were the attractions of idolatry?
 What was the worship of God?
- What is a prostitution of God's worship now?
 13 What efforts had God made to teach and warn them?
 Name these prophets.
 14 What had the people done?
 From what does the figure "hardened their neck" come?
 15-17 Why is it said they did not believe in Jehovah, when they knew he existed?
 What did they reject?
 What did they make?
 What all did they worship?
 How did they try to discover future events?
 What is meant by "sold themselves to do that which was evil"?
 18 What did God then do with them?
 How long did Judah remain after this?

Heroes and kings, obey the charm,
 Withdraw the proud high-reaching arm;
 There is an oath on high,
 That ne'er on brow of mortal bright
 Shall blend again the crowns of earth,
 Nor in accordance cry.

Her many voices mingling own
 One tyrant lord, one idol throne:
 But to His triumph soon
 He shall descend who rules above,
 And the pure language of his love
 All tongues of men shall tune.

Nor let ambition heartless mourn;
 When Babel's very ruins burn,
 Her high desires may breathe—
 O'ercome thyself, and thou mayest share
 With Christ his Father's throne and wear
 The world's imperial wreath.

—Keble.

LESSON VI—MAY 11

II. History of Judah, the Southern Kingdom

In the following five lessons we study the history of the kingdom of Judah.

JEHOIADA'S VICTORY OVER BAAL

Read: 1 Kings 14: 21 to 15: 24; 22; 2 Kings, chapters 11 and 12.

Lesson Text: 2 Kings 11: 1-4, 11-18.

2 KINGS 11. 1 Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.

2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons that were slain, even him and his nurse, and put them in the bed-chamber; and they hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not slain;

3 and he was with her hid in the house of Jehovah six years. And Athaliah reigned over the land.

4 And in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the captains over hundreds of the Carites and of the guard, and brought them to him into the house of Jehovah; and he made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of Jehovah, and showed them the king's son.

11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, along by the altar and the house, by the king round about.

12 Then he brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, Long live the king.

13 And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the house of Jehovah:

14 and she looked, and, behold, the king stood by the pillar, as the manner was, and the captains and the trumpets by the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew trumpets. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason! treason!

15 And Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, Have her forth between the ranks; and him that followeth her slay with the sword. For the priest said, Let her not be slain in the house of Jehovah.

16 So they made way for her; and she went by the way of the horses' entry to the king's house: and there was she slain.

17 And Jehoiada made a covenant between Jehovah and the king and the people, that they should be Jehovah's people; between the king also and the people.

18 And all the people of the land went to the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of Jehovah.

Golden Text—Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. (Eph. 6: 10.)

Time—B.C. About 878.

Place—Jerusalem.

Persons—Athaliah, Jehoiada, Jehosheba, Joash, the guards, and the people.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 46.

Home Reading—

- May 5. M. Seeking God's Counsel. 1 Kings 22: 1-9.
6. T. True and False Prophecy. 1 Kings 22: 13-23.
7. W. Joash Saved. 2 Kings 11: 1-4.
8. T. Joash Crowned. 2 Kings 11: 9-12.
9. F. Athaliah's Death. 2 Kings 11: 13-17.
10. S. Victory over Baal. 2 Kings 11: 18-21.
11. S. The Righteous and the Wicked. Psalm 1.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

We know the Kingdom of Judah was the Southern Kingdom; the Kingdom of Israel was the Northern Kingdom.

INTRODUCTION**I. The Kingdom of Israel**

The marriage of Jehoram (or Joram), the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, to Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, connects this lesson with the kingdom of Israel. We have studied the history of the kingdom of Israel from its establishment under Jeroboam, the Son of Nebat, to its final destruction under King Hoshea.

Jeroboam reigned twenty-two years; Nadab, his son, two years; Baasha (the beginning of the second dynasty), twenty-four years; Elah, Baasha's son, two years; Zimri, the captain of half Elah's chariots, who killed Elah, seven days; Omri (the beginning of the third dynasty), twelve years; Ahab, Omri's son, twenty-two years; Ahaziah, Ahab's son, two years; Jehoram, Ahab's son (2 Kings 1: 17; 3: 1), twelve years. Ahab formed an alliance with the king of the Sidonians by marrying his daughter, Jezebel, adding transgressions to his sins. (1 Kings 16: 30-33.)

Ahab, Jezebel and Jehu

Jezebel was a brilliant, ambitious, unscrupulous, heathen, wicked woman. She introduced into Israel the worship of Baal, for which a temple was erected in Samaria, whence it spread through the kingdom of Judah. She persecuted and destroyed God's prophets and encouraged and sustained the prophets of Baal and the Asherah.

We have learned of this abominable, wicked, licentious worship. During Ahab's reign Elijah appeared, denouncing such idolatry and wickedness, teaching and correcting the people. After him Elisha came, taking up his work and continuing it for more than fifty years.

From Ahab and Jezebel and their descendants to the third generation and from Elijah and Elisha went forth two most powerful contrary and conflicting influences, resulting finally, in the overruling wisdom of God, in the extermination of the entire family of Ahab. This was done by the fiery Jehu, son of Nimshi, whom God directed Elijah to anoint king of Israel.

Jehu killed Jehoram, king of Israel; Ahaziah, king of Judah; and had Jezebel pitched out of the window alive to be run over by the horses and chariots. He treacherously put to death all the prophets of Baal, destroyed the images and altars, and converted the temple into a public necessary.

Yet, with all his zeal, Jehu did not "walk in the law of Jehovah" and "departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, wherewith he made

Israel to sin." He was negative in his zeal, tearing down Baal worship, but not building up the worship of God.

Better men than Jehu make the same mistake today.

An account of all this is given in 2 Kings 9, 10.

Jehu (the beginning of the fourth dynasty) reigned twenty-eight years over Israel. Jehu's family occupied the throne through the fourth generation, closing with the reign of Jeroboam II.—a period of one hundred and two years. (2 Kings 10: 30; 15: 10-12.)

II. The Kingdom of Judah

Returning to the kingdom of Judah, Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, reigned seventeen years; Abijah, three years; Asa, forty-one years; Jehoshaphat, twenty-five years; this reaches the present lesson.

Jehoram and Athaliah

This lesson shows the power of influence—in this case, the wonderfully bad influence of Jezebel.

Jehoshaphat "joined affinity with Ahab" (2 Chron. 18: 1); and his son, Jehoram (or Joram), married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. (2 Kings 8: 18, 19; 2 Chron. 21: 5-7; 22: 2.)

Jezebel was the daughter of a king, the wife of a king, the mother of a king, the mother-in-law of a king, the grandmother of a king, and the great-grandmother of a king. Who were all these kings?

Jehoram was weak and wicked; Athaliah was ambitious and idolatrous, like her mother. This proved a disastrous union to Judah, for the weak king was wholly under the influence of his wicked wife.

Baal worship was established in Jerusalem and through the country. (2 Chron. 21: 11-15.) There was a temple of Baal in Jerusalem, which Jehoiada, the priest, destroyed in the reign of Joash. (2 Kings 11: 18.) This house of Baal, in all probability, was erected, and this worship was established by Jehoram.

It is said of Jehoram: "And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife; and he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah." (2 Kings 8: 18.) "Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and made the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot, and led Judah astray." (2 Chron. 21: 11.) He also slew with the sword "all his brethren" and "divers also of the princes" of his kingdom. (Verses 1-4.)

For his idolatry and wickedness he suffered the condemnation of God. His enemies were stirred up against him; his wives and children were slain; his people were smitten with a plague; he himself suffered from a great affliction of the bowels, until "day by day" for two years they fell out, "and he died of sore diseases." (Verses 12-20.)

Jehoram reigned only eight years and Jehoahaz (also called "Ahaziah"—2 Chron. 22: 2), his youngest son, reigned in his stead; for his enemies had slain all his other sons.

Jehoahaz reigned only one year. "He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab; for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly. And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, as did the house of Ahab; for they were his counselors after the death of his

father, to his destruction." (Verses 2-4.) Jezebel, yet alive, was his grandmother; Athaliah, his mother; and Jehoram, king of Israel, his uncle and contemporary.

Both kingdoms at that time were under the wicked influence of Jezebel, and it seemed that the influence of Elijah and Elisha was lost; but it was at work, like leaven, and burst forth, like the sun from behind a cloud, in the widespread destruction of Baal worship in both kingdoms. Jehu slew Jehoram, Jehoahaz, Jezebel, all the sons of Ahab, and all the prophets of Baal.

Our lesson shows how Athaliah perished and a new era of the true worship of God dawned upon Judah.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Athaliah "Destroyed All the Seed Royal"

1. Athaliah, as we have seen, was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel; the wife of Jehoram, king of Judah: the sister of Jehoram, king of Israel; and the mother of Ahaziah.

When she "saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal," including her own grandchildren. (2 Kings 11: 2; 2 Chron. 22: 10, 11.) "The seed royal" were those who could lay any claim to the kingdom. This was a custom then with wicked and ambitious rulers. Athaliah's husband, as we have seen, slew all his brethren. She slew her every possible rival, that she might have undisturbed possession of the kingdom. In her proud, worldly ambition she was unwilling to retire to private life; and to accomplish her wicked purpose, human lives, few or many, were nothing to her.

This was the only time in the history of the kingdom of Judah that a woman ruled over it, and she did this by usurpation. That its subjects would suffer the rule of this half heathen, idolatrous woman for six years, shows how far the kingdom had departed from God and how low it had sunk into idolatry.

2. Jehosheba (also called "Jehoshabeath"—2 Chron. 22: 11) was the daughter of Jehoram (or Joram) the sister of Ahaziah, the aunt of Joash, and the wife of Jehoiada, the priest. (2 Chron. 22: 11.) From her righteous conduct, probably Jehosheba was not Athaliah's daughter, since Jehoram had other wives. (2 Chron. 21: 14.)

II. Joash, the Babe, Saved

When Athaliah was destroying "all the seed royal," Jehosheba stole away from the king's sons that were slain, Joash, a babe about a year old (2 Kings 11: 3, 21), with his nurse, and hid them "in the bedchamber," or chamber for storing away beds (see the margin), and he escaped. Joash's mother was Zibiah, of Beersheba. (2 Kings 12: 1.) He was the grandson of Athaliah and the great-grandson of Jezebel. On the one side he descended from David, Solomon, and all Judah's kings; on the other side, from the wicked Ahab and Jezebel; through Jezebel, from the heathen king of Tyre.

3. Joash was "hid in the house of Jehovah six years." He was probably in some of the chambers about the temple proper, in which it was lawful for Jehosheba and Joash's nurse to enter. This was a safe place to conceal the child from the idolatrous queen, for she had no use for the temple of Jehovah; and besides, the high priest

had the chief management of its affairs. During this six years "Athaliah reigned over the land."

III. Plans Made for Destroying Athaliah

4. "In the seventh year" of Joash's age "Jehoiada strengthened himself" (2 Chron. 23: 1) and "sent and fetched the captains over hundreds of the Carites ('executioners'—margin) and of the guard, and brought them to him into the house of Jehovah; and he made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of Jehovah, and showed them the king's son." He made an agreement with them, and took an oath of them that they would carry it out; and then he showed them the young Joash. The names of these captains are given in 2 Chron. 23: 1.

Jehoiada did his work cautiously and well. These captains "went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the heads of the father's houses of Israel (the kingdom of Judah), and they came to Jerusalem." Then all together made a covenant that Joash should be made king and should reign, as God had spoken concerning David. (Verses 1-3.) With the work well planned, all were ready now for execution.

5, 6. Jehoiada then told the captains what they should do. These guards had periods of service and periods when they were off duty, one body of troops relieving the other every Sabbath. (See 1 Chron. 9: 17-27.) Jehoiada chose the Sabbath for this important work, it seems, because both companies of guards—the one going off duty and the one going on—could be utilized (2 Chron. 23: 8), and the gathering together of the people would attract less attention. A third part of this guard was to be stationed at the place "of the watch of the king's house;" a third part, "at the gate Shur;" and a third part, "at the gate behind the guard." "The gate behind the guard" was the principal entrance to the palace, it seems from 2 Kings 11: 19. It is not known what gate "the gate Shur" was.

"And be a barrier." These guards were placed thus that they might "be a barrier" to any attack of an enemy.

The guard that went off duty was divided into two companies, and these were to guard the house of Jehovah, and thus protect the king. (Verse 7.)

They were to surround the king and to slay any man who would attempt to break through the ranks to harm him. (Verse 8.)

IV. Joash Crowned King

9-10. The captains carried out Jehoiada's directions. All who had not arms were supplied with "the spears and shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of Jehovah." (Verse 9, 10); (See 2 Chron. 23: 9.) "David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem." (2 Sam. 8: 7.)

11. The guard, with weapons in hand, stood "from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, along by the altar and the house," thus forming a circle around the king when he came. None were to go into the temple, "save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall come in, for they are holy: but all the people shall keep the charge of Jehovah." (See 2 Chron. 23: 4-6.)

12. The guards all placed and everything arranged, Jehoiada then "brought out the King's son"—Joash, now seven years old—and crowned him, "gave him the testimony," anointed him and proclaimed him king. "The testimony" given the young king was the book of the law, for this is called "the testimony" (Ex. 25: 16; 31: 18); and God directed that the king should have a copy of the law in a book and should keep it and read it, "that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God, to keep all the words of his law and these statutes, to do them; that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left; to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel." (Deut. 17: 18-20.) All this done, "they clapped their hands, and said, Long live the king." This was the first public announcement of the fact that Joash had been preserved from Athaliah's wicked hand and made king.

V. Athaliah Slain

13, 14. When Athaliah heard the shout, "Long live the king," and "the noise of the people running and praising the king" (2 Chron. 23: 12), "she came to the people into the house of Jehovah" (she pressed in among those in the temple); saw the young king standing "by the pillar ('on the platform'—margin), as the manner was" (see 2 Kings 23: 3; 2 Chron. 34: 31); took in the situation at once; and "rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, treason." Thus her brother said, "There is treachery," when Jehu slew him and her son. (2 Kings 9: 23.)

15. Jehoiada commanded that she should be put out of the temple "between the ranks" and killed, and not killed in the temple; Jehoiada also commanded that whosoever followed her should be slain.

16. The guards did as Jehoiada commanded, and "made way for her; and she went by the way of the horses' entry to the king's house: and there was she slain." There was a gate called "the horse gate." By the entrance of this gate Athaliah went to the king's house, where she was slain. (2 Chron. 23: 15.)

17. Then Jehoiada and the people made two covenants—one, between Jehovah and the king and the people; one, between the king and the people. All covenanted to be true to God and the king.

18. Then all the people went to the house of Baal, destroyed it and all its altars and images, and slew Mattan, the priest of Baal; then the young king, accompanied by the guard, was removed from the temple to the king's house and placed on the throne of the kings. "So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet." (Verse 19, 20.)

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons.

Give the names of the kings of Judah and the length of the reign of each king, down to our lesson.

Give the names of the kings of Israel, the different dynasties, and the length of the reign of each king, down to the end of

Jehu's reign.

Who was Jezebel?

What did she introduce into Israel?

Through what kingdom did it spread?

What two powerful and conflicting influences were at work?

How and by whom was Ahab's family exterminated?

How did Jezebel die?

How did Jehu destroy the proph-

- ets of Baal?
 In what did he fall?
 How long did he reign?
 Through what generation did his sons reign?
 What period did this cover?
 With whom did Jehoshaphat form an alliance?
 Whom did his son, Jehoram, marry?
 What kind of a woman was Athaliah?
 What was Jehoram's character?
 What sins did he commit?
 How long did he reign?
 What did he suffer on account of his sins?
 How did he die?
 Who succeeded him?
 How long did he reign?
 What was his character?
 Of whom did he seek counsel?
 Who virtually ruled both kingdoms?
 How did Jehoahaz die?
 Who were his mother, grandmother, and uncle?
 1 When Jehoahaz was slain, what did Athaliah do?
 Why did she do this?
 How long did she reign?
 Why was she suffered to reign at all?
 2 Who was Jehosheba?
 What did she do in order to preserve "seed royal" for the throne of David?
 Where was Joash hid?
 Who was Joash's mother?
 What different blood flowed in his veins?
 3 How long was Joash hid?

- Why was he hid in the house of Jehovah?
 4 Who was Jehoiada?
 How did he proclaim Joash king?
 How did he strengthen himself?
 What did he first have these captains to do?
 Whom did he then show to them?
 Where and for what purpose were they then sent?
 When all came to Jerusalem, what covenant did they make?
 5, 6 On what day did Jehoiada arrange to proclaim Joash king?
 Why on this day?
 How were the guards arranged?
 7 How was the temple guarded?
 8 What should be done to any one who should attempt to break through the ranks to the king?
 9-11 What did the captains do?
 How were those supplied with arms who had none?
 How were the guards arranged to protect Joash when he came out?
 Who were not to go into the house?
 12 What was done next?
 What was "the testimony?"
 Why was it given to Joash?
 What then did the people shout?
 13, 14 What did Athaliah do?
 15 What did Jehoiada command to be done with her?
 What should be done to any one who should undertake to defend her?
 10 Where was she slain?
 State, in order, the acts of the people after this, as given in verses 17-20.

"After the toil and trouble, cometh a day of rest;
 After the weary conflict, peace on the Savior's breast;
 After the care and sorrow, the glory of light and love;
 After the wilderness journey, Father's bright home above.

"After night and darkness, the shadows all flee away;
 After the day of sadness, hope sheds her bright ray;
 After the strife and struggle, the victory is won;
 After the work is over, the Master's words, 'Well done.'"

LESSON VII—MAY 18

ISAIAH AND THE ASSYRIAN CRISIS

Read: 2 Kings, Chapters 18-20; Isaiah, Chapters 36-38. *Lesson Text:* Isa. 37: 14, 21-23, 29, 33-36.

ISAIAH 37. 14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up unto the house of Jehovah, and spread it before Jehovah.

21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria,

22 this is the word which Jehovah hath spoken concerning him: The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

23 Whom hast thou defied and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.

29 Because of thy raging against me, and because thine arrogancy is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

33 Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come unto this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it.

34 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come unto this city, saith Jehovah.

35 For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

36 And the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.

Golden Text—

God is our refuge and strength,

A very present help in trouble. (Ps. 46: 1.)

*Time—*About B. C. 710; some think later than this.

*Places—*Jerusalem and Nineveh.

*Persons—*Hezekiah, Isaiah, Sennacherib, and others.

*Devotional Reading—*Psalm 46.

Home Reading—

May 12. M. Assyria Defies Israel. Isa. 36: 1-10.

13. T. Assyria Defies Israel's God. Isa. 36: 13-20.

14. W. Isaiah's Courage. Isa. 37: 1-7.

15. T. Hezekiah's Prayer for Deliverance. Isa. 37: 14-20.

16. F. Arrogance Rebuked. Isa. 37: 21-29.

17. S. Victory over Assyria. Isa. 37: 30-38.

18. S. "Our refuge and strength." Psalm 46.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

For a fuller description of Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Nineveh, Lebanon, and Jerusalem consult some Bible dictionary. Then locate these places on the map.

Lachish was an important, fortified town of Judah (2 Chron. 11: 9), and was besieged by Sennacherib. It was in the southwestern part of Judea, about sixteen miles east of Gaza.

INTRODUCTION

I. Hezekiah

While we cannot learn all about such a busy king and so good a man as was Hezekiah in one lesson, let us learn all we can. He was the son of Ahaz—a godly son of a most ungodly father. He succeeded his father to the throne. He began to reign at the age of twenty-five years, and reigned twenty-nine years. His name means “strength of Jehovah.”

“His mother’s name was Abijah, the daughter of Zachariah.” (2 Chron. 29: 1.) “Abijah” means “father is Jehovah.” Doubtless Abijah was a good woman, from whom Hezekiah received righteous impressions and impulses; he also gave heed to the instruction and warnings of Isaiah, who had then been a prophet for more than thirty-two years.

Hezekiah’s wife’s name was “Hephzibah” (2 Kings 21: 1), which means “my delight is in her.” (Isa. 62: 4.)

Hoshea had been king over Israel three or four years when Hezekiah began to reign. (2 Kings 17: 1; 18: 1.)

Hezekiah’s reformation of Judah was five or six years before the downfall of Israel.

“And he did all that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, according to all that David his father had done . . . He trusted in Jehovah, the God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among them that were before him. For he clave to Jehovah; he departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which Jehovah commanded Moses.” (See 2 Kings 18: 3-8.)

Read all the chapters designated in order to get all that bears on this lesson.

In the comments verses 24-32 are not omitted.

Sennacherib was king of Assyria. He was the son of Sargon. Isaiah (20: 1) mentions Sargon.

II. Hezekiah’s Preparation for War

The facts of this lesson occurred in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah’s reign. (2 Kings 28: 13.) He had “rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not” (2 Kings 18: 7), to whom Ahaz had submitted (2 Kings 16: 7; 2 Chron 28: 20, 21), and Sennacherib was seeking to reduce him to submission. Sennacherib came “up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.”

Alarmed at this, Hezekiah sent to Sennacherib at Lachish, confessed he had offended, and offered to pay whatever tribute Sennacherib should lay upon him, if Sennacherib would only return from him. Sennacherib appointed “three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.” In order to raise this enormous sum, Hezekiah emptied his own treasuries and spoiled the temple of God. (2 Kings 18: 13-16.)

If Sennacherib withdrew at all, he soon returned and determined to subdue the kingdom and remove its people into another country. (2 Kings 18: 32.) Hezekiah then prepared for the siege and to encourage the people. (See 2 Kings 20: 20; 2 Chron. 32: 1-8.)

III. Sennacherib's Cruel, Bloody, and Blasphemous Message

At the time of this lesson Sennacherib and his army were at Lachish. From Lachish, Sennacherib sent officers, "with a great army," to Jerusalem with a cruel and bloody message, demanding of Hezekiah a complete surrender and the removal of the people as captives into another country. With this manifesto were coupled the vilest insults and greatest blasphemy.

The army took its stand "by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field." This, it is thought, was on the north side of Jerusalem. It was close enough for the people on the wall to hear the Assyrians speak. Hezekiah sent out Eliakim, Shebna, and Asaph to talk with the Assyrians. Rabshakeh was the chief speaker for the Assyrians. He asked, virtually, upon what ground Hezekiah hoped to succeed. He said to trust in the king of Egypt was to fail. (Isa. 36: 4-6; 2 Kings 18: 17-21.) To trust in themselves, they were told tauntingly, was to fail. (See Isa. 36: 8, 9; 2 Kings 18: 23, 24.) To trust in God was to fail also. Their trust in God was mocked, and God himself was blasphemed. All this was enlarged upon and spoken in the Jews' language to stir up sedition among them. But they very wisely, according to Hezekiah's instructions, held their peace. (Isa. 36: 11-22; 2 Kings 18: 26-36.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Hezekiah's Prayer and Trust in God

14. Hezekiah's officers went to him "with their clothes rent" and reported what had been said. He also, in distress, "rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of Jehovah." He then reported to Isaiah what had been said.

Hezekiah trusted that God would hear and punish the blasphemy of the Assyrians, and his trust was not in vain. Through Isaiah, God answered Hezekiah and told him to be not afraid; that he had heard this blasphemy; that the king of Assyria should hear tidings, should return to his own land, and should there fall by the sword. (Read Isa. 37: 1-7; 2 Kings 19: 2-7.)

Sennacherib sent messengers again to Hezekiah, endeavoring to induce him to surrender. This time he wrote a letter to Hezekiah, railing on "Jehovah the God of Israel" and speaking against him. 2 Chron. 32: 17; 2 Kings 19: 10-13 contain this railing.

Hezekiah read the letter and treated it as he should have done, because it was an attack upon God. He took it into the temple, spread it before God, and prayed.

This prayer is given in Isa. 37: 16-20; 2 Kings 19: 14-19, which study. As Sennacherib had reproached and defied God, Hezekiah trusted that God would answer. He desired relief and salvation for God's honor.

All elders, all preachers, and the whole church today are bound by virtue of being Christians to seek and to uphold the honor and glory of God among all people and governments of men on earth. To fail here is to dishonor God and to betray Christ.

II. God's Answer to Hezekiah

21-22. Isaiah also "prayed because of this, and cried unto heaven" (2 Chron. 32: 20); but he was not with Hezekiah in the temple, and his prayer is not recorded.

God answered Hezekiah through Isaiah. The answer is given in this lesson and in 2 Kings 19: 20-34. God said the virgin daughter of Zion would laugh the boastful enemy to scorn and shake her head at him, and the haughty Assyrian should be brought low.

Cleansed of their idolatry and worshiping God "as it is written," as Hezekiah had taught them to do, God's people are called "the virgin daughter of Zion." Though few and weak in the sight of the Assyrians, they would laugh to scorn him who had ridiculed and mocked their God.

23-25. The message which God sent to Sennacherib is contained in verses 22-29.

God told Sennacherib that he had blasphemed, defied, and lifted up his voice against "the Holy One of Israel"; that he had attributed his victories over all the nations he had mentioned to the multitude of his chariots and military skill; and that he had threatened to dry up all the waters of Egypt; but that he could do nothing only as God willed it.

III. God's Message to Sennacherib

26, 27. Sennacherib was informed that he was only a means in God's hand to chastise and destroy these nations. Howbeit he did not mean it so, or intend it as service to God, but thought he had accomplished all this by his own wisdom and power. Little did he know that he was, indeed, a battle-ax and chastening rod in God's hand to destroy these nations and to chastise the Jews. So God said when he had "performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and Jerusalem," he would "punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks." (Isa. 10: 5-16.)

28, 29. Sennacherib was further informed that God knew his sitting down, going out, and coming in—his every movement. Because of his raging and arrogancy, God would put a hook in his nose and a bridle in his lips and lead him back the way he came.

If we cannot learn from these facts that God uses one wicked nation to chastise and even destroy other more wicked nations, and protects and saves his own people, when they trust him and rely upon him, then we cannot learn the simplest truth or plainest facts.

IV. God's Further Answer to Hezekiah

30. While Sennacherib's army had destroyed the growing crops in order to reduce the people to famine, God encouraged Hezekiah by promising that the people should live the remainder of that year and through the next year, which is supposed to have been a Sabbath year, of the volunteer products of the earth. This was both a sign to Hezekiah and a manifestation of God's great goodness.

31, 32. God would save Jerusalem, and "the remnant" that had "escaped of the house of Judah" should "again take root downward, and bear fruit upward." God's zeal would perform this.

33, 35. Therefore, God said that Sennacherib should not come into the city, or cast up a mound against it, or even shoot an arrow

against it; but, as stated above, he should return by the way he came. God would do this for his own sake and for his servant David's sake. (See 2 Kings 19: 30-34.)

V. The Destruction of Sennacherib's Army

36. "And Jehovah sent an angel, who cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains, in the camp of the king of Assyria." (2 Chron. 32: 21.) That night, after Hezekiah's reception of that blasphemous letter, "the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore, and five thousand: and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies." The Assyrian camp was at once broken up, and Sennacherib in haste "returned with shame of face to his own land." God did this to dishonor him.

While God did this suddenly, it does not follow that he used no means; yet we know not what means he used, if any. Some suppose that it was the deadly simoon which sometimes sweeps over that country. Winds are said to be God's messengers and "flames of fire his ministers." (Ps. 104: 4, 5.)

Sennacherib returned to Nineveh, and, according to history, lived after this about seventeen years (see Smith's Bible Dictionary), and was slain by his sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, with the sword, while "worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god."

37, 38. Nisroch seems to have been the national god of the Assyrians.

This lesson shows the efficacy and power of prayer.

Faith, humility, reverence, and submission to God's will are essential elements of acceptable prayer. (See 1 John 3: 22; 5: 14.)

Thus God saved Hezekiah and Jerusalem "and guided them on every side."

Hezekiah was greatly honored, and the land again bloomed with prosperity. (See 2 Chron. 32: 22, 23.)

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time, place, and persons.
Give Hezekiah's parents and life up to this lesson.
What had Hezekiah done for the people before this?
What was the occasion of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah?
Who was Sennacherib?
What cities of Judah had he taken?
What message did Hezekiah send him?
What tribute did he lay upon Hezekiah?
Where did Hezekiah get the money?
What next did Sennacherib determine to do?
What preparation did Hezekiah make?
Where were Sennacherib and his army?

Where was Lachish?
Whom did Sennacherib send with a message to Hezekiah?
What were the demands of this message?
From what place did these officers speak of Hezekiah's officers and the Jews?
Whom did Hezekiah send to hear this message?
What question did Rabshakeh ask the Jews?
Give the substance of Rabshakeh's speech.
Why did Rabshakeh speak in the Jews' language?
What did the people do when they heard this speech?
What did Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah do?
What did Hezekiah do?
Whom did he inform of this?
What answer did God make through Isaiah?
Where did Rabshakeh find Sen-

- nacherib?
 How did Sennacherib address Hezekiah the second time?
 What did Hezekiah do with this letter?
 Against what had Isaiah warned? (See Isa. 30: 1-5.)
 21, 22 Who else prayed?
 How did God answer?
 State, in full, God's answer to these prayers.
 23-25 Give that part of the message which God sent to Sennacherib which these verses contain.
 Why were God's people called "a virgin daughter?"
 26, 27 Of what facts did God inform Sennacherib?
 28, 29 What did God know of Sennacherib?
 What would God do with him?
 30 What promise and sign did God give Hezekiah?
 31, 32 What should the "remnant" do?
 33, 35 What should Sennacherib not do?
 36 How was the Syrian army destroyed?
 How many were slain?
 What did Sennacherib do?
 How long did he live afterwards?
 How did he die?
 What came to Hezekiah?

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
 And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
 And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
 When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
 And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd;
 And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and dull,
 And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
 And the idols are broken in the temple of Baal!
 And the might of the Gentile, unsmeared by the sword,
 Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

—Byron.

LESSON VIII—MAY 25

JEREMIAH AND THE BABYLONIAN CRISIS

Read: Jeremiah 7: 1-26; 9: 1-9; 15: 1-10; 18: 1-12; 25: 1-14; 26: 1-24; 36: 1-32; 38: 1-28. *Lesson Text:* Jeremiah 26: 8-16.

JEREMIAH 26. 8 And it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that Jehovah had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold on him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.

9 Why hast thou prophesied in the name of Jehovah, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant? And all the people were gathered unto Jeremiah in the house of Jehovah.

10 And when the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house unto the house of Jehovah; and they sat in the entry of the new gate of Jehovah's house.

11 Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy of death; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

12 Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, Jehovah sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.

13 Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Jehovah your God; and Jehovah will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

14 But as for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as is good and right in your eyes.

15 Only know ye for certain that, if ye put me to death, ye will bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth Jehovah hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

16 Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets: This man is not worthy of death; for he hath spoken to us in the name of Jehovah our God.

Golden Text—Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of your God. (Jeremiah 26: 13.)

Time—B. C. 602.

Place—Jerusalem.

Persons—Jeremiah, priests, princes and elders.

Devotional Reading—Psalm 86: 1-8.

Home Reading—

- May 19. M. Jeremiah's Warning. Jer. 26: 1-7.
- 20. T. Jeremiah and the Babylonian Crisis. Jer. 26: 8-16.
- 21. W. False and True Worship. Jer. 7: 1-7.
- 22. T. Deceitfulness Avenged. Jer. 9: 1-9.
- 23. F. The Prophet's Anguish. Jer. 15: 5-10.
- 24. S. The Potter and the Clay. Jer. 18: 1-13.
- 25. S. Supplication and Confidence. Psalm 22: 1-8.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

We have learned the situation and importance of Gilgal, Shiloh, and Jerusalem, places mentioned in this lesson.

We shall learn something of Babylon later.

Anathoth was only two or three miles northeast from Jerusalem, and was a priestly city. (Josh. 21: 18.)

INTRODUCTION

I. Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim

We have given rather a cursory history of Judah to Hezekiah's reign.

He reigned twenty-nine years and was succeeded by his son, Manasseh, who reigned fifty-five years. Manasseh was succeeded by his son, Amon, who reigned two years, and was succeeded by Josiah.

Josiah, like Hezekiah, was a godly king, reformed Judah, restored the worship of God "as it is written," and reigned thirty-one years. He very foolishly formed an alliance with the king of Assyria, fought the king of Egypt at Megiddo and lost his life, which terminated suddenly his reformatory work.

Jehoahaz, Josiah's son, became king in his stead, but reigned only three months. Pharaoh-necoh deposed him, fined the land a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold, and made Eliakim, Jehoahaz's brother, king in his stead. Jehoahaz was placed in bonds and carried into Egypt, where he died. It is not stated why he was deposed.

Eliakim, whose name Pharaoh-necoh changed to "Jehoiakim," was older than Jehoahaz. It is not stated, either, why he was not made king by the people upon his father's death.

It was customary, it seems, when one in authority placed others in office, to change their names in order to show supremacy of power. Examples can be seen in Gen. 41: 45; 2 Kings 24: 17; Dan. 1: 6, 7.

Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years. "And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his fathers had done." (2 Kings 23: 31-37; 2 Chron. 36: 1-8.)

He was a cruel and oppressive tyrant. See the description of his character by Jeremiah (22: 13-19). He slew the prophet Uriah with the sword, and, it seems, would have slain Jeremiah also, had not Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, protected him. (Jer. 26: 20-24.)

II. Jeremiah and His Prophecies

Jeremiah prophesied during the reign of this wicked and blasphemous Jehoiakim.

"The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin: to whom the word of Jehovah came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month." (Jer. 1: 1-3.) Hilkiah, Jeremiah's father, is thought to be a different man from the high priest of that name so prominent in Josiah's time.

Jeremiah began to prophesy while young (Jer. 1: 6), and continued from the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign until a short while after the downfall of Jerusalem—a period of more than forty years—and was carried into Egypt, where it is thought he was martyred.

In studying the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin or Jeconiah (Coniah in Jer. 22: 24), and Zedekiah, one should study

the book of Jeremiah, as one should study the book of Isaiah in studying the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

Jeremiah prophesied the downfall of Jerusalem and the nation because of sin, and then advised the people to submit to the Babylonians as chastisement from the Lord.

Great and grievous were the sins of the people—rebellion against God, rejection of his word, dishonesty, oppression of the poor, covetousness, murder, adultery, falsehood, treachery, deceit, idolatry and all its abominable practices, etc. Jeremiah's prophecies and his advice to submit to the Babylonian captivity as chastisement greatly displeased the people, as well as the king; and Jeremiah was shut up, and at times placed in the dungeon—a horrible pit. His life was a martyr's life.

Chapter 25, this lesson, and chapter 27: 1-11 are samples of Jeremiah's warning and advice in Jehoiakim's reign.

Jeremiah taught much by object lessons—the girdle hidden in the cleft of the rock by the Euphrates (13: 1-11), jars of wine (13: 12-14), the potter's vessel (18: 1-12), the bottle broken in the valley of Hinnom (19), good and bad figs (24), bonds and bars (27: 1-15), the Rechabites (35), buying land and recording the deed. (32: 6-35.)

Jeremiah has been called "the weeping prophet." We cannot read his prophecies and not be impressed with his tears and lamentations over the sins of the people and his earnest prayers to God.

While one weeps now over the worldliness of many congregations and the sad failure of not a few preachers to preach the Word of God and warn the people, it seems that the majority of preachers and other church members rejoice in their evil course, as did the prophets and priests and people in Jeremiah's day.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Jeremiah Arrested

8. Read verses 1-7. The facts recorded in this lesson occurred "in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim." God sent Jeremiah to "stand in the court of Jehovah's house" and teach all who came from all the cities of Judah to worship. This was a public place, and many people could be reached in this way. (See Jer. 7: 2; 19: 14; 2 Chron. 24: 20, 21; Luke 19: 47, 48.) Jeremiah was not to "diminish" a "word" of all Jehovah had commanded him. That which he said was very unpleasant for the people to hear, but he must say it. If the people would hearken unto him and turn from their evil ways, then God would stop the evil which was coming upon them. But if they would not hearken to God, to walk in the law he had set before them, to his words which he had spoken through his prophets, then he would destroy the temple of Solomon, as he had destroyed Shilo, and would make Jerusalem "a curse to all the nations of the earth." "The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of Jehovah."

Jeremiah 7 is similar to this lesson.

When Jeremiah had spoken all that Jehovah had commanded him to speak at this time, the priests, prophets, and people arrested him and said to him: "Thou shalt surely die." Their intention was to have him killed.

Jeremiah's courage, faithfulness, and whole character are ad-

mirable. He never flinched and never ceased his warnings until he had declared the whole words of God. He reminds us of Paul. Paul at no time shrank from declaring "the whole counsel of God," at no time kept back anything that was profitable to the church, but "admonished every one night and day with tears," and at no time held his "life of any account as dear unto" himself. (See Acts 20: 18-38.) His one purpose, as was the purpose of Jeremiah, was to save the people.

Why did the priests, prophets, and people threaten Jeremiah's life and seek to kill him, when he, too, was a prophet and sought the salvation of the people? Did not all other prophets and did not the priests—the spiritual guides of the people—seek the same? As we are told now, were they not all "seeking the same end and going to the same place?" The following declarations and many similar ones in the book of Jeremiah show why this was done.

"A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means ('at their hands'—margin); and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5: 30, 31.)

"I sent not these prophets, yet they ran: I spake not unto them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, then had they caused my people to hear my words, and had turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." (Jer. 23: 21, 22.)

"For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth. . . . And their course is evil, and their might is not right; for both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith Jehovah." (Jer. 23: 10, 11.)

"And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied by Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.

"In the prophets of Jerusalem also I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies; and they strengthen the hand of evil doers, so that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them become unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah." (Jer. 23: 13, 14.)

"Behold ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods that ye have not known, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations?

"Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, saith Jehovah." (Jer. 7: 8-11.)

Because Jeremiah had the faith and courage to solemnly warn the false prophets and priests against their sins they sought to kill him. And human nature and worldly wisdom and ways are the same today.

The New Testament abounds in solemn warnings against false prophets (Matt. 7: 15; Rom. 16: 17, 18; 2 Cor. 11: 13-15; Tit. 1: 10, 11). but these warnings seem of little importance to most people and are but little heeded. "Beware of false prophets." False prophets always come in sheep's clothing and with smooth and fair speech. The priests and scribes were the leaders in persecuting and crucifying Jesus and in persecuting the church afterwards.

It is a lamentable fact that much of strife, bitterness, and unholy division in the church today is produced and fed by preachers. If they would all speak the same thing, be perfected together in the same mind and judgment, follow the law of love, and each count others better than himself, strife and bitterness and un-Christian divisions would disappear as dew before the sun and peace would flow as a river through the church. Preachers sometimes lead in circulating evil and slanderous reports and in persecuting others as the prophets and priests did in persecuting Jeremiah.

II. Jeremiah Tried

9. Having been arrested, Jeremiah was tried "in the house of Jehovah," and all the people were gathered there for that purpose. He was asked why he had prophesied in the name of Jehovah, saying: "This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant."

For some time after the Israelites had crossed over the Jordan into the land God had promised them, their camp and the tabernacle were at Gilgal (Josh. 4: 2, 8, 20; 5: 9, 10; 10: 43); then they removed to Shiloh and "set up the tent of meeting there" (Josh. 18: 1). It remained there for about one hundred and thirty years (Josh. 18: 31; 21: 19; 1 Sam. 1: 3)—until the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant and Eli's house was destroyed. (1 Sam. 4: 10-22.)

God destroyed Shiloh because of the sins of the priests and the people, and he would destroy Jerusalem, where his temple was, and make all a desolation.

10. The princes, having heard of the arrest of Jeremiah and the assembly of the people, went "up from the king's house" and took charge of and conducted the trial. The princes were the king's cabinet, or counselors. The good king, Hezekiah, had his princes, and he and they took counsel together. (2 Chron. 30: 2.)

11. The priests and prophets accused Jeremiah to the princes and all the people, saying: "This man is worthy of death; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears."

12. Jeremiah "was his own lawyer" as we say, and defended himself. To the princes and the people he replied to the accusation of the priests and prophets as follows: "Jehovah sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard." He did not deny the charge, but said God had sent him, and all that he had said was the word of God. This he could not change; and let the consequences be what they may, he could but speak the word of God.

13. Jeremiah continued by saying that the only way to escape destruction was neither by his retracting nor by their killing him, but by the repentance of priests, prophets, and people. "Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Jehovah your God; and Jehovah will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you."

Let us note that Jeremiah was not abusive and bitter, but courageous, unflinching, and true. Pity it is there are not more Jeremiahs today.

14-15. Continuing, Jeremiah said he was in their hands, and they could do as seemed good to them; but if they killed him, they would

bring innocent blood upon themselves, upon the city, and upon its inhabitants, because God had sent him to speak all he had said.

In the same dignity and calmness all real lovers of the truth and faithful servants of God meet persecution now. They never shun through fear of personal loss or punishment to speak bravely at all times the words of God.

Killing the speaker does not kill the truth he speaks; yet in this way, in different ages, many have sought to destroy the truth. Crucifying Jesus did not destroy, but established, the truth.

III. Jeremiah Acquitted

16. The princes, having heard the charge against Jeremiah and his defense, decided that he was innocent, and hence not worthy of death. The reason they gave was a wise and just one: "For he hath spoken to us in the name of Jehovah." No one should be killed for speaking the word of God.

Let us study verses 17-19. Certain elders then arose and addressed the assembly, citing the case of the prophet Micah and Hezekiah's treatment of him when he prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem. He said: "Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest."

But instead of putting Micah to death, Hezekiah feared and entreated the favor of Jehovah, and Jehovah withheld the punishment. The conclusion was that to kill Jeremiah would be to commit great evil against their own souls.

The remaining verses of the chapter—20-24—show the difference between the conduct and end of the prophet Uriah and the conduct and end of Jeremiah. Uriah also prophesied against Jerusalem and the land of Judah; but when the king sought to put him to death, he feared and fled into Egypt, whence he was brought back and killed. Jeremiah stood his ground and was spared. Jeremiah said they could kill him, but that would not destroy the truth or change the purpose of God.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time, place, and persons.
How did Josiah die?
Who succeeded him?
How long did Jehoahaz reign?
Who deposed him?
How much was the land fined?
What became of Jehoahaz?
Who succeeded him?
How old was Jehoiakim when he began to reign, and how long did he reign?
What was his character?
Who was Jeremiah's father?
Where was he brought up?
When did he begin to prophecy, and how long did he continue?
On what account did he prophecy the downfall of the nation?
Name these sins.
By what object lessons did Jeremiah teach?

Why has he been called "the weeping prophet?"
8 When did the facts recorded in this lesson occur?
Where did God send Jeremiah to teach?
Why?
What was he not to do to the word of God?
How must we treat the word of God?
Upon what condition would God stop the punishment?
What would he do unless they should repent?
Who heard Jeremiah?
What did the priests, prophets, and people do to Jeremiah?
With what did they threaten him?
In what was he like Paul?
Why did other prophets and the priests seek to kill Jeremiah?
Name the different sins of the

- prophets, priests, and people.
 Against whom does the New Testament warn all?
 How can strife and division be stopped?
 9 Where was Jeremiah tried?
 What question was he asked?
 Where was Shiloh?
 Where did Israel first camp after crossing the Jordan?
 To what place did they remove?
 How long was the tabernacle there?
 Why was Shiloh destroyed?
 10 Who conducted the trial?
 Who were the princes?
 11 What accusation was brought against Jeremiah?
- By whom was it brought?
 12 Who pleaded Jeremiah's cause?
 What answer did he make?
 13 What was the only way to escape destruction?
 14, 15 What would still be true should they kill Jeremiah?
 Why did he speak all they had heard?
 16 What decision did the princes render?
 What reason did they give for this?
 17, 18 What did certain elders say?
 19 What example was furnished?
 Why was Uriah killed and Jeremiah spared?

"We sat down and wept by the waters
 Of Babel, and thought of the day
 When our foe, in the hue of his slaughters!
 Made Salem's high places his prey;
 And ye, O her desolate daughters!
 Were scatter'd all weeping away.

"While sadly we gazed on the river
 Which roll'd on in freedom below,
 They demanded the song, but, oh, never
 That triumph the stranger shall know;
 May this right hand be wither'd forever,
 Ere it string our harp high for the foe.

"On the willow the harp is suspended
 O Salem! its sound should be free;
 And the hour when thy glories were ended
 But left me that token of thee;
 And ne'er shall its soft tones be blended
 With the voice of the spoiler by me."

—Byron.

LESSON IX—JUNE 1

THE BABYLONIAN EXILE

Read: 2 Kings, Chapters 21-25; 2 Chron., Chapter 36. *Lesson*

Text: 2 Chron. 36: 11-21.

2 CHRONICLES 36. 11 Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem:

12 and he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah his God; he humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of Jehovah.

13 And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart against turning unto Jehovah, the God of Israel.

14 Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of Jehovah which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.

15 And Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place:

16 but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

17 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or virgin, old man or hoary-headed: he gave them all unto his hand.

18 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of Jehovah, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon.

19 And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

21 to fulfil the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths: for as long as it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

Golden Text—

Righteousness exalteth a nation;

But sin is a reproach to any people. (Prov. 14: 34.)

*Time—*B. C. 588.

*Place—*Jerusalem and Babylon.

*Persons—*The Jews and Babylonians.

*Devotional Reading—*Psalm 80: 1-7.

Home Reading—

May 26. M. The Book of the Law Discovered. 2 Kings 22: 8-13.

27. T. A National Reformation. 2 Kings 23: 1-6.

28. W. Repentance Too Late. 2 Kings 23: 21-27.

29. T. The Final Rebellion. 2 Chron. 36: 11-16.

30. F. The Doom Descends. 2 Chron. 36: 17-21.

31. S. The Sorrows of the Exiles. Psalm 137.

June 1. S. A Prayer for Salvation. Psalm 80: 1-7.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Babylon, Its Beauty and Downfall

This lesson begins with one great city, Jerusalem, and ends with another, Babylon.

Jerusalem was the center of the light and worship of Jehovah, and from which the gospel was to be preached unto all the nations of earth.

Babylon was the center of beauty and wickedness of the whole world. It was about eight hundred miles almost east from Jerusalem.

Any history of Babylon makes the beauty, greatness, and grandeur of that city most apparent. The Bible speaks of its magnificence and glory. It was at the time of our lesson, in commerce, wealth, and learning, the greatest city of the world.

It is said to have been about fourteen miles square. Surrounded by two walls, the outer of which, according to the most authentic estimates, was nearly eighty-five feet thick and about three hundred and fifty feet high, strengthened with two hundred and fifty towers, and entered by one hundred gates of brass with brazen lintels and side posts. It was the strongest fortress in the world. The Bible speaks of "the broad walls of Babylon" and "her high gates." (Jer. 51: 58; see also 51: 53.)

We are familiar with the fact that the city was built on both sides of the Euphrates and connected by a great bridge, and that Cyrus entered it by the channel of the river, having turned the water out of its course. The Bible foretold the sudden capture of the city by the Medes and Persians (see Isa. 21: 1-9; Jer. 51: 27-32); also the downfall and utter destruction of the city and empire were minutely foretold.

"And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."

"It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall shepherds make their flocks to lie down there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there, and wild goats shall dance there."

"And wolves shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." (Isa. 13: 19-22; read the entire chapter; see also Jer. 50, 51.)

This is literally true today. The walls of Babylon have fallen, the drought is upon her, her land is a wilderness, her cities are a desolation, wild beasts inhabit the place, the natives regard it as haunted, the wandering Arab will not pitch his tent there, and there the shepherd will not fold his flock.

HINTS AND HELPS FOR TEACHERS

"Be Sure Your Sins Will Find You Out"

This lesson brings us to the consummation of the repeated sins of the kingdom of Judah.

2 Kings 17: 7-26 gives an account of the destruction of the king-

dom of Israel and the captivity of the ten tribes about one hundred and thirty-five years before this.

The destruction of the kingdom of Judah had long since been foretold, and the people had God's warnings against sin and rebellion and the results to which they would lead. The good and loyal kings had stayed at times this destruction by temporary reformatations; but during the reigns of the wicked kings the people had relapsed until now it was inevitable.

God sent numerous prophets to warn and to teach the people, but they gave no heed. Jeremiah, we have seen, labored faithfully until old age, and was then cast into the dungeon to be starved to death because he spoke the truth, and where it seems he would have died, but for the intercession of an Ethiopian. (Jer. 38: 7-13.)

We are astonished that the people then did not heed God's solemn warnings and serve him; it is a still greater astonishment that people now, with all this before them, do not believe his warnings against sin and repent and obey him. We have recorded by inspiration all that befell the kingdoms of Israel and Judah because of sin for our instruction and warning; and, besides this, we have all that the New Testament contains. Like the Jews, people are sinning and persisting in rebellion against God in the face of all truth.

That fearful "destruction from the face of the Lord and the glory of his might" (2 Thess. 1: 7-10) of which the New Testament gives solemn and repeated warnings will as surely come as destruction came upon the Jews.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Zedekiah

11. Zedekiah was the son of the good king, Josiah. His original name was "Mattaniah;" he was made king by Nebuchadnezzar, who changed his name to "Zedekiah." He began to reign at the age of twenty-one years and reigned eleven years.

12. "He did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah his God." He followed the example of his brother, Jehoiakim, and other wicked kings, and not the good example of Josiah. He was weak, vacillating, and sinful. "He humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of Jehovah." Jeremiah was God's mouth-piece, and spoke the word of God. Peter (2 Pet. 1: 21) says: "Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Jeremiah warned Zedekiah from God against rebelling and fighting against the king of Babylon; but, while at times he consulted Jeremiah and seemed disposed to listen to him, he departed from his counsel.

For this and the continued sins of the Jews God brought the Babylonians against Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah to destroy them.

In this sense Nebuchadnezzar is called God's servant and battle-ax, although a wicked and heathen king. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians made war upon the Jews with wicked intent to plunder and destroy; but in God's overruling power he led them and used them to chastise his people. When this purpose was served, he then destroyed Babylon for its wickedness. See the terrible punishment

pronounced against Babylon in Jer. 50, 51. Be sure to read these chapters.

This demonstrates how God overrules a wicked nation to chastise and punish others, and yet the wicked nation so used is not approved of God.

13. Zedekiah "also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who made him swear by God." In the fourth year of his reign Zedekiah took an oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 51: 59; Ezek. 17: 11-21), but he broke this oath and sent ambassadors to Egypt to obtain help in his rebellion against Babylon. This led to the siege of Jerusalem. It was a sin to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar, because Zedekiah in doing so broke his oath and also disobeyed God. He further sinned in hardening "his heart against turning unto Jehovah the God of Israel." Had he turned to God, he would have stayed the destruction of the kingdom.

II. Instead of Being Examples, Priests and Prophets Led in Being Sinners

14. "Moreover," in addition to the sins of the king, "the chiefs of the priests, and the people, trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of Jehovah which he had hallowed in Jerusalem."

The "chiefs of the priests" were the heads of the twenty-four courses of the priests. (1 Chron. 24: 1-19.) While the priests should have led the people in the true service of God, they led in all this wickedness.

Christ is "the Light of the World," and the Great Exemplar. He teaches all to follow him. Paul is an example in all holy living and godliness as well as in preaching the gospel, teaching "the whole counsel of God," and in preaching and teaching nothing else. In all this God, through Paul, commanded Timothy and Titus to be examples. In like manner God commands all preachers, elders, and other teachers to first practice the truth and then teach it—TO BE EXAMPLES. Also, all Christians are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world," and are commanded by the Lord to set good examples. That the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3: 15) means more than that the church must give money to support preachers of the gospel at home and abroad; it means that all Christians—the house of God—the church—must maintain the truth by practicing it in their daily lives—by keeping "unspotted from the world," by growing "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," by escaping from the corruption that is in the world through lust, and by "becoming partakers of the divine nature." Christians follow Jesus in having his mind and spirit and in being God-like in character, not otherwise.

It is a sad fact that in all departures from the truth and innovations upon the worship of God and work of the church preachers and teachers have led the people. As a rule, they are leaders in strife, contentions, factions, and divisions.

"My people have been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray." (Jer. 50: 6.)

"The abominations of nations" were the worship of all sorts of

idols. The abominations are mentioned in Jer. 7: 8-11; 23: 9-15; Ezek. 8: 1-18; which be sure to read.

Christians are God's temple to-day. "If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye." (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; 6: 19, 20.) A Christian then can indulge in no intemperance or lustful practices which will in any way weaken and destroy the body or the mind.

III. God's Compassion in Warning the People

15. "And Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers." These messengers were God's prophets. Jeremiah (25: 3) says: "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, the king of Judah, even unto this day, these three and twenty years, the word of Jehovah hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising up early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened." He also adds that God had thus sent all his prophets. (Jer. 25: 4-11; 7: 13-15.) "Rising up early and sending them" is an expression showing God's zeal in persuading the people to repent.

This was done "because he had compassion on the people, and on his dwelling place." God knew to what fearful destruction their sins were hastening them, and in compassion and mercy he continually warned and persuaded them, if by any means he could save them.

IV. God's Message Mocked

16. "But they mocked the messengers of God." They killed Uriah and beat, imprisoned, and sought to kill Jeremiah. (Jer. 26: 20-24.) In Hezekiah's effort to reform the ten tribes, as well as Judah and Benjamin, they laughed his messengers to scorn, and mocked them. (2 Chron. 30: 10.) "And despised his words." In forbearance and mercy God sought the peace and good of the people, but they refused to obey his words. To refuse to obey God now is to despise his words. (See Prov. 1: 24-32.) Instead of heeding God's words delivered through his prophets, the people "scoffed at his prophets."

Many despise and scoff at the word of God to-day. All who do not repent and obey God to-day despise "the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering." On the contrary, just as the Jews did, after their "hardness and impenitent" hearts they treasure up for themselves "wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

V. People May Sin Until There is No Remedy

"Until the wrath of Jehovah rose against his people, till there was no remedy." Ezra (5: 12) says: "But after ['because'—margin] that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into captivity." God is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth; keeping loving-kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and . . . will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation." (Ex. 34: 6, 7.)

In the case of the downfall of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem, we have seen how the sins of Manasseh were visited upon his children's children (2 Kings 24: 3, 4); and yet it was because his children and grandchildren walked in his ways and would not repent and obey God. A disease passes the crisis and becomes incurable; so with the sins of Judah.

17. "Therefore"—because they had sinned beyond remedy; because the forbearance, mercy, and abundant goodness of God had failed upon them—"he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans."

VI. God Overrules Wicked Kings and Nations to Serve Him

By reading Jeremiah, chapters 50, 51, and others, we learn that Nebuchadnezzar was called God's servant and "battle-ax and weapons of war," with which he broke into pieces nations and destroyed kingdoms; and yet Nebuchadnezzar did not intend this as service to God, but was a wicked and heathen king. In his overruling power God did all this. In the ordinary record of human events it is said that Nebuchadnezzar did it. (See Dan. 4.)

This question should be studied until all "know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth over it the lowest of men;" "that the heavens do rule;" that "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing" in God's sight; that "he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth;" that "none can stay his hand," or say unto him, "What doest thou?" (Dan. 4: 17, 25, 26, 32, 35, 37); and that "he changeth the times and the seasons," and "removeth kings, and setteth up kings." (Dan. 2: 21.)

Paul declared at Athens God gives "to all life, and breath, and all things;" that "he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitations." (Acts 17: 25, 26.)

Jesus, "the faithful witness, the first born from the dead," is "the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1: 5), and "the King of kings, and Lord of lords." (1 Tim. 6: 15.)

"By me kings reign,
And princes decree justice,
By me princes rule,
And nobles, even all the judges of the earth." (Prov. 8: 15, 16.)

Jeremiah 18: 1-12 declares that nations in God's hands are as clay in the potter's hand. According to the clay the potter makes a vessel of honor or of dishonor. According to the nation—its wickedness or its righteousness—God uses it to serve his purpose. So he used the Jews and the Chaldeans; so he used Judas and Peter; so he uses Jesus and Satan; and so he uses nations and individuals now.

VII. The Punishment

Nebuchadnezzar went up against Jerusalem in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, when this captivity began. (Jer. 25: 1; Dan. 1: 1, 2; 2 Kings 24: 1.) Jehoiakim was put in chains for the purpose of carrying him to Babylon; but, it seems, Nebuchadnezzar changed his purpose and retained Jehoiakim as king. (2 Chron. 36: 5, 6.) We have seen how Jehoiakim was reduced to submission and how he died.

Nebuchadnezzar went against Jerusalem again in the reign of Jehoiachin, when the second captivity took place. (2 Kings 24: 8-16; Ezek. 1: 1-3.)

The siege of this lesson began on the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah and continued until the ninth day of the fourth month of the eleventh year of his reign—eighteen months. (Jer. 52: 4-6.) During this time there was a short cessation when the Chaldeans went to fight back the Egyptians. (Jer. 37: 11.)

The inhabitants of Jerusalem were reduced to the greatest suffering and sorest famine. The book of Lamentations describes the horrible famine and great desolation of this siege. (See Lam. 2: 11, 12, 20, 21; 4: 6-10.)

Jeremiah advised long before this submission to the Chaldeans in order to avoid all this suffering, but for his wise counsel he was persecuted. When God's people were obedient to him, he advised them not to submit to heathen nations, and always gave them the victory over their enemies; but now the greatest mercy he could show was to advise submission.

At the time mentioned above the complete downfall of the nation and destruction of the city came. It seems from Jer. 33: 4 that houses within Jerusalem were torn down to strengthen the walls weakened by the enemy's battering rams, but to no avail. A breach was finally made in the wall; and when this was done, Zedekiah and the men of war fled by night, and were overtaken in the plains of Jericho. Zedekiah's sons were slain before his eyes, and all the nobles of Judah were slain. (Jer. 39: 1-10.) In Jerusalem young men were slain "with the sword in the house of their sanctuary," where they had gone for refuge; and no compassion was shown to "young man or virgin, old man or hoary-headed." The eyes of the king were put out, and he was carried in fetters to Babylon, where he remained in prison until he died. (Jer. 52: 11.)

18. The temple was again robbed, and everything that was left after the former spoiling (2 Chron. 36: 10) was carried to Babylon. A description of these things is given in Jer. 52: 17-23. The king's house and the houses of his princes were also robbed of all their treasures.

19. The temple and all the palaces of the city were burned, all goodly vessels not removed to Babylon were destroyed, and the walls of the city were broken down. All this came to pass as Jeremiah had foretold and forewarned. (Jer. 7: 12-15; 21: 8-14; 34: 1-5; etc.)

20. All that escaped from the sword, except the poorest of the people, who were left as vinedressers and husbandmen, were carried into captivity. A great number of the best people were carried away before this with Jehoiachin. (See Jer. 52: 28-30.)

21. "To fulfill the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah." Jeremiah had foretold the seventy years of captivity. (Jer. 25: 11; 29: 10.) "Until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths." God ordained that the land should rest every seventh year—keep a Sabbath (Lev. 25: 1-7); and in Lev. 26: 27-35 God warned the people that if they did not obey him in allowing the land to rest every seventh year, he would scatter them among their enemies until the land should keep its Sabbaths. This is now fulfilled.

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time, place, and persons.
Of what was Jerusalem the center?
Of what was Babylon the center?
Give the situation, size, walls, towers, gates, beauty, and destruction of Babylon.
How long had the ten tribes been in captivity at the time of our lesson?
Who had at times stayed the destruction of Jerusalem?
At what are we astonished?
Against what destruction are we solemnly warned?
- 11 Who was Zedekiah, and how long did he reign?
12 What was Zedekiah's character?
How did God speak through the prophets?
Why did God bring the Babylonians against Jerusalem?
In what sense was Nebuchadnezzar God's servant and battle-ax?
What use does God make of wicked nations?
- 13 What other sins did Zedekiah commit?
What led to the siege of Jerusalem?
14 Who else sinned?
Who were the chief priests?
What sins were committed?
What is Christ to the world?
In this respect what were Paul, Timothy, Titus, and all Christians?
Instead of teaching and practicing the truth into what do some preachers lead people?
Who have been first in all apostasies?
What is God's temple now?
- 15 How did God warn the people against sin?
How did God show his zeal in this?
- How did he show his compassion?
16 How did the people treat God's prophets?
Who despises God's goodness now?
Why was there no remedy for their sins?
Repeat Ex. 34: 6, 7.
In what way does God visit the iniquity of the fathers upon their children?
- 17 Why did God deliver the Jews unto the Chaldeans?
What was Nebuchadnezzar in God's hands?
Who rules and uses all nations of earth?
Give the different passages cited in this lesson which prove that. For what purpose does God use wicked nations?
Relate, in order, the attacks of the Chaldeans upon Jerusalem and the captivity of the people.
Why did God advise submission to the Chaldeans?
How did the Jews fortify the weak places of the walls?
How did the Chaldeans finally enter the city?
What did the king and men of war do?
What was done with the king?
What was done with his sons and nobles?
What was done with the people of the city?
- 18 What befell the temple and its vessels?
19 What was done with all the palaces of the city?
20 Who were left in the land?
What became of the rest?
21 What did this destruction fulfill?
Why did the land rest seventy years?

"Seldom can the heart be lonely
If it seek a lonlier still—
Self-forgetting, seeking only
Emptier cups of love to fill."

LESSON X—JUNE 8

EZEKIEL ENCOURAGES THE EXILES

Read: Ps. 137: 1-6; Ezekiel 34. *Lesson Text:* Ezek. 34: 11-16, 25, 26.

EZEKIEL 34. 11 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out.

12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

13 And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

14 I will feed them with good pasture; and upon the mountains of the height of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie down in a good fold; and on fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord Jehovah.

16 I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but the fat and the strong I will destroy; I will feed them in justice.

25 And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell securely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

26 And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in its season; there shall be showers of blessing.

Golden Text—I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but the fat and the strong I will destroy; I will feed them in justice. (Ezekiel 34: 16.)

(The whole of the verse containing the Golden Text should be committed well to memory. It shows both the mercy and justice of God. Comments are made upon it in the body of the lesson.)

Time—About B.C. 587.

Place—The land of the Chaldeans.

Persons—Ezekiel and the Jews.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 23.

Home Reading—

- June 2. M. False Shepherds. Ezek. 34: 1-6.
- 3. T. The Flock of God. Ezek. 34: 11-16.
- 4. W. Showers of Blessing. Ezek. 34: 23-31.
- 5. T. The Watchman of Israel. Ezek. 33: 7-16.
- 6. F. Gracious Blessings Promised. Ezek. 36: 22-28.
- 7. S. A Sign to the Nations. Ezek. 39: 25-29.
- 8. S. The Good Shepherd. John 10: 11-16.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Tel-abib was an unknown place on the river Chebar.

Chebar was a river of Babylonia, which flowing from the east, emptied into the Euphrates about two hundred miles north of Baby-

lon. Some say this river was in the vicinity of Babylon.

Chaldea was the district of Babylonia, the low part of Mesopotamia.

INTRODUCTION

I. Some Facts of History

This lesson is in the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel was taken captive with Jehoiachin and others eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem. These captives were settled at Tel-abib, on the river Chebar in Babylonia.

Ezekiel was the son of Buzi, and belonged to the priestly family. (Ezek. 1: 1-3; 2 Kings 24: 8-16; 2 Chron. 36: 9, 10.) He began to prophesy before the destruction of Jerusalem in the fifth month of the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, and "in the thirtieth year," either of his age or of "the new era of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, who began to reign B. C. 625." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

The Jews in captivity with Ezekiel were yet rebellious and idolatrous (Ezek. 2: 3; 20: 33-39), and hearkened unto false prophets (Ezek. 13: 1-19). Jeremiah exhorted them to hearken not to false prophets, but to seek the peace of the city where they were held as captives, for in the peace of their conquerors would they have peace; and to take wives, rear children, build houses, and till the ground until the expiration of seventy years. (Jer. 29: 1-32.)

We should see clearly from this two things:

(1) Christians today should pray, as God commands them to do, for kings and all other civil rulers that they may "lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity" (1 Tim. 2: 1-4); yet, they can do this and take no part in the management of these governments and in their strife, bitterness, devastations, and wars.

(2) Christians must work as well as pray: since they pray for "a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity," they must work for what they pray by obeying God in *studying* [making it their ambition—margin] "to be quiet," to attend to their "own business," to have some useful work, and to "walk becomingly toward them that are without." (1 Thess. 4: 11.) They work for the "tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity" by being themselves quiet, grave, and godly; by being at peace among themselves, (1 Thess. 5: 13), by being at peace with all men in so far as their conduct is concerned (Rom. 12: 18), by following peace with all men (Heb. 12: 14), by seeking and pursuing peace (1 Pet. 3: 10-12), by being peace-makers (Matt. 5: 9), by resisting not him that is evil, by loving their enemies, by doing good for evil, etc. They work for the salvation of civil rulers by teaching them the word of God as Jesus tried to teach Pilate (John 18: 36-38; 19: 10-13); as Peter did teach Cornelius (Acts 11: 13); and as Paul attempted to teach Felix, Festus, king Agrippa and others. (Acts 22: 22-25 and the whole chapter; 25: 6 to 26: 32.) Paul preached the gospel to the soldiers to whom he was chained and it became manifest throughout the whole Praetorian guard that he was in bonds for Christ (Phil. 1: 13), and some of Caesar's household became saints. (Phil. 4: 22.) To encourage both professed Christians and civil rulers and their soldiers and citizens in strife and political bitterness, greed of gain and thirst for power, devastation and

bloodshed, and in making cripples and widows and orphans is as opposite to what Christians are commanded to pray and work for as heaven is to hell.

Paul requested the Thessalonians to pray that he "may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all men have not faith." (1 Thess. 3: 1, 2.) God then can overrule "unreasonable and evil" men and men without faith so as to accomplish his purpose.

In 1 Thess. 4: 11 those who "are without" are all who are not Christians. Christians are commanded to "walk becomingly toward them"—to live so as to command their respect and to demonstrate to them the beauty of holiness and the power of godliness. There is a difference between the two classes—Christians and those who "are without," a difference between the church and the world, between "the prince of this world" (John 12: 31; 14: 30; 16: 11; 2 Cor. 4: 4; Eph. 2: 2) and "the prince of peace;" between the spirit of the rulers of this world and the spirit of Christ, and between the laws of the governments of this world and the laws of Christ's kingdom.

When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem, he made Gedaliah ruler over the poor people left in the land (2 Kings 25: 23; Jer. 50: 5), with his seat of government at Mizpah. Ishmael slew Gedaliah. (Jer. 44: 1-10.) Johanan rescued the Jews whom Ishmael had compelled to follow him, and, through fear of the Chaldeans, persuaded them against the wise counsel of Jeremiah to go into Egypt. (Jer. 41: 11-18.) These Jews who fled to Egypt against the counsel of God for safety from Nebuchadnezzar were slain by him there. (Jer. 42.)

During this time Ezekiel was prophesying and encouraging the Jews in captivity. The last date he mentioned is the twenty-seventh year of the captivity (Ezek. 29: 17); so he prophesied for at least twenty-two years.

During a part of this period at least Daniel also was a famous prophet. (Ezek. 14: 14; 28: 3.)

II. Ezekiel's Call and Commission—The Vision of the Living Creatures

Chapters 1 and 2 give a description of "the living creatures," "the wheels beside them," the quick and gliding motion of the living creatures and the wheels, the "stormy wind out of the north," the "great cloud," the "brightness round about" the cloud, the "fire flashing continually," "the likeness of a firmament," "the likeness of a throne" above the firmament, the one upon the throne, and the appearance of the bow. I cannot say what the "four living creatures," with their four different faces, each signify; or whether or not each face—that of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and of an eagle—represents some peculiar feature of divine power and wisdom. All together represent the overruling province, the wisdom, the power, and the glory of God. These wonderful appearances made a profound impression on Ezekiel, and he fell upon his face. God commanded him to stand upon his feet.

The Commission

In verses 1-6 of chapter 2 God spoke to Ezekiel, the Spirit entered into him, and he stood as God commanded, God setting him upon his feet. Then God gave him his commission "to the children of Israel."

They were "impudent and stiff-necked" and "rebellious;" and

whether they would hear or not hear, Ezekiel was to speak God's word unto them. He was not to flinch. God said to him: "But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that which I give thee." Ezekiel then ate the roll of the book which God gave him and commanded him to eat. It was full of lamentation, mourning, and woe. It was as sweet as honey, because it was joyous to receive the word of God and to be his messenger. But Ezekiel was moved at the rebellion of his people. In Rev. 10: 9, 10, when John ate the "little book," it, too, was as sweet as honey, but afterwards became bitter, doubtless, because of the condemnation of sinners which it contained.

God made Ezekiel's face as hard as adamant, that he might deliver this message.

We should all eat the word of God—digest and assimilate and feed upon it—that it may nourish and sustain the inner man.

All preachers, like Ezekiel, are commanded to "preach the word" regardless of consequences.

Ezekiel was sent "to them of the captivity." God said they would not hear because they were "of a hard forehead and of a stiff heart." Ezekiel's face was "hard against their faces" and his "forehead hard against their foreheads." He was not to be dismayed.

In verses 12-16 of chapter 3 Ezekiel says:

"Then the Spirit lifted me up and took me away." Ezekiel had been prepared and was ready to go. In what way he was transported by the Spirit to the place where he was to warn the captives I cannot say. Behind him he heard "the voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of Jehovah from his place," and "the noise of the wings of the living creatures as they touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them." This noise is described in chapter 2: 24, 25.

He went "in bitterness" and heat of spirit, the hand, or power of God, supporting and encouraging him, to the ones in captivity at Telabib on the river Chebar. There he sat "overwhelmed among them seven days."

He was overwhelmed with grief over the fearful condition of heart of the people and the punishment they had to endure.

During these seven days God gave to Ezekiel no immediate revelation. He may not have been yet prepared to receive and deliver it, either because of his bitterness of spirit or great grief for his people.

III. Ezekiel's Prophecies

Of Ezekiel as a prophet Smith's Bible dictionary says:

"His predictions are marvelously varied. He has instances of visions (as 8-11), symbolic actions (as 4-7), similitudes (as 12, 15), parables (as 17), proverbs (as 12: 22; 18: 1, 2), poems (as 19), allegories (as 23, 24), open prophecies (as 6, 7, 20, etc.)." His book has been divided into nine sections: "I. Ezekiel's call (1: 1 to 3-15). II. The general carrying out of the commission (3: 16 to 7: 27). III. The rejection of the people because of their idolatrous worship (8-11). IV. The sins of the age rebuked in detail (12-19). V. The nature of the judgment, and the guilt which caused it (20-23). VI. The meaning of the now commencing punishment (24). VII. God's judgment denounced on seven heathen nations (25-32). VIII. Proph-

ecies after the destruction of Jerusalem concerning the future condition of Israel (33-39). IX The glorious consummation (40-48)."

IV. False Teachers—Covetous Shepherds

(Three P's—Prophets, Priests, Preachers.)

The priests, Levites, and prophets of the Old Testament were the teachers of the Old Testament, and are the ones who are called the "shepherds."

The priests and Levites were to teach the people the law of God. (See Lev. 10: 11; 2 Chron. 15: 3; 2 Chron. 17: 7-9.) The priests stood between the people and God, representing them to God, offering sacrifices and making atonement for them. (Read Lev. 16, especially verses 32-34; Num. 15: 25, 27; Heb. 9: 6, 7.) The high priest made both "the gifts and sacrifices for sins." He must be a man who could "bear gently with the ignorant and erring." (Heb. 5: 1-3.) As a high priest Jesus represents the people to God, and is "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God," making "propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2: 17, 18), ever living "to make intercession for them." (Heb. 25.) How fearful the consequences, then, when the priests were wicked and rebellious against God!

Through the prophets God not only foretold future events, but taught his will to the people. They presented the word of God and in this way represented God to the people. A prophet was called "a man of God." In 1 Kings 12: 22 Shemaiah is called "the man of God" and in 2 Chron. 12: 5 he is called "the prophet." Moses, Elisha, and other prophets are so designated. (See Deut. 33: 1; Josh. 14: 6; 2 Kings 4: 7, 9; 5: 8.) Saul's servant said to him, "there is in this city a man of God." This was Samuel. (1 Kings 9: 6.) Isaiah called upon heaven and earth "to give ear" to what he had to say, "for Jehovah hath spoken." (Isa. 1: 2.) So God spoke through Moses. (See Ex. 20: 18-22; Deut. 5: 4, 5, 23-27.) Through Jesus as "that prophet" and his inspired apostles God has spoken to us and must be obeyed. (Matt. 7: 24-27; Acts 3: 22, 23; Heb. 1: 1, 2; 2: 1-4, especially verses 3, 4.)

How fearful the sin now of those who claim to be teachers and preachers of God's word in changing it, adding to it or taking from it, and making it a matter of gain to themselves! Preachers now, or since inspiration ceased, are not "men of God" in the sense of being inspired, and certainly they are not ambassadors of Christ. (2 Cor. 5: 18-21.) It is either ignorance or presumption which leads any to make such false claims. All are charged now most solemnly to preach and teach only that which has been revealed already and to add nothing to that or to take nothing from it. (Gal. 1: 8, 9; Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; Rev. 22: 18, 19.)

False and covetous and iniquitous priests and prophets were largely in the majority at times, and were responsible for the downfall of both kingdoms. This is clearly seen by reading Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. "Therefore my people are gone into captivity for lack of knowledge." (Isa. 5: 13; read also verse 14.) Many prophets "ran" whom God did not send. They taught falsehoods. "the deceit of their own hearts;" but if they had stood in God's counsel and had caused the people to hear his words, they would have "turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." (See Jer. 23: 21-40.)

Priests and prophets at times reeled in drunkenness, erred through strong drink (Isa. 28: 7), and taught for hire. (Jer. 6: 13; Mic. 3: 9-12.)

By reading the references given and many other similar passages it will be seen how very wicked the priests and prophets were at times and how their corruption led to the corruption and downfall of the people.

The first ten verses of the chapter from which this lesson is taken show not only the duty of shepherds to heal the sick, strengthen the weak, bind up the broken-hearted, bring back that which is driven away, seek that which is lost, and desire in every way the good of the flock, but also the wicked failure of priests and prophets to do this. They clothed themselves with the wool and feasted upon the fatlings. God's sheep became "scattered upon all the face of the earth," wandered upon the hills and through the mountains, and became food for wild beasts.

For these causes God was against the shepherds, and declared he would remove them and would deliver the sheep from their mouths.

To-day God's people err through lack of knowledge, and there are teachers who seek the fat and fleece and not the good of the flock. There is widespread complaint that not a few preachers are failing to "preach the word," to teach "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1: 3), and to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the Saints." (Jude 3.) Today "the Israel of God" are failing in the knowledge and practice of the truth, in righteousness and godliness, because of the shameful and woeful failure of many preachers to preach the gospel of God and for lack of scriptural shepherds to guard and protect and instruct the church.

We are told by both Christ and the apostles that there are many false prophets or teachers and are solemnly warned against them and are commanded to test them. (See Matt. 7: 15-20; 1 John 4: 1-6; 1 Thess. 5: 21.) Preachers and teachers never acknowledge that they themselves are false prophets.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. God's Care for His Sheep

11, 12. Jehovah is the true and great Shepherd of his sheep. We should read here Ps. 23.

This lesson reminds us of the parable of the sheepfold in John 10: 1-18, and Jesus' declaration that he is "the good shepherd."

Whereas the cruel, oppressive, covetous, and wicked shepherds had devoured the flock, neglected the afflicted and needy, brought on the captivity, and scattered the sheep in many places, God would search for them, seek them out, and "deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day"—days of distress, persecution, and captivity.

13, 14. After seeking his sheep that had been scattered, God promised—(1) to take them out from the peoples among whom they were captives, gather them from these countries, and bring them into their own land; (2) to "feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the water courses, and in all the inhabited places of the country;" (3) and to fold them—to feed them with fat and good pastures and cause them to "lie down in a good fold."

15. God himself would shepherd them.

16. Contrast verse 4 with this verse. God would "seek that which was lost," "bring back that which was driven away," "bind up that which was broken," "strengthen that which was sick;" but the ones who had grown fat and become strong by preying upon the others he would destroy.

The covetous and wicked prophets and priests, who had oppressed and fleeced the flock, had fattened and become strong—God declared he would deal "in justice" with them and with the ones they had oppressed and driven away. He said he would deliver the captives of the mighty and feed the oppressors with their own flesh and cause them to drink their own blood. (See Isa. 49: 24-26.)

God in no wise clears the guilty, but shows mercy to the poor, the needy, and the oppressed. When his people had properly received the chastisement of the captivity, had repented, and were ready to fully set themselves apart from idol worship and other sins to his service, he promised to forgive and cleanse them and bring them in peace to their own land. (See Ezek. 28: 25, 26; especially Ezek. 36: 22-28.)

II. God is the Judge

17-22. God declares that he would judge between "sheep and sheep, the rams and the he-goats," "the fat sheep and the lean sheep"—between the ones who had grown fat by oppressing others, the ones who had preyed upon the helpless, the ones who had consumed all they could and had spoiled the rest so that others could not eat it, the ones who had pushed away from the food with their horns the weak and sickly ones and the ones thus treated, and would save his true and faithful flock from being a prey any further. He would judge between the true and the false ones, the hypocrites and the faithful ones.

III. One Shepherd

These promises of God in verses 23, 24 had a spiritual as well as a temporal and literal significance, as other promises had. For instance, Amos 9: 11 (which see) is such a promise. Amos prophesied long before Ezekiel, but embraced the reign of Christ in this prophecy. In Acts 15: 14-18 James quotes this prophecy and shows that its fulfillment is in Christ, as King, and in the salvation of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. Then building "again the tabernacle of David," building "again the ruins thereof," and setting it up, that the Gentiles may seek the Lord and be saved, means the establishment of Christ as King and the opening of his kingdom to the Gentiles. The kingdom of Christ and "the tabernacle of David" are the same and has been set up already.

Then Christ must be the "David" of our lesson and the "David" who was to come. Luke 1: 69 declares that in Jesus God has "raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." Read also Acts 13: 21-23. Acts 13: 34-39 declares that God's promise, "I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David," has been fulfilled in Jesus as the Christ. So does Acts 2: 29-35.

These verses of the lesson declare that God would set over his sheep "one shepherd," even his "servant David." We know that Christ is this "one shepherd;" therefore he is this "servant David."

Again, these verses state that Jehovah would be their God and his "servant David prince among them;" and we know Christ is this Prince—"the Prince of Peace." Read now Isa. 55: 3; Jer. 30: 9, 10; Ezek. 37: 24; Hos. 3: 4, 5.

25, 26. Under this "one shepherd" and God's "servant David," the flock would have "a covenant of peace." This covenant is an everlasting one. (Isa. 55: 3; Ezek. 16: 60.) Jesus is "the Prince of Peace," and at his birth the angels praised God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." (Luke 2: 14.) Every one in the Israel of God today is at peace with God and with all God's children, and follows peace with all men. (Heb. 12: 14.) As people become Christians, they beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks and learn war no more. (Isa. 2: 4; Micah 4: 1-4.) God blessed his people, returned from captivity, with peace and prosperity; the showers came in due season; the trees in the field yielded their fruit; the earth gave her increase; and they were secure in the land, no more to be a prey to the nations around them. God would give them "showers of blessing."

But more abundant would be the spiritual blessings God would bestow upon his people under the King, his "servant David," and the "one shepherd." Here, again, we are reminded of the declaration in John 10: 16, "And other sheep have I, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd."

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time, place, and persons.
Repeat the Memory Verse.
Where were these captives settled?
What was Chaldea?
Where was the River Chebar?
When was Ezekiel taken captive?
Who was Ezekiel, when and where, and how long did he prophecy?
In what condition of heart were the Jewish captives?
What did Jeremiah teach and exhort them to do?
For what in regard to rulers must Christians pray today? (Repeat 1 Tim. 2: 1-4.)
Can Christians pray thus without taking part in the strife, bitterness, wars, and management of these earthly governments?
For what must Christians work as well as pray?
Show how Jesus and Paul worked for this and how we must work.
Whom did Nebuchadnezzar make ruler when he destroyed Jerusalem?
What became of Gedaliah?
Who rescued the Jews from Ish-

mael?
What became of him and the ones who followed him?
Give the meaning of Ezekiel's visions related in Chapters 1 and 2 of his book.
To whom did God send him?
What alone was he to speak?
What was he commanded to eat?
Of what was it full?
How was Ezekiel prepared for such things?
Why would the Jews not hear Ezekiel?
Where was Ezekiel carried?
What did he hear behind him?
What overwhelmed him?
How long before he began to speak?
Give the varieties of Ezekiel's predictions.
Give the nine sections into which his book is divided.
Who were the shepherds spoken of in the Old Testament?
What was the character at times of the prophets and priests?
Give the relationship of priests to the people and God.
Give the relationship of prophets to the people and God.
What is meant by "man of God?"
Who mainly caused the downfall of both kingdoms?
What books most clearly show

- this?
 How could these prophets have saved the people?
 What do the first ten verses of this chapter show?
 How do God's people err now?
 What serious complaint is justly made against many preachers and elders of the church?
 Against whom is the church warned?
 How are preachers and teachers to be tested?
- 11, 12 What is God to his people?
 Of whom and what parable are we reminded?
 What in these verses would God do for his sheep?
- 13, 14 What do these verses state God would do for his sheep?
- 15 What does this verse state?
- 16 What would God do for the weak, sick, broken, etc.?
- How would he deal with all?
 What punishment would he visit upon the wicked shepherds?
 When would he lead his people back to their own land?
 What do the intervening verses declare?
- 23, 24 What are the promises of these verses?
 What did these promises embrace?
 How was Amos 9: 11 fulfilled?
 Who was the "David" of these verses?
 Who was the "one shepherd?"
- 25, 26 What covenant would God make with his people?
 What blessings did he promise?
 What peace do God's children have?
 How are these blessings more abundantly granted?

"Daily living seemeth weary
 To the one who never works;
 Duty always seemeth dreary
 To the one who duty shirks.
 Only after hardest striving
 Cometh sweet and perfect rest;
 Life is found to be worth living
 To the one who does his best."

"And ye shall succor men;
 'Tis nobleness to serve;
 Help them who cannot help again:
 Beware from right to swerve."

—Emerson.

III. The Restoration of Judah

The last five lessons embraced the history and downfall of Judah. The next two teach the return of Judah to Jerusalem and the restoration of the worship of God "as it is written."

LESSON XI—JUNE 15

THE RETURN AND THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

Read: Ezra, chapters 1 to 6. *Lesson Text:* Ezra 3: 8-13; 6: 14, 15.

EZRA 3. 8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem, and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old upward, to have the oversight of the work of the house of Jehovah.

9 Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to have the oversight of the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites.

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise Jehovah, after the order of David king of Israel.

11 And they sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto Jehovah, saying, For he is good, for his lovingkindness endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised Jehovah, because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid.

12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, the old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

13 so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

EZRA 6. 14 And the elders of the Jews builded and prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the decree of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

Golden Text—Comfort ye, Comfort ye my people, saith your God. (Isa. 40: 1.)

Time—B.C. 535 to 515—a period of twenty years.

Place—Jerusalem.

Persons—Zerubbabel, the governor; Joshua, the high priest; Haggai and Zechariah, prophets; Cyrus, Ahasuerus (Cambyses, Cyrus' son), Artaxerxes (a usurper), and Darius Hystaspes—Medo-Persian kings.

Devotional Reading—Psalm 100.

Home Reading—

- June 9. M. The Rebuilding of the Temple Commanded. Ezra 1: 1-11.
 10. T. Rebuilding Begun. Ezra 3: 8-13.
 11. W. The Work Hindered. Ezra 4: 1-6.
 12. T. The Work Stopped. Ezra 4: 17-24.
 13. F. Building Resumed. Ezra 6: 1-12.
 14. S. The Temple Dedicated. Ezra 6: 13-18.
 15. S. The Joyful Return. Psalm 126.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

See notes on Babylon, Jerusalem, Assyria, and Chaldea in previous lessons.

SOME HISTORICAL FACTS**I. Why This Captivity?**

God punished the Israelites by captivity and servitude, according to his solemn warnings in Deut. 28 (which read).

The book of Judges gives an account of the lapses and restorations of the Israelites; while Kings and Chronicles give the downfall and captivity, first, of the kingdom of Israel, and, next of the kingdom of Judah.

The subjects of the kingdom of Judah were carried into captivity at different times (2 Kings 24: 1, 2; 2 Chron. 36: 5-8; Jer. 52: 28-30; Dan. 1: 1); but the two principal deportations were (1) when Jehoiachin, his mother, princes, soldiers, and artificers were carried away (2 Kings 24: 10-19), and (2) when Jerusalem was destroyed (2 Kings 25: 1-21; 2 Chron. 36: 17-21.) Sin weakened them and made them easy victims of their enemies.

God's discipline and correction are not signs of his displeasure, but of his love. The chastisement of his love has served its purpose when it produces in his children the fruits of righteousness. The Jews were cured of idolatry, repented of their sins, and returned unto God. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I observe thy word." (Ps. 119: 67, 71.) In captivity the Jews were in God's school of correction. Here they passed through the furnace of trial until the dross of idolatry and other sins was consumed. (See Heb. 12: 4-12.) They never could have returned to Jerusalem before learning these lessons. The ten tribes in a body never returned, but many of them returned with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. We read of those of other tribes serving God in the temple. (Luke 2: 36.) Many of the Levites returned to Judah soon after the establishment of the kingdom of Israel, and many were in this return from Babylon. (Ezra 2: 36-42.)

The Jews were encouraged to repent and were prepared for this return through the prophets of God. (Ezek. 20: 33-39.)

Since they were not carried all at once into captivity they did not all return at the same time, but from the beginning of the captivity unto the beginning of the return and from the destruction of the temple unto its completion when rebuilt was seventy years.

II. The Return Foretold

God not only foretold this captivity in his solemn warnings against sin, but foretold it would last for seventy years. (Jer. 25: 12; 29: 10.) According to Jeremiah's instruction (29: 1-8), the Jews in captivity built houses, planted gardens, reared families, and sought

the peace of their captors as we have learned; hence they increased in wealth and numbers, and some, as Daniel and Nehemiah, rose to places of the highest positions of trust and honor.

III. Cyrus and His Proclamation

Compare 2 Chron. 36: 22, 23 and Ezra 1: 1-3. Cyrus, was king of Persia. His father was Cambyses, and his mother was Mandane, the daughter of Astyages, king of the Medes. We have learned how he captured Babylon. We have learned that Darius reigned a while as king of Babylon, but Cyrus conquered it. (Dan. 5: 30; 6: 1.)

In the first year Cyrus was actual ruler over Babylon (Dan. 6: 28) he issued the proclamation "throughout all his kingdom" concerning the building of the temple and the Jews' return to Jerusalem. (See Ezra 1: 1-4.)

"That the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished," Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Jeremiah had foretold that the captivity would continue seventy years (Jer. 25: 12; 29: 10), and this time had been fulfilled. The purpose, too, of the captivity in correcting the Jews and leading them back to trust in God and to his true worship had been accomplished.

Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed Jerusalem and led the Jews into this captivity, was overruled by Jehovah to do this, and was called God's servant. (Jer. 25: 9; 27: 6.) So when God had accomplished his purpose upon the Jews by captivity, he overruled Cyrus, calling him his "shepherd" and "anointed," and stirred up his spirit to send them back to Jerusalem. God called Cyrus by name about one hundred and seventy-five years before this. (Isa. 44: 28 to 45: 1.) It is stated also that Cyrus had not known God.

In his overruling power God gave the nations to Nebuchadnezzar and led Nebuchadnezzar to acknowledge his might, glory, and everlasting dominion. (Dan. 4: 2, 3, 37.) So he gave "all the kingdoms of the earth" to Cyrus, and led him to make this proclamation.

It is more than probable that to Cyrus were pointed out the above quotation from Isaiah and the passages in Jeremiah stating that the Jews would return to Jerusalem in seventy years. In this way God "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus" to make this proclamation. Cyrus made the proclamation first orally and then made it a matter of record that it might stand.

IV. Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah

These three leaders were most prominent and did much in leading the Jews out of exile back to Jerusalem, rebuilding the temple, restoring the worship of God and rebuilding the walls of the city.

Zerubbabel's return was B.C. 536; laying the foundation of the temple, B.C. 535; the beginning of the revival of the work under the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, B.C. 519; the completion of the temple, B.C. 515; the events of the book of Esther, B.C. 483-473; Ezra's journey to Jerusalem, B.C. 458; Nehemiah's prayer and visit to Jerusalem, B.C. 445-444; rebuilding the walls and reading and obeying the law, B.C. 444. These dates are approximately correct.

The name "Zerubbabel" probably means "born in Babylon." He

was the son of Shealtiel (Ezra 3: 2), and was a descendant of the kings of Judah. (1 Chron. 3: 17.) He was a faithful, unswerving, loyal servant of God, withstood much, and did a great work in the restoration of the true worship of God.

V. Preparing Lodging Places

It is not stated at what time of the year the Jews began their journey of about eight hundred miles from Babylon to Jerusalem on their return from captivity; but since they reached their destination some time before the seventh month (corresponding to the last of September and first of October), and since it required several months to make the journey, they must have left Babylon in the spring. It required Ezra and those with him four months to make this journey. (Ezra 7: 9.)

Upon their arrival in their own country, the Jews went to the cities which belonged to their respective families before the captivity. (Ezra 2: 70; 3: 1.) They found the cities, like Jerusalem, in ruins and the country desolate. Their first work was to prepare some sort of lodging places for themselves and families. This was done by repairing the old houses, constructing huts, and, perhaps, stretching tents. This done, in the seventh month "the people gathered themselves together as one man in Jerusalem."

VI. Worshipping God "As It Is Written"

The people went to Jerusalem in obedience to God. (See Num. 29.) They did not wait until the temple was rebuilt before they began to worship God, for it was necessary to worship God during the time they would be employed in rebuilding the temple. They built on its original foundation the altar of burnt offering, and began "from the first day of the seventh month" to offer the daily burnt offerings. At the appointed time they kept the feast of tabernacles and offered the burnt offerings by number during the feast as "every day required." After this they offered the burnt offerings of the new moons and "of all the set feasts." Although "fear was upon them because of the peoples of the countries," they began and continued the worship of God.

There was but one way to restore the true worship of God, and that was to do all things according to his directions; hence these Jews, assembled at Jerusalem (Deut. 12: 5, 6), made their burnt offerings, kept their set feasts, and did all things "as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God." (Ezra 1-6.) Hezekiah reformed the people by persuading them to worship God "as it is written" (2 Chron. 30: 5; 31: 3); Josiah did the same (2 Kings 22: 13; 23: 3, 21); the Jews, as our lesson shows, after the captivity restored the true worship of God by worshipping "as it is written;" and later, Ezra reformed them by insisting on doing "as it is written." (Neh. 8: 1, 4, 9, 14.)

To restore the worship of God under Christ, as revealed in the New Testament, it is necessary to worship God "as it is written" in that book. (On this point see Mark 7: 1-13; 1 Cor. 4: 6; 2 John 9.)

The worship of God inaugurated as described above, the Jews then began to make preparation to rebuild the temple. Imitating Solomon (1 Kings 5: 1-11), they purchased from the people of

Sidon and Tyre timbers for this purpose. The grant also which they had from Cyrus allowed them to do this. (Ezra 3: 7; 1: 2; 6: 3-6.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Celebrating the Laying of the Foundation of the Temple

8, 9. In the second month (corresponding to the last of April and first of May) of the second year of their return the Jews were ready to lay the foundation of the temple. The Levites were appointed to have the oversight of the work. (Ezra 8: 9.)

10. When the builders had laid the foundation of the house, it was made an occasion of a great celebration. The apparel of the priests is described in Ex. 39 and the use of the two silver trumpets made according to God's command is given in Num. 10: 1-10 (which see). In Solomon's time these trumpets were increased to one hundred and twenty (1 Chron. 5: 12), and were employed as an accompaniment to songs of thanksgiving and praise. They were so employed on this occasion. "The Levites the sons of Asaph," used cymbals. This was a class of musicians named for Asaph. (1 Chron. 15: 16-24.) This was done "after the order of David king of Israel"—that is, as David had directed, or ordained. (1 Chron. 6: 31; 16: 7; 25: 1, 5, 6.)

11. "And they sang one to another"—that is, by courses and responding one to another. They sang thus "in praising and giving thanks unto Jehovah." They said: "For he is good, for his loving-kindness endureth forever." (See 1 Chron. 16: 34, 41; Ps. 106.) All praised God "because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid."

This is no precedent for celebrating the laying of the corner stones of houses of worship and of dedicating such houses, because this temple at Jerusalem was not a type of houses of worship, but of the spiritual temple, or building, of God. (See 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; 6: 19, 20; Heb. 3: 6; 8: 2; 1 Pet. 2: 5.)

II. The Old Men Weep

12-13. "But" contrasts what the old men did with the joy of the preceding verse. "Many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, the old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice." Their grief was very great. Why did they weep? Not because this house was smaller than the one which had been destroyed, for it was larger. This house was sixty cubits high and sixty cubits broad, while the first one was only twenty cubits broad and thirty cubits high. (See 1 Kings 6: 2; 2 Chron. 3: 3, 4; Ezra 6: 3.) The contrast between the plainness and poverty of this one and the richness, beauty, and magnificence of the first one; the absence of the ark of the covenant and its contents, the mercy seat and the fire from heaven; and old associations, made them weep. They felt that the glory of Israel had departed. To them the glory of this building, compared to the glory of the former one, was nothing. (Hag. 2: 3.) Some of these men must have been old indeed.

In this way God was leading his people away from material splendor and glory to the greatness and glory of his spiritual kingdom.

Fifteen years after this Haggai encouraged the people to proceed

with this building, making the following promise: "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah of hosts." It was greater than the former because Jesus Christ would come to it and fill it with his glory. (Hag. 2: 1-9.) While these old men "wept with a loud voice," others "shouted aloud for joy;" so that the people could not distinguish between the shouts of joy and cries of sorrow. This was, doubtless, a most affecting scene.

III. The Good Work Hindered

Chapter 4 shows how the Jews' adversaries tried to hinder the work of building the temple.

Lesson XI of Second Quarter of 1923 gives the opposition and attacks of the enemy in detail. The first attack was that of ridicule and mockery; the second, was conspiracy and arms; the third, was treachery; the fourth, was false accusations; the fifth, was to frighten Nehemiah with his collaborators into transgression of God's law and perhaps to assassinate him. But the greatest hindrance Nehemiah met with was neglect and sins among his own people. The poor Jews were oppressed by their own rich brethren. Nehemiah, in the fear of God, had this opposition stopped and proper restorations made.

IV. Some Applications

1. The progress of the Gospel and work of the church are greatly hindered today by wrongs in the church members.

2. God today will fight the battle of right to a glorious victory against all mockery, ridicule, treachery, false accusations, threats, and wicked plots to lead into sin.

3. Right always comes out right, it matters not who does wrong.

4. God's work today in preaching the gospel throughout the world, restoring his worship "as it is written" in the New Testament, and building up the church after the Bible order, is "a great work," and, like Nehemiah, his people must go steadily on with it. There is no time for conferences with the enemy.

5. The enemies are all who teach for doctrines the precepts of men and worship otherwise than is written in the New Testament.

6. For Nehemiah to have a conference with his enemies would be to acknowledge their authority and to place God's word on an equality with their teaching. Nehemiah's was a different work; his authority was from God, and he heeded not their advice.

7. For God's people to hold conferences today with those who teach for doctrines the commandments of men and worship after the ways of men is to place the wisdom of God and God's ways on a level with the wisdom and ways of men. To do this is to surrender the truth.

V. The Adversaries

These adversaries were the people the kings of Assyria had transported from other countries into Samaria after the captivity of the ten tribes. (2 Kings 17: 24-26; Verses 2, 9, 10.) From these sprang the Samaritans. When these adversaries "heard that the children of the captivity were building a temple unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, . . . they drew near to Zerubbabel, and to the heads of fathers' houses, and said unto them, Let us build with

you; for we seek your God, as ye do; and we sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assyria, who brought us up hither." Esar-haddon was the son of Sennacherib. (2 Kings 19: 37.) These

Samaritans did not worship God; they were idolaters. An account of their worship is given in 2 Kings 17: 24-41. "But Zerubbabel [the governor] and Joshua [the high priest], and the rest of the heads of fathers' houses of Israel [the wise men and leaders], said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us in building a house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us."

The Jews would receive no assistance from such a source, and dismissed these adversaries in this summary manner. The Jews could not acknowledge these idolatrous people as true worshipers of God, and could join them in nothing which pertained to the worship of God. They declined to place themselves under any obligations whatever to the enemies of the true worship of God; neither would they make any compromise which would adulterate this worship by a mixture with heathenism. There was a way in which these adversaries could have joined the Jews in this work, and that was by renouncing all idolatrous worship and heathen practices and worshipping God "as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God." This they were unwilling to do. Today the house of God, the church of Christ, can place themselves in no way under obligations to teachers of error and real enemies of the church of God by accepting assistance and counsel from them. In this these Jews are good and great examples.

This action of the Jews so intensified the hatred of their enemies that they "weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building"—that is, opposed and terrified them in every way. They "hired counselors against them, to frustrate their purpose." They succeeded in greatly checking this work even during the rest of Cyrus' reign, who granted the Jews the privilege of carrying it on and assisted them in doing so. They wrote letters to Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes, accusing the Jews of sedition and rebellion, and succeeded in getting an order from Artaxerxes to stop the work "by force and power." A copy of these letters is given in chapter 4. "Then ceased the work of the house of God until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia."

VI. The Encouragement of Haggai and Zechariah

6: 14-16 Chapters 5 and 6 relate that the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, taught and encouraged the Jews to return to the work of building the temple until it was completed. Cyrus reigned until B.C. 529—six years after the work of rebuilding the temple began. Cyrus was succeeded by his son, Cambyses (Ahasuerus of chapter 4: 6), who reigned until B.C. 522. Artaxerxes, the usurper, succeeded Cambyses, and reigned only eight months, and was succeeded B.C. 521 by Darius Hystaspes.

It is thought by some that "Xerxes" and "Artaxerxes" were titles assumed by Persian kings, and not their real names.

In the second year of the reign of Darius, Haggai and Zechariah prophesied to encourage the Jews to resume work on the house of God. This was B.C. 519. Read the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. Haggai showed that (1) the time had come to build the house of God;

(2) it was wrong to dwell in ceiled houses while the house of God was waste; (3) God had sent the drought because his house had not been completed; (4) God would be with them, since they had resolved to resume work; (5) while this house seemed to some as nothing, it should be more glorious than the former one; and (6) God, who rules over all, would crown their work with success.

The result was that the Jews went to work in the face of all opposition. Tattenai was governor of the country at this time. He, Shethar-bozenai (some officer of rank), and his companions first asked the elders, who were working by the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, and under God's care, therefore, who gave them a decree to build the temple and finish the wall around the city.

These elders made a courteous, humble, and straightforward answer and confession of the sins of their people, stating that Cyrus had made the decree to build the house of God and to place in it the vessels Nebuchadnezzar had carried out of the temple of Solomon to Babylon; that upon that decree Sheshbazzar had come and laid the foundation of the house of God, but that since that time until the time of this inquiry the house had "been in building" and was not yet complete.

Without prejudice or malice, Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai wrote these facts to Darius, asking if Cyrus had made such a decree and requesting the king's pleasure concerning the matter. Upon investigation, Darius found that Cyrus had made this decree, giving the dimensions of the house and ordering that the expenses be paid out of the king's treasury and the vessels mentioned above be returned.

Therefore, Darius returned answer, favoring the work of the Jews and ordering Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai, and his companions not only not to hinder them, but assist them financially in the work; also that such things as they should need for sacrifices and offerings be given them, and that they be requested to "pray for the life of the king and his sons." Tattenai and those with him joined heartily in carrying out these directions of king Darius. Therefore in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the house of God was finished, seventy years after it had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and twenty years after the return of the first Jews from Babylon.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons.

Why this captivity?

State the principal times when the Jews were carried into captivity.

By whom was this captivity predicted?

How long did it continue?

What did the Jews do in captivity?

What does sin do for any people?

Whom does God chastise and correct?

What became of the ten tribes?

Between what periods was the seventy years of captivity?

Who was Cyrus?

What had God foretold by Jeremiah?

How was this fulfilled?

What had God foretold of Cyrus?

How did God stir up Cyrus' spirit to do this?

What did God charge Cyrus to do?

What proclamation did Cyrus make?

What three men were prominent in restoring the Jews and the worship of God?

What is the probable meaning of "Zerubbabel?"

Of what descent was he?

How long do you suppose it required the Jews to make the

- journey from Babylon to Jerusalem?
 What was their first work after their return?
 When and why did they assemble at Jerusalem?
 Why did they first erect the altar?
 Where did they erect it?
 How only could they restore the worship of God?
 What have all true reformers endeavored to persuade people to do?
 How can the pure worship of God, as revealed in the New Testament, be restored?
 Having inaugurated the worship of God, what did the Jews proceed to do?
 8, 9 When was the foundation laid?
 10 How was the occasion celebrated?
 11 What is meant by singing to one another?
 What did they say of the goodness of God?
 Why is this action not a precedent for celebrating the laying of corner stones and dedicating houses of worship?
 12, 13 Why did the old men weep?
 Why was not this house as rich and splendid as the former one?
 In what was it more glorious?
 What did others do while the old men wept?
 Who were the adversaries of the Jews?
 What people sprang from them?
 What proposition did they make to the Jews?
 What is said of their worship?
 What reply did the Jews make to this proposition?
 Why would they not accept the service of these people?
 What lesson does this teach us?
 What effect did this rejection of their proposition have upon the Jews' enemies?
 How did they succeed in causing the work of the Jews to cease?
 14-16 Who succeeded Cyrus, and when?
 Who succeeded Cambyses, and when?
 Who succeeded Artaxerxes, and when?
 What do you suppose "Xerxes" and "Artaxerxes" were?
 Who encouraged the Jews to resume work?
 When?
 Did you ever read the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah?
 State, in order, what Haggai showed.
 Give the inquiry Tattenai made and the Jews' answer.
 What did Tattenai write to Darius?
 What is the character of Tattenai's letter?
 What reply did Darius return?
 When was the temple completed?

"They whose hearts are whole and strong,
 Loving holiness,
 Living clean from soil of wrong,
 Wearing Truth's white dress,—
 They unto no far-off height
 Wearily need climb;
 Heaven to them is close in sight
 From these shores of time.

"Only the anointed eye
 Sees in common things,—
 Gleams dropped daily from the sky
 Heavenly blossomings.
 To the hearts where light has birth
 Nothing can be drear;
 Budding through the bloom of earth,
 Heaven is always near."—

—Lucy Larcum.

LESSON XII—JUNE 22.

REFORMS UNDER EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

Read: Ezra, chapters 7-10; Nehemiah, chapters 5, 8 and 13.

Lesson Text: Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 8-12.

NEHEMIAH 8. 1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel.

2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

8 And they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading.

9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto Jehovah your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye grieved; for the joy of Jehovah is your strength.

11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

Golden Text—Teach me, O Jehovah, the way of thy statutes; And I shall keep it unto the end. (Psalm 119: 33.)

Time—B.C. 444.

Place—Jerusalem.

Persons—Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Jews.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 119: 97-105

Home Reading—

June 16. M. Israel Separated from the Heathen. Ezra 10: 7-12.

17. T. A Complaint Against Oppression. Neh. 5: 1-5.

18. W. Nehemiah Abolishes Usury. Neh. 5: 6-13.

19. T. God's Law again Proclaimed. Neh. 8: 1-8.

20. F. A Day of Sorrow and Joy. Neh. 8: 9-18.

21. S. Nehemiah Enforces the Sabbath Law. Neh. 13: 15-22.

22. S. The Healer of the Nations. Hosea 14: 1-8.

HINTS AND HELPS FOR TEACHERS

By studying the chapters designated we learn of the work of Ezra and Nehemiah—who they were, their deep convictions and determinations, their struggles against the Jews' enemies, their faith and prayers, and their victories by the power of God.

These studies are most helpful.

The subject of this lesson should impress us most seriously.

The wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the Jewish month

Elul, the sixth month of the Jewish year, or about the middle or last of our September. (Neh. 6: 15.)

When this work was completed, Nehemiah made his brothers, Hanani, and Hananiah rulers over Jerusalem.

He also instituted the examination into the genealogies recorded in chapter 7. Every one's city was determined by the register; and priests, Levites, and all Israel were settled, each in his own city. (Neh. 7: 73.)

The wall having been finished, the temple having been put in order, all things were now ready for the restoration of the true worship of God.

Ezra was joined by Nehemiah in this great work. The time was favorable, because the people desired to hear the word of God.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Law Read and Explained

1. On the first day of the Jewish year "all the people [men, women, and children old enough to understand the law of God] gathered themselves together as one man . . . before the water gate" and requested Ezra to read to them the law of God.

"The water gate" was on the eastern side of the city and led to the brook Kidron, and "the broad place" before this gate was a public square south of the temple.

2. According to the requests of the people, "Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly." This, as stated, was on "the first day of the seventh month." This was the first day of the civil year and the day of the feast of trumpets. The new year was ushered in by the blowing of the trumpets, as described in Lev. 23: 23-25; Num. 19: 1. This day was one of solemn rest and a "holy convocation."

3. Ezra read from the law "from early morning [from the light—margin] until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." This was a most impressive sight.

Suppose people now were sufficiently anxious to learn God's will as to do this; all would soon come to the knowledge of the truth. It is thought by some that the people stood while the law was read and sat while it was explained.

4-7. "A pulpit of wood," or elevated platform, was prepared for Ezra to stand upon; and beside him stood six prominent men on his right hand and seven on his left hand to assist him. When "Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people)," they stood, out of respect for the word of God.

Is it not a fact that many people now show no respect at all for the word of God when it is read and give it no attention whatever?

When the people stood, "Ezra blessed Jehovah, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with the lifting of their hands." They stood to thank and praise God. "And they bowed their heads, and worshiped Jehovah with their faces to the ground."

8. "And they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly."

"Distinctly" means not only so the people could hear the words read, but, as the margin says, "with an interpretation." This is explained as follows: "And they gave the sense, so that they [the people] understood the reading."

"The Israelites, having been lately brought out of Babylonish captivity, in which they had continued seventy years, according to the prediction of Jeremiah (chapter 25: 11), were not only extremely corrupt, but it appears that they had in general lost the knowledge of the ancient Hebrew to such a degree that when the book of the law was read, they did not understand it; but certain Levites stood by and gave the sense—that is, translated it into the Chaldee dialect." (Clark's "Commentary.") This was, doubtless, true of those born in the captivity. Many had also forgotten the commandments and ordinances of God and the manner of observing these ordinances; hence the meaning of such had to be explained.

This does not show by any means that people cannot now read in their own language for themselves and understand the word of God. It has already been translated into our own language, that we may read it and understand and obey it.

II. The Effect Upon the People of Reading the Law

9. Nehemiah received from Artaxerxes the appointment of governor. (Neh. 5: 14.) Ezra was "a ready scribe in the law of Moses." (Ezra 7: 6.) The Levites mentioned in verse 7 "caused the people to understand the law;" hence they "taught the people." Nehemiah, Ezra, and these Levites said to the people: "This day is holy unto Jehovah your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law." The people were so impressed with the truth and mercy of God, their sin and its retribution, that they wept and mourned.

When Josiah heard the word of God from the book which Hilkiah, the priest, had found, he rent his clothes and wept and said: "For great is the wrath of Jehovah that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us." (2 Kings 22: 11, 13, 18, 19.)

So the people on this occasion saw from the word of God how far they had gone from God, how terrible were their sins, and how fearful were the consequences; but that in their penitence and return to God and the restoration of his pure worship he would forgive and bless them. Hence this was not a day of sorrow and mourning, but of joy and gladness. God had appointed this day as one of general rejoicing. (See Deut. 12: 7, 12.)

The Jews should rejoice on this occasion because of their return from captivity, the completion of the wall around Jerusalem, their establishment in their own cities and homes, the restoration of the worship of God, and the mercy of God in pardoning their sins.

10. Ezra told the people at the conclusion of the reading of the law on the first day, instead of mourning and weeping, to go their way, "eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions" unto the poor for whom nothing had been prepared. Our greatest and most lasting joy is in carrying joy and gladness to others. God commanded the Israelites to rejoice in all the good things he did for them. (Deut.

26: 11-13.) So are we commanded to rejoice always. (Phil. 4: 4.) "For the joy of Jehovah is your strength." "The joy of Jehovah" is the joy which Jehovah gives. God had given these Jews at this time the joy of safety from their enemies, the joy of his temple and restored worship, and the joy of pardon and salvation. To rejoice in the Lord is strength, or the joy of Jehovah is indeed the stronghold of his people.

III. Must Do "As It Is Written"

11, 12. The people obeyed the instructions given, and rejoiced "because they had understood the words that were declared unto them." They saw and appreciated the mercy and goodness of God, which they more than ever realized was upon them.

The word of God is a source of great comfort and joy.

While all the men and the women and the children did not return "on the second day, the heads of the fathers' houses (leaders of the people), the priests and Levites, came on that day also to Ezra, to give attention to the words of the law." These probably did this of their own accord.

Above all men, these should know the word of God that they might teach and guide the people aright. And above all men today preachers and elders, who undertake to teach the truth and preach the gospel, should know the word of God, should know and teach it all, and should teach nothing else.

"And they found written in the law" that God had commanded the children of Israel to keep the feast of tabernacles in the seventh month and how it should be kept. (Verses 13-15.)

They "found" all this "written in the law," which shows that they did not know God had commanded it. Especially those who had been born in the captivity and since then were ignorant of the word of God. The only way to restore the worship of God was to study his word and do what was written therein as fast as they learned it.

It is most worthy of note that every one in any age who ever reformed those who had wandered from God's way did so by studying God's word and persuading the people to do "as it is written" therein. Hezekiah did all in his power to persuade all Israel to worship God "as it is written." He sent out teachers for this purpose, and he wrought a great reform. (2 Chron. 30: 5; 31: 3.) Later on Hezekiah's great-grandson, Josiah, wrought another great reformation by persuading the people to study the word of God and worship him "as it is written." (2 Kings 22: 13; 23: 3, 21; 2 Chron. 34: 29, 30.) Ezra and Nehemiah restored the worship of God after the long captivity by reading the word of God to the people and inducing them to do "as it is written."

The only way to worship God acceptably today is to turn away from all the doctrines and commandments of men and worship him "as it is written" in the New Testament. We cannot "go beyond the things which are written" in the New Testament and remain pleasing and acceptable to God. (1 Cor. 4: 6.) "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9.) Every faithful and true disciple of Christ is afraid of everything in the worship of God that is not found written in the

New Testament. All should study the word of God now and do what it requires of them as fast as they learn it.

"So"—when the people had learned that God required them to keep the feast of tabernacles and how to keep it, they proceeded at once to prepare to obey God.

Since this feast began on the fifteenth day of the month, they had several days in which to prepare for it. (Verse 16.) Verse 17 states that in gladness this feast was kept, and verse 18 states that "day by day" during the feast, "from the first day until the last day," Ezra "read the book of the law of God" to the people.

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Of what three men should we learn?
What about these men should we learn?
When was the wall finished?
Who were made rulers in Jerusalem?
What examination did Nehemiah institute?
For what were the people now ready?
How had they been made ready?
Who were leaders in this work?
- 1 What did the people request Ezra to do?
Where were the people assembled?
Where was the "water gate?"
 - 2 What was the feast of trumpets?
 - 3 Who were present?
For what length of time did Ezra read to the people?
 - 4-7 What preparation was made for Ezra to be seen and heard?
How did the people show their respect for the word of God?
What was the first thing that Ezra did when the people stood?
What was their position when they worshipped?
How long did this meeting continue?
 - 8 Who assisted Ezra?
Why was it necessary to give the sense, that the people might understand the law?
 - Can the people now understand the Bible for themselves?
 - 9 What assistance did these Levites render?
What did the people do when they heard the law?
Why did they weep?
Why should the people not weep?
Why should they rejoice?
 - 10 What did Ezra tell them to do?
What affords lasting joy?
What joy is our strength?
 - 11, 12 Why did the people rejoice?
Who returned to Ezra on the next day to hear the law?
Why should these be familiar with the law?
What did they find written in the law?
What was this feast called?
What did it celebrate?
Where and how was it observed?
In what way alone can the true worship of God be restored?
 - How did Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra, and all reformers proceed, and to what did they appeal as the standard in order to reform the people?
 - How alone can the worship of the New Testament be restored?
Of what is every true and faithful disciple of Jesus afraid?
 - 12 What did the people do when they learned God had commanded this feast?

"Hand in hand with angels!
Blessed so to be!
Helped are all the helpers;
Giving light, they see.
He who aids another
Strengthens more than one;
Sinking earth he grapples
To the Great White Throne."

—Lucy Larcum.

LESSON XIII—JUNE 29.

REVIEW: REHOBAM TO NEHEMIAH

Golden Text—Righteousness exalteth a nation; But Sin is a reproach to any people. (Prov. 14: 34.)

Devotional Reading: Micah 4: 1-5.

Home Reading—

- June 23. M. The Day of Jehovah. Amos 5: 18-24.
- 24. T. Formalism and Righteousness. Isa 1: 10-20.
- 25. W. The Glory of the Gospel. Jer. 31: 27-34.
- 26. T. The Equal Way of the Lord. Ezek. 18: 25-32.
- 27. F. The Victory of Righteousness. Mal. 4: 1-6.
- 28. S. The Judgment of the Nations. Joel 3: 9-16.
- 29. S. God's Promise of Peace. Mich. 4: 1-5.

As the Golden Text declares, God exalted the children of Israel from the deepest servitude and basest slavery in Egypt to the widespread prosperity and glory of Solomon's reign over all the country from the Euphrates to the river of Egypt.

It will greatly help us to study Moses' farewell address to the children of Israel in the book of Deuteronomy; and especially, at this time, chapters 27-30. In these chapters God rehearses the blessings and the curses and says that he had set before them, "Life and death, the blessing and the curse;" "Life and good, death and evil," and that if they would love him and "walk in all his ways," they should prosper at all times and in all ways and should be exalted "on high above all the nations of the earth." Obeying and relying upon Jehovah, the children of Israel reached this exalted position. It was made "the head and not the tail" of the nations of earth.

On the other hand "sin is a reproach to any people" and because of the sins enumerated in the chapters designated the children of Israel began first to decline, then go further and further into idolatry and all accompanying sins, to sink deeper and deeper into wickedness and stubbornness until utter destruction overtook them and they became a reproach and "the tail and not the head" of the nations of earth.

Since "these things happened unto them by way of example" and have been "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. 10: 11), the church everywhere should walk in the good and right of the Lord, worthily of the calling wherewith all have been called (Eph. 4: 1-6), and should keep unspotted from the world. Worldliness, wickedness, and all disobedience to God are a reproach to the church.

Righteousness will exalt an individual in the respect, confidence, and worthy esteem of his fellowmen and in the favor of God. Sin, on the contrary, will lower him in all respects.

QUESTIONS

Repeat the Golden Text. Show how righteousness exalted the Jews. Show what sin did for them. What will bring reproach upon the church? What brings a man into favor with men and God? What lowers him? In order to show what we have learned, name the rulers of Judah from Rehobam to Nehemiah.

Lesson I.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What rent the kingdoms?

Lesson II.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Relate the struggle between Elijah and Baal.

Lesson III.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. How did Elisha overcome the Syrians? How

did he show them mercy?

Lesson IV.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who was Amos? Why, when and where did he prophecy? Who was Hosea?

Lesson V.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who were carried into Assyrian exile? How long was that before Judah was carried away?

Lesson VI.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. How did Jehoiada gain this victory over Baal?

Lesson VII.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. State the Assyrian crisis of this lesson and the result.

Lesson VIII.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who was Jeremiah? Under what circumstances did he teach? What was the crisis of this lesson?

Lesson IX.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who captured and destroyed Jerusalem? What became of Zedekiah? Where were the people carried?

Lesson X.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who was Ezekiel? To whom and where did he prophecy? What did he teach in this lesson?

Lesson XI.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who was Cyrus? Why did God call him his shepherd? What was Cyrus' proclamation concerning the Jews? How long had the Jews been in captivity? Who led the first company back? How long after that before the temple was rebuilt?

Lesson XII.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who are Ezra and Nehemiah? How did they restore the worship of God?

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call to me,
And may there be no moaning at the bar
When I put out to sea.

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark,
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.

"Far though from out our bourne of time and space
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar."

—Tennyson.

THIRD QUARTER

THE LIFE OF JESUS (HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS)

I. Opening Period of Christ's Ministry

(First Quarter of a Nine Months' Course)

LESSON I—JULY 6.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Read: Luke 1; Matt. 1, 2; *Lesson Text:* Luke 2: 7-20.

LUKE 2. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock.

9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people:

11 for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

12 And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger.

17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child.

18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

Golden Text—For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2: 11.)

Time—B.C. 4.

Place—Bethlehem of Judea.

Persons—Augustus Caesar, Cyrenius, Joseph, Mary, the babe, the shepherds, and the angels.

Devotional Reading—Isa. 11.

Home Reading—

- June 30. M. The Birth of Jesus. Luke 2: 7-14.
 July 1. T. The Shepherds See the Child. Luke 2: 15-22.
 2. W. Jesus Dedicated to God. Luke 2: 22-32.
 3. T. Children are God's Gift. Gen. 30: 1-5.
 4. F. Children Glorify God. Psalm 138: 1-6.
 5. S. Jesus Reveals God. John 1: 1-5.
 6. S. The Righteous Child. Isa. 11: 1-5.

INTRODUCTION

1. Time—Call attention to what a most wonderful event the coming of the Son of God into the world was—the very greatest event in the world history. “God manifest in the flesh.”

2. The time of Jesus Birth—Reckoning time from the birth of Jesus did not begin until several hundred years after his birth, and it has been agreed by those who have studied the question that a mistake of four years was made which places the birth of Jesus in the year B.C. 4. “According to the received chronology, Jesus was born in the last year of Herod; and he was, therefore, less than a year old when Herod died. His birth occurred four years previous to our common era, the era having been erroneously fixed by Dionysius Exiguus in the sixth century.” (McGarvey.)

This Monk fixed the date of Jesus' birth 753 after the building of Rome; but this can not be the right date, because Jesus was born before the death of Herod the Great and Herod the Great died in the spring of 750 after the building of Rome. Jesus then was born as early as 749 after the building of Rome, or B. C. 4.

The date fixed by this learned Monk has been so long in general use that it is hardly possible to change it, and it is not necessary for practical purpose to try to do so.

There is no proof whatever that Jesus was born on Dec. 25. On the contrary, it seems altogether probable that he was not born on that day.

3. *Harmony of the Gospels*—What is meant by “the harmony of the gospels?” There is but one gospel, and that is the same and unchangeable to the end of time. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote the life of Jesus—his existence as “the Word” before the creation of the world, his birth, his actions on earth, his crucifixion, his resurrection, and his ascension. What these four men wrote has been called “the four gospels”; but they all wrote for the one purpose of proving that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and Savior of the world (John 20: 30, 31), and, hence, has “all authority . . . in heaven and on earth” to speak concerning the salvation of the human race. (Matt. 28: 18-20.) They do not attempt to give in exact chronological order all that Jesus did and taught, but different events are so grouped together that it may be seen in what period of time they occurred.

The putting together of parallel passages of these four different writers respecting the same events in Jesus' life and showing their agreement is the harmony of the gospel.

4. *Luke*—Luke, the author of the book of Luke and of Acts of the Apostles, was born, it is supposed, in Antioch of Syria, and was educated for a physician. (Col. 4: 14.) It is thought also that he was a Gentile. From his use of the pronoun “we” in Acts of the Apostles we learn where he joined Paul (Acts 16: 10, 11), where he remained

when separated from Paul, when and where he joined Paul again (Acts 20: 5, 6), and where he accompanied Paul (Acts 20: 7; 21: 15-18; 2 Tim. 4: 11). He was not an apostle, and not, therefore, an eyewitness of what he wrote concerning Jesus, but learned it from others. He was a scholar, and "traced the course of all things accurately from the first," seeking information and facts, until he knew "the certainty concerning the things" whereof he wrote. (Luke 1: 1-4.) It is thought he wrote his Gospel under Paul's influence at Caesarea, and Acts of the Apostles under the same influence at Rome.

5. *Herod The Great*—There are seven Herods mentioned in the New Testament: "Herod the king" (Matt. 2: 1); Archelaus, his son and successor (Matt. 2: 22); Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee (Matt. 14: 3; Mark 6: 16, 17; Luke 3: 1), son of Herod the Great; Herod Philip I., another son of Herod the Great, lawful husband of Herodias, who was his half niece (Luke 3: 19); Herod Philip II. (Luke 3: 1), son of Herod the Great, built Caesarea Philippi, married Salome, his brother Philip's daughter, the girl who danced before Herod Antipas; Herod Agrippa I., son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod the Great, who beheaded James, who seized Peter with the purpose of killing him also, and who was eaten of worms (Acts 12: 1-3, 23); Herod Agrippa II., before whom Paul made his famous defense. (Acts 25: 13, 23; 26: 2, 27.)

The Herods were aliens by race, Jews in religion, and Romans in politics.

"Herod the king" is so called to distinguish him from the other Herods and because he was made king of Judea by the Romans. Josephus calls him "Herod the Great." He was the son of Antipater, an Idumean, and Cypros, an Arabian of noble descent. Antipater was made procurator of Judea by Julius Caesar in B.C. 47. Any authentic Bible dictionary gives the life of Herod and how he became king. He was a bloodthirsty, corrupt, and cruel wretch. It is said that "household murders stained his own hearth again and again. His nearest relatives, friends, companions, aged men, unoffending women, were slain—one, in one way; another, in another way." Before the slaughter of the children in Herod's attempt to destroy the child Jesus, moved by jealousy, he slew two high priests, an uncle, his own favorite wife (Mariamne), three sons, and many others. When at the point of death, he caused to be thrown into prison a number of his most illustrious subjects—one from every family—and ordered that they should be put to death the moment he expired in order that there might be tears shed when he died, for he knew his death would be an occasion of rejoicing instead of mourning. This order, however, was not carried out.

6. *Augustus Caesar*—(See Luke 2: 1-6.)—Augustus was the second of the twelve Caesars and the first emperor of Rome. He was grandnephew and successor of Julius Caesar, and was Caesar Octavius until Rome conferred upon him the title of "Augustus" in B.C. 27. On his victory over Antony at Actium he entered into supreme power, and from that time was master of the Roman world. Rejoiced at his victory over his enemies, he closed the temple of Janus, which stood open in time of war, for the third time in seven hundred years, and declared universal peace. During his reign Rome enjoyed "the golden age." This, then, was a fit time for the birth of "the Prince of Peace."

"In those days," perhaps just after the birth of John the Baptist, Augustus declared that "all the world should be enrolled," preliminary to taxation. Some think "all the world" here means the Roman empire. It more probably means the Jewish nation. (See Luke 21: 26.)

7. *Quirinius*—Quirinius "was consul B.C. 12, and was governor of Syria after the banishment of Archelaus in A.D. 6. He was probably twice governor of Syria, his first governorship extending from B.C. 4 (the year of Christ's birth) to B.C. 1. It was during this time that he was sent to make enrollment, which caused Joseph and Mary to visit Bethlehem." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) This "was the first enrollment." The second is mentioned in Acts 5: 37.

8. *Where Enrolled*—While the Romans required registration in the place of residence, the Jews were permitted to follow their own customs: "and all went to enroll themselves, every one to his own city."

9. *Bethlehem*—Joseph went from Nazareth, in Galilee, a distance of about eighty miles, to the south, "because he was of the house and family of David" and Bethlehem was "the city of David." "Bethlehem" means "house of bread." It was an old city, six miles south of Jerusalem. Its early name was "Ephrath" or "Ephrathah." Here Jacob buried his beloved Rachel. (Gen. 35: 16-19; 48: 7.) Here Ruth lived after her famous decision to cling to Naomi, and here she gleaned from the grain fields of Boaz. Here David was born and reared; here he learned to sing psalms; and here, as a shepherd lad he fed his father's flocks more than a thousand years before the birth of the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." (Mic. 5: 2; see also Matt. 2: 6.) This time has come in our lesson.

There was a Bethlehem of Zebulun. It is mentioned but once. (Josh. 19: 15.)

After David captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites it was called "the city of David." There he reigned as king over all Israel and Judah for thirty-three years, having reigned seven years and six months in Hebron over Judah, and there he was buried. (See 2 Sam. 5: 5-10; 6: 12, 16; 1 Kings 2: 10; 9: 24.)

10. *The Fulfillment of Prophecy*—In the providence of God Joseph and Mary were called to this town just in time for Jesus to be born there.

Betrothal is a virtual marriage, although the betrothed did not go at once to the husband's home.

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the

Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us. And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name Jesus." (Matt. 1: 18-25.)

Mary knew not a man (Luke 1: 34), and Joseph "knew her not," until after Jesus was born. After this there were born unto Joseph and Mary both sons and daughters. (Matt. 12: 46-48; 13: 54-56; Acts 1: 14.) This forever destroys the dogma of Mary's "perpetual virginity."

11. *Why Jesus Must Be Born of Woman*—We do not know just why Jesus did not appear immediately after the fall of man, but it seems that the race must be prepared for his coming. The law of Moses was "added because of transgressions, till the seed [Jesus] should come." (Gal. 3: 19.) It prepared the Jews for the reception of Christ. (Verse 24.) The law was full of types which pointed to Christ. (Heb. 10: 1.) Then, according to his own purpose and after the counsel of his own will, "when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4: 4, 5; see also Eph. 1: 9-14.)

Before his birth on earth Jesus existed with God as "the Word." "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." (See John 1: 1-14; 1 Tim. 3: 16.) After his manifestation in the flesh, his name is "Jesus," and he is called "the Son of man."

He must be born of woman in order to become flesh, and he must become flesh in order to suffer and die for the race; he must suffer and weep and be tempted in order to "become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." (See Heb. 2: 14-17; 4: 14-16; 5: 7-9.) God prepared for him a body. (Heb. 10: 4-10.) He bore "our sins in his body upon the tree," and by his "stripes ye were [we are] healed." (1 Pet. 2: 24.)

"When the fullness of the time came" for Jesus to be born, Gabriel, as we know, appeared to Mary at Nazareth and declared to her that she should become the mother of the Son of God. While these declarations of Gabriel were astonishing to Mary, and wonderful, she never doubted them. Gabriel assured her that "no word from God shall be void of power." To this, Mary replied, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." (Luke 1: 26-38.) This is great faith indeed—faith sublime.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Inn and the Manger

7. While Joseph and Mary were at Bethlehem, Jesus was born. It was not so designed by them, but it was so arranged in the plan and prophecies of God.

"Swaddling clothes" were unmade bands, in which the newborn child was wrapped. This was the customary dress for infants. (Ezek. 16: 4.) Jesus, as a babe and as a man, was clothed as ordinary babes and men.

He was laid in a manger, "because there was no room for them in

the inn." The inn and the manger were different apartments. Inns were respectable and useful lodging places for travelers, but not in the modern use of the word. They were rude, unfurnished, square buildings surrounding an open space or court. On the inside of the square walls were separate rooms fronting the court; hence each party could have a room to itself. The beasts of burden fed and rested in the court, or in sheds abutting the outside wall, or in caves around it. Each party carried its own bedding and provisions. There seems to have been but one inn at Bethlehem, and it was full when Joseph and Mary reached there. So in one of the stables adjoining, perhaps a cave, they found a lodging place; and there Jesus was born and laid in a manger—a feeding trough, not a jeweled cradle in some royal palace. It is impossible to conceive of a humbler birthplace for the Son of God.

II. The Shepherds and the Angels

8. "There were shepherds in the same country," and, therefore, near by, "keeping night watches [see margin] over their flocks"—that is, watching in turn over their sheep to protect them from wild beasts and robbers and to prevent their straying away.

This is an argument against the supposition that Jesus was born on December 25. Some say it was possible for the shepherds to be out at night in that mild climate in December; yet it is no more probable that Jesus was born then than in June. Religious sects have placed the birth of Jesus in every month in the year.

Had God desired us to celebrate the birth of his Son, he would have preserved the date and taught us how to celebrate it. He does desire us to remember the body and blood of his Son, and has taught us how to do it. (1 Cor. 11: 20-34; Acts 20: 7; Heb. 10: 25; Acts 2: 42.)

9. The angel and the multitude of the heavenly host did not appear to the shepherds by accident. The shepherds were prepared in heart and character for this visitation. The Lord comes to those who are ready for him, and blesses those who are prepared to receive and use his blessings. These shepherds were not in the synagogue on the Sabbath day or at the temple on some feast day, but they were at the post of duty.

This beautiful angelic hymn was not sung in the palace of the Cæsars or to the learned Athenians or to the Pharisees in Jerusalem, but to humble shepherds waiting and praying in the daily routine of life's duty for the Messiah. Here, too, "the glory of the Lord shone round about them." This was the bright light or dazzling cloud from the presence of God which accompanied the angel. It shone from the face of Moses (Ex. 34: 29-35); it shone from the face and raiment of Jesus (Matt. 17: 2-5); it shone round Saul of Tarsus, and smote him blind on his way to Damascus (Acts 22: 6, 7); and it shone about John on the isle of Patmos. "And they were sore afraid." This light has never been seen without fear and trembling.

10, 11. "Be not afraid," the angel said to remove the fear of the shepherds. "Fear not" and "be not afraid" were expressions frequently used to allay fear aroused by the miraculous appearances of angels and Jesus. (See Luke 1: 13, 30; Matt. 17: 7; 28: 5, 10; Mark 6: 50; Luke 5: 10; 12: 32; John 6: 20; Rev. 1: 17.)

The angel came to inform the shepherds of the birth of Jesus.

This was not only good news to them, but to "all the people." Jesus came to save both Jews and Gentiles.

"Jesus" means "Savior." Others were named "Jesus" (Col. 4: 11); but there is only one Jesus Christ, the Lord. "This Jesus" was made "both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2: 36.)

"Christ" means "anointed," and God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power. (Acts 10: 38.) Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed, and Jesus is all these. "Lord" means "master," "sovereign," "ruler;" hence "Christ the Lord" is the anointed Lord or King.

12. The shepherds were to know Jesus by the sign: "A babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger."

III. "Glory to God in the Highest, on Earth Peace and Good Will Among Men"

13, 14. "The heavenly host" was a multitude of angels from around the throne of God. They suddenly appeared after the advance angel had announced the birth of Jesus. This was an eventful night on earth and in heaven. The angels praised God, and declared that the life of this newborn babe would redound to the glory of God in the highest and to the peace and good will of men on earth.

Jesus is "the Prince of Peace," who lived and died to bring the race into peace with God and with one another, and the gospel is called "the gospel of peace." "Grim-visaged war" had drenched the earth again and again in human blood, but he has now been born who will teach all his followers "to beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks," and to learn war no more. And under his influence "nation shall not uplift sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isa. 2: 2-4; 11: 1-9; Micah 4: 1-4.) Jesus teaches and influences people through "the gospel of peace" and has made his church "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3: 15), or has commissioned it and charged it to support and carry his gospel to the whole world. What a pity and what a great sin it is, then, that any part of his church—any church members—should engage in war or even encourage war, and should fail to teach against it!

From his birth to his ascension angels were close to Jesus. An angel visited Mary, and one came to Joseph; an angel announced the birth of Jesus, and angels first sung in his honor a hymn of praise; angels ministered unto him after his temptation, and one strengthened him in Gethsemane; angels watched round his tomb, rolled the stone away, and proclaimed first his resurrection; he was "seen of angels;" "the angels of God ascended and descended upon" him; angels conducted him to heaven; and when he returns, it will be with his "mighty angels."

15, 16. Having made the above announcement, the angels returned to heaven. The shepherds believed the angels, went at once to see the babe, and found him lying in a manger. Without hesitation or doubt, they obeyed the word of God.

17. When the shepherds found all things to be just as the angel had described, they made known to all present all that had transpired.

18. All who heard what the shepherds reported were filled with wonder.

19. "But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart." They made a deeper impression upon her than upon others. Other things had already taken place which filled her heart with wonder and thought. It is also stated that she kept in her heart that which transpired at Jerusalem when Jesus visited there when twelve years of age. (Luke 2: 51.) We are not astonished that his mother should do this.

20. The shepherds then "returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them."

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place and persons.

What is the greatest event in the world's history?

Give the reason for saying Jesus was born B. C. 4.

Who wrote the life of Christ?

Did they write one gospel or four?

For what purpose did they write?

What is meant by "the harmony of the gospels?"

What books did Luke write?

Was he an apostle?

How did he learn what he wrote?

Under whose influence is it thought he wrote?

How can we tell when he joined Paul, when with Paul, and when separate from him?

What was his profession?

Name the Herods mentioned in the New Testament.

Give the history, character, and bloodthirsty deeds of Herod the Great.

Who was Caesar Augustus?

What did he decree?

Why was this a fit time for Jesus to be born?

Who was Quirinius?

How many enrollments are mentioned?

What is meant by "his own city?"

Where did Joseph and Mary live?

Why did they go to Bethlehem?

Give a brief statement of different events which occurred at Bethlehem.

Why was Jerusalem also called "the City of David?"

What does "betrothal" mean?

Why did Joseph treat Mary as he did?

Did Mary become the mother of other children?

7 Where was Jesus born?

What was done with him?

What are "swaddling clothes?"

Describe the inn.

What was the "manger?"

8 Who were in the field?

Why was the birthday of Jesus not made known?

What are we taught to celebrate?

9 Who first appeared to the shepherds?

What shone around them?

On what other occasions was this light seen?

10, 11 What did the angel say to the shepherds?

What was the "glad tidings?"

For whom was it?

What does "Jesus" mean?

What does "Christ the Lord" mean?

12 By what sign were the shepherds to know Jesus?

13, 14 Then who else appeared?

What did they say?

What does that mean?

What do all who become Christians do with their swords and spears?

Through what or through whom does Christ spread the gospel and influence the nations?

What then is shameful and sin in Christians?

Relate other appearances of angels in connection with Jesus.

15, 16 What then did the shepherds do?

Why did they do this?

17 What did the shepherds make known?

18 What effect did this have upon all who heard it?

19 How did Mary regard these things?

20 What then did the shepherds do?

LESSON II—JULY 13.

THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS

Lesson Text: Luke 2: 40-52.

LUKE 2. 40 And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast;

43 and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not;

44 but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance:

45 and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him.

46 And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions:

47 and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Golden Text—Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2: 52.)

Time—Birth of Jesus B.C. 4; visited the temple A.D. 8.

Places—Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Nazareth.

Persons—Joseph, Mary, the child Jesus, the boy Jesus, the teachers or "doctors of the law." (Acts 5: 34.)

Devotional Reading—Ps. 119: 9-16.

Home Reading—

- | | | | |
|------|--------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| July | 7. M. | The Boyhood of Jesus. | Luke 2: 40-52. |
| | 8. T. | The Boy and his Bible. | 2 Tim. 3: 14-17. |
| | 9. W. | The Boy and his Church. | 1 Sam. 1: 21-28. |
| | 10. T. | The Child and the Kingdom. | Matt. 18: 1-6. |
| | 11. F. | The Boy Who Helped. | John 6: 5-14. |
| | 12. S. | Children Worshiping. | Matt. 21: 12-17. |
| | 13. S. | Guided in the Way. | Psalms 119: 9-16. |

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Nazareth, where Jesus was brought up, was a small and insignificant village of Lower Galilee, about seventy-five miles north from Jerusalem, twenty miles east of the Mediterranean Sea, and sixteen miles west of the sea of Galilee. It had no history until Jesus immortalized it. It was held in disrepute by Galileans themselves. We

are familiar with Nathanael's question, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46.) It is not mentioned in the Old Testament. It was situated on a "brow of the hill" (Luke 4:29), north of the plain of Esdraelon. It is said to have now six thousand inhabitants. Here Jesus lived until he was about thirty years of age. (Luke 3:22.)

Jesus is called a Nazarene because he was reared at Nazareth. Joseph and Mary lived there. (Luke 1:26; Matt. 2:23; Mark 1:24.) "Nazarete" is very different from "Nazarene," (See Num. 6.)

INTRODUCTION

Hints and Helps for Teachers

Note the facts intervening between the last lesson and this one.

1. On the eighth day Jesus was circumcised and named in obedience to the law of Moses (Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3; John 7:22), under which he was born (Gal. 4:4), and which he kept.

2. The presentation of Jesus in the temple is another important fact. After the circumcision of a Son the mother continued "in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days." For a daughter she was unclean two weeks, and remained out of the sanctuary sixty-six days. (Lev. 12.)

These days having been fulfilled, Joseph and Mary carried the child to Jerusalem "to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord), and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. (Luke 2:22-24.) For the law concerning the first born see Ex. 13:2, 12; Num. 3:13; 18:15, 16.

3. At this time, the righteous and devout Simeon, waiting for "the consolation of Israel," it having "been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ," was led into the temple by the Holy Spirit, and taking Jesus in his arms thanked God and blessed Joseph and Mary and the child. At that hour, too, Anna, the prophetess came in, thanked God, and spoke of Jesus to "all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." (Luke 2:25-38.)

4. The visit of "the wise men" from the east, the flight into Egypt, and the destruction of the babes of Bethlehem by Herod in his efforts to destroy the child Jesus (Matt. 2:1-18), must be noted.

5. After the death of Herod, the angel directed Joseph to take the child and his mother back into the land of Israel, which he did. It seems that he intended to make his home in Judea, probably at Bethlehem; but learning that Archelaus ruled in that country instead of his father, and being warned of God not to go there, he withdrew and went to his own city, Nazareth.

6. In the guidance and care of God, Jesus was protected in Egypt, and the prophecy was fulfilled: "Out of Egypt did I call my son." (Matt. 2:15.) He was brought up at Nazareth, and the scripture was fulfilled which says: "He should be called a Nazarene." (Matt. 2:23.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Jesus Grew

40. "And the child grew." He was first a babe, and grew in "stature" (verse 52) and "waxed strong" physically.

He was "filled with wisdom." The margin says "becoming full of wisdom," and verse 52 says "advanced in wisdom." He gained wisdom by application and the use of proper means.

"The grace of God was upon him." God's favor was upon him to protect him, as from Herod and other dangers, and to furnish him with such means of physical and mental development as were necessary. Jesus had to grow in every way.

II. The Feast of the Passover

41. "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before Jehovah thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles." (Deut. 16:16; see also Lev. 23; Ex. 12.) The passover occurred in the spring.

The women were not required to go, but were allowed to go, and frequently did go. Hannah went with Elkanah to Shiloh when the altar of God was there (1 Sam. 1; 2:1-21), and there God heard her prayer and gave her Samuel.

By reading the references we learn what the passover was and why it was observed.

42. At twelve years of age boys began to celebrate the passover, and were required to keep the law. Always obedient, Jesus attended this feast with Joseph and Mary.

43. There were eight days in all. The first day was the passover, and there were seven days of the feast. (Num. 28:16, 17.) It was through no accident or misunderstanding or foolishness on his part that "Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem;" he knew when the feast ended and his company started for home; but it was on account of the great interest he felt in his Father's affairs. All that he saw and heard in the temple aroused the divinity within him and impressed him that he should be about his Father's business.

III. Jesus Remained in the Temple

44. These companies were large. Starting from remote places, they increased in number until they reached Jerusalem. Families, kindred, and acquaintances were together. So in returning they were necessarily large. Jesus was old enough and large enough to care for himself; and easily he might not have been missed, therefore, until the end of the first day's journey, until each looked more carefully after his own at nightfall when all stopped to camp. It was not carelessness in Joseph and Mary that Jesus was not missed before; for they supposed he was somewhere in the company, and they sought him at the right time. It would have been a reflection on his superior judgment to have watched him as a mere child.

45-46. "When they found him not" among "kinsfolk and acquaintance," "they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him;" and "after three days [or on the third day] they found him in the temple,

sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions."

There were different apartments of the temple. In some of these probably one of the porches or the court of the women, these teachers, or rabbis, conducted their schools and regularly expounded the law.

Jesus was not detained by the beauty and outward show of the temple; he did not loiter behind with careless companions for the sake of frolic and amusement; but, intensely interested in grave and important matters, he remained in a school in the temple.

"Hearing them, and asking them questions," means not only that Jesus answered the questions of the teachers, but also asked them such questions as would direct their minds to a clearer understanding of the law. The truth was frequently covered up with the numerous traditions of the fathers, and the questions and answers of Jesus were responses to these.

"Hearing them, and asking them questions," gives us an idea as to how teaching was done at that time. This is yet one of the most impressive ways and one of the best ways to teach.

IV. About His Father's Business

47-48. Jesus manifested such a clear insight into the meaning of the Scriptures and an understanding so far beyond one of his age that he astonished all. Joseph and Mary, no doubt, had noted with great interest his growth and development from the eventful night of his birth; but they themselves were astonished and gladly amazed to find him thus engaged. They had sought him elsewhere, "sorrowing." His mother reproved him, and informed him of the sorrow she and Joseph had experienced on his account. Mary spoke of Joseph as Jesus' "father" in an accommodated sense. (See Luke 3: 23.)

49. This reply is not reproachful. "How is it that ye sought me [looked elsewhere for me]?" He seems to think they should have known where to find him. "Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house [or 'about my Father's business'—Authorized Version]?" Thus early he realized God had a work for him to do and he must be about it. It was this deep conviction which enabled him to accomplish so much in his eventful life and to say on the cross: "It is finished."

What a beautiful example to all young people to enter the service of God early and to strive to accomplish much!

50. Joseph and Mary did not comprehend this reply; hence he had a clearer insight into his earthly mission than he received from them.

51. If his divine wisdom and consciousness of his earthly mission drew him into the temple and caused him to tarry behind, the same led him back to Nazareth, where he remained for eighteen years in the quiet affairs and daily routine of a carpenter's life. The law of God required obedience to parents (Deut. 21: 18-21), and Jesus kept it. He is a beautiful and royal example to children in this respect. (Eph. 6: 1-3.) The noblest, purest, most royal child that ever lived on earth was most obedient to his parents.

Jesus was just as much in the work of God at home in Nazareth, subject to his parents, as he was in his public ministry. Disobedience to parents is a bad sign and a great sin. (2 Tim. 3: 1-7.)

"His mother kept all these sayings in her heart." There were many things already in his life to fill her soul with thought and wonder.

V. The Means by Which Jesus Grew

"Jesus grew up among a people seldom (and only contemptuously) named by the ancient classics, and subject at the time to the yoke of foreign oppressors; in a remote and conquered province of the Roman empire; in the darkest district of Palestine; in a little country town of proverbial insignificance; in poverty and manual labor; in the obscurity of a carpenter's shop; far away from universities, academies, libraries, and literary and polished society, without any help, so far as we know, except the parental care, the daily wonders of nature, the Old Testament Scriptures, the weekly Sabbath service of the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:16), the annual festivals in the temple of Jerusalem (Luke 2:42), and the secret intercourse of his soul with God, his heavenly Father." (Scaff, in "The People's New Testament with Notes by Johnson.")

52. "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature." This fact is stated also in verse 40. Jesus was not a man in a child's body. His mind developed as he grew larger and stronger. He grew in every way—in stature, in intellect, in wisdom, in heart, and "in favor with God and men." He grew by use of means—grew physically by taking proper exercise, wholesome food, and restful sleep; grew in wisdom and grace by asking questions, studying the Scriptures, and the exercise of mind and soul. The physical exercise which Jesus took embraced his manual labor as a carpenter. The fact that he learned to work with his own hands must not be overlooked.

These quiet years at Nazareth were spent in physical, mental, and spiritual development and preparation for his great public work. He resisted temptation, prayed, attended the feasts and public worship, and kept God's laws. Thus he grew in grace, in favor with God; and his sincerity, purity, generosity, humility, and kindness brought him into favor with men.

Thus Christians should grow and do grow. (2 Pet. 3:18.) They must so live "that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." (Tit. 2:10.)

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons.

Relate what is said about Nazareth.

State the difference between a "Nazarene" and "Nazarite."

Give the law concerning circumcision and show why Jesus must be circumcised.

Give the law concerning the mother's uncleanness and purification after the birth of a son and a daughter.

What offering did Joseph and Mary make, and why this?

At this time who expressed their thanks to God and blessed

Mary, Joseph, and the babe?

Give the facts of the visit of the "wise men."

How did Herod seek to kill Jesus?

After Herod's death what was Joseph directed to do?

What scriptures did this fulfill?

40 In what respect did Jesus grow?

How was "the grace of God" upon him?

41 Who were required to attend the feasts at Jerusalem?

Why did the women go?

Where and when was Hannah blessed?

Name the feasts.

State at what time of the year they were observed.

- What assembling and service does God require of Christians?
- 42 How old was Jesus at this time? What was required of boys at this age?
- 43 How long did the feast last? Why did Jesus tarry behind? How did Joseph and Mary discover that he was not along?
- 44 Where did they seek him?
- 45, 46 What did they then do? Where did they find him? On what day? What was he doing?
- 47, 48 What was the character of his questions and answers? Why were Joseph and Mary, with the rest, amazed?
- What reproof did Mary offer?
- 49 What answer did Jesus make? What did he mean?
- 50 Why did not Joseph and Mary understand him? From what source did Jesus receive this insight into his mission and work?
- 51 Why, then, did he return to Nazareth? What was his trade? In this was he obedient to God? What impression did all of this make upon his mother? What "sayings" did she remember? Where was Nazareth? What is said of its obscurity and insignificance?
- 52 In what did Jesus grow? How did he grow? In what and how must Christians grow?

"It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold,
'Peace on the earth, good-will to men,
From heav'n's all-gracious king.'
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

* * * *

"Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long
Beneath the angel strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And men at war with men, hear not
The love song which they bring.
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.

"For lo! the days are hast'ning on,
By prophets seen of old,
When with the ever circling years,
Shall come the time foretold;
When the whole heaven and earth shall own
The Prince of Peace their King,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing."

LESSON III—JULY 20.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Lesson Text: Mark 1: 1-11.

MARK 1. 1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

2 Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way;

3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight;

4 John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins.

5 And there went out unto him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey.

7 And he preached, saying, There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 I baptize you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John in the Jordan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him:

11 and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

Golden Text—Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. (Mark 1: 11.)

Time—Probably the first of A.D. 27.

Place—The place of baptism was in the Jordan, probably at Bethabara.

Persons—John the Baptist, Jesus, God and others.

Devotional Reading—Isa. 42: 1-4.

Home Reading—

July 14. M. The Baptism of Jesus. Mark 1: 1-11.

15. T. Fulfilling All Righteousness. Matt. 3: 13-17.

16. W. Confessing Christ. Phil. 2: 5-11.

17. T. Being in Christ. 1 John 5: 18-21.

18. F. The Baptism of Saul. Acts 9: 10-18.

19. S. Baptism to be Observed. Matt. 28: 16-20.

20. S. Jehovah's Chosen Servant. Isa. 42: 1-4.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

In order to gain correct information concerning the river Jordan, from source to mouth, consult "Lands of the Bible" by McGarvey, or the works of some other accurate man, who has not only seen this river and country, but who was there sufficiently long to take measurements and give accurate accounts of them. See pages 30-36 "Lands of the Bible." "The central and principal source of the river Jordan" is a spring, one of the largest in the world, which flows from the western side of a mound on which the ancient town of Dan stood. This stream is about twenty feet wide and from two to two and a

half feet deep. This is the middle source of the Jordan. East of Dan about two and a half miles from the north side of the ruins of Cæsarea Philippi flows another spring, about half the size of the one at Dan. It empties into the former about six miles below Dan. This is the eastern source of the Jordan. Another stream about the same size of the one from Cæsarea Philippi springs from the western side of Mount Hermon and about twenty miles northeast from Dan. This is the western source of the Jordan and empties into the one from Dan a short distance below the mouth of the stream from Cæsarea Philippi. These three streams, flowing together from the Jordan. A few miles below the junction of these streams the Jordan, flowing southward, spreads into a small lake, called the waters of Merom. The middle stream from Dan to the northern end of Merom is 12 miles. From this lake it is little more than ten miles into the lake of Galilee; and thence sixty-five miles into the Dead Sea. Its length from source to mouth on an air line is less than one hundred miles, but measured the way it runs it is more than two hundred miles, its various meanderings from the lake of Galilee to the Dead Sea are counted two hundred miles. Its average width is thirty feet, and its average depth is from three to twelve feet. From the lake of Merom to its mouth it falls 1292 feet. These springs, its real source, are more than 1000 feet higher. It is a rapid stream in the main, but has many eddies and pools on account of its many turns.

It is not only the most important stream of Palestine, but on account of its connection with so many sacred facts, it is the most interesting river of earth. It was crossed miraculously by the Israelites (Josh. 3: 17; Ps. 114: 3), and by Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2: 8, 14.) In it Naaman dipped seven times to be healed of leprosy (2 Kings 5), in it Elisha caused iron to swim (2 Kings 6: 1-7), in it John baptized the multitudes, and in it the Son of God and Savior of the world, was baptized.

INTRODUCTION

Hints and Helps for Teachers

1. This lesson is in the book of Mark.
2. Mark is the author of this book.
3. Mark is first mentioned in Acts 12: 12.
4. His given name was John; he was John Mark.
5. His mother's name was Mary, but his father's name is not given. Mary was a good woman; she lived in Jerusalem; and in her house many brethren met and prayed for Peter's deliverance from prison. (Acts 12: 5, 12.)
6. Mark was nephew or cousin to Barnabas. (Col. 4: 10.)
7. He was Peter's son in the gospel. (1 Pet. 5: 13.) He probably became a Christian while in Jerusalem.
8. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their return from Jerusalem to Antioch when they visited Jerusalem to take alms to the brethren of Judea. (Acts 12: 25.) Paul and Barnabas took him with them also on their first missionary journey. (Acts 13: 5.) But from Perga on this journey he turned back and "went not with them to the work," returning to Jerusalem (Acts 15: 38), not to Antioch.
9. For this reason he was not satisfactory to Paul; but Barnabas

insisted on taking him the second time, Paul declined so decidedly that he and Barnabas "parted asunder," and Barnabas took Mark and Paul took Silas. (Acts 15: 36-40.)

10. But Paul and Barnabas were still good men, treated each as brethren, never criticised each other, and certainly never caused factions and divided congregations over the matter. On the contrary, afterwards Paul affectionately commended both Barnabas and Mark, he and Mark being intimately associated in their work as "co-laborers" and Mark proving a "comfort" to Paul while together in prison in Rome. (Col. 4: 10, 11; Phile. 24.)

11. After this it is inferred that Mark joined Peter in Babylon, and from Babylon, probably went to Asia Minor; for Paul, during his second imprisonment, in writing Timothy, exhorted him to take Mark with him to Rome, because Mark was profitable to Paul "for ministering." (2 Tim. 4: 11.)

12. Mark was not an apostle. It is almost unanimously agreed by early writers that he wrote under the direction of Peter, and wrote for Gentile converts, since he often explains Jewish customs.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Mission of John the Baptist

1. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Mark announces in the outset that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. John, the apostle, begins the life of Christ by going back of the creation of the earth to that unknown period called "the beginning." (John 1: 1.) Matthew traces his descent from Abraham, showing him to be the seed of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed (Matt. 1: 1-16); Luke traces his descent back to Adam, the son of God (Luke 3: 23-38); and Mark begins with his personal ministry, introducing his baptism and work by giving a brief statement of the mission of John the Baptist.

The word "gospel" means "good tidings." Mark relates the "good tidings" of salvation procured by Jesus Christ.

2. The prophecies of this and the next verse refer to the work of John the Baptist. This verse is a quotation of Mal. 3: 1, which see. "The idea is taken from the practice of Eastern monarchs, who, whenever they entered upon an expedition or took a journey through a desert country, sent harbingers before them to prepare all things for their passage, and pioneers to open up the passes, to level the ways, and to remove all impediments." (Clarke's "Commentary.")

These harbingers prepared the way for chariots and armies by filling up valleys, leveling down hills, and making straight roads through the wilderness and mountain passes. See Luke 3: 3-6.

3. The statement in this verse was made by Isaiah. (See Isa. 40: 3-5.) John the Baptist was this voice—this warning and exhortation—to the people. He was the harbinger of the great King soon to come this way, and was preparing the way for him. (See John 1: 23.) He preached really in the literal wilderness; but he preached to the Jews, who were also "in the desert of sorrow and sin."

John prepared "the way of the Lord" by inducing people to repent and be baptized unto the remission of their sins, and made "his paths straight" by persuading them to forsake their crooked ways.

4. "John came." Read the account of his birth in Luke 1: 5-25,

57-66. He was the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth. One verse tells us all we know of his history from childhood until his public ministry began: "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." (Luke 1: 80.) His mission was declared by Gabriel as follows: "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him." (Luke 1: 16, 17.)

"Who baptized in the wilderness." God sent John to baptize (John 1: 23); hence those who refused to be baptized rejected the counsel of God against themselves. (Luke 7: 29, 30.)

The wilderness was not a barren waste, but a thinly inhabited country used for pasture. It lay west of the Jordan and Dead Sea and in the southeastern part of Judea.

"The word of God came unto John" by inspiration; and he went "into all the region round about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins." (Luke 3: 3.)

John exhorted the people to repent because the kingdom of heaven was "at hand" (Matt. 3: 2) and that they might escape the wrath to come. (Luke 3: 7.) Jesus told the seventy whom he sent to say: "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10: 9), which is equivalent to "at hand."

"Baptism of repentance" is baptism springing from repentance. The people were baptized because they repented and desired to obey God.

II. Repentance

Repentance is a change of purpose, a change of will, a change of heart, a determination to forsake sin, and an actual turning from sin to obedience to God. Jesus says that "the men of Nineveh . . . repented at the preaching of Jonah" (Matt. 12: 41); but they turned "every one from his evil way, and from the violence" that was in his hand, and "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way," and spared the city. (Jonah 3: 7-10.) Repentance led to baptism, because baptism was the obedience which God required as an expression of repentance. When the people obeyed God, he forgave their sins; hence it was "the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins."

There are two other passages like this: Christ shed his blood "for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. 26: 28); and, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." (Acts 2: 38.) Christ shed his blood, not because sins had been remitted, but that sins might be remitted. "Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22.) Then the people to whom John preached repented and were baptized "unto remission of sins"—that is, that their sins might be forgiven or blotted out.

John did not preach repentance "unto remission of sins" and baptism unto something else. "The baptism of repentance" was "unto remission of sins." So now those who believe in Christ are not commanded to repent "unto remission of sins" and "be baptized unto" something else; but "repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in

the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." (Acts 2: 37, 38.) The people so understood John, for "they were baptized of him . . . confessing their sins." (Matt. 3: 6.)

III. Confessing Sins

5. John's preaching and earnest exhortations to repentance greatly interested and aroused the people. Therefore "there went out unto him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." Not absolutely every one was baptized, for Luke (7: 29, 30) says some refused to be.

Among "the multitudes" (Luke 3: 7) who were baptized were "many of the Pharisees and Sadducees," to whom John said: "Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matt. 3: 7.)

"Confessing their sins." Truly penitent people are not ashamed to confess their sins. They confess their sins, too, as their own, and do not blame others with them. Baptism is itself a confession of sin and an expression of repentance.

Baptism is a burial in water of one dead to sin. (Rom. 6: 3, 4; Col. 2: 12.) John baptized "in the river Jordan" and "in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there;" and the people "came, and were baptized" (John 3: 23), and "went out unto him," and "were baptized," and went "up out of the water." (Verse 10; see also Acts 8: 36-39.)

IV. John's Habits

6. John's habits, clothing, and diet were simple. His raiment was "camel's hair, and . . . leathern girdle"—a loose garment made of a coarse fabric woven out of the long, rough hair of the camel and fastened "about the loins" with a "leathern girdle." This girdle was worn by any common laborer. The hairy garment was a recognized dress of prophets. (2 Kings 1: 8; Zech. 13: 4.) "And did eat locusts and wild honey." The locust was a large insect resembling a grasshopper, which the Jews were allowed to eat. (Lev. 11: 22.) The poor of Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia use locusts still for food. Honey was deposited in rocks by wild swarms of bees. (Ps. 81: 16.) John drank neither wine nor strong drink of any kind, and was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. (Luke 1: 15.) Compare this with the law for Nazarites. (Num. 6.)

V. One Mightier Than John

7. In his preaching John said: "There cometh after me he that is mightier than I." He said this in answer to the question which arose in the hearts of the people whether he was the Christ or not. (Luke 3: 15-18.) This one mightier than John was Christ. He considered himself unworthy to unloose the latchets of Christ's shoes. Unloosing one's shoe latchets was a humble service. Slaves among Jews, Greeks, and Romans put on, took off, and carried the shoes of their masters. It may have been done sometimes as a voluntary and humble service. John was "the friend of the bridegroom," was happy to sustain this relationship to Jesus, and said Jesus must increase, while he must decrease. (John 3: 29, 30.)

"John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus." (Acts 19: 4.)

8. "He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit." Christ overwhelmed their souls in the Holy Spirit, as John had baptized their bodies in water. This came to pass on the day of Pentecost, just after Christ's ascension (Acts 2), and at the house of Cornelius. (Acts 10: 44-47; 11: 15.)

Matthew (3: 11, 12) and Luke (3: 16, 17) gives a fuller account of John's speech on this point. Matthew and Luke speak of the baptism "in fire." It seems clear, from the fact that the chaff and wheat will be separated and the chaff burned with "unquenchable fire" and from the omission of the baptism "in fire" in the promise of the Holy Spirit when Jesus was speaking to his disciples alone (Acts 1: 4), that burning the chaff with "unquenchable fire" is the baptism "in fire." At the end of the world the good (the wheat) will be gathered into the garner of eternal salvation, and the wicked (the chaff) will be burned in "unquenchable fire."

VI. The Baptism of Jesus

9. "In those days" means when John was baptizing the people. (See Luke 3: 21.) Jesus went from Nazareth to Galilee to the Jordan (about seventy-five or eighty miles) to be baptized of John—most likely to Bethabara (the house of the ford, or passage), or, "to Bethany [which must have been a village whose site is now unknown] beyond Jordan [on the eastern bank], where John was baptizing" (John 1: 28); for John baptized in the Jordan, and Jesus was baptized in that river.

John knew Jesus, not as the Christ, but as a good man, better than himself, and, therefore, at first declined to baptize him, saying: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" John preached "the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins," and Jesus had no sins of which to repent and to be remitted. John recognized his own unworthiness in the presence of Jesus. All along he sought to honor Jesus. His mission was to prepare a people for him. Now Jesus demands baptism at his hands. He did not see the fitness in baptizing Jesus.

If remission of sins is the only reason for being baptized, there would have been no reason for baptizing Jesus; but there are other reasons.

Jesus said: "Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3: 14, 15.) Then John baptized him. Evidently the greater was baptized by the less.

Jesus came down from heaven to do God's will—all God's will. (John 6: 38.) Had he declined or refused to be baptized, as did the Pharisees and lawyers (Luke 7: 29, 30), he would have been disobedient to God and would not have fulfilled all righteousness. Had Jesus obeyed every command of God except the one to be baptized, he would not have obeyed all of them, and hence would not have fulfilled "all righteousness."

To do God's will, whatever it is, is to do righteousness. Since Jesus, the sinless Son of God, traveled so far to be baptized in obedience to God, should we not follow his example? "Thus [like me in

this obedience] it becometh [is fitting and proper] us [others besides Jesus] to fulfill all righteousness."

John also baptized that Christ might be made manifest unto Israel. By the descent of the Holy Spirit upon some one John was to know that that one was the Christ, the Son of God and Savior of men. John knew Jesus before this as a righteous and good man, but not as the Son of God and Messiah. (See John 1: 29-34.) Jesus was not baptized, then, into his priestly office. He was not a priest on earth. (See Heb. 7: 12-28; 8: 4.)

10. "Straightway coming up out of the water" after he was baptized, and Luke (3: 21) adds, "and praying," "he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him." "The Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove" (Luke 3: 22), "and it abode upon him." (John 1: 32.) When John saw the spirit descend upon Jesus, he pointed him out as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." (On this see Lesson V of this quarter.) John saw this, and all present must have seen it. Jesus saw it and looked through the open heavens into the glory beyond, for "the heavens were opened unto him." (Matt. 3: 16.) Here he was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power. (Acts 10: 38.) He was full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4: 1), and had the Spirit without measure. (John 3: 30-36.)

Talmage baptized a person in the river Jordan. In late years others have done the same. I have baptized persons in rivers, lakes, creeks, ponds and pools. What was done? What was done when Talmage baptized that person in the Jordan? Everyone knows. The same thing was done when John baptized people in the Jordan.

11. "And a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." All present must have heard this voice. On two other occasions God spoke aloud from heaven to Jesus—in Jerusalem (John 12:20-36) and on the mount of transfiguration. (Matt. 7: 5.)

It is most significant that God sent his Spirit upon Jesus and confessed him before the world as his beloved Son when he was baptized. He acknowledges us as his children and gives us his Spirit when we obey him. (Acts 2: 38; 5: 32.) "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3: 26, 27.)

The baptism of Jesus must fill all who consider it with reverence and awe. First, baptism is a command of God; second, God's Son and the world's Redeemer, he who came to be "King of kings and Lord of lords," submits to it; God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit were present, and no doubt the angels of God beheld it: and the Father in heaven spoke audibly to all present, and said, "this"—the person just baptized and upon whom the Holy Spirit was descending, "is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This may be associated with Moses on Sinai, the transfiguration of Jesus, his ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

When I see any one baptized, I think of Jesus' baptism; of the fact that the Son of God, "the King of kings and Lord of lords," and Savior of the world was baptized. I think, too, of the fact that God spoke from heaven and confessed Jesus as his Son, and said he

was well pleased with what he had done. And I know that God, his Son, the Holy Spirit, and the angels witness the baptism of every one now who thus obeys God, and that God is well pleased. Then, since God is well pleased, it matters not what the world may think or say.

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time, place, and persons.
Who wrote the book of Mark?
What was his given name?
Who was his mother?
Whose nephew was he?
Whose son in the gospel was he?
On what journey did he start with Paul and Barnabas?
At what place, and why, did he turn back?
Where then did he go?
Why did Paul and Barnabas part?
Where was Mark again with Paul?
Where is it supposed he joined Peter?
Where did he go from Babylon?
Under whose directions is it thought he wrote his book?
Was he an apostle?
- State the different ways in which Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John begin their life of Christ. What does the word "gospel" mean?
 - To what do the prophecies of this and the next verse refer? Of what is this verse a quotation? From what is the idea taken?
 - Who made the prophecy of this verse? Who was this voice? How did harbingers of kings prepare their way? How did John prepare the way of the Lord?
 - Who were John's parents? Who announced the fact that John would be born? Where was Zacharias at the time? Where was John's home, and what did he do until his public ministry began? What did Gabriel declare John's mission to be? By whose authority did John baptize? What did those who refused to be baptized reject? What and where was the wilderness? How did the word of God come unto John? Then, where did he go, and what did he do?
 - Why did he exhort the people to repent? What does "at hand" mean? What is meant by "the baptism of repentance"? What is repentance? Give an example of repentance. Why does repentance lead to baptism? When did God forgive the sins of those to whom John preached? Give other expressions in the New Testament of "unto remission of sins." Why did Jesus shed his blood? Why should those who now believe in Christ repent and be baptized? What shows that the people to whom John preached understood that they must be baptized in order to be pardoned?
 - What effect did John's preaching have upon the people? What did they do? How do we know that not every one was baptized? What did John say to the Pharisees and Sadducees? What is "the wrath to come"? What must be a theme with all preachers? Who are not ashamed to confess their sins? Of what is baptism itself a confession? What is baptism? What circumstances prove this to be true?
 - What were John's habits, clothing, and diet? What are "locusts"? What is "wild honey"? Who yet eat locusts? What did John not drink? With what was he filled from birth?
 - Who did John say would come after him? What was he not worthy to do for Jesus? Who performed this service? What relation did John sustain to Christ?
 - In what would Christ baptize people? When was this done? What was the baptism in fire, to which Matthew and Luke refer?

- 9 What is meant by "in those days?"
 From what place and how far did Jesus go to be baptized?
 Where was John baptizing?
 In what river was Jesus baptized?
 Why did John decline at first to baptize Jesus?
 What other reasons are there for being baptized besides for the remission of sins?
 Which one did Jesus give?
 What would it have been in Jesus had he refused to be baptized?
 For what other reason did John baptize?
 How did he know Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God?
 How do we know Jesus was not baptized into his priestly office?
- 10 What did Jesus do upon coming up out of the water?
 What descended upon him?
 Who saw this?
 What did Jesus see?
 With what was Jesus anointed?
- 11 What did God say?
 Who heard this?
 At which other times did God speak to Jesus?
 When did God first publicly acknowledge Jesus as his Son?
 When will he acknowledge us as his children?
 Describe the awe inspiring scene of Jesus' baptism?
 Of whom and of what should we think in witnessing baptism?

"But then I sigh, and with a piece of scripture
 Tell them that God bids us do good for evil.
 And thus I clothe my naked villiany
 With old odd end stolen forth of Holy Writ;
 And seem a saint when most I play the devil."

"Through floods and flames if Jesus leads,
 I'll follow where he goes."

"I know not where his islands lift
 Their fronded palms in air,
 I only know I cannot drift
 Beyond his love and care."

LESSON IV—JULY 27.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Lesson Text: Matt. 4: 1-11.

MATTHEW 4. 1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered.

3 And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple.

6 and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and, On their hands they shall bear thee up, Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Golden Text—In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. (Heb. 2: 18.)

Time—Probably the first of A. D. 27.

Place—The place of temptation was probably in the northern part of the wilderness of Judea.

Persons—Christ, the devil, and angels.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 124.

Home Reading—

July 21. M. The Temptation of Jesus. Matt. 4: 1-11.

22. T. Christ Sympathizes with the Tempted. Heb. 4: 12-16.

23. W. Christ Intercedes for the Tempted. Luke 22: 31-38.

24. T. Christ Helps the Tempted. Heb. 2: 10-18.

25. F. Satan, the Tempter. 1 Thess. 3: 1-10.

26. S. The Meaning of Temptation. James 1: 1-12.

27. S. The Divine Helper Acknowledged. Psalm 124.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

The wilderness of Judea was an uninhabited, or thinly settled and uncultivated part of the country, infested with wild beasts, (Mark 1: 13), lying west of the Jordan, and the Dead Sea, and the South-eastern part of Judea.

INTRODUCTION

Hints and Helps to Teachers

1. This lesson is in the book of Matthew.
2. Matthew, the apostle, wrote this book.
3. "Matthew," means "a gift of God."
4. Matthew was the son of Alphéus, and is also called Levi. (Mark 2:14.)
5. He was a Jew, a publican, (Matt. 10:3), and was called from "the place of toll," or his place of business, in Capernaum, to be a disciple of Jesus. (Matt. 9:9.)
6. He speaks of himself as "Matthew, the publican," unwilling to conceal his despised calling before he became a follower of Jesus.
7. He became an apostle. (Matt. 10:2-4.)
8. He made Jesus a great feast, which he himself modestly declines to mention. (Luke 5:29.)
9. He is mentioned by name the last time in Acts. 1:13.
10. It is understood that he wrote the book which bears his name for the benefit especially of his fellow countrymen.
11. Jesus must be tempted. Satan would not allow him to overthrow the kingdom of darkness and wickedness without mighty opposition at every point.
12. Jesus must be tried and approved. (See Heb. 6-18, especially verses 14, 15; 4:14-16.)
13. He was "in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."
14. He was made perfect through suffering. (Heb. 5:7-9.)
15. "He is able to succor them that are tempted," since he has endured all.
16. He is an example to us, showing us how to overcome temptation, or Satan himself, by reliance upon God and the proper use of the word of God.
17. The three strong temptations of this lesson represent three great classes of temptations to which we are exposed today.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Why Jesus Was Tempted

1. He "returned from the Jordan" (Luke 4:1), and was driven immediately by the Spirit (Mark 1:12) "into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil," and "was with the wild beasts" (verse 13).

In the beginning of the race, Adam was tempted and fell; in the beginning of his great work of reclaiming the earth and redeeming the race, Christ was tempted and gained a triumphant victory.

Christ was doubtless tempted before. During the thirty years he spent at Nazareth he must have suffered different temptations; but now that he enters upon his public work, Satan renews these attacks with increased energy and force; he does all he can to thwart the purpose of God and to defeat Jesus in his mission of salvation.

Besides, this temptation was a preparation for Jesus in the flesh for his great work as the Messiah; he must grapple with every difficulty and conquer every foe. He is not the Savior of men and cannot establish his spiritual kingdom if he yields in a single point

or does not really overcome Satan in his subtlest and mightiest attacks; but, having overcome, he is ready to succor all who are tempted.

The loyalty of every soul must be tried; and as one proves faithful, God commits to him greater trusts. We cannot understand this too well. And we cannot understand too well that we must be in all things and at all times true to God, not to some scheme and theory of our own.

2. Luke says: "During forty days, being tempted of the devil." During all this time he endured temptation. The temptations are not specified, as below; but, being in the flesh, with all the lusts and appetites of the flesh, he was tempted in all points as we are.

He "fasted forty days and forty nights." Luke (4: 2) says: "He did eat nothing." Moses fasted the same number of days twice (Ex. 24: 18; 34: 28); Elijah, once. (1 Kings 19: 8.) If Jesus had been miraculously sustained during this time, the effects of the fast would have been destroyed; but "he afterwards hungered."

Any great grief, imminent danger, deep anxiety, mental excitement, or intense interest destroys for the time being the natural desire for food. (See Acts 27: 20-44.) Fasting and prayer lift one above animal appetites into closer union and communion with God, and are means of gaining spiritual strength and power. (See Mark 9: 29; 2 Cor. 6: 3-10; 11: 16-33, especially verse 27.) Intensely interested in the greatest work the earth ever witnessed, overwhelmed with its vast importance, in deep anxiety and constant prayer for strength and power to accomplish it; undergoing the severest test, the fiery trials, and the great mental and spiritual strains to which the shrewd and mighty temptations of Satan could subject him, Christ's natural desire for food was suspended. In this mighty, unrelenting conflict he is most successful at absolutely every point. He resisted triumphantly every attack of the subtle deceiver. Now the danger, seemingly, is past; the victory is his; and nature reacts and asserts its claims with powerful force, and he is hungry in the extreme of a gnawing, imperious appetite.

II. The First Temptation of the Three

3. The tempter watched his time. He withdrew only for a moment to change his tactics, to renew his energy, to increase his force, and to return to make his subtlest, most cruel, most severe, and most powerful assault in the time of Christ's greatest weakness.

So he attacks us in our weakest places and weakest moments—when we are weary, weak, nervous, sick, depressed in spirit, or disheartened.

There are two points in this temptation: (1) To display his power in turning stones into bread, and (2) to satisfy his hunger—an appeal to his fleshly appetite. Christ's temptations were real and powerful. Men love to display their power. "If thou art the Son of God" suggests a doubt and is a taunt. Why should the Son of God hunger? "You are not he; if so, you could make bread of these stones." "Let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen." (Luke 23: 35.) "Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us." (Verse 39.)

Jesus fed the multitudes and raised the dead, but he did not

use his miraculous power to feed himself or to save himself from the cross. He and his apostles did not use their miraculous power for self-benefit and self-glorification. To have done this would have thwarted his earthly mission. He came in the flesh to live as a human being among men, to suffer, to be tempted, to weep, to die. Satan appealed to a most imperious appetite (hunger), and did it in the subtlest way. What wrong is there in eating bread when one is hungry—and when, too, one's power is displayed in making it? To eat wholesome food is not wrong within itself; it is necessary, and clothing and shelter are necessary; but "the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment." Jesus is here voluntarily as a man, and to have used miraculous power to sustain life would have made his humanity a mere appearance.

4. God led the children of Israel into the wilderness to humble them, to prove them, whether they would trust and obey him or not; and while they knew not what they would eat, he fed them on manna. So the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted and approved. He was under God's protection, and God would feed him when he saw fit; hence he said to the devil: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (See Deut. 8: 3.) God could be trusted to sustain him.

"Every word" of God means that all of God's will must be done, if it leads through hunger and poverty, to the cross and death; and God will sustain him who does it.

The sword of the Spirit, the word of God—"the written word," as people sometimes say—is the only weapon Jesus uses with which to defend himself. He at once quoted the scripture, saying: "It is written."

III. The Second Temptation

5. The devil then took Jesus into Jerusalem. "The holy city" is Jerusalem, and "the pinnacle of the temple" is some very high point of the building, overlooking, perhaps, the deep valley below.

6. Again the doubt and taunt are repeated. To cast himself down without injury would show his power and gain the applause of the wondering multitudes. Love of applause and love of distinction are human passions. Thus he would open up a short way into the confidence of the Jewish nation and easily establish himself at once as their King. This would be a quicker and more desirable way than the patient, suffering, tearful, prayerful, self-denying way of the cross. This was a temptation.

Jesus—in human tears, sweat, and blood—shrank from the cross and prayed God that the cup might pass; but in its dark shadow, as in the wilderness of temptation, his only desire was that God's will should be done.

Since Jesus relied so implicitly upon the word of God, the devil quoted scripture to induce him to do wrong. He quoted Ps. 91: 11, 12, but left out an important line: "To keep thee in all thy ways." God will protect and keep those who walk in the way which he has appointed for them. Going where God says go is trusting him, not tempting him. Satan first tempted Jesus to distrust God, but now he tempts him to go to the extreme of rashly tempting him.

"The devil can cite scripture for his purpose.

An evil soul producing holy witness

Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,

A deadly apple rotten at the heart."

It should be remembered that Satan quotes the scriptures in order to carry out his unholy purposes, and so do men now. To quote the scriptures today to carry a point or to sustain error is like Satan quoting them to Jesus.

7. Jesus at once replied: "Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God." God's statements do not conflict; his word is always harmonious. He does not tell men what to do, or what not to do, and then send the devil, or even angels, to them to countermand his directions. Jesus still relied implicitly upon the word of God as "it is written." So may we; it is always right.

IV. Satan's Master Piece—The Third Temptation

8, 9. This is the last temptation at this time, and it is the mightiest. It has been called "Satan's masterpiece." In this he throws off the mask and acknowledges that he is "the prince of the world." From a lofty eminence—"an exceeding high mountain"—he spreads out before Jesus, "in a moment of time" (Luke 4: 5), "the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." Jesus sees all—the luxury and ease, the pomp and splendor, the bright crowns and dazzling glories; the wealth of the East, the culture and refinement of Greece, and the power and triumphant armies of Rome. Satan offers all this to Jesus, saying: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." "For it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." (Verse 6.) "All this authority, and the glory of them. . . . It shall all be thine." This was a great temptation. The love of worldly power and glory is one of the strongest, if not the strongest, human passions.

Satan told no lie; all this has been delivered to him, and he is "the prince of the world." (John 14: 30.) It would have been no temptation to offer to Jesus that which Satan did not possess. Christ's "kingdom is not of this world." (John 18: 36.) These are two different and very antagonistic kingdoms. "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ." (Rev. 11: 15.) Christ must rescue all from Satan. He did not dispute Satan's claim to these things. To reclaim them and to reign with God, Jesus must tread the thorny way alone; he must endure the cross and its shame; he must go through blood and the grave. If Jesus would give up this purpose and worship Satan (make him head and leader), then he would place Jesus on the throne without this self-denial and suffering.

10. Jesus felt the force of the temptation, but abhorred the thought and repelled the adversary with indignation, exclaiming: "Get thee hence, Satan [Leave me, thou archenemy of God and men]: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (See Deut. 6: 13.)

Again Christ's defense was the word of God: "It is written." This is sufficient. God is Creator and Ruler of the universe, and to worship and serve him is man's only and greatest good; to turn from him is ruin forever.

11. Satan has done his best. He has presented all his temptations—"the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life" (1 John 2: 16)—and he has presented them in his subtlest and most artful manner, and Jesus has resisted all.

Satan recognized his defeat and "departed from him for a season." (Luke 4: 13.)

When Jesus had fought off the devil, "angels came and ministered unto him." They came after the victory, not to fight his battles. In all probability, they brought him food and sympathy. Angels, indeed, have charge of him now.

All must be tempted. (Matt. 18: 7.) Every one is tempted through his own lusts. (James 1: 13-15.) None are tempted above their ability to resist. (1 Cor. 10: 13.) Temptations prove all and strengthen all who resist. (James 1: 2-4.) "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

QUESTIONS

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| <p>Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give the time, place and persons. Give the ten statements concerning Matthew (or the teacher can call for five at a time, or two at a time). Give the seven points concerning the temptations of Jesus (one at a time).</p> <p>1 Give reasons why Jesus must be tempted. Where did Jesus go after his baptism? What led him there? What was "the wilderness?" Why was Jesus driven there? How long was he there? Was he ever tempted before? How? Why was he so severely tempted at this time?</p> <p>2 Was he tempted all through the forty days? How long did he fast? Was Jesus miraculously sustained during this fast? What will cause one to fast? What benefit may be derived from fasting and prayer? When did Jesus become hungry? Why?</p> | <p>3 Why did Satan come to him just then? When does Satan try us most sorely? What is this temptation? How many points are there in it?</p> <p>4 Why does Jesus not thus feed himself? How does he defend himself? Where is this scripture? What does "every word . . . of God" mean? How do we live by it?</p> <p>5 What is "the holy city?" What is "the pinnacle of the temple?"</p> <p>6 What is this temptation? How does Satan try to persuade Jesus to yield?</p> <p>7 How does Jesus meet it? Does God contradict himself?</p> <p>8, 9 What is the last temptation? What all does Jesus see? Does Satan lie? Why is this a temptation?</p> <p>10 How does Jesus meet this one? What is it to worship Satan? What is it to worship God? Why did Satan leave Jesus?</p> <p>11 Who "ministered unto him?" How? How can we resist temptation?</p> |
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Higher than the perfect song
For which love longeth,
Is the tender fear of wrong,
That never wrongeth.

—Bayard Taylor.

LESSON V—AUGUST 3.

THE FIRST DISCIPLES OF JESUS

Read: John 1: 35-51. *Lesson Text:* John 1: 35-46.

JOHN 1. 35 Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples;

36 and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them. What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), where abidest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day: it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ).

42 He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter).

43 On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Golden Text—Jesus saith unto him, follow me. (John 1: 43.)

Time—A.D. 27.

Place—Bethabara, or Bethany (not Bethany on the Mount of Olives, but a village whose site is unknown), the place "beyond the Jordan [on the eastern bank,] where John was baptizing." (John 1: 28.)

Persons—Jesus, John and Peter.

Devotional Reading—Prov. 3: 13-18.

Home Reading—

July 28. M. Pointing Men to Jesus. John 1: 35-42.

29. T. Jesus Finding Men. John 1: 43-51.

30. W. Requirements for Discipleship. Luke 8: 34-38.

31. T. Following the Good Shepherd. John 10: 11-18.

Aug. 1. F. Following the Great Shepherd. Heb. 13: 16-21.

2. S. Following the Chief Shepherd. 1 Peter 5: 1-11.

3. S. Wisdom's Happy Ways. Prov. 3: 13-18.

INTRODUCTION

Hints and Helps for Teachers

1. John, the beloved disciple, wrote the book of John. (What other books of the New Testament did he write?)

2. He was a fisherman by trade (Matt. 4: 21), a brother of

James, and a son of Zebidee and Salome. (Compare Matt. 27: 56; Mark 15: 40.)

3. John 1: 1-34 should be studied before this lesson.

I. The Word

It is first stated that "the Word" existed in the beginning with God and that "the Word was God;" that "all things were made through him;" that "without him was not anything made that hath been made;" that "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us;" that this was done in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, "the only begotten of the Father;" that "in him was life;" that John the Baptist bore witness of Jesus, "the true light," and pointed him out as "the One" to come. John the Baptist told the delegation of priests and Levites, which the Jews sent out from Jerusalem to ask him who he was, that he was not Elijah, or "that prophet," or the Christ; but he was the one sent to prepare a people for the Lord, as Isaiah had foretold.

II. The Lamb of God

"On the morrow [the day after the visit of these priests and Levites] he seeth Jesus coming unto him." (Verse 29.) This was after Jesus' baptism and forty-days' temptation.

This is the first reference to the appearance of Jesus in person which is made by John's Gospel. The author of this Gospel passes over the birth and early life of Jesus, because his readers were familiar with these facts.

John the Baptist pointed Jesus out as "the Lamb of God" to the multitude. He intended for his own disciples to believe in and follow Jesus.

Jesus was mild and innocent, like a lamb. "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before his shearer is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." (Acts 8: 32.) Yet John meant here that he was a sin offering. Every lamb slain as a sacrifice under the law of Moses pointed to him. He is spoken of as "a Lamb . . . slain" (Rev. 5: 6; see also Rev. 13: 8); "the blood of the Lamb," as the power that gives the victory over the enemies of God's people (Rev. 12: 11) and in which the robes of the righteous have been washed. (Rev. 7: 14.) God prepared for him a body, which was bruised and offered up "once for all." (Heb. 10: 5-10.) His blood "cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1: 7.) "That taketh away the sin of the world"—not of the Jews only, but of the world. John, by inspiration, was enabled to make this declaration.

John had first told the multitudes he baptized that one mightier than himself would come (Matt. 3: 11), and enjoined upon them to believe on him when he should come (Acts 10: 4); now he has come, and John points him out as the one referred to. "After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me." (See John 1: 15.) Jesus was first in importance, and he existed with God as "the Word" and was before John in point of existence.

III. How John Knew Jesus Was the Christ

John the Baptist said, "And I knew him not." John knew Jesus as a man, for their mothers were cousins: Mary visited Elisabeth just before the birth of John the Baptist and remained about three months.

(Luke 1: 39, 56.) John knew Jesus as a good man, knew Jesus was better than himself, and for this reason declined, at first, to baptize him (Matt. 3: 14); but John did not know Jesus as "the Lamb of God" and Messiah.

"But," said John, "that he should be made manifest to Israel [as the Messiah], for this cause came I baptizing in water." All his preaching and baptizing were to prepare a people for the Messiah and to make him known to the world. In John's baptizing, the Messiah, or "Lamb of God," became manifest in the way stated below.

As we have already learned, God sent John, as a forerunner of the Messiah, to preach "the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins" and to baptize the penitent "in water." In this way—that is, by teaching the people to repent and be baptized unto the remission of their sins—John prepared the people for the Lord.

God gave John a sign by which he could recognize the Messiah when he should be baptized. "Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit." When Jesus was baptized, this occurred, and John saw it. Besides, God said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3: 16, 17.) In this way John knew Jesus was the Messiah and "the Lamb of God." So he "bare witness," or gave his testimony, saying: "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him."

Christ, the Messiah, was to baptize "in the Holy Spirit." He did not do this until after his ascension. (Acts 1: 4, 5; 2: 1-4.) Christ alone could baptize "in the Holy Spirit."

John said, "And I have seen (this sign God gave) and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." John bore this testimony on different occasions. He gladly pointed out Jesus as the Son of God and "Lamb of God." John was the morning star; Jesus was "the Sun of righteousness." John said of Jesus: "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3: 30.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Andrew and John

35. "Again on the morrow." This is the day after the one mentioned in John 1: 29. On the preceding day, in a public discourse, John pointed out Jesus as "the Lamb of God," etc.; but on this day he declares him to be such to two of his own disciples. One of these was Andrew (verse 40), and from his own modest way of speaking of himself we conclude that probably the other was John.

John was an apostle, and all the twelve apostles were present when Jesus was baptized and heard the testimony of John the Baptist concerning him. (Acts 1: 22.)

36. When John pointed him out as "the Lamb of God," he meant that God had prepared him as a sin offering "that taketh away the sin of the world."

37. John intended for the two disciples to follow Jesus; and having heard John's testimony, they did so. Had they not been first the disciples of John, they had not then been prepared for Jesus; now they cannot become the disciples of Jesus unless they leave John

and follow Jesus. They must improve their opportunities. To follow the light they had was a sure way to greater light.

38. Jesus did not proceed until they overtook him; but he "turned, and beheld them following," waited for them, and said: "What seek ye?" He encouraged them to follow him and to make known their desires.

"Rabbi," as John interprets it, means "Master," "Teacher."

They desired to be with Jesus and to learn from him; hence they asked: "Where abidest thou?"

39. He invited them to go with him by saying, "Come, and ye shall see;" and they accepted the invitation. He probably had some temporary stopping place near; but his home was yet at Nazareth, and he soon left this region for Galilee. (John 2: 1.) They went and "abode with him that day: it was about the tenth hour," or four o'clock P.M., counting from sunup to sundown as a day. Counting from twelve o'clock at night, according to the Roman reckoning, as in John 19: 14, it was ten o'clock A.M.; and this is more probable. They spent the day, no doubt, in receiving profitable information.

"What seek ye?" is one of the greatest questions of life, because people usually find what they seek. "Seek, and ye shall find."

40. One of these two was Andrew, who afterwards became an apostle. (Matt. 10: 2.) He was of Bethsaida (John 1: 44), probably a suburb of Capernaum. (Mark 1: 21, 29.) He and Peter were fishermen. Fishing was an honorable occupation. He was the one who suggested to Jesus the lad with five barley loaves and two fishes (John 6: 9) and who went with Philip to tell Jesus of the Greeks who desired to worship him. (John 12: 22.) He was one of the first two disciples of Jesus, becoming one before Peter; but later on Peter grew into greater prominence, and but little is known of Andrew. That he is here called "Simon Peter's brother" shows that Peter was the more prominent of the two when John wrote. Yet Andrew filled his mission. That is all any of us can do. Doing that, we do well.

II. Peter

41. "He findeth first his own brother Simon." "First" to what? Either before the other disciple found his brother or finding Simon was the first thing he did after leaving Jesus. The latter seems to be the meaning.

In the spirit of his new Teacher, Andrew at once sought to lead his own brother to Christ. This is the true missionary spirit. Christ came first to his own; the apostles preached first to the Jews. First "in Jerusalem," then "in all Judea and Samaria," and thence "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8), is God's order. A man is under greater obligation than any one else to teach his own family the Bible and to lead them to Jesus. Still, he must not stop with that.

From this and Philip's example in John 1: 45 we learn the value and power of personal work. Note also the example of Philip, the evangelist (not this Philip), preaching to one man. (Acts 8: 26-40.)

"Messiah" is Hebrew and means the same as "Christ," which is Greek—that is, "the Anointed One."

42. Peter soon became more prominent and accomplished more than Andrew, because he was bolder and more aggressive; yet Andrew "brought him unto Jesus." We may be weak ourselves and pos-

sess but one talent, yet we may lead to Jesus those who, by God's grace, may accomplish much. To bring our friends and dear ones to Jesus is the greatest service possible that we can render them. If every Christian would bring one soul to Jesus, how soon the world would be turned to God! This is the way the kingdom of God began, and this is the way to extend it. It cannot be done by proxy; we cannot send some one else, but must go ourselves and do our own work. If we will lead our own family to Christ, we will receive strength and courage by that to lead others to him. "To him that hath shall more be given." John the Baptist pointed out Jesus to two; one of these brought another, and that one brought thousands to Jesus.

"Simon" was the name by which Peter was known. He was the son of John, or Jonah. (Matt. 16: 17.) Jesus said he should be called "Cephas," which means "a stone." John interpreted the meaning for his readers. "Peter" is the Greek form; "Cephas" "is Aramaic, the modified form of Hebrew spoken in Palestine in our Lord's day." This seems a prophecy as to what Simon would become in strength of character. He was impulsive and wavering at times in the beginning, but he grew to be a stone.

III. Philip

43. "On the morrow"—the day after the meeting with these three disciples—Jesus "was minded to go forth into Galilee" (go home), "and he findeth Philip" and invited him to follow him. To him first, so far as the record shows, were spoken the words: "Follow me." That Jesus found him may imply that Jesus sought him, and, having found him, called him to follow. He became an apostle, and must be distinguished from Philip, one of "the seven," who became an evangelist. (Acts 6: 3, 5; 21: 8.) His name is at the head of the second group of apostles, as Peter's is at the head of the first group. (Matt. 10: 2, 3; Mark 3: 16-18; Luke 6: 14-16.) He and Andrew are associated in John 6: 7-9; 12: 20-22.

44. "Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter."

"Bethsaida" means "house of fishing."

It is difficult to determine the situation of this place. There seems to have been two places by this name—one, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum and Chorazin (Matt. 11: 21; Mark 6: 45-53; Luke 10: 13); the other, on the northeastern shore. (Mark 6: 31-53; Luke 9: 10-17.) The first mentioned was the one of our lesson.

IV. Nathanael

45. Philip, like Andrew, desires others to come to Christ; and he "findeth Nathanael" to tell him about Jesus.

Nathanael was a Galilean and lived at Cana. (John 21: 2.) In our lesson and in John 21: 2 are the only two places his name is mentioned in the Bible. He was "an Israelite indeed, in whom is [was] no guile."

"It is very commonly believed that Nathanael and Bartholomew are the same persons. The evidence for that belief is as follows: St. John, who twice mentions Nathanael, never introduces the name 'Bartholomew' at all; St. Matthew (10: 3), St. Mark (3: 18), and St. Luke (6: 14), all speak of Bartholomew, but never of Nathanael.

It may be, however, that 'Nathanael' was the proper name and 'Bartholomew' (son of Tolmai) was the surname of the same disciple, just as 'Simon' was called 'Bar-jona' and 'Jesus' was called 'Barnabas'." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) If this be so, Nathanael was an apostle; and John 21: 2 favors this conclusion.

"Of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote," means that Jesus is the One to come foretold by Moses (Deut. 18: 18, 19, for instance) and by the prophets. "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24: 27.) "That all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me." (Luke 24: 44.) "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19: 10.)

"Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph," is the star of Jacob and the hope of Israel, the One to come. This was clear to Philip. Jesus was supposed to be "the son of Joseph."

46. But the mention of Nazareth, an insignificant and despised Galilean town, raised a doubt in Nathanael's mind, and he asked: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" It was proverbial "that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." (John 7: 52.)

"Come and see" was the best answer to make to Nathanael. Seeing for himself would remove his doubts. He was not too prejudiced to investigate, and was soon convinced. An honest heart is necessary to the reception of the truth.

Christ asks the world to "come and see." He says that "the tree is known by its fruit." Christianity is known by what it has done. Christians are the light of the world through their charitable, godly lives and faithful service to God.

47. Jesus showed his divinity by declaring at once, as he approached, the character of Nathanael, whom he had never met: "An Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" This was a high tribute to Nathanael's sincere and honest heart. He was free from hypocrisy and every form of deception—guileless. According to the law, he worshiped God sincerely.

48. It greatly astonished Nathanael that Jesus should know him, not having met him, and he asked: "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus replied: "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee."

We have no way of knowing where this fig tree was or what experience, if any, Nathanael had under it. It seems that before Philip reached Nathanael to tell him about Jesus he was under this fig tree, where Philip found him. While there and before Philip reached him and where Jesus could not see him with the natural eye, Jesus saw him and knew him. This was done by the exercise of divine power, and proved that Jesus was more than human.

49. This convinced Nathanael that Jesus was the Messiah, and he confessed him to be "the Son of God" and "King of Israel."

50. Jesus assured Nathanael that while he had been convinced by this fact, he should "see greater things than these." Nathanael witnessed the wonderful miracles of Jesus and saw him after he arose from the dead. If he was one of the apostles, he saw Jesus ascend into heaven.

51. Seeing Jesus ascend into heaven is probably what Jesus meant

by saying Nathanael should see "the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." (See Luke 24: 50-53; Acts 1: 9-11.) Paul (1 Tim. 3: 16) says Jesus was "seen of angels."

Jesus frequently speaks of himself as "the Son of man." In his humility he uses this expression to designate his humanity. He is not only the Son of Mary, of the seed of David, the promised seed of Abraham; but he is "the Son of man," and thus related in sympathy, service, and sacrifice to all the human family.

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
- Repeat the Golden Text.
- Give the time, place, and persons.
- Who wrote the book of John?
- What other books did he write?
- What should be studied before this lesson?
- What was Jesus before he came to earth?
- How did "the word" come to earth and become flesh?
- What day is meant by "on the morrow?"
- Who were sent to inquire of John the Baptist who he was?
- What reply did John make to these delegates?
- Upon whom did John teach the people he baptized to believe?
- What had John told the people of Jesus?
- In what way did John not know Jesus?
- Why did he at first decline to baptize Jesus?
- How did John prepare a people for the Lord? How was Jesus manifested as the Messiah through John's baptism?
- Why, then, did John say he knew that Jesus was the Messiah?
- What testimony did John again bear?
- 35 What day here is meant by "on the morrow?"
- To whom did John point out Jesus on this day?
- Who were they?
- 36 In what sense is Jesus "the Lamb of God?"
- 37 What did these disciples do?
- Did John the Baptist intend for them to do that?
- How can we receive more light?
- 38 What did Jesus do?
- What reply did they make?
- 39 What is meant by "come and see?"
- What was the hour?
- What seek you all?
- 40 Relate all you know about Andrew—where he lived, what he did, and what he became.
- 41 Whom did he find?
- What is meant by "first"—first to what?
- What did he do with Peter?
- What spirit did he manifest?
- What should we do?
- 42 What did Jesus say to Peter?
- What does "Cephas" mean?
- What did he become as to character?
- 43 What day is meant by this verse?
- Where would Jesus go?
- Whom did he find?
- What did he bid Philip do?
- What did Philip become?
- 44 Where did he live?
- What does "Bethsaida" mean?
- Where was it?
- 45 What did Philip do?
- Who was Nathanael?
- Why is it supposed that he was the same as Bartholomew?
- What did Philip say to him of Jesus?
- Of whom did Moses and the prophets write?
- 46 What reply did Nathanael make to Philip?
- What did Philip say to this?
- What is essential to the reception of the truth?
- How is Christianity known?
- 47 What did Jesus say of Nathanael?
- 48 What did Nathanael ask Jesus?
- What reply did Jesus make?
- 49 What did Nathanael confess Jesus to be?
- What does "Rabbi" mean?
- 50 What "greater things" did Nathanael see?
- 51 What did Jesus say Nathanael would see?
- What is meant by "angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man?"
- Why did Jesus speak of himself as "the Son of man?"

LESSON VI—AUGUST 10

THE FIRST MIRACLE OF JESUS

Lesson Text: John 2: 1-11.

JOHN 2. 1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

2 and Jesus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

6 Now there were six waterpots of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast. And they bare it.

9 And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants that had drawn the water knew), the ruler of the feast calleth the bridegroom,

10 and saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

Golden Text—Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. (John 2: 5.)

Time—A. D. 27, the early part of the year.

Place—Cana of Galilee.

Persons—Jesus and his disciples; Mary, the mother of Jesus; and others at the marriage feast.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 108: 1-6.

Home Reading—

- Aug. 4. M. The First Miracle of Jesus. John 2: 1-11.
5. T. Christ's Power over Nature. Matt. 8: 18-27.
6. W. Christ's Power over Evil Spirits. Matt. 15: 21-28.
7. T. Christ's Power over Disease. Luke 6: 12-19.
8. F. Christ's Power over Death. Luke 7: 11-17.
9. S. Miracles Strengthen Faith. John 20: 24-31.
10. S. The Testimony of Trust. Psalm 108: 1-6.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

It is not certainly known where Cana was in Galilee. McGarvey, in "Lands of the Bible," says that the village now called "Kefr Kenna" is usually regarded as the "Cana of Galilee." It is about three miles north of Nazareth, on the road to the lake. Some suppose that the place called "Kanna el Jilil," twelve miles north of Nazareth, is the place.

INTRODUCTION

Hints and Helps for Teachers

1. There being six lessons of this quarter—V to X—in the book of John further attention is called to it and its author.

2. This book was written toward the close of the first century, and after Matthew, Mark, and Luke had written their books, or Life of Christ.

3. John's reference to much these other writers wrote is a corroboration of them.

4. He gives more of Jesus' early ministry than they, but omits his birth and childhood—his miraculous conception, visit of the wise men, destruction of the innocents, flight into Egypt, return to Nazareth, visit to the temple when twelve years of age, and baptism. His readers were familiar with these facts.

5. He records only one miracle common to the four—feeding the five thousand; but he records four not mentioned elsewhere: (1) John 2: 1-11 (this lesson); (2) John 5: 1-9; (3) John 9: 1-17; (4) John 11: 43, 44; relate these. What are they?

6. He omits the parables recorded by the others.

7. He devotes at least one-third of his book to the sayings and doings of the last twenty-four hours of Christ's life. For instance, chapters 13-17 record the facts of Jesus washing the saints' feet and, after the Lord's Supper, his speeches and prayer before his departure from that upper room to go "over the brook Kidron" (John 18: 1) into Gethsemane. Chapters 18, 19 relate the events of the remainder of the night and the next day, while chapters 20, 21 give the account of his resurrection and appearance to his disciples.

8. John, Peter, and James were the closest to Jesus. They witnessed the resurrection of Jairus' daughter, the transfiguration, and the agony in Gethsemane.

9. John was the "beloved disciple" who leaned on Jesus' bosom.

10. He and Peter followed Jesus after the arrest and went into the house of Caiaphas.

11. He was at the trial before Pilate and stood by the cross, where Jesus committed to him the care of Mary, the Lord's own mother.

12. He outran Peter to the sepulcher on receiving the news of Christ's resurrection; but while he stooped to look in, Peter passed him and went in.

13. John and James were called by Jesus "sons of thunder." John and James desired to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritan village which refused Jesus a night's lodging. (Luke 9: 54-56.)

14. John forbade others doing a good work in the name of Jesus because they were not literally following Jesus with the apostles. (Luke 9: 49.)

15. John and James asked for the highest positions of honor in the earthly kingdom they thought Jesus was about to establish.

16. John wrote much of love; but that does not mean he was not true, firm, and brave. It is he who says that those who claim to know God, and yet refuse to keep his commandments, are liars and the truth is not in them. (1 John 2: 4), and that to love God is to keep his commandments. (1 John 5: 3.) To really love God and men is to be both true and courageous, uncompromising and steadfast.

17. Peter, James, and John "were reputed to be pillars." (Gal. 2: 9.)

18. John spent the later years of his life in Asia Minor, whence

he was exiled to Patmos. He lived to be an old man, but we are unable to say how or when he died.

19. John (20: 30, 31) gives the prime purpose of Christ's miracles and why he recorded many of them: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." Nicodemus said: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3: 2.) Jesus says the works he did bore witness of him that the Father sent him. (John 5: 36.)

20. In his numerous miracles of compassion and mercy he relieved the variously afflicted; but the prime object of his miracles is to convince the world that the Father had sent him, that all may believe on him and receive life through his name.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Jesus Attended a Marriage Feast

1. "And the third day"—the third day after the call of Philip and Nathanael, of which we learned in the last lesson (John 1: 43-45)—this marriage feast was given "in Cana of Galilee."

As we have learned, Cana was the home of Nathanael. (John 21: 2.) From the time of the events of this lesson it has been noted as the place of Christ's first miracle.

The feast was given at the bridegroom's expense, at his own or his father's home, and it continued usually for seven days. The women ate separately from the men. All ate from a large dish filled with rice or other grain and bits of meat and set either on the ground or on a table. The guests took the food out with their hands or with bits of bread. The chief guests ate first, then others, and so on until all had eaten. Geikie, in his "Life of Christ," says: "Singing, music, dancing, merry riddles, and the play of wit amused the house night after night, while the feast was prolonged; and it was only after it had worn itself out that life settled down into colorless monotony." Samson's wedding feast, in Judg. 14, is an example. Farrar says: "It is well known that those ceremonies began at twilight. It was the custom in Palestine, no less than in Greece,

"To bear away

The bride from home at blushing shut of day,"

or even later, far on into the night, covered from head to foot in her loose and flowing veil, garlanded with flowers, and dressed in her fairest robes. She was heralded by torchlight, with songs and dances and the music of the drum and the flute to the bridegroom's home. She was attended by the maidens of her village, and the bridegroom came to meet her with his youthful friends."

"And the mother of Jesus was there." John tenderly speaks of Mary as "the mother of Jesus"; he never calls her by name. (John 2: 5, 12; 19: 25.) From the interest she manifested and the part she took in this feast in directing the servants it has been supposed that Mary was a relative of the family where it occurred.

Since Joseph has not been mentioned since the visit of Jesus, when twelve years of age, to Jerusalem, it has been supposed that he was then dead.

2. "And Jesus also was bidden, and his disciples, to the marriage." Nathanael lived there; Mary was a friend, if not a relative, of the family; and naturally Jesus and his disciples were invited. We have seen who his disciples were at this time.

Marriage and the home are institutions of God. There can be no home without marriage. Eden was not a complete home to man without woman, without a wife. God says that "it is not good that the man should be alone" and that man shall "leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Jesus sanctioned and honored this relationship by attending this feast and performing here his first miracle. Jesus does not sanction asceticism and compulsory celibacy. Peter and other apostles were married. Paul simply waived his right to marry, but he maintained that he had this right. (1 Cor. 9: 4, 5.)

While Jesus would have us temperate, grave, and sober-minded, he would also have us cheerful, joyous, and happy; he would not have us long-faced and doleful, complaining and fault-finding. His ministry was of peace and good-will. He went about cheering, comforting, and blessing others. He attended other feasts besides this one. If Christians are now invited to wedding feasts or other feasts given even by unbelievers, they may attend, provided while there they violate no principle of the gospel. (See 1 Cor. 10: 27-33.)

Jesus lived in the humble home of Joseph and Mary, at Nazareth, until he was about thirty years of age; he visited Peter's home; and he delighted to visit the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus at Bethany. That is a happy home that has Jesus for a guest.

3. "And when the wine failed." For some reason the wine gave out, but just why we do not know. It has been supposed it was because the family was in humble circumstances and there were more guests than were at first expected. The "servants" mentioned in John 2: 5 suggests that the family was in comfortable circumstances. Some have supposed that Jesus and his disciples were invited after the arrangements for the feast were made. Farrar says: "None but those who know how sacred in the East is the duty of lavish hospitality and how passionately the obligation to exercise it to the utmost is felt can realize the gloom which this incident would have thrown over the occasion or the misery and mortification which it would have caused to the wedded pair."

That the wine failed and that this failure furnished Jesus an occasion to perform this miracle and manifest his glory (verse 11) are the facts which concern us.

II. The Conversation of His Mother With Jesus

"The mother of Jesus saith unto him. They have no wine." Why did Mary appeal to Jesus? Her solicitude is explained upon the ground that she was a friend or relative and felt somewhat responsible for the success of the feast. It has been suggested that she felt that Jesus and his disciples were responsible to some extent for this failure. She knew Jesus and believed that he could relieve the difficulty. From her direction to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith

unto you, do it" (verse 5), it seems that she believed he could perform a miracle.

4. To her Jesus replied: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" In our language these words may seem harsh and lacking in respect, but in the language Jesus used the expression, "woman," was most respectful. Queens were so addressed. Thus Jesus addressed his mother from the cross (John 19: 26), and so he addressed Mary Magdalene after his resurrection. (John 20: 13, 15.)

"What have I to do with thee?" is an expression frequently found in the Bible. By looking out the following references we will obtain an idea of its meaning: Judg. 11: 12; 2 Sam. 16: 10; 19: 22; 1 Kings 17: 18; 2 Kings 3: 13; 2 Chron. 35: 21; Mark 1: 24; 5: 7; Luke 4: 34; 8: 28. It means, as has been explained by others: "Leave me to myself; let me follow my own course." Jesus is Mary's son, of the seed of David; but he is more; he is the Son of God. While he was David's Son, David "in the Spirit" called him "Lord." (Matt. 22: 41-44.) While he was not disrespectful and disobedient to his mother, he would teach her that he is more than her Son. He said on another occasion, when his mother and brethren sought him with an endeavor to control his actions: "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt. 12: 48-50.)

III. "Mine Hour is Not Yet Come"

What does Jesus mean by his hour? There is a special time in Jesus' history called by himself and by John his "time," or his "hour." Jesus said to his brethren: "My time is not yet come." (John 7: 6, 8.) At the feast the Jews sought to take him; "and no man laid his hand on him, because his hour was not yet come." (Verse 30; see also John 8: 20.) A few days before his crucifixion Jesus said at Jerusalem, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified;" and: "What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour." (John 12: 23, 27.) "Father, the hour is come." (John 17: 1; see also Matt. 26: 45; Mark 14: 35.) The "hour" above all, the supreme "hour" for which Jesus came into the world, was that "hour" when he redeemed the race and glorified God by his death on the cross. This having been accomplished, God exalted him to glory at his own right hand. Every word Jesus spoke in condemnation of sin and every miracle he performed excited the jealousy and intensified the hatred of the Jews, until their jealousy and hatred culminated in his death on the cross. Jesus knew that at the beginning of his public ministry and his first miracle started him on his death march to the cross. He did not work a miracle simply to supply a feast with wine.

Some say this expression in this verse means that the hour to begin his public ministry and to manifest his glory (John 2: 11) had not come; but the above explanation seems the true meaning.

5. This verse shows that his mother knew he meant no disrespect in his answer and that she expected him to relieve the difficulty to which she had called his attention.

IV. Jesus Turns Water into Wine

6. "Six waterpots of stone, . . . containing two or three firkins apiece." A "firkin" was a measure of seven or eight gallons. One jar, then, would contain from fifteen to twenty-five gallons. If one jar contained about twenty gallons, the six jars would contain one hundred and twenty gallons. Some estimate these jars as containing more than this.

"After the Jews' manner of purifying." The Jews had many washings of purification, and much water was necessary. They washed their hands before eating and their cups, pots, and brazen vessels as religious ceremonies (Mark 7: 3, 4); also as the guests arrived, their feet were bathed.

7. Jesus directed the servants to "fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim."

The question has been raised: Why did Jesus make so much wine? The pure and wholesome wine of that country was quite different from the fiery, intoxicating wines of the saloons of our times, and large quantities could be drunk without intoxication. Palestine was a wine-producing country, and wine was the beverage of the people. While Jesus may not have turned all this water into wine, he made a sufficient quantity to supply the needs of the feast, and perhaps more. When he fed the five thousand, twelve basketfuls of food were taken up.

8. The waterpots having been filled with water, Jesus then directed the servants to "draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast." It was put in water and drawn out wine. "The ruler of the feast" was the one selected to superintend and manage the feast and to preserve order. He first drank of the wine, according to custom.

9. "The ruler of the feast," when he drank, knew it was wine, and good wine; but he "knew not whence it was." The servants who had put the water into the jars and had drawn it out wine, knew. Then, here are two independent witnesses to this miracle: the servants knew it was put in water; the ruler, ignorant of this fact, knew it was wine.

10. Having tasted it, the ruler called to the bridegroom, who gave the feast, and made the statement of this verse. "The ruler of the feast" states here the custom of the country of setting out first the good wine when the appetites of the guests are sharpest and they could easily discern the difference between the good and bad; and when all "have drunk freely" and their appetites are so dulled that they cannot discern the difference, "then that which is worse." But this bridegroom reversed this custom—saved the best until the last. This all goes to prove that it was a miracle Jesus performed, for this water turned into wine was a pure and good quality. That Jesus turned water into wine at this marriage feast—the pure, wholesome fruit of the vine of that country, an abundance of which one could drink without becoming intoxicated—is not the slightest justification of the use of the fiery, intoxicating, poisonous liquors and strong drinks of to-day; neither is it the slightest justification of the tippling saloon, or of "boot-legging," as selling intoxicating liquors in violation of law, as on the sly and under cover of darkness, is now called.

V. Jesus' First Miracle

11. "This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee." This is not only the first miracle in Cana, but it is the first of all Jesus performed.

A miracle is a supernatural act. The Creator of nature and who is above nature can intensify, modify, or suspend the laws of nature; and when he does it, it is a miracle. Christ's miracles are here called "his signs," as in John 20: 30; and they are "signs" of his divine Sonship—that he "is the Christ, the Son of the living God."

"And manifested his glory." This miracle was a manifestation of his divine power—that he was more than human, that he was "the only begotten from the Father" (John 1: 14), that he was the Christ.

"And his disciples believed on him"—the disciples mentioned above and who were then with him. Nathanael had already confessed him to be "the Son of God" and "King of Israel." (John 1: 49.) They all believed in him, but their faith by this miracle was increased.

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden text.
Give the time, place, and persons.
State what is said of "Cana of Galilee."
How many lessons of this Quarter are in the book of John?
When was it written?
What does John omit that the other evangelists relate?
What does he record which they omit?
What was John by trade?
Who were his parents?
Who was his brother?
What were James and John called?
In what particulars were he, James, and Peter closer to Jesus than the other apostles?
Relate the further facts in his history.
What other books did he write?
Why did he write the book of John?
What was the purpose of Christ's miracles?
- The day here mentioned is "the third day" from what?
Where was Cana?
What disciple lived there?
Describe the feasts of that country.
Relate the marriage customs.
Why is it supposed that Joseph was then dead?
 - Why were Jesus and his disciples invited to this feast?
Who were his disciples at this time?
How did Jesus sanction marriage and honor home?
What dispositions would Jesus have us cultivate and manifest?
 - Why is it supposed "the wine failed?"
What would this failure have been considered?
Why did Mary appeal to Jesus?
 - What reply did he make to her?
What did he mean by this?
Who now are mother, sister, and brother to Jesus?
What is meant by "mine hour is not yet come?"
 - What does Mary's direction to the servants show?
 - How many waterpots were there, and how much would each hold?
Why was so much water necessary?
 - What did Jesus direct the servants to do?
Why did Jesus make so much wine or make it at all?
 - What next did Jesus tell the servants to do?
What were the duties of the governor of the feast?
 - What two facts prove that Jesus turned water into wine?
 - What did the governor of the feast say of this wine and of the custom at such feasts?
Why did he speak to the bridegroom about it?
Why is not the fact that Jesus turned water into wine a justification of strong drink and the tipping saloon now?
 - What is a miracle?
Why did Jesus perform this one?
What is Christ's glory?
Is this simply the first miracle at Cana or the first that Christ ever performed?
Why is it said, "His disciples believed in him," when they were already his disciples?

LESSON VII—AUGUST 17

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE*Lesson Text*—John 2: 13-22.

JOHN 2. 13 And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

14 And he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 and he made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables;

16 and to them that sold the doves he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.

17 His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for thy house shall eat me up.

18 The Jews therefore answered and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Golden Text—My house shall be called a house of prayer. (Matt. 21: 13.)

Time—A. D. 27.

Place—Jerusalem.

Persons—Jesus and the Jews.

Devotional Reading—Psalm 15.

Home Reading—

- Aug. 11. M. Jesus Cleanses the Temple. John 2: 13-22.
- 12. T. The Church, God's House. 1 Tim. 3: 14-16.
- 13. W. The Church, Christ's Body. Eph. 1: 15-23.
- 14. T. Christ the Head of the Church. Eph. 5: 22-30.
- 15. F. A Cleansed People. 1 Cor. 6: 8-11.
- 16. S. The Temple of God. 1 Cor. 3: 16-23.
- 17. S. A Clean Life. Psalm 15.

INTRODUCTION**Hints and Helps for Teachers**

1. After the events of the marriage feast at Cana Jesus, his mother, his brethren, and his disciples "went down to Capernaum," and abode there "not many days." (John 2: 13.)

2. The names of Jesus' brothers were James, Joses, Judas, and Simon. He had sisters, but the number is not given. (Mark 6: 3.) At this time his brothers did not believe in him as the Messiah and Son of God. (John 7: 5.) Afterwards they became his disciples. (Acts 1: 13, 14.)

3. Let all learn what they can about Capernaum—where it Christ had with it, what disciples lived there, etc. See lesson X of this quarter.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Cleansing the Temple

13. "And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." Jesus went to this passover from Capernaum.

An account of the institution of the passover is given in Ex. 12: 1-28.

This was one of "the set feasts of Jehovah," which the Jews observed perpetually. They were commanded to do this that they might not forget the day when they came out of Egypt. (See Lev. 23: 4-8; Num. 28: 16-25; Deut. 16: 1-8.) This feast was observed in the place in which God chose to put his name, which was Jerusalem. (See Deut. 12: 1-14; 2 Chron. 6: 6-11.)

This was the first passover Jesus attended and his first visit to the temple after his public ministry began.

14-16. Jesus "found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting."

Sacrifices of these animals and birds were necessary for the services in the temple, and were sold and bought in Jerusalem, and money was necessary to purchase these offerings and to pay the temple tax due from every Jew. (See Ex. 30: 13.) This temple tax had to be paid in native coin, and foreign money had to be exchanged for it. Doves were for sacrifices for the poor (Lev. 12: 6-8; Luke 2: 24) and other offerings. Thousands of oxen, sheep, kids, and paschal lambs were required for these feasts; and since many from a distance could not bring them, they were allowed to purchase them in Jerusalem. (See Deut. 14: 24-26.)

But these things were not to be sold and bought in the temple, and money sharks were not to make them matters of speculation. This market was held in the court of the Gentiles.

Jesus drove the animals out of the temple with a scourge of cords, and "poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables; and to them that sold the doves he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."

II. The Temple Cleansed the Second Time

It is remarkable that Jesus' first visit to the temple after his public ministry began and his last visit to it before his death were characterized by his-cleansing the temple. This lesson gives the account of the first cleansing and Matt. 21: 12-17; Mark 11: 15-18; Luke 19: 45, 46 give the account of the second cleansing.

Only a few days before his death Jesus cleansed the temple the second time. On the second occasion he said: "Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers." (See Isa. 56: 7.)

This "house of prayer" had been converted into a market place and "den of thieves," and was filled with the din of traffic, the noise of bleating sheep and lowing oxen, and the excrement of all.

In cleansing the temple Jesus declared his Lordship and divine authority.

III. The Temple a Type of the Church

The beautiful and holy temple, the house of prayer and worship, was a type of the spiritual temple of God today. The church is God's

temple today. Paul says: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye." And "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit." (See 1 Cor. 3: 17; 6: 19.) Therefore we should not defile our bodies, but should keep our hearts pure and our bodies clean and our lives holy.

We should remember that while the temple was polluted, this evil doubtless made gradual progress from small beginnings. Gradually the way of God had been perverted into this great sin.

IV. Trafficing in Religious Wares

Through "the deceitfulness of riches" (Matt. 13: 22) the spiritual temple of God may be profaned. Hearts are hardened "through the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3: 12, 13.) These people had grown into these sins until such trafficking in sacrifices seemed right.

In this way they made money. So Paul says that now some suppose that godliness is a way of gain—something out of which to make money. (1 Tim. 6: 5-11.) To make merchandise of the gospel and to turn things pertaining to the service of God into money-getting is sin of which this profanation of the temple was only a type. (Read Titus 1: 10, 11; 2 Pet. 2: 1-3.) While the sacrifices under the law were necessary and to buy them according to God's regulations was necessary; yet to make God's house in selling them "a den of thieves" was wrong and was severely condemned by the Savior. Just so it is necessary to preach the gospel, and God has ordained that those who preach the gospel shall live of it and the laborer is worthy of his hire; yet it is sin and a wicked perversion of God's order to traffic in the gospel and to sell one's preaching to the highest bidder. This is a disgrace and profanation of the Church of God. It is necessary to print Bibles and to receive pay for doing so, and various kinds of religious literature are necessary, and those who circulate such for the advancement of the truth should receive proper pay for their work; yet to traffic and speculate in such literature for the sake of gain is to take advantage of the church and to make godliness a way of gain.

I see in places the bread for the Lord's Supper advertised for sale. It is not bread as such that is advertised and sold; but it is told in the advertisement that it is for the Lord's Supper. Those who make it and those who sell it must make a profit—make money.

It would be making merchandise of the gospel if preachers could be secured only from a combination, or "union," of preachers, and that, too, only for a certain amount of money. This would be "a combine" of the worst kind.

It would be making merchandise of the gospel and turning godliness into a way of gain to form a monopoly of the sale of all Bibles, or a combine of all teaching of the truth.

Do not suppers, fairs, festivals, and all fleshly entertainments "to raise money for the church," as it is called, come here under the condemnation of Jesus?

If one preaches, edits a paper, writes articles and books or sells Bibles for the glory of God—that is, for the peace and advancement of His church and the salvation of men, that motive will mani-

Jerusalem, and said: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?"

VII. The Three Temples—Solomon's, Zerubbabel's, Herod's

The first temple built in Jerusalem was that of Solomon. He was seven years in building it. (1 Kings 6: 38.) This temple was pillaged and profaned by different enemies of the Jews at different times (see 1 Kings 14: 25, 26; 2 Chron. 12: 9; 2 Kings 12: 16, 18), and was finally destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. After lying in ruins during the Babylonian captivity, the temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel upon the return of the Jews to their own country. (Ez. 1: 1-4; 2: 1; 3: 8-10; 6: 15, 16.) It was inferior in glory to the temple of Solomon. Herod the Great pulled down the temple of Zerubbabel and began the reconstruction of it 17 B. C., forty-six years before the time of this lesson. It was not forty-six years before it was fit for service, but many workmen were employed for these years in completing the outbuildings.

"All the Jewish writers praise this temple exceedingly for its beauty and the costliness of its workmanship. It was built of white marble exquisitely wrought and with stones of large dimensions, some of them twenty-five cubits long, eight cubits high, and twelve cubits thick. To these there is, no doubt, a reference in Mark 13: 1; Luke 21: 5." (Bible Dictionary of the American Tract Society.)

21. But Jesus "spake of the temple of his body." The body of Christians is the temple of the Holy Spirit. "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.) "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye." (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17.) Destroying the temple of Jesus' body was killing him. This was a prediction of his death and resurrection, and that the Jews would kill him. Jesus knew the Jews would crucify him and that he would rise the third day. The Jews continued in their misunderstanding of it, and used it slanderously against him. This was one of the charges brought against him during his trial. Some said: "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands." (Mark 14: 58.) While he hung on the cross they said: "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself." (Matt. 27: 40.)

In this way men now pervert the teaching of some and slander others. In like manner some pervert the gospel, twist the scriptures, and handle the word of God deceitfully.

22. The disciples of Jesus did not understand the meaning of this declaration at first. It was difficult for them to understand that Jesus would suffer, die, and rise from the dead. (See Mark 9: 31, 32; Luke 9: 45; John 20: 9.) But when Jesus had risen from the dead, "his disciples remembered that he spake this," and understood then what he meant by it. When John wrote this, Jesus had long been raised from the dead; hence he said: "His disciples remembered that he spake this, and they believed the scripture"

fest itself and govern the whole life. On the contrary, when one preaches, edits papers, writes tracts and books, sells Bibles, etc., in order to get money, that motive will manifest itself and control the whole life.

Are we not forced to think that the great sin of making God's house a house of entertainment, of traffic, in religious wares, and a "den of robbers" is on the increase?

V. Should Not Fear to be Zealous

17. "His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for thy house shall eat me up." This is a quotation of Ps. 69: 9, and means Jesus' zeal for truth and right, purity and godliness, manifested in cleansing the temple, would consume him, or lead him to persecution and destruction at the hands of those so severely reprov'd.

The courage and zeal of Jesus manifested here in cleansing the temple furnish fine examples. We are here reminded that some brethren—under certain circumstances are very much lacking in both zeal and courage and have expressed fear that others might suffer—be persecuted and even imprisoned—on account of their zeal and courage to stand by their convictions and speak out clearly in teaching the truth. It turns the heart sick to realize that in the face of this example of Jesus, any should fail to teach the truth either through fear of persecution or of financial loss. The truth must be practiced and taught at all hazards.

VI. Seeking a Sign

18. "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" The Jews meant a sign of authority to cleanse the temple. A "sign" means a miracle. The Jews at different times requested a "sign" of Jesus. (Matt. 12: 38; 16: 1; John 6: 30.)

At different times the Jews questioned Jesus' authority to teach. To ask, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" means: Where did he get authority to teach, or by which ecclesiasticism was he sent out to preach? His answer to this question shows this: "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me." (John 7: 15, 16.) When Jesus cleansed the temple the second time and taught the people, the chief priests and elders asked him by what authority he did these things. (Matt. 21: 12-17, 23-27.)

19. In answer to their request to show them a sign, Jesus said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." On another occasion when the Jews asked for a sign, Jesus virtually said the same as he did in this verse: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matt. 12: 39, 40.) Destroying the temple and raising it in three days had reference to his death and resurrection. His resurrection is supreme proof and the crowning argument that he is the Son of God. He "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1: 4.)

20. The Jews thought Jesus had reference to the temple in

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and the word which Jesus had said." They believed what Jesus had said concerning his resurrection and all the scriptures foretelling it. (See Luke 24: 27, 44-47.)

During the feast of the passover, which Jesus was attending when he cleansed the temple, "many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did." But knowing what is in man's heart—his frailties, weaknesses, and fickleness—he knew he could not trust himself to the Jews.

QUESTIONS

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| <p>Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give the time, place, and persons. To what place did Jesus go after turning water into wine at Cana? Who went with him? Name his brothers. Were they then his disciples? How do we know they ever believed on him? What can we tell about Capernaum?</p> <p>13 What feast did Jesus attend? What was the passover? Where was it held?</p> <p>14-16 What did Jesus find in the temple? Why were these animals and money necessary? Why could not the people bring these offerings with them? What provision was made in the law for this? What sin, then, were these men committing? What did this act of Jesus show him to be? What characterized Jesus' first and last visit to the temple after his public ministry began? What do some turn godliness into? Of what was the temple a type? What then is God's temple now? How should God's temple be treated now? How may godliness be turned into a way of gain now? (Let the teacher bring out the different ways in which this may be done.) How had these people become such great sinners?</p> | <p>Through what are people led into sin?</p> <p>17 What scriptures did this action of Jesus cause his disciples to remember? In what is Jesus here a fine example? What do some lack courage and zeal to do? Did Jesus wait for an opportune time to cleanse the temple or did he cleanse it when he saw it needed cleansing?</p> <p>18 For what did the Jews ask? What is a "sign?" On what other occasions did the Jews ask for Jesus' authority to teach and act as he did here?</p> <p>19 What reply did Jesus make? What did he mean by this? What similar answer did Jesus give on another occasion? What is the supreme proof that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ?</p> <p>20 What did the Jews say to this reply of Jesus? Who built the first temple? the second? the third? How was Herod forty-six years in building this temple?</p> <p>21 What did Jesus mean by this statement? How may God's temple be abused now? What use did the Jews make of this statement?</p> <p>22 When did the disciples see the meaning and feel the force of this statement? Why did many at this feast believe on Jesus?</p> |
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"He liveth long who liveth well
 All other life is short and vain;
 He liveth longest who can tell
 Of living most for heavenly gain."

Jerusalem, and said: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?"

VII. The Three Temples—Solomon's, Zerubbabel's, Herod's

The first temple built in Jerusalem was that of Solomon. He was seven years in building it. (1 Kings 6: 38.) This temple was pillaged and profaned by different enemies of the Jews at different times (see 1 Kings 14: 25, 26; 2 Chron. 12: 9; 2 Kings 12: 16, 18), and was finally destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. After lying in ruins during the Babylonian captivity, the temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel upon the return of the Jews to their own country. (Ez. 1: 1-4; 2: 1; 3: 8-10; 6: 15, 16.) It was inferior in glory to the temple of Solomon. Herod the Great pulled down the temple of Zerubbabel and began the reconstruction of it 17 B. C., forty-six years before the time of this lesson. It was not forty-six years before it was fit for service, but many workmen were employed for these years in completing the outbuildings.

"All the Jewish writers praise this temple exceedingly for its beauty and the costliness of its workmanship. It was built of white marble exquisitely wrought and with stones of large dimensions, some of them twenty-five cubits long, eight cubits high, and twelve cubits thick. To these there is, no doubt, a reference in Mark 13: 1; Luke 21: 5." (Bible Dictionary of the American Tract Society.)

21. But Jesus "spake of the temple of his body." The body of Christians is the temple of the Holy Spirit. "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.) "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye." (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17.) Destroying the temple of Jesus' body was killing him. This was a prediction of his death and resurrection, and that the Jews would kill him. Jesus knew the Jews would crucify him and that he would rise the third day. The Jews continued in their misunderstanding of it, and used it slanderously against him. This was one of the charges brought against him during his trial. Some said: "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands." (Mark 14: 58.) While he hung on the cross they said: "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself." (Matt. 27: 40.)

In this way men now pervert the teaching of some and slander others. In like manner some pervert the gospel, twist the scriptures, and handle the word of God deceitfully.

22. The disciples of Jesus did not understand the meaning of this declaration at first. It was difficult for them to understand that Jesus would suffer, die, and rise from the dead. (See Mark 9: 31, 32; Luke 9: 45; John 20: 9.) But when Jesus had risen from the dead, "his disciples remembered that he spake this," and understood then what he meant by it. When John wrote this, Jesus had long been raised from the dead; hence he said: "His disciples remembered that he spake this: and they believed the scripture,

and the word which Jesus had said." They believed what Jesus had said concerning his resurrection and all the scriptures foretelling it. (See Luke 24: 27, 44-47.)

During the feast of the passover, which Jesus was attending when he cleansed the temple, "many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did." But knowing what is in man's heart—his frailties, weaknesses, and fickleness—he knew he could not trust himself to the Jews.

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time, place, and persons.
To what place did Jesus go after turning water into wine at Cana?
Who went with him?
Name his brothers.
Were they then his disciples?
How do we know they ever believed on him?
What can we tell about Capernaum?
- 13 What feast did Jesus attend?
What was the passover?
Where was it held?
- 14-16 What did Jesus find in the temple?
Why were these animals and money necessary?
Why could not the people bring these offerings with them?
What provision was made in the law for this?
What sin, then, were these men committing?
What did this act of Jesus show him to be?
What characterized Jesus' first and last visit to the temple after his public ministry began?
What do some turn godliness into?
Of what was the temple a type?
What then is God's temple now?
How should God's temple be treated now?
How may godliness be turned into a way of gain now? (Let the teacher bring out the different ways in which this may be done.)
How had these people become such great sinners?
- Through what are people led into sin?
- 17 What scriptures did this action of Jesus cause his disciples to remember?
In what is Jesus here a fine example?
What do some lack courage and zeal to do?
Did Jesus wait for an opportune time to cleanse the temple or did he cleanse it when he saw it needed cleansing?
- 18 For what did the Jews ask?
What is a "sign?"
On what other occasions did the Jews ask for Jesus' authority to teach and act as he did here?
- 19 What reply did Jesus make?
What did he mean by this?
What similar answer did Jesus give on another occasion?
What is the supreme proof that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ?
- 20 What did the Jews say to this reply of Jesus?
Who built the first temple? the second? the third?
How was Herod forty-six years in building this temple?
- 21 What did Jesus mean by this statement?
How may God's temple be abused now?
What use did the Jews make of this statement?
- 22 When did the disciples see the meaning and feel the force of this statement?
Why did many at this feast believe on Jesus?

"He liveth long who liveth well
All other life is short and vain;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of living most for heavenly gain."

LESSON VIII—AUGUST 24

JESUS TALKS WITH NICODEMUS

Read: John 3: 1-17. *Lesson Text:* John 3: 1-3, 8-17.

JOHN 3. 1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 the same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

8 The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things?

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

12 If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?

13 And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;

15 that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

17 For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him.

Golden Text—For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3: 16.)

Time—A. D. 27, soon after Jesus cleansed the temple the first time.

Place—Probably in the house of some friend in Jerusalem.

Persons—Nicodemus and Jesus.

Devotional Reading—Isa. 11: 1-9.

Home Reading—

Aug. 18. M. Jesus Talks with Nicodemus. John 3: 1-17.

19. T. Born of God. John 1: 1-13.

20. W. Born of Christ. 1 John 2: 25-29.

21. T. Born of the Holy Spirit. Titus 3: 1-7.

22. F. A New Heart. Ezek. 36: 22-27.

23. S. The New Man. Eph. 4: 17-24.

24. S. The Branch that Brings Blessings. Isa. 11: 1-9.

INTRODUCTION**Hints and Helps for Teachers**

1. It would mar the lesson to omit any of the verses; hence all are printed with comments.

2. Begin the study of the lesson with the understanding that

"the new birth" can be understood and is essential to the salvation of the soul.

3. To be born of God and to be his child is very different indeed from having one's name merely enrolled on some church book.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Nicodemus

1. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and "a ruler of the Jews." He was a ruler among them—that is, a member of the Sanhedrin and a rabbi, or teacher. (John 3: 10.) His name is mentioned only three times in the Bible. In John 7: 50, 51, he speaks out in the Jewish council and protests against condemning Jesus unheard, and in John 19: 39-42 he brings a hundred pounds of mixture of myrrh and aloes and assists Joseph of Arimathea in burying Jesus.

The Pharisees were the most numerous and most "orthodox" religious sect among the Jews. They believed in angels, spirits, and the resurrection, and in this were opposed to the Sadducees, another religious sect. Paul was a Pharisee. (Acts 23: 6-8.) They were scrupulous and punctilious as to outward forms, but paid little regard to purity of heart and life. They, with the Sadducees, strongly opposed Christ. They tithed "mint and anise and cummin" and "left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith." They should have done the former, but should not have neglected the latter. As it was, they were "blind guides." They strained out the gnat and swallowed the camel. (Matt. 23: 23, 24.) They were great critics, fault finders, and exacting in telling others what to do; but they said and did not. They presented a beautiful outward appearance, made long public prayers, and great pretensions; but in heart were full of extortion, excess, and rottenness. They were filled with all uncleanness, corruption, iniquity, and hypocrisy. They split hairs over theories, liked chief seats in meetings, sought to be considered the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and loved religious titles. With all this they were zealous for their own righteousness, while living in disobedience to God, and were intensely missionary, compassing sea and land to make one convert, making him at the same time "two-fold more a child of hell [Gehenna] than" themselves. Study Jesus' exposition and denunciation of their hypocrisy and corruption in Matt. 23.

II. A Lesson for the Church

There is such a thing now as being church members nominally, or pretended Christians, and even professed guides of the blind, lights to those in darkness, teachers of babes, and instructors of the ignorant (Rom. 2: 17-23); and yet with all these pretensions and professions there is such a thing as being "lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God;" and yet, "holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof." These, says Paul, are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," "take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts." (2 Tim. 3: 1-7.) What can be the difference between these and the

Pharisees, except the Pharisees may have been more moral? One person cannot be all these bad things at once; but any one of them is bad enough in a pretended teacher and leader.

There can be nothing more pharisaical than to split hairs over various theories and to neglect justice and mercy and faith; than to make laws where God has made none, while disobeying some God has made; than to hold "a form of godliness" while denying the power thereof. The "power of godliness" is the transformation it makes in one's own heart and life—Godlikeness in one's own character—mercy, justice, uprightness, purity, truth, and love, and also hatred of evil and wrongdoing anywhere and in anyone. Jesus loved righteousness and hated iniquity. (Heb. 11: 8, 9.)

One's "logical deductions" are far more binding on some than the teaching of the New Testament. The Pharisees by some process of logic had drawn the conclusion and law that to "swear by the temple" is nothing, but to "swear by the gold of the temple" is binding; and to "swear by the altar" is nothing, but to "swear by the gift" upon the altar is binding. But Jesus says they were blind and fools. Are not some theories and contentions today as foolish? Are not some who make such contentions as blind?

I cannot undertake and am not able to specify various instances of Pharisaism. But saying and doing not is one; binding burdens upon others, while doing nothing to lighten them is another; forever criticising and finding fault, while not setting a proper example, is another; seeking religious titles of any sort is another; seeking prominence and boasting and self-exaltation is still another. A vast amount of pharisaism can be sifted out by studying and especially practicing 2 Tim. 3: 1-7. Think awhile on "lovers of self," "lovers of money," "boastful," "puffed up," "haughty," "slanderers," "no lovers of good," "without self-control," "silly women laden with sins," "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God"; and yet all these are pretending to learn and to teach the truth! In some places such seem more popular than the humble, meek, modest, truly pure and sincerely godly. But the Lord knows all who are his!

III. Why Nicodemus Went by Night

2. Why he came to Jesus "by night" we do not know, since the record does not give his reason.

Here we learn the difference between faith and opinion. That he came to Jesus and came "by night" are two facts. These we all believe, because the Bible states them. About these there is no controversy. Why he came "by night" cannot be a matter of faith, because the record does not say; this is a mere conjecture, or opinion. Some say that it was through fear of the Jews, already enraged over the cleansing of the temple, and he did not wish to encounter the hostility of the priests; yet he wanted to know more of a teacher who he believed was sent from God. Others say that since he was a member of the Sanhedrin and the business of that body was greatly increased during the passover, the night was the only opportune time for an interview. Still others say that it was a matter of prudence on his part; he wanted to know for certain what he was doing before he made a change. Others yet say that he sought the quietude of the night, after the multitudes had dispersed, because Jesus was busily engaged with them during the day. Still

others say that he had mingled motives; that all the above motives had something to do with it. Now, why did he come "by night?"

Whatever God says, that we believe, we know; concerning that about which he does not speak we can have no faith, for faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Rom. 10: 17.) Opinion is not faith, and "we walk by faith" in the service of God. (2 Cor. 5: 7.)

"Rabbi" means "teacher," or "master," and was a title of honor. (Matt. 23: 1-12.) Nicodemus was respectful, candid, honest, sincere, and sought information, whatever may have been his reason for going "by night." He confessed at once his faith in Jesus as a teacher sent from God, and assigned his reason: "For no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (See John 5: 36; 20: 30, 31.)

IV. The New Birth

3. Jesus recognized Nicodemus' desire for information, saw where his point of difficulty lay, and replied directly to it. Nicodemus, like those who went to John's baptism, doubtless thought that because he was a son of Abraham he was already prepared to enter the promised kingdom.

By "verily, verily," Jesus lays emphasis on the statement he is about to make: "Except one be born anew [or 'from above'; see John 3: 31; 19: 11; James 1: 17; 3: 15, 17—margin], he cannot see the kingdom of God"—that is, any man, every man, must be "born anew" in order to enter Christ's kingdom. This is similar to what John the Baptist told the multitude in Luke 3: 7-9. Every one must repent, be baptized from his heart, continue to obey God, and thus show by a new life that he has repented, and all upon his own responsibility to God. He who does not do this will be destroyed.

"Born anew" is a strong and expressive figure, which shows the complete change that must take place in a man before he is prepared to enjoy the kingdom of God. This change is comparable to being born anew. One is represented as coming out of darkness into light; called out of darkness into "marvelous light" (1 Peter 2: 9); delivered from "the power of darkness" and "translated" into the kingdom of the Son of God (Col. 1: 13); "a new creature" (2 Cor. 5: 17); walking "in newness of life" (Rom. 6: 4); "dead unto sin, but alive unto God" (verse 11); a partaker of "the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust." (2 Pet. 1: 4.)

Many people do what is called "joining the church," when really they are not in it. They have "joined" after the fashion, because they think they "ought to belong to some church." A struggle and a scramble for numbers may have placed the names of thousands on the church roll who have never been "born anew."

To "see the kingdom of God" means to enter it, to appreciate it, and to enjoy it. One must become a new creature to do this.

"The kingdom of God is . . . righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14: 17.) In it God reigns as King. He is the supreme object of love, adoration, and service. His will is its law, and men must love and obey him in order to enter it. People may get their names on the church roll without regard to character, but they cannot enter Christ's church that way.

4. Nicodemus took Christ's language literally, and asked how one could "enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born."

The woman at Jacob's well thought Jesus meant literal water (John 4: 10-15), and the Jews took him to mean his literal flesh (John 6: 53-71). It is no more difficult to understand being "born anew" than to understand what Jesus means by "the water of life," or "living water," and "the bread of heaven."

5. In this Jesus does not reply so much to Nicodemus' difficulty as he explains the new birth. He emphasizes again by "verily, verily" and repeats the declaration that one must be "born anew" by saying: "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Christ's "must be born anew," or "born of water and the Spirit," stands between every sinner and the kingdom of God.

"Born of water and the Spirit" means one birth; it cannot mean two births.

This birth concerns the heart, the inner man. One's heart is engaged and enlisted through the gospel of Jesus preached "by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven." (1 Pet. 1: 12.) The gospel is God's power to save. (Rom. 1: 16.) It is spiritual power addressed to the hearts of men. They hear it, believe it, are moved by it to repent of their sins and to obey God in baptism. This is the change in one which Jesus calls being born again. All who have been "born again" or "anew" continue "to walk in newness of life."

Speaking without a figure, Jesus says: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16: 15, 16.) The apostles did this. On Pentecost they preached the gospel; exhorted all to know it "assuredly"—that is, to believe it, and to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus unto the remission of sins. (Acts 2: 37, 38.) People who did all this were "born anew," "born of God" "born of water and the Spirit."

"All agree that the birth of the Spirit refers to the inward, or spiritual, change that takes place; and all candid authorities agree that 'born of water' refers to baptism. So Alford, Wesley, Abbott, Whitby, Olshausen, Tholuck, Prof. William Milligan, the Episcopal 'Prayer Book,' the 'Westminster Confession,' the Methodist Episcopal 'Discipline,' the Methodist Episcopal 'Doctrinal Tracts,' and also the writers of the early church, all declare. Alford says: 'All attempts to get rid of this have sprung from doctrinal prejudices.'" (Johnson, in "The People's New Testament.")

6. In this verse, and without stopping, Christ informs Nicodemus that he is speaking, not of a fleshly, but a spiritual, birth. One is born of the flesh in the natural birth: but the spiritual birth has to do, not with the physical nature, but with the heart. One's spirit, not one's body, is born again. One's physical constitution remains the same; but there is wrought in one's heart, in one's spiritual nature, so great a change from love of sin to hatred of sin, from love of Satan to love of God, from disobedience to God to loving and delightful obedience to him, that it is called a "new birth."

7. This is necessary from the very nature of the case, and should not astonish Nicodemus.

8. In this verse Jesus further shows that it is not a visible, physical birth, but an invisible, spiritual one. As the wind blows and we hear it and know it exists, although we cannot see it or tell whence it comes or whither it goes, so is this birth, or so is every

one that is born of the Spirit. It is a reality—it takes place—although not a visible, physical affair, like the natural birth, or birth of the flesh. It is the spirit of man, not the body—the heart, not the physical structure—that is changed.

But suppose Christ is explaining here how the Spirit of God operates on the hearts of men, it must be remembered that the comparison is not between the effects of the wind—such as feeling it—and the effects of the Spirit, but between hearing the one and hearing the other. People must hear the Spirit.

The word "pneuma," here translated "wind," is, in the last part of this verse, translated "Spirit," and also in every other place where it occurs in the New Testament. In this very place, in the margin of the version we use in these lessons, it is also translated "Spirit." Then the verse would read: "The Spirit breatheth where it will [or pleases], and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The sound the Spirit makes is its "voice." One hears the Spirit speak. He speaks through the apostles. They spoke "as the spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2: 4.) The Spirit speaks the word of God. It is the incorruptible seed by which one is "begotten again" (1 Pet. 1: 23), by which one is "quickened" (Ps. 119: 50), and by which one is "brought . . . forth." (James 1: 18.) The word of God is spiritual seed, and by it God begets spiritual children. (James 1: 18; 1 Cor. 4: 15; Phile. 10.) Through it the sinner is warned and aroused, and his heart is warmed and broken (Jer. 23: 29) and its secrets are laid bare. (Heb. 4: 12.)

Again, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God." (1 John 5: 1.) Faith comes through hearing the word of God. (Rom. 10: 17.)

To love God is to be begotten of him. (1 John 4: 7, 8.)

To do righteousness is to be begotten of God. (1 John 3: 20.)

All these are not different births, but the one birth. One hears the gospel, believes it, loves God because God first loved him, and does righteousness, and is thus born of God. So when one hears the voice of the Spirit through inspired men preaching the incorruptible seed—the gospel—and receives that seed into his heart and obeys it, he is born of the Spirit, is "born of water and the Spirit," because the Spirit leads him by faith in Jesus to repent and be baptized in the name of Christ unto the remission of sins. (Acts 2: 37, 38.) The gospel was preached to Onesimus (Phile. 10) and the Corinthians by Paul (1 Cor. 4: 15). So Paul is called their "father in the gospel." They were "born again." The Corinthians "hearing, believed, and were baptized." (Acts 18: 8.)

All children of God have been "born of God," or "born again." "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3: 26, 27.) These are God's children; hence have been born of him, but this birth was through faith which led to repentance and baptism into Christ.

Then, where is the mystery about the new birth?

9, 10. Nicodemus still wondered; and Jesus asked him if, as a "teacher of Israel," he did not know these things. He ought to have known them.

11. Nicodemus and his associates did not receive this testimony of Jesus and his disciples.

12. "Earthly things" seem to be the things belonging to the kingdom on earth; "heavenly things," the things of the "everlasting kingdom"—God and eternal glory.

13. Heaven is Christ's home. He existed "in the beginning"—long before he appeared on earth. He came down from heaven to tell of heavenly things. He who was with God knows. To hear him is the only way to be saved. (See Rom. 10: 6-11.)

V. How Healed by the Brazen Serpent

14, 15. (See Num. 21: 4-9.) Great numbers of the Israelites were bitten by the fiery serpents in the wilderness, and not a few died. The bite was incurable. If God did not heal them, they must die. He directed Moses to make a serpent of brass and to put it upon a pole in the camp, and promised that whoever, when bitten by a serpent, would look "unto the serpent of brass," should live. The look was an act of faith.

So Christ was lifted up on the cross, that whosoever believeth in him should be saved. To believe in him is to trust and obey him. This faith must be expressed in whatever act of obedience God now requires, as the faith of the Israelites was expressed then in a look. God requires now all who believe in Jesus and have repented of their sins to show their faith in the burial and resurrection of Christ by being baptized. (Col. 2: 12.)

In 2 Kings 18: 4 we learn what became of this brazen serpent.

16. This verse declares the great love of God manifested in the gift of his Son for the world under the condemnation of sin. It sets forth (1) what God has done to save the world, (2) what Jesus has done to save the world, and (3) what the world must do to be saved. God so loved the world as to give his Son, the Son so loved the world as to come and die, and all must believe in Christ with the faith which works through love (Gal. 5: 6) and which is made perfect through obedience. (James 2: 14-26.)

17. God did not send his Son to condemn, but to save, the world. God does not hate, but loves, the world, and sent his Son to save the world. Jesus did not come to hunt up all the sins of the world, to sum them all up, and prosecute and condemn the world; he knew the world was condemned already, and he came to call sinners to repentance and to seek and to save the lost. "He that believeth not hath been judged already," and Jesus brings the way of salvation. "He that believeth on him is not judged," or condemned.

VI. Active or Obedient Faith Saves

Verses 18-21 show that this is active or obedient faith. So does verse 35. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

If people in the church have the spirit of Christ, they will in gentleness and humility try to restore all other members who have been overtaken in any trespass but will not scour the country hunting up all the faults and mistakes against such in order to condemn them.

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time, place, and persons.
- 1 What particular one sought him?
What was he?
Where else and in what connection is his name mentioned?
Who were the Pharisees?
What were they in character, pretense, and practice? (Give examples.)
Show from 2 Timothy 3: 1-7 and other scriptures in what ways church members and teachers may be pharisaical now.
 - 2 Why did he go by night?
What is the difference between faith and opinion?
What did he say to Jesus?
What does "Rabbi" mean?
Is it right to wear titles of distinction in religion?
What convinced Nicodemus?
Was he honest?
 - 3 How did Jesus treat him?
What was his difficulty?
What was Jesus' reply?
What does "verily" mean?
What is meant by "born anew?"
What is "the kingdom of God?"
 - 4 How did Nicodemus take this language?
 - 5 What else did Jesus say?
What is it to be "born of water and the Spirit?"
 - 6 What is "born anew"—one's body or his spirit?
 - 7 Why should Nicodemus not marvel at this?
 - 8 What does this verse mean?
- How is the heart of man influenced by the Spirit?
- 9, 10 Ought Nicodemus to know these things?
 - 11 Did he receive Christ's testimony?
 - 12 What are the "earthly things," and what are the "heavenly things?"
 - 13 Who came from heaven, and who knows these things?
 - 14, 15 What was "the serpent in the wilderness?"
Who lifted it up, and why?
What did the people do in order to be healed?
What obedience does God now require?
What became of the brazen serpent?
Who is lifted up for us?
How?
What must people do now to be saved?
 - 16 What does this declare?
What has God done to save the world, what has Jesus done, and what must men do to be saved?
When does faith save?
 - 17 Who are condemned already?
Why?
What did Jesus come not to do, but to do?
 - 18-21 What do these verses and verse 35 show?
What will Christians do, and what will they not, in regard to others who do wrong?

"All that journey, soon or late
Must pass within the garden's gate;
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
And battle with some fierce despair,
God pity those who can not say,
'Not mine, but thine'; who only pray,
'Let this cup pass,' and can not see
The purpose in Gethsemane."

LESSON IX—AUGUST 31

JESUS TALKS WITH A SAMARITAN WOMAN

Read: John 4: 1-42. *Lesson Text:* John 4: 7-14, 24-26, 31-35.

JOHN 4. 7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy food.

9 The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans).

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

31 In the mean while the disciples prayed him, saying, Rabbi, eat.

32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not.

33 The disciples therefore said one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat?

34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest.

Golden Text—God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4: 24.)

Time—A. D. 27.

Place—Jacob's Well.

Persons—Jesus, and a fallen woman.

Devotional Reading—Psalm 25: 1-7.

Home Reading—

Aug. 25. M. Jesus Talks with a Samaritan Woman. John 4: 1-14.

26. T. White Harvest Fields. John 4: 24-38.

27. W. The Spirit Promised. Isa. 44: 3-8.

28. T. The Satisfying Christ. John 7: 37-44.

29. F. God's Gracious Provision. Isa. 41: 17-20.

30. S. Earth Filled with the Truth. Hab. 2: 9-14.

31. S. "The God of my salvation." Psalm 25: 1-7.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

"Sychar—was the ancient Shechem, so famous in the early history. It was about forty miles north of Jerusalem, and was situated between

Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, the mounts of blessing and cursing." (Josh. 8: 30-35.) Abraham encamped here (Gen. 12: 6), and here the covenant was renewed after Joshua had conquered Canaan (Josh. 24: 1-25). It was on the road from Judea to Galilee. Jacob bought this ground "of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money. And he erected there an altar, and called it El-Elohe-Israel" (Gen. 33: 19, 20)—that is, "God, the God of Israel." He gave this to Joseph (Gen. 48: 22), and here the bones of Joseph were buried after the children of Israel had brought them out of Egypt. (Josh. 24: 32.)

Jacob's Well—"The well of Jacob lies about a mile and a half east of the city, close to the lower road, and just beyond the wretched hamlet of Balata. . . The well is deep—seventy-five feet when last measured—and there was probably a considerable accumulation of rubbish at the bottom. Sometimes it contains a few feet of water, but at other times it is quite dry. It is entirely excavated in solid rock, perfectly round, nine feet in diameter, with the sides hewn smooth and regular. Of all the special localities in our Lord's life, this is almost the only one absolutely undisputed." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) It was found to be one hundred and five feet deep in 1697. The thirty feet of rubbish at the bottom has covered up the water. It must have been curbed around with stones, and perhaps covered. This was a well watered country; hence Jacob must have dug this well in order to be independent of the people of that country.

INTRODUCTION

Hints and Helps for Teachers

1. After his visit to Jerusalem, the passover, his miracles there, and his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus and his disciples went into the country of Judea; "and there he tarried with them, and baptized." (John 3: 22.) He was there probably until fall.

2. Jesus preached, as did John the Baptist, "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 4: 23), saying: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Verse 17.) When he sent out the apostles "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," he commanded them to preach the same (Matt. 10: 6, 7); and the "seventy," as they went "two and two," preached the same. (Luke 10: 1-16.)

3. Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John. He did the baptizing through his disciples. (John 4: 1, 2.)

4. While Jesus and his disciples were thus busy at work in Judea, John "was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there." (John 3: 23.) He had not yet been cast into prison. Here John bears testimony again of Jesus in replying to the statement of his disciples that Jesus was baptizing also, "and all men come to him." He and Jesus were each filling the mission each received from Heaven. This is clear, strong, and noble testimony.

5. When the fact that Jesus was making so many disciples was known by the Pharisees, they became jealous and aroused; and Jesus departed from Judea and went to Galilee.

6. His time had "not yet come" for this open conflict. He had many truths yet to teach and disciples to train.

7. In order to reach Galilee from Judea, "he must needs pass through Samaria," because Samaria lies exactly between the two. (See the map.)

8. Galilee was the northern division; Samaria, the middle division; and Judea, the southern division, of Palestine. The city of Samaria was the capital of Samaria.

9. In his journey Jesus came to Jacob's well. "Wearied with his journey," Jesus sat on this well. We have seen that Jesus became hungry. Here he was weary, tired, and thirsty. He sat down to rest. It is right to rest sometimes. He exhorted his apostles, after a preaching tour, to retire "into a desert place, and rest a while." (Mark 6: 31.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Woman

7, 8. Jesus rested there while his disciples were gone into Sychar to buy food. At this time a woman of Samaria came from "the city" (John 4: 28) to draw water, and Jesus asked of her a drink. He had no means of drawing the water himself.

9. By his speech or appearance, or by both, she recognized him as a Jew, and asked why he would ask a drink of her, a Samaritan. This was not a refusal of his request, but an expression of surprise. The Jews, as a class, looked upon the Samaritans as dogs; and this woman was astonished that a Jew would ask a favor of her. The Samaritans were a mongrel race.

When the king of Assyria had overthrown the kingdom of Israel (the ten tribes) and had carried the Israelites into captivity, he brought men from Babylon, from Cuthah, from Ava, from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and settled them in the cities of Samaria. They mixed with the few and poor scattered Israelites that were left: also their idolatry was mixed with the worship of God, so that they neither served God nor practiced altogether their former idolatrous ordinances. (2 Kings 17: 24-41.)

The Jews and the Samaritans differed in nationality and in religion and had rival places of worship. (John 4: 20, 21.) The bitterness entertained by the Jews against the Samaritans is seen in the following vituperation: "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?" (John 8: 48.) We can hardly conceive of a greater racial, social, and religious intolerance. The Jews had commercial dealings with the Samaritans, for the disciples had gone then to buy food in Sychar.

II. Living Water

10. The greatest "gift of God" is Christ and salvation through him. God gave "his only begotten Son."

Jesus was really thirsty, but in asking this favor he sought an opportunity to confer a greater one.

"Living water" is "springing water" (Gen. 26: 19), or "running water" (Lev. 14: 5)—perennial—in contrast with cistern, or standing, water. But Jesus uses the term figuratively. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." (Isa. 12: 3.) God is the source of "the wells of salvation." "For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the foun-

tain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (Jer. 2: 13.) To leave God and his ways is to turn away from the "living water."

Christ is this "living water," as he is "the bread of heaven" or "the light of the world." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;" and he who drinks of Christ will himself become a fountain to dispense the "living water" to others, as he who walks in the light himself becomes light to others. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7: 37-39.) Filled with the Spirit on Pentecost, the apostles were "rivers of living water" to their hearers; and guided by the Spirit and having "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom. 8: 9-14), Christians bring forth "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5: 22, 23) and become "living water" to others.

11, 12. Like Nicodemus, the woman took Jesus literally; yet she was impressed with what he said and wanted to know where he could get "living water." He could not draw it from that well, because he had nothing to draw with. Then, could he obtain it from some other source? Was he greater than Jacob, who gave the well?

13, 14. Christ shows her that he does not mean the water of the well or water like that. To drink that is to "thirst again." The water he gives satisfies—"shall never thirst." Christ satisfies the thirst of the soul. Nothing earthly can do this. Christ fills it with wellsprings of joy, sweet peace, abiding contentment, permanent happiness—in a word, with heaven.

15. The woman still mistakes him, but is still interested, and thinks that if she had that water she would not have to go to the well and draw.

III. Jesus Convinces the Woman He is a Prophet

16, 18. To lead her to a knowledge of himself and to recall her life and convince her of her need of salvation, Jesus said to her: "Go, call thy husband." These words had the desired effect, and she confessed that she had no husband. Jesus replied: "Thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband."

19-24. The woman then acknowledges Jesus to be a prophet. Since he is a prophet, she appeals to him to settle the question of the place of worship—in the mountain of Samaria (Mount Gerizim) or at Jerusalem. Some have said that this woman sought to direct the attention of Jesus from her past life by raising the question of the proper place of worship, but that cannot be. She thought that Jesus, being a prophet, could tell her which is right.

IV. God Must be Worshiped in Spirit and Truth

Jesus explains to her that she knows not what she worships and that in this controversy the Jews are right; but, under him, people must worship God "in spirit and truth." "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

25, 26. The woman acknowledges that when the Messiah should come he would declare unto the people all things. Here John again

explains that "Messiah" is "Christ." In this way Jesus leads her to acknowledge him as the Messiah.

No "sacred place" is now essential to acceptable worship. "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands; as saith the prophet, The heaven is my throne, and the earth the footstool of my feet: what manner of house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?" (Acts 7: 48-50.)

Anywhere, everywhere, God may be worshiped under the reign of Christ, but the two important elements of worship are necessary—spirit and truth. One must be in earnest, honest, sincere, and zealous; his whole inner man—his heart and his spirit—must be enlisted and engaged. Then he must serve God according to God's word. His "word is truth." (John 17: 17.) However earnest and zealous, sincere and honest, one may be in doing a wrong thing, that does not make the wrong thing right. Or one may do in a formal, technical, heartless manner—having the form of Godliness, while denying the power thereof, and even then be not an acceptable worshiper of God. One may have zeal without knowledge (Rom. 10: 1-3) or knowledge without zeal. Both are necessary.

V. Leading Others to Christ

As verses 27-30, 39-43 state, this woman notwithstanding her past sinful life, accepted Christ in faith and led many of her neighbors to him. He, being besought by her neighbors, remained there two days. Some believed through this woman's word concerning Jesus, and others believed because they heard him themselves. They were open and frank, and it seems that Jesus worked no miracles to convince them. They believed in him without that.

This teaches the church to-day the very important lesson of seeking the salvation of the lost, and to what great results such efforts may lead. This woman was not beyond the attention and love of Jesus and such should not be beyond ours.

VI. Jesus' Meat Was to Do the Will of God

31-34. Having returned with the food they went to purchase, and the woman having gone into the city to tell her neighbors about the wonderful prophet she had just met, who must be the Christ, the disciples prayed him to eat. But he declined, saying he had meat to eat they knew not of. They did not understand his meaning and said to one another, "Hath any man brought him aught to eat?" Then he answered, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work."

It was Jesus' mission on earth to do God's will. He declares of himself: "I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 6: 38.) His judgment was righteous because he sought not his own, but God's will. (John 5: 30.) So in his severest trial and deepest sorrow he prayed God's will and not his be done. There was no unrighteousness in Jesus and he was true in all things and to all persons because he sought not his own glory but the glory of God. (John 7: 18.)

In his consuming desire to do God's will and to accomplish God's

work he lost sight of his hunger and his own comfort. Filled with this spirit Christ's disciples to-day lose sight of their physical comfort and appetite in their burning desire and earnest efforts to save souls and to accomplish God's work otherwise.

Let us learn, too, the wonderful lesson that the more fully people seek to do God's will and not their own, and to glorify God and not themselves, the more nearly righteous and just they are with all others and in all things. Being governed by the will of God renders people righteous, just, merciful, of sound mind, and of sound judgment. Let's try this.

VII. Fields White unto Harvest

35. It was four months at that time until the grain harvest, and the grain could not be harvested until that time had come; but looking upon the Samaritans, ready to receive him as the Messiah, he declared to his disciples that the fields were "white already unto the harvest." On another occasion he said: "The harvest indeed is plenteous; but the laborers are few," and he exhorted his disciples to pray "the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10: 2; see also Matt. 9: 36-38.)

There is a crying need to-day of the plain, simple, all-powerful, soul-saving gospel of Christ, and of men to preach it in all the world. Hence there is great need of faithful and true, righteous and godly laborers, who are satisfied with "the wages" Jesus here mentions. God's way of obtaining such laborers is to pray him for them. Note that the harvest is "HIS," and he must send into it such laborers as he desires. Jesus declares that "the laborer is worthy of his hire," and therefore this is true; but God's way of obtaining more laborers is not to increase the carnal pay. Some men will do anything for money, even preach; but comparatively few men will preach the gospel of Christ fully and truly for the love of souls and the glory of God, or for the wages which Christ pays.

God, then, really sends laborers into "his harvest," and all he sends are the right kind. All who preach are not God-sent. Note—

1. "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife" and "of faction." (Phil. 1: 15-17.)

2. Some preach their own wisdom and theories and speculations, seeking their own glory. (John 7: 18.) He only seeks God's glory who seeks and does and preaches only the will of God—all of it, but no more, and for the wages which he pays.

3. Some preach themselves—their own exploits, families, experiences, and wisdom and ways. (2 Cor. 4: 5.)

4. Paul says in his day "many" were "corrupting the word of God," and the margin says, "making merchandise" of it, while he preached Christ in sincerity and of God in God's sight. (2 Cor. 2: 17.)

5. Some "with feigned words make merchandise" of the churches (2 Pet. 2: 3.) Pretending to seek the good of the churches, they seek their own profit. This is hypocrisy, hence Paul says with "feigned words."

6. Some walk "in craftiness" and handle "the word of God deceitfully," but Paul commended himself "to every man's conscience in the sight of God." (2 Cor. 4: 2.)

7. Satan fashions "himself into an angel of light," and "his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose ends shall be according to their works." (2 Cor. 11: 14, 15.)

With at least seven classes of teachers and preachers prompted by wrong motives and striving to accomplish unholy purposes, we must feel the force of the necessity of praying God to send the only one true and faithful class into "his harvest."

There have been false, mercenary, self-seeking teachers and preachers since Cain killed Abel, and will be to the end of time. The church of God should have sufficient knowledge of the Bible, sufficiently clear and conscientious convictions, and sufficiently strong courage to distinguish always between the false and true and to turn away from the former.

Verses 36-38 state the true co-operation of the sowers and reapers. Both rejoice together. While God has ordained that true preachers of the gospel should be supported, the wages, or fruit reaped is "life eternal" for themselves and all they help to save. Who will work for such wages?

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time, place and principal characters of the lesson.
Where and what was Sychar?
Name the facts which occurred there.
State all the facts of Jacob's well.
Where did Jesus go from Jerusalem?
What did he do?
Who performed the act of baptizing the people?
What did Jesus and his disciples preach?
Where was John the Baptist now?
What statement was made to him about the work of Jesus?
What reply did he make?
Why did Jesus leave Judea?
Why must he pass through Samaria to reach Galilee?
- 7, 8 Why did Jesus stop there?
Where were the disciples?
Who came to the well?
For what did Jesus ask?
9 Why was she astonished?
Who were Samaritans?
10 What did Jesus say to this reply of the woman?
What did he mean by "living water?"
11, 12 What did the woman think he meant?
What did Jesus say?
13, 14 What reply did she make?
15 Whom did Jesus tell her to call?
19-24 What convinced her that Jesus was a prophet?
What question of worship did she desire Jesus to settle?
- Who were right in this controversy?
25, 26 Under Christ, how must God be worshiped?
Where may God be worshiped now?
What do "spirit" and "truth" mean?
What is it to worship in spirit and truth?
How did this woman lead others to Christ?
How long was he there, and why?
Why did many believe on him?
What lesson should the church learn from this example of Jesus?
- 31-34 When the disciples returned with food what did they exhort Jesus to do?
What reply did he make?
What was Jesus' mission to earth?
Filled with the Spirit of Jesus what do his disciples lose sight of and what will they do?
- 35 What does "white unto the harvest" mean?
Why did Jesus say this?
What did he say on other occasions in regard to this?
Of what is there general and crying need?
What is God's way of increasing the number of laborers?
Give the seven different motives named here which are not acceptable to God but which move men to preach. (Let the teacher dwell on each.)
What is the only right motive and purpose to be accomplished?

LESSON X—SEPTEMBER 7.

JESUS HEALS A NOBLEMAN'S SON*Lesson Text:* John 4: 46-54.

JOHN 4. 46 He came therefore again unto Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.

48 Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe.

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, saying, that his son lived.

52 So he inquired of them the hour when he began to amend. They said therefore unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

54 This is again the second sign that Jesus did, having come out of Judea into Galilee.

Golden Text—I am the way, and the truth, and the life. (John 14: 6.)

Time—The last of A.D. 27.

Place—Cana and Capernaum.

Persons—Jesus, the nobleman and his son.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 130: 1-8.

Home Reading—

- Sept. 1. M. Jesus Heals a Nobleman's Son. John 4: 46-54.
2. T. God Heals a King. 2 Kings 20: 1-7.
3. W. Healing Shows God's Mercy. Phil. 2: 25-30.
4. T. Healing Shows God's Power. Luke 5: 17-26.
5. F. Healing Shows God's Love. Isa. 38: 16-22.
6. S. Faith for Healing. Matt. 9: 18-31.
7. S. Hope for the Hopeless. Psalm 130: 1-8.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Capernaum was one of the chief cities of Galilee, situated on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, on the border between the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali. (Matt. 4: 13.) In Jesus' day it is said to have had thirty thousand inhabitants. It had a synagogue, built by a Roman Centurion (Luke 7: 1-5); a custom station, where Matthew collected taxes (Matt. 9: 9); and a Roman garrison. Jesus made his home there for two years, and it was called "his own city." (Matt. 4: 13; 9: 1; Mark 2: 1—margin, "at home.") Its site is now supposed to be Tel Hum. Cana is noted in Lesson VI.

INTRODUCTION

Hints and Helps for Teachers

(See verses 44, 45.)

1. Having spent "two days" at Sychar, teaching the Samaritans, many of whom accepted him as "the Savior of the world," as we learned in the last lesson, Jesus "went forth thence into Galilee," for which country he had started when detained at Sychar. (John 4: 3-5.)

2. "For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honor in his own country." This "for" connects this statement of John with some action of Jesus. What was that action? Farrar and others say that it was Jesus' departure from Nazareth after his rejection there; that John omits this fact so fully recorded by Luke (4: 16-30). Geikie and others say that it was Jesus' avoidance of Nazareth at this time; that, instead of stopping at Nazareth, he continued his journey to Cana; and that his rejection at Nazareth occurred later.

3. It seems impossible—and, therefore, not necessary—to arrange the events of the life of Jesus in chronological order. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John do not do this. This statement made by Jesus is recorded in three other places (Matt. 13: 54-58; Mark 6: 1-6; Luke 4: 16-30), in all of which reference is made to his rejection at Nazareth; and it is possible that John here refers to the same event. However, Jesus knew that he would not be received at Nazareth, and it is probable that for this reason he did not at this time go there. In this statement Jesus declares a general truth; yet he does not mean that we cannot so live as to gain the respect, confidence, and admiration of our own immediate neighbors.

4. Christians are commanded to so live in quiet, peace, gravity, and righteousness that they will win the favor of all and influence others to become Christians.

5. The statement "So when he came into Galilee" shows that while Jesus was either rejected at Nazareth or at this time did not stop there, he was received by others in Galilee. The reason for his reception by the Galileans is given—because they saw "all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast"

6. The Galileans, with all pious Israelites, attended the feasts at Jerusalem. This was the feast of the passover, in the preceding spring; and the things which Jesus did there were cleansing the temple and performing miracles. (John 2: 13-25.) Those who attended this feast had carried back the news of the wonderful works of Jesus

7. The hearty reception of Jesus by these Galileans is in striking contrast with the rejection of him by the rulers at Jerusalem.

8. He spent much of his time and did much of his work in Galilee.

9. All the apostles, except probably Judas Iscariot, were of Galilee. (Acts 2: 7.) Some suppose that "Iscariot" is from "Kerioth," a town in Judea. (Josh. 15: 25.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. What Nobleman?

46. Jesus "came therefore again unto Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine." It had been about ten months since this, his first miracle. This was his second return into Galilee since his baptism.

Cana, as we have learned, was the home of Nathanael; and Jesus may have stopped with him.

"And there was a certain nobleman." This was one of the king's officers. Herod Antipas was then tetrarch of Galilee. Luke (8:3) mentions "Joanna the wife of Chuzas Herod's steward" and (Acts 13:1) "Manaen the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch," but there is not the slightest evidence that either Chuzas or Manaen is the "nobleman" of this verse. We have no way of ascertaining who he was.

"Whose son was sick at Capernaum."

II. He Besought Jesus to Heal His Son

47. If this nobleman was a Jew, he probably attended the feast of Jerusalem and witnessed the miracles Jesus did there; if a Gentile, he had heard of Jesus' power.

"When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee," he went in person to Cana to see him and to beseech him to "come down, and heal his son," who "was at the point of death."

His son had fever (John 4:52), which was common there.

This nobleman had sufficient faith to believe that Jesus could heal his son, but he thought that Jesus would have to go down in person to where the son was. He did not conceive that Jesus could heal his son at such a distance. To make sure of the service of Jesus, he himself went to see Jesus instead of sending servants. He thought, too, that should his son die before Jesus reached him, it would be too late. (Verse 49.) He had not as great faith as the centurion spoken of in Matt. 8:5-13, who said: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed."

48. This nobleman had heard of Jesus as a "wonderful healer by the cures reported to have been wrought by him; but he had not, apparently thought of him as more." (Geikie.)

The Samaritans had been led to believe in Jesus as the Messiah by the truth he spoke, which was the need of their souls; but this man had been led to him by the reports of his miracles, and not by the great truth he taught. He had some faith which Jesus would develop; hence he said: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe." This seems a reproof to that condition of heart whose faith depended upon "signs and wonders." (Matt. 12:38, 39.)

Thayer says the word "signs" and the word "wonders" "differ not in substantial meaning, but only in origin;" and of the word "wonder" he says: "In the New Testament it is found only in the plural and joined with" the word "signs."

49. To show that he did believe that Jesus could heal his son, this nobleman urged him to go at once, saying: "Sir, come down ere my child die."

III. The Son Healed

50. Jesus is always ready to bless when those seeking the blessing are ready to receive it. Paul (Eph. 3:20) says Jesus "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." He is here preparing this nobleman for the reception of the blessing he is about to grant and for a still greater blessing; he would lead him to the faith that he can heal not only the body, but is the Messiah and can heal the soul.

When the nobleman had reached the point to believe Jesus, Jesus said: "Go thy way; thy son liveth."

The nobleman "believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went his way."

At first he thought Jesus must go to his son in order to heal him; now he believes Jesus can heal the son at that great distance. He did not comprehend that Jesus was the Messiah, but he believed the words of Jesus—that what he says will come to pass.

Of this miracle McGarvey says: "This, one of the earliest of miracles, was wrought at a greater distance from the subject than any other on record." Jesus wrought other miracles at a distance.

51, 52. The father's anxiety was gone, because he believed Jesus, and he did not hurry back home. He spent the night on the road, when probably he could have reached Capernaum for he left Jesus at one o'clock. On the next morning servants (bondservants, or slaves) were sent to tell him his son had passed the crisis and was convalescent. He asked the servants at what "hour" his son "began to amend," and they said, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him"—that is, at one o'clock.

53. That was the exact hour when Jesus said: "Thy son liveth." "And himself believed, and his whole house." He and his house not only believed now that Jesus had power to heal, and to heal at a distance, but they believed him to be the Messiah.

54. "This is again the second sign that Jesus did, having come out of Judea into Galilee." Jesus had wrought other miracles in Judea, but this was the second miracle in Galilee. The first, as we have learned, was at Cana; the second was at Cana, but the subject was in Capernaum.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and leading characters of the lesson.

Give the situation, size, importance, and other facts of Capernaum.

What do you remember about Cana?

What two days are here meant?

Where did Jesus go from Sychar?

What did Jesus say in regard to a prophet in his own country?

Why did John record this saying here?

What influence should Christians exert in their own communities?

Why did the Galileans receive

Jesus?

How long had it been since this feast?

What apostles were from Galilee?

From what do some suppose Judas Iscariot was?

46 To what place did Jesus go in Galilee?

What return was this of Jesus into Galilee?

Who came to Jesus at Cana?

Who was this nobleman?

Why did he go to Jesus?

Where was the nobleman's son?

How far was Cana from Capernaum?

47 What was the condition of this man's faith at this period?

Why did he think that Jesus

- could heal his son?
 What did he think was necessary for Jesus to heal his son?
- 48 What is the difference between his faith and the faith of the centurion in Matt. 8: 5-13?
 What is the difference between his faith and that of the Samaritans?
 What did Jesus say this nobleman would have to see before he would believe?
 What is the difference between "signs" and "wonders?"
- 49 What urgent request did he make of Jesus?
 What did this request show?
- 50 Why did Jesus not heal the nobleman's son at the first request?
- What then did Jesus say to him?
 What was the nobleman's faith at this point?
- 51, 52 Why did the father not hasten home?
 What were servants sent to say to him?
 What question did he ask them?
 How did they answer him?
 What did he know by that?
 What time of the day was that?
- 53 What effect did this have upon the nobleman and his house?
- 54 What other miracle had Jesus done in Galilee?
 Where had he performed other miracles?

"Strive, yet I do not promise
 The prize you dream of today
 Will not fade when you think to grasp it
 And melt in your hand away;
 But another and holier treasure,
 You would now perchance disdain
 Will come when your toil is over,
 And pay for all your pain.

"Wait, yet I do not tell you
 The hour you long for now
 Will not come, with its radiance vanished,
 And a shadow upon its brow;
 Yet far through the misty future,
 With a crown of starry light,
 An hour of joy you know not
 Is winging her silent flight.

"Pray; though the gift you ask for
 May never comfort your fears,
 May never repay your pleading,
 Yet pray, and with hopeful tears;
 An answer, not that you long for,
 But diviner, will come one day;
 Your eyes are too dim to see it,
 Yet strive, and wait, and pray."

LESSON XI—SEPTEMBER 14.

JESUS DRIVEN FROM NAZARETH*Lesson Text:* Luke 4: 16-30.

LUKE 4. 16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written.

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

23 And he said unto them, Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in thine own country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is acceptable in his own country.

25 But of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land;

26 and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.

28 And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things;

29 and they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong.

30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

Golden Text—The spirit of the law is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4: 18, 19.)

Time—A.D. 28, perhaps in the spring.

Place—Nazareth.

Persons—Jesus and his audience.

Devotional Reading—Isa. 60: 1-11.

Home Reading—

- Sept. 8. M. Jesus' Inaugural. Luke 4: 16-21.
9. T. Jesus Driven from Nazareth. Luke 4: 22-30.
10. W. "His own received him not." John 1: 9-14.
11. T. The Jews Disbelieve. John 5: 37-47.
12. F. The Chief Priests Disbelieve. Luke 22: 66-71.
13. S. Christ's Brethren Disbelieve. John 7: 1-9.
14. S. Christ's Mission. Isa. 61: 1-3, 10, 11.

INTRODUCTION**Hints and Helps for Teachers**

1. The Golden Text is the text from Jesus' sermon on this occasion and should be committed entire.
2. From Galilee, after healing the nobleman's son, Jesus went back to Jerusalem to "a feast of the Jews." (John 5: 1.) Some suppose this was the second passover which Jesus attended after the beginning of his public ministry.
3. During this visit to Jerusalem the events and conversation of John 5 occurred.
4. About this time John the Baptist was cast into prison; and when Jesus heard this, "he withdrew into Galilee." (Matt. 4: 12; see also Mark 1: 14; Luke 4: 14.)
5. This, then, was his third return into Galilee after his baptism and temptation.
6. Matthew, Mark, and Luke pass over unmentioned several months of Jesus' work, which is recorded in the first five chapters of John.
7. Between verse 13 and 14 of Luke 4 there is a period of more than a year.
8. This lesson should embrace verses 14, 15. The preaching and works of Jesus produced a wonderful effect in Galilee, and he was "glorified of all."

EXPLANATORY NOTES**I. The Synagogue Service**

16. During the last-mentioned tour through Galilee Jesus "came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up."

When Joseph returned from Egypt with Mary and the child Jesus, he was directed by the Lord to go into Galilee; and from a babe until he was thirty years old Jesus lived at Nazareth. He lived among the people to whom he now preached. Maybe he helped to build some of the houses in which they lived and to make some of the furniture they used. It was difficult for them to look upon him as the Messiah.

Synagogues were established after the Jews' return from the captivity of Babylon, probably by Ezra and Nehemiah. Literally, the word "synagogue" means a congregation, but from this it came to mean the house in which the congregation gathered. In Christ's time synagogues were in all the towns of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, and in towns of other nations where there was a sufficient number of Jews. (See Acts 13: 14; 17: 2, for examples.) There were said to be four hundred and eighty in Jerusalem. In these buildings the children were taught and the young men had their debating clubs and libraries. The people met in them every Sabbath (Saturday) to read the Scriptures and to worship God.

Reading the Scriptures was a very important part of this service. God commanded the study of his word. When the Jews met at their feasts three times in the year, the law was read. (Deut. 31: 11.) King Jehoshaphat, in the third year of his reign, sent out princes and Levites to teach the law in all the cities of Judah, which was done with great effect. (2 Chron. 17: 7-9.) Later, they met every Sabbath in their synagogues in all the land and wherever the Jews were scattered, whether they had synagogues or not (Acts 16: 12, 13), to study the Scriptures and to worship. The Old Testament is meant; the New Testament had not been written. This kept alive in their hearts the knowledge of God, saved them from idolatry, and helped to prepare the world for the coming of Christ.

"As his custom was," Jesus went into the synagogue at Nazareth on the Sabbath. It was his custom to go there to worship while living at Nazareth; and since his public work began, it was his custom to enter synagogues, wherever he was, to teach. (Verse 15.) Any competent person could read, and several might read at one meeting.

II. Jesus' Text

17. "The attendant" (verse 20) handed Jesus the book of Isaiah. ("Esaias," Authorized Version.)

One advantage of the American Revised Version is the uniformity with which it gives proper names. The variations of the same name in the Authorized Version are confusing.

"The book" was a roll, or a double roll. As it was read, it was rolled off of one cylinder on another. It was written in large letters on thick material, and one prophecy would make a large book, or roll.

Book making as we have it was not known then.

Jesus found the place he desired to read, not some certain appointed lesson. There were no chapters and verses then. He read what is now Isa. 61: 1, 2.

18. Isaiah has been called the "gospel prophet," because he gives so many prophecies relating to Christ and his work. (See Isa. 7: 14, 15; 9: 6, 7; 11: 1-10; 35; 53.)

The passage Jesus read referred directly to himself as the Messiah.

Isaiah foretold the captivity of Israel in Babylon, and the deliverance therefrom, but also the still grander deliverance from sin through Jesus and the greater blessings of his kingdom.

We have already learned that Jesus was anointed "with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10: 38), and "with the oil of gladness above thy [his] fellows" (Heb. 1: 9), when he was baptized, and that he had the Spirit without measure. (John 3: 34.)

We have seen, too, that he was begotten of God, was the Son of God, and was endowed with wisdom by his divine nature in all his work from a child; but by the Holy Spirit he was enabled to perform miracles, and thereby convince the people that God sent him and was with him.

He was also anointed to preach the gospel to the poor.

This verse tells his mission upon the earth.

God made provisions for the poor and afflicted in both the Old

Testament and the New Testament. The poor must not be oppressed. Jews must lend to their poor brethren without interest, and the way we now treat the poor is a test of our Christianity. (Matt. 25: 31-46; Gal. 2: 10; James 1: 27.) Jesus has taught us that we have the poor always with us, and our treatment of them is our treatment of him.

Looking after the temporal wants and the salvation of the poor is so contrary to the spirit of the world that it was evidence to John the Baptist that Jesus was the Christ, because he preached the gospel to the poor. (Matt. 11: 5.)

Christianity has done great things for the poor. We can see this when we compare the condition of the poor where Christianity is with that of the poor where it is not.

The gospel is printed, the Bible is published and sent without cost into every poor home in the land, and it is translated into the various languages and dialects of the earth and scattered "without money and without price." Schools all over Christian lands are open to the poor, where they can all learn to read, and, therefore, to read for themselves the word of God. Colleges, public libraries, and art galleries are open to them. Asylums, hospitals, sanitariums, widows and orphans' homes, houses of refuge, and various other benevolent institutions have been provided for the needy. This is not the case where Christianity is not known. These reflect the light of "the sun of righteousness" as the moon reflects that of the king of day. Were there no sun, there would be no light for the moon to reflect; were there no Christ, every continent would be the "dark continent." Much more remains to be done along this line in carrying out the glorious mission of the gospel, but all that has been accomplished has been done through the influence of Christianity. Through the influence of Christianity now blood-thirsty nations may learn and practice war no more, while Christians cease this diabolical work as soon as they become Christians.

Then Christ preaches the gospel to all the poor—to those who are humble or "poor in spirit" (Matt. 5: 3) and to poor sinners doomed to everlasting destruction unless they repent.

Christ is "the water of life" to the thirsty, "the bread of life" to the hungry, "the light of the world" to all who are in darkness, "the great Physician" and the "balm in Gilead" to the afflicted and to those who mourn. Hence he heals the broken-hearted—those who are broken down and overwhelmed with sorrow. How consoling, how healing, to the bleeding heart are the "precious and exceeding great promises" of Jesus!

He preached deliverance to the captives of sin, of which deliverance from Babylon was a type. "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin." (John 8: 34.) All slaves of evil habits, of fleshly passions—like intemperance, worldly pride, and vanity—are set free by Jesus.

Note what Christianity has done in the way of prison reforms and the freedom of literal slaves. Jesus opened the eyes of the literally blind, and Christianity has erected blind asylums and made books which the blind can read; but Jesus has opened the eyes of the ignorant and of the spiritually blind, pointing them to heaven and to the highest aims and hopes of true life. Jesus did all this while

on earth, but what he did in person was only an earnest of what his church would afterwards accomplish in the same great work. Christianity to-day is known by its fruits.

19. "The acceptable year of the Lord" was the time when all this would be fulfilled. The Deliverer—and, therefore, the deliverance—had come. He would save men from sin and eternal death. This was probably a reference to the Jewish year of jubilee. (Lev. 25:8-17.) This year, to the Jews, was full of great promises and blessings: the landed property went back to the owner who through poverty had to sell it, and the captive went free.

The rest of the prophecy Jesus did not read. The next line says: "And the day of vengeance of our God." That time had not yet come, but it would come to all the disobedient. Jesus did afterwards proclaim it in his solemn warning to the rebellious cities where he labored.

III. Jesus' Discourse

20. Here Jesus closed the book and gave it to "the attendant"—the one whose business it was to put it back in its place and care for it and the building. Back of the platform, or stand, upon which the reader stood was an ark, in which the sacred books were kept.

It was the custom to stand while reading, but to sit while preaching; hence "the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him," eager to hear what he would say upon the text. All eyes were focused upon him, and all prophecy is fulfilled in him.

21. Without equivocation, he announced that the prophecy just read was applicable to himself and was fulfilled that day before them.

22. His words were full of mercy, tenderness, truth, and love, filling the afflicted with consolation and hope (John 1:17); "and all bare him witness" by their countenances and attitudes, showing that they understood him. Perhaps his mother and brethren were present. They all showed their astonishment in the question: "Is not this Joseph's son?" How could their fellow townsman—a poor carpenter, a laboring man, and the son of a carpenter—say and do such things? At this thought their feelings were changed and they became at once bitter toward him.

23. Jesus perceived this and said "Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself"—that is, as he explains, let him do at Nazareth all the wonders he has performed at Capernaum.

Jesus had been to Capernaum already (John 2:12), and a few months before this visit to Nazareth he had healed a nobleman's son there. (John 4:46-54.) Doubtless he had performed other miracles there. The people of Nazareth had heard of this, and wished him to verify the report by doing the same there. They did not believe, it seems, what they had heard. If he had done so much for the afflicted of other places, let him help his own people at home. So they said to him on the cross: "He saved others; himself he cannot save."

IV. The Unbelief of the People

24. He answered this by another proverb: "No prophet is acceptable in his own country." This he stated as a general truth. It

was difficult for them to believe in the greatness and power of one reared in their midst. His own brothers, as well as his neighbors, did not at that time believe on him as the Son of God. (John 7: 5.)

The reason "he did not many mighty works there" was "because of their unbelief." (Matt. 13: 53-58.) He did not perform miracles to display his power. People must themselves be prepared in heart to receive a blessing and to properly use it before God blesses them.

25, 26. For this reason Elijah was sent to the widow of Zarephath, a town near Zidon, to a Phenician, passing by the widows of Israel, during a long and terrible drought. She, in faith and trust, was ready to receive the blessing. (1 Kings 17.)

27. On this principle Elisha healed Naaman, the leper, although a Syrian, while there were many unhealed lepers in Israel. Naaman wanted to be healed, sought the blessing, and thanked God for it. (2 Kings 5.) Other lepers did not do this. This is all true and applicable to-day.

The one today who studies and obeys the gospel, trusts God, is thankful to God, and will properly apply and use God's blessing, is the one who will be blessed.

28. All in the synagogue felt most keenly the application of this to themselves. These two Gentiles referred to were better and more appreciative than themselves. Hence they were filled with feelings of vengeance, and sought to kill Jesus.

29. "They rose up"—that is, informally and irreverently—"and rushed out with him, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built," intending, like a mob, to throw Jesus down. This precipice is supposed to have been forty or fifty feet high.

30. With a dignity and majesty which overawed them, Jesus passed through their midst and went his way. (See John 18: 6.) He went to Capernaum. (Luke 4: 31, 32.)

QUESTIONS

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| <p>Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give the time, place, and principal characters of this lesson. Where did Jesus go after healing the nobleman's son? What do some suppose this feast was? What chapter records the events of this visit? Who was cast into prison about this time? Where did Jesus go upon hearing this? What events do Matthew, Mark, and Luke pass over? What effect in Galilee did Jesus' work and preaching produce? 16 From what country did Jesus go into Nazareth? How long had Jesus lived in Nazareth? What was a "synagogue"? Why were synagogues built? Did God require that the scriptures be read?</p> | <p>Who had the law taught throughout Judea? What was the result? What scriptures are meant? What was Christ's custom? What did he do at Nazareth? 17 Who was "the attendant"? What was then called a "book"? What book was handed to Jesus? What place did he find? Why this place? 18 Why is Isaiah called the "gospel prophet"? To whom did this passage refer? When and how was Jesus anointed? To what extent did he have the Spirit? What did God anoint him to do? What provision has God made for the poor? What was one evidence to John the Baptist that Jesus was the Christ? What has Christianity done for the poor?</p> |
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- What did Christ do for the broken-hearted?
 What did he do for captives?
 To what were they captives?
 What did Christ do for the blind?
 What is Christianity now doing for the blind?
 What did Christ do for slaves?
 19 What is meant by "the acceptable year of the Lord?"
 20 What was the duty of "the attendant?"
 What did Jesus do when he had closed the book?
 What was the custom about reading and speaking?
 Where were the eyes of his audience?
 21 What remark did he make upon the text?
 22 What was the nature of his words?
- What did his audience do?
 What did they ask?
 What effect had this question upon them?
 23 What did Jesus say?
 What had he done at Capernaum?
 24 What is the meaning of this proverb?
 Why did he not do many mighty works there?
 25, 26 Why was Elijah sent to the widow at Zarephath?
 Why was he not sent to other widows?
 27 Why was Naaman, and why were not others, healed?
 28, 29 What effect did these illustrations have upon the people?
 What did they do to Jesus?
 30 What became of him?

"Is thy cruse of comfort failing?
 Rise and share it with another,
 And through all the years of famine
 It shall serve thee and thy brother.
 Love divine will fill thy store house,
 Or thy handful still renew,
 Scanty fare for one will often
 Make a royal feast for two.

* * * *

"For the heart grows rich in giving;
 All its wealth is living grain;
 Seeds which mildew in the garner,
 Scattered fill with gold the plain.
 Is thy burden hard and heavy?
 Do thy steps drag wearily?
 Help to bear thy brother's burden;
 God will bear both it and thee."

—Mrs. Charles.

LESSON XII—SEPTEMBER 21.

JESUS MAKES A MISSIONARY TOUR*Lesson Text:* Mark 1: 35-45.

MARK 1. 35 And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed.

36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him;

37 and they found him, and say unto him, All are seeking thee.

38 And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, That I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth.

39 And he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons.

40 And there cometh to him a leper, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And being moved with compassion, he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou made clean.

42 And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean.

43 And he strictly charged him, and straightway sent him out,

44 and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to spread abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into a city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

Golden Text—If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. (Mark 1: 40.)

Time—A.D. 28.

Place—Capernaum, Galilee.

Persons—Jesus, his disciples, and the variously afflicted.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 65: 1-7.

Home Reading—

Sept. 15. M. Jesus Makes a Missionary Tour. Mark 1: 35-45.

16. T. The Missionary Pattern. Acts 10: 34-43.

17. W. Christ's Parting Command. Matt. 28: 16-20.

18. T. Helping People. Matt. 25: 34-40.

19. F. A Missionary Call. Isa. 60: 1-11.

20. S. The Persistence of the Gospel. Luke 19: 29-40.

21. S. "Unto thee shall all flesh come." Psalm 65: 1-7.

INTRODUCTION**Hints and Helps for Teachers**

(Read verses 9-34.)

1. As stated in the last lesson, when Jesus heard of the imprisonment of John the Baptist, he "came into Galilee" (Mark 1: 14), or as Matthew (4: 12) says, "withdrew into Galilee."

2. On this tour through Galilee he was rejected at Nazareth, as learned from the last lesson.

3. Matthew (4: 13-17) gives an account of Jesus' preaching at this time in Galilee.

4. At Capernaum and around the Sea of Galilee Jesus did most

of his marvelous works and spent most of his public life.

5. The Sea of Galilee was formed by a depression in the ground where the river Jordan simply spread out, for it ran into the northern end of this sea and out at the southern end. This was also called "the Sea of Tiberias" (John 6: 1), from the city of that name on its border. "Gennesaret," from the beautiful plain on its north-western angle; "Chinneroth," from a town of that name (Num. 34: 11; Deut. 3: 17; Josh. 11: 2; 12: 3; 13: 27); "the Sea of Galilee," from the province of Galilee on its western border. It is thirteen miles long and six miles across in the widest place. The region around it was the most densely settled of all Palestine, there being no less than nine cities on its very shores.

In its waters Peter and Andrew, James, and John with many others fished as an honest occupation.

6. Christ's theme in preaching was: "the gospel of God;" "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand;" "repent ye and believe the gospel." "The gospel" here was "the good tidings" (See margin) that the kingdom of God approaches or has come nigh.

7. Jesus called four disciples—Andrew, Peter, James, and John—to leave their work and follow him.

8. On "the Sabbath day" Jesus went into the synagogue in Capernaum and taught. His teaching astonished all.

9. He cast a demon out of a man to the amazement of all.

10. "The report of him went immediately everywhere into all the region of Galilee."

11. From the synagogue Jesus and his disciples went at once "into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John."

12. He healed Peter's mother-in-law of "a great fever."

13. The Sabbath ended at sun down, so after sunset the Jews could bear burdens (John 5: 10) and go to their general work. So after sunset this day "all the city" (comparatively speaking) was gathered at the door of this house, having "brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed of demons." They may have come after sunset, too, because it was cool. They believed Jesus could heal all of them.

14. Jesus did this "with a word." (Matt. 8: 16.)

15. This was a very busy day with Jesus. His was a busy and eventful life. See also John 9: 4.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Jesus Must Pray

35. After the events mentioned in the previous parts of the chapter and the work and fatigue of a busy Sabbath, Jesus rose early the next morning—"a great while before day"—and went "into a desert place" to pray. He sought the solitude of this place and the quietude of this early hour, while all the city was wrapped in slumber, to commune with his Father.

Jesus was a prayerful Savior. He frequently withdrew from even his disciples to pray. Sometimes he spent a whole night in prayer. (Luke 6: 12; 11: 1; Heb. 5: 7.) It was necessary for him to pray in order to gain wisdom for his work, strength to resist temptation and to accomplish all that he did.

Many to-day yield readily to temptation and accomplish so little because they pray but little or not at all, and it is hard to show such people the necessity and blessings of prayer. They are too blind and too weak to realize their need and to appreciate the privilege of carrying everything to God in prayer.

36, 37. Simon and the other disciples followed him; and when they found him, after a search, they informed him that all men sought him. All had heard of the wonderful events of the previous day.

The disciples seemed pleased with the popularity of their Master, and thought he would continue to teach and to heal the people there.

38, 39. Jesus informed them that he must preach to others as well, and here he inaugurated his first preaching tour through Galilee.

"He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons."

We are told that there were two hundred and forty towns and villages in Galilee.

Matthew (4: 23-25) says: "And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan."

These people were attracted to Jesus by the many wonderful works which he did.

Decapolis was a district of ten cities of undefined area east and southeast of the Sea of Galilee.

40. Among those healed was a leper. He went to Jesus beseeching him and saying unto him: "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." He recognized the ability of Jesus to heal him; and, hence, his being healed depended only upon the willingness of Jesus to do so.

Leprosy is a loathsome and terrible disease. It begins with sores in the skin. (See Lev. 13: 10, 11.) Then it eats away on the body until, one by one, different parts are consumed—nose, lips, palate, etc. Sometimes the nails decay and fall off, and joint after joint of the fingers and toes are eaten off. It is a terrible affliction. Some lepers recover.

This disease renders the ones afflicted by it "unclean"—not because it was so contagious, but ceremonially unclean, as touching a dead body or having an issue of blood. Naaman was a leper, and yet was the general of the Syrian army.

"And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and the hair of his head shall go loose, and he shall cover his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague is in him he shall be unclean; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his dwelling be." (Lev. 13: 45, 46.) Read carefully Lev. 13, 14.

If leprosy is a type of sin, sin is an awful disease. One is healed of the leprosy of sin when by faith he obeys Jesus, the Christ, the

Son of the living God. (See Heb. 5: 7-9; Mark 16: 15, 16; Acts 2: 38; Gal. 3: 26, 27; 2 Cor. 5: 17.)

41, 42. Jesus showed his willingness to heal and his compassion upon the leper by touching him. "And straightway the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean"—that is, cured.

43, 44. Jesus immediately sent the leper out, and strictly charged him to say nothing to any man, but to show himself to the priest and to offer for his cleansing the things required in the law and for a testimony unto the people.

This offering was not "because of" his having been healed, but in order to his cleansing. He had already been healed of the unclean disease, and in that particular was well, or clean; but he was still legally or ceremonially unclean and must make the offering "Moses commanded" in order to be cleansed and for a testimony that he had recovered from the disease. (Lev. 14: 1-20.)

45. "But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to spread abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into a city, but was without in desert places; and they came to him from every quarter."

This helps us to understand why Jesus frequently told those he had healed to say "nothing to any man." The people became unduly excited and came upon Jesus in such crowds that they hindered the purpose they would accomplish. When there was no danger of unduly exciting the people and when the occasion required, Jesus told the one healed to tell his friends "how great things" the Lord had done for him. (Mark 5: 19, 20.)

Jesus healed the people in body, mind, and soul—healed all human infirmities. He is opposed to human suffering. He healed them miraculously, but he has set in motion forces through his teaching which alleviate human suffering and make all good and wise.

Christianity is good for the body, mind, and soul. Its principles are healthful and save from intemperance, or self-indulgence of every kind, and its benevolence carries comfort and joy to the various afflicted of earth.

Christianity is aggressive, entirely unselfish, and eminently missionary, seeking to bless and to save the whole world. Jesus' disciples have his spirit and his mind to suffer for others. (See Phil. 2: 1-14.)

Jesus in compassion not only healed the people of "all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness," but by his miracles he showed his authority to teach and that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God. (See John 3: 2; 5: 36; 14: 11; 20: 30, 31.)

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place and principal characters of the lesson.

What account does Matthew here give?

Where did Jesus perform most of his miraculous work?

Describe the Sea of Galilee?

By what other names is it called?

Who fished in its waters, and why?

Where did Jesus teach on the Sabbath?

What did he do for a man in the synagogue?

Where did the report of Jesus' work go?

Where did he go from this synagogue?

Whom did he heal there?

What did all the city do after sunset?

Why was this done after sun-

- down?
 What did Jesus do?
 35 Where did Jesus go on the next morning "a great while before day?"
 Why did he do this?
 How often and how much did Jesus pray?
 Why did he pray?
 Why do many Christians yield so easily to so many temptations?
 Why can they not see the necessity of daily prayer?
 37 What did Simon and the other disciples do?
 What pleased them?
 38, 39 What reply did Jesus make?
 Where did he go preaching?
 Who followed him?
 What attracted them?
 What and where was Decapolis?
 40 What did this leper say to Jesus

- in requesting to be healed?
 Describe the leprosy.
 Of what is leprosy thought to be a type?
 When now is one healed of sin?
 41, 42 How did Jesus show his compassion for the leper?
 43, 44 What charge did Jesus give him and tell him to do?
 Why must he show himself to the priest and make this offering?
 45 Why did Jesus charge the leper not to tell what had been done for him?
 Why did he sometimes tell those healed not to tell their friends?
 How does Jesus bless and heal people now?
 In what different ways does Christianity bless the world?
 What was the great purpose of Jesus' miracles.

"Assailed by slander and a tongue of strife
 His only answer was a blameless life."

"Do thy duty, that is best;
 Leave unto the Lord the rest."

"Ah! well the poet said in sooth
 That whispering tongues can poison truth."

QUESTIONS

LESSON XIII—SEPTEMBER 28.

REVIEW

Golden Text—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3: 16.)

Devotional Reading—Isa. 55: 1-13.

Home Reading—

- Sept. 22. M. The Purpose of Christ's Coming. John 3: 7-17.
- 23. T. The Birth of Jesus. Luke 2: 7-16.
- 24. W. The Boyhood of Jesus. Luke 2: 41-52.
- 25. T. The Baptism of Jesus. Mark 1: 1-11.
- 26. F. The Temptation of Jesus. Matt. 4: 1-11.
- 27. S. First Followers of Jesus. John 1: 35-45.
- 28. S. God's Invitation. Isa. 55: 1-13.

God's love for the world embraces all he has done and is doing still to save men; Christ's love for the world embraces all he has done and is doing to save men; and faith in Christ, working by love (Gal. 5: 6), embraces all that men are to do to be saved.

Since God and Christ so loved the world, all men should love God and Christ. "We love"—love God and men—"because he first loved us," and "the love of Christ constraineth us." (2 Cor. 5: 14.)

All know, or should know, that no obedience to God means no love for God; "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." (1 John 5: 3.) "He that loveth me not keepeth not my words." (John 14: 24.)

The study of the life of Christ—implicitly obedient to God's will, spent in going about doing good, self sacrificing, eventful, heroic, tragical, full of suffering and sorrow, sublime and wonderful—is most awe inspiring and soul filling and saving.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the golden text.

The love and work of what three parties are embraced in the Golden text?

When does faith save?

What is it to love God?

Lesson I.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give briefly the story of the birth of Jesus.

Lesson II.—Give the subject. Repeat the golden text. Repeat the facts of the boyhood of Jesus.

Lesson III.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give the awe-inspiring facts of Jesus baptism.

Lesson IV.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give the three temptations of Jesus—the temptation peculiar to each.

Lesson V.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who were the first disciples of Christ? Where did Jesus find them?

Lesson VI.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What was Jesus' first miracle? Where was it?

Lesson VII.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. How many times did Jesus cleanse the temple? When each time? Of what was the temple a type? How is the church polluted by traffic today?

Lesson VIII.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What did Jesus tell Nicodemus was essential to entering his kingdom? Explain how one is born again, or of God.

Lesson IX.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Relate the facts which led to this conversation. Give the conversation and the result. What was Christ's food?

Lesson X.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. How did Jesus heal this nobleman's son? What showed the nobleman's faith?

Lesson XI.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Why was Jesus rejected at Nazareth? Where then did he make his home?

Lesson XII.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Relate the facts of this journey. When and why did Jesus retire to pray?

FOURTH QUARTER

THE LIFE OF JESUS—HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS

II. Central Period of Christ's Ministry

Second Quarter of a Nine Months' Course

LESSON I—OCTOBER 5.

THE CHOICE OF THE TWELVE

Lesson Text—Matthew 10: 1-8.

MATTHEW 10. 1 And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans:

6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely ye received, freely give.

Golden Text—Freely ye received, freely give. (Matt. 10: 8.)

Time—Last of A.D. 28 and first of A.D. 29. About this time the preaching tour of Matt. 9: 35 was made.

Place—Galilee; and from some place in Galilee Jesus sent forth the twelve.

Persons—Jesus and the twelve

Devotional Reading—Isaiah 40: 1-8.

Home Reading—

- | | | |
|-------|--------|--|
| Sept. | 29. M. | The Choice of the Twelve. Matt. 10: 1-8. |
| | 30. T. | "Fishers of Men." Matt. 4: 18-25. |
| Oct. | 1. W. | Forsaking All. Luke 5: 1-11. |
| | 2. T. | "Follow me." Matt. 9: 9-13. |
| | 3. F. | The Inner Circle. Mark 5: 35-43. |
| | 4. S. | Winning One by One. John 1: 43-51. |
| | 5. S. | The Gospel Proclaimed. Isa. 40: 1-8. |

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

See on the map the river Leontes. Galilee was bounded on the north by this river and by Samaria on the south, by the Mediterranean Sea on the west and by the eastern coast of the Sea of Galilee on the east. It was about fifty miles from north to south and not so wide by ten or fifteen miles. In it lay the plain of Esdraelon, "the battlefield of Palestine." We are told there were two hundred and forty towns and villages in Galilee.

INTRODUCTION

I. Review

The third general preaching tour of Jesus through Galilee embraces this lesson.

We should remember that much of Jesus' work up to this time and much that follows was done in Galilee.

Soon after his baptism and temptation Jesus returned to Galilee, with the few disciples he had at that time, and there at Cana he performed his first miracle, and then made a short visit to Capernaum. (John 2: 1-12.) That was the first of the year 27.

In the spring of that year he attended the passover at Jerusalem, cleansed the temple the first time, preached to Nicodemus, and spent the summer and fall preaching and baptizing in Judea. (John 2: 13 to 3: 24.)

The first of that winter he returned to Galilee, and converted the woman at Jacob's well on the way. (John 4: 1-43.)

He remained in Galilee, it seems, until the spring of 28, when he attended a feast at Jerusalem, supposed by many to be the passover. (John 5: 1-47.)

He soon returned to Galilee, was rejected at Nazareth, removed to Capernaum, called his disciples to be fishers of men, did many miracles, and thence made his first circuit through Galilee. (Matt. 4: 12-25; Mark 1: 39; Luke 4: 4-44.)

He spent all that summer at work in Galilee, and in the fall he made another tour through that country. (Luke 8: 1-3.)

He spent all the fall and winter of 28 and 29 in Galilee, which brings us down to our present lesson.

During this third tour he was rejected the second time at Nazareth. (Matt. 13: 53-58.)

II. Jesus' Teaching and Preaching

Jesus spent much of the year 29 in Galilee, as will be seen farther on. Much of these three years was spent in Galilee. On this tour Jesus did three things. (1) He taught in the synagogues, (2) He preached the gospel of the kingdom, and (3) he healed all the variously afflicted.

There is some difference between teaching and preaching. We have a splendid example of Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5, 6, and 7.) He taught "as one having authority, and not as their scribes." To "preach" means to publish abroad, to make known, to proclaim.

Jesus proclaimed the coming kingdom, saying: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4: 17.)

He showed great generosity in healing all sorts of diseases, but his divine power was manifested in performing these and all miracles to prove that he spoke by divine authority. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." (John 10: 37, 38.)

We should learn a lesson from Jesus example in these three general tours through Galilee: He first sowed the seed, then cultivated it, and returned to reap the harvest.

III. False Shepherds and Scarcity of Laborers

The last three verses of Chapter 9 are connected with the mission of the twelve.

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd."

This shows their spiritual condition. Their pretended shepherds, the scribes and Pharisees, instead of feeding them and preparing them for Christ's coming, had fleeced them, preyed upon them, and laid upon them "burdens grievous to be borne."

In compassion for them, Jesus provides help in sending out the twelve apostles to assist in teaching them correctly.

Note that Jesus "is the good shepherd" (John 10: 11-14), the "great shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. 13: 20), and "the chief Shepherd." (1 Pet. 5: 4.)

Note further that Jesus has provided shepherds for his flock. (Acts 20: 28-31; 1 Pet. 5: 1-5.) All should know that shepherds are the elders, or bishops, or overseers of the church in any given place. Elders, overseers, bishops and pastors are all the same. These shepherds should perform their duty faithfully. The church will never be what God intends for it to be until they do this.

Jesus then changed the figure from that of sheep without a shepherd to a ripe and abundant harvest, with not enough laborers to gather it, and which will be lost if not gathered in.

These two figures represent the same sad condition of the unfortunate people.

The laborers were few, because there were not enough ready and willing to go to the distressed people.

IV. God's Way of Securing Laborers

The great and crying need of the church as well as of the world is self-sacrificing, consecrated, unselfish, untiring laborers in the field and true shepherds of God's flock, who will lay down their lives for the sheep.

The need was urgent when Jesus was on earth, but it is none the less urgent now. Jesus' way of making elders and preachers then is his way of making them now, just as his way—the only way—of making Christians is always the same. He raised no objection to proper education and strongly taught that "the laborer is worthy of his hire; but his way of securing more laborers is not higher education and "better pay." He never went to the worldly wise, the highly educated, and the wealthy to select his apostles, and not many such now ever become Christians. Let us commit to memory 1 Cor. 1: 22, 26-31; 2: 1-10; 3: 18-23.

The false teachers and pretended shepherds of Jesus' day asked concerning him: "How knoweth this man letters having never learned?" (See John 7: 15-18.) "What are his college and university degrees?" Who licensed him to teach or gave him authority to preach? Not Gamaliel, not the Pharisees, not the Sadducees, not the Herodians. Without leave or license from any ecclesiasticism or degree from any college of the sects or denominations of his time he preached the will of God open and above board. Paul gave up all this in order to become a Christian.

Jesus' answer to their question was: "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me." He needed the right to teach from God only. Just so it is today, when one possesses the qualifications which God himself specifies (be sure to learn what these are) one has God's leave to teach and to preach, and God's support in doing so.

Not only so, but Jesus declares that all who will—who purpose and determine—to do God's will—not the theories and notions and commandments of men—shall know that his teaching is from God and not from men.

This is a most serious charge against all who teach their own speculations, theories, doctrines, etc.—that is, they are unwilling to do God's will.

The "laborers"—the elders, preachers, and other teachers so greatly needed today are the ones who have willed with all the power of mind and strength and soul to first do and then to teach God's will. God knows the hearts of men; hence, Jesus teaches and exhorts his disciples to pray God to send the laborers into his harvest. All whom God sends are faithful and true, and he sends them in answer to prayer.

Like Jesus, these apostles and all Christ's disciples must accompany their prayers with earnest work and must go on the mission upon which Jesus sends them.

It distresses all true disciples of Christ for self-constituted censors, who work for their own selfish ends—in education, travel, position, etc.—to point out destitute fields and direct others to work them.

But in this, as in all other things, God's thoughts are not man's thoughts, neither are man's ways of increasing the number of laborers God's ways. (Isaiah 55: 8-11.) And no way of God has been any more perverted than this one, especially in later years.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Apostles Selected Before This

1. Jesus then "called unto him his twelve disciples" and sent them forth with authority to cast out "unclean spirits" and to heal all manner of diseases.

He had many other disciples, and of these "he chose twelve, whom he also named apostles." (Luke 6: 12, 13.)

Before choosing or appointing these (Mark 3: 14, 15) Jesus spent the night on a mountain in prayer.

Since it was necessary for Jesus to pray before taking the important steps of choosing his apostles, how much more is it necessary for us to pray earnestly and to solemnly commit our way to God before making important decisions and moves in life!

There is no ceremony of "ordination" in the word "choose" or "appoint."

Jesus appointed the twelve for two reasons: (1) "that they might be with him" and (2) "that he might send them forth to preach" and "to have authority to cast out demons."

2-4. These verses and Mark 3: 14, 15; Luke 6: 12, 13 show when he appointed them; Mark 6: 7; Luke 9: 1-6; and Matt. 10: 1 and 5 to 11: 1 show when he sent them forth.

These verses give the selection of them in connection with sending

them forth; but they were selected some months before that, for the reason given "that they might be with him" in training for the great work he wished them to do. By this training and development they were prepared to go themselves.

The apostles must be eye-witnesses, too, of the miracles, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and, in turn, perform miracles to prove their divine authority to preach and to teach. (Acts 1: 21, 22; 22: 16-18; 1 Cor. 15: 5-9; Heb. 2: 3, 4.)

They must be disciples (learners) first; they must go to school to Christ before they become apostles.

They went forth to do just what Jesus did—to perform deeds of mercy and love, to work miracles attesting their authority to teach, and to preach the gospel of the kingdom.

II. The Names of the Apostles

These verses give also the names of the twelve apostles. There are three other lists. (Mark 3: 16-19; Luke 6: 14-16; Acts 1: 13.) The persons are the same in every list, but some are called by different names. For instance, Peter is generally called "Peter" in the New Testament, but he is sometimes called "Symeon" (Acts 13: 1; 15: 14) and sometimes "Simon Peter" (2 Pet. 1: 1.) So, in this list of apostles, Matthew, in the Authorized Version, gives the name of the tenth one as "Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus," but in the American Revised Version both Matthew and Mark give his name as "Thaddeus," while Luke gives his name as "Judas the son of James," and places him eleventh in the list. (Luke 6: 16; Acts 1: 13.) We do not know who this James was, only that he was the father of Judas or Thaddeus. Simon was surnamed "Peter" ("a stone"—John 1: 42); and James and John "Boanerges," which means "sons of thunder," possibly because of their fiery temperament. They wanted to burn down a Samaritan village because it refused Christ a night's lodging. (Luke 9: 51-56.) Andrew was Peter's brother, and the one who found "first his own brother Simon" and "brought him unto Jesus." (John 1: 40-42.) But little is known of Andrew's work; yet he filled his mission. Philip was of Bethsaida, and is usually named with Bartholomew. "Bartholomew" means "son of Tolmai," and is supposed to be Nathanael. Matthew does not conceal the fact that he was a publican. Thomas was coupled with Matthew and was also called "Didymus," which means "twins." (John 11: 16.) Thaddeus was Judas, the son of James. "Simon the Cananean" is called by Luke "the Zealot." "Cananean" is the Hebrew equivalent of "Zealot." "The form in which the term 'Canaanite' is spelled has led many English readers to suppose that Simon was either a descendant of the original Canaanite or a citizen of the town of Cana, neither of which supposition is true. The original is the Syro-Chaldaic name of a sect among the Jews who took into their own hands, without process of law, the punishment of flagrant offenses. . . . Luke translates the name into Greek, and calls this apostle 'Simon Zelotes,' or 'Simon the Zealot.'" (McGarvey.) "Iscariot" means a man of Kerioth, a town of Judah. He was the only one, then, not a Galilean. (Acts 1: 11: 2: 7.) Judas Iscariot is not mentioned in the list of Acts 1: 13, because he had fallen by transgression (Acts 1: 25), and was at that time dead.

There was not a priest or scribe among the apostles. They were from the ranks of what is called "the common people." Several of them were fishermen, and all practical, industrious, business men. Jesus appointed no lazy man an apostle.

In all the lists Simon Peter is mentioned first by way of pre-eminence. (See Matt. 16: 13-20; Acts 15: 7.)

James, Peter, and John are called "pillars." (Gal. 2: 9.) They were with Jesus in the room when he raised Jairus' daughter, on the mount of transfiguration, and in Gethsemane.

III. The First Commission, Not to Gentiles, Not to Samaritans

5, 6. On this mission the apostles were not to "go into any way of the Gentiles" or "into any city of the Samaritans."

All who were not Jews were Gentiles, and the Samaritans, the inhabitants of Samaria, were a mixed race, who sprang from the few Jews who remained and the Gentiles who were colonized there after the destruction of the ten tribes, or the kingdom of Israel. (1 Kings 17: 24.) They worshiped in Mount Gerizim. (John 4: 20.) The Jews had no dealings with them. (John 4: 9.) A Samaritan village refused the common hospitalities of the country to Jesus.

The apostles were to go only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel"—that is, to the lost Jews.

Why this difference? Because the preparatory work of the kingdom was still in progress, the kingdom was not yet set up, the new institution had not yet been ushered in, the new covenant had not yet been sealed by the blood of Jesus. (See Heb. 8: 8-13; 9, and especially verses 15-24.) All this took place after the shedding of Christ's blood and his resurrection. The law of Moses, the first covenant, was yet in force; Jesus was born under the law (Gal. 4: 4), and kept it; the apostles lived under it and were subject to it. It was "the middle wall of partition" between Jews and Gentiles. This must be broken down, and "the law of commandments contained in ordinances" must be abolished by the death of Christ, that the Gentiles may be brought nigh by his blood, "that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Eph. 2: 11-18.) The apostles were not to preach that Jesus is the Christ (Matt. 16: 20) until after his resurrection from the dead. (Matt. 17: 9.)

IV. The Second Commission—This Time to the Whole World

Contrast this commission here with the commission given to the apostles after Christ arose from the dead. (Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 46-53.) The same Lord gave both.

1. In the first the apostles are forbidden to go to the Gentiles or Samaritans, but must go to the Jews only; in the second they are to go "into all the world," "preach the gospel to the whole creation," and "teach all nations," beginning first at Jerusalem, then in Judea, then in Samaria, and thence "unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1: 8.)

2. In the first they were not commanded to preach Jesus as the

Christ, but that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," or "the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10: 9); in the second they were to preach that Christ had died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, had been buried, and had been raised from the dead, according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15: 1-8), for "our justification" (Rom. 4: 25), and that God had highly exalted him and made him both Lord and Christ (Phil. 2: 8-11; Acts 2: 36); that people should believe in him as such, confess him as Lord (Rom. 10: 9, 10), repent and be baptized in his name unto the remission of sins, with the promise that they should receive the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2: 38.)

3. In the first they asked nothing in Christ's name (John 16: 23, 24); in the second, or after Christ went to the Father, they received whatever they asked in his name (John 14: 12-14; Heb. 4: 14-16.) The preparatory work now has been done, the King is on his throne, the kingdom is established, and subjects are inducted into it.

V. What the Apostles Preached

7. And as ye go, preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

We have before seen that "at hand" means "has come nigh," is near, or has approached. The kingdom had not at that time been inaugurated, but the preparatory work was still going on. John the Baptist preached, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3: 2); Jesus preached the same (Matt. 4: 17); so did the apostles, and so did the seventy. (Luke 10: 1-9.)

It is most significant that, after the resurrection of Jesus and under the second commission, the apostles were not commanded to preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." After this they preached its actual existence, and that people were translated from the power of darkness into it. (Col. 1: 13.)

Jesus instructed the apostles to deal with people in prudence and wisdom, and told them of the persecution they would have to endure.

VI. Freely Give

8. They were authorized to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." They did not ignore means, but used remedies at times, anointing many with oil and healing them. (Mark 6: 13.)

They were to perform all these cures in benevolence and mercy, not only to demonstrate their love, but also to show their divine authority to teach by this manifestation of divine power through them. It should be noted here that Judas Iscariot, with the others, was sent out with power to heal the sick and cast out devils, etc.

Miraculous power was not bestowed upon the apostles and others to make them morally or spiritually better, but to confirm the truth which they preached. Their moral and spiritual condition depended upon their own faith and obedience to God.

They had freely received; as freely they were to give. The afflicted must be relieved and the gospel of the kingdom preached "without money and without price." (Isa. 55: 1.) Simon the sorcerer desired to place these powers on a money basis. (Acts 8: 18-20.) To make merchandise of the gospel now destroys the very spirit and

perverts the very nature of God's kingdom. "But if any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8: 9.)

VII. Further Preparation for Their Present Work

While the Lesson Text ends with verse 8, verses 9-15 contain further instructions to the apostles regarding the preparation for their work and the promise of support. Let us study this.

They were to provide no money of gold, silver, or brass. The margin puts "girdle" for "purse," because money was carried in girdles. "Wallet" was a traveling bag, used for carrying provisions—more properly, a shepherd's bag, used by the shepherd for carrying food when tending his sheep away from home. They were "to go shod with sandals." (Verse 9.) "Sandals" were soles of leather, felt, or wood strapped across the foot with thongs. In different countries different materials were used; in Egypt palm leaves and papyrus stalks were used. The word translated "shoe" literally means: "What is bound under, a sandal." (Thayer.) To be "shod with sandals" means to bind on the sandals (Acts 12:8), or to have sandals for shoes. As the apostles were not to take "two coats" and only a staff, so they were not to take two pairs of shoes. A second staff was used for carrying a budget; and since they had none, they would not need an extra staff.

The reason given for not making any further preparation is, "The laborer is worthy of his food"—that is, "a living;" but he must be a laborer. God provided this for them, and provides it for those who preach the gospel to-day; but he does it through the hospitality and generosity of worthy people, and not in a mysterious and miraculous way. This is done as follows: "If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. 9:11.) "Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel." (1 Cor. 9:14.)

Thus the apostles could go free from all anxiety and give themselves wholly to their work, assured of a support. Sometimes Jesus and the apostles carried money with them (John 12:6; 13:29); others contributed to their support (Luke 8:1-3); and sometimes, it seems, they carried bread. (Matt. 16:6, 7.)

On another occasion and under different circumstances Jesus gave different instruction: "When I sent you forth without purse, and wallet, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. And he said unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a wallet; and he that hath none, let him sell his cloak, and buy a sword." (Luke 22:35, 36.)

This is not contrary to Christ's general instruction to the twelve, and later to the seventy, and throughout the Epistles, that "the laborer is worthy of his hire," and that "they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel."

Neither is this instruction to buy a sword contrary to Christ's instructions to feed and clothe, pray for and love one's enemies; to overcome evil with good; to avenge not oneself, but to turn the other cheek; and all his teaching on keeping peace, making peace, and following peace with all men. On the other hand, it is the strongest way possible to condemn the use of the sword. Because, when telling his disciples to buy a sword and they said, "Lord, be-

hold, here are two swords," he replied, "It is enough." (Luke 22: 38.) Had he intended for his disciples to use swords two would not have been enough; but two were enough to serve his purpose. For he condemned just after this the literal use of the sword when he bade Peter put it up and declared the fate of all who use the sword. (Matt. 26: 52-54.) Had the apostles had no sword at all they could not have attempted to use one; commanding them to put back into the scabbard the one they did have after they had begun to use it and at such a trying time was the very strongest way to condemn its use.

In this way Jesus shows the apostles the trying times which would come upon them—that their enemies would assail them on every side; but however severe the trial or hot the contest they must not use the sword or engage in carnal warfare.

They went once as sheep among wolves, but now still more trying times were upon them. They must "preach the gospel to every creature" in "all the world," but would have to depend upon their own efforts sometimes, as in Paul's case, for a support, hence would need their "purse" and "wallet." In no wise does Jesus teach here that one may make a bargain for a support before he will preach the gospel, but rather the reverse.

At first when they went into a place they were to "Search out who in it is worthy"—that is, who would receive them and extend to them kindness and hospitality, because they were servants of God. "Salute it." "Peace be to this house" was the salutation. (Luke 10: 5.) "And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it"—that is, let the blessings of God abide upon it; if not worthy, the blessings of God would be withheld and it would be rewarded according to its sins. In the house that was worthy they were to abide. But should they not be received or heard, as they went out of the house or city they were to "shake off the dust" of their feet against it, showing they had cleared themselves of all responsibility.

The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah are referred to in order to emphasize the sin of rejecting the truth.

After further instructions and great encouragement (Matt. 10: 16-42), the apostles went fourth on this preaching tour preaching the approach of the kingdom of heaven and that men should repent. (Mark 6: 12.)

Verse 30 of Mark 6 states that the apostles returned from this preaching tour and reported to Jesus both what they had preached and what they had done. Jesus told them to go apart in a desert place and rest. The people were gathering in order to start to the passover, were excited over the cruel death by Herod Antipas of John the Baptist, and Jesus wanted to wait until the excitement should subside.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time, place, and principal characters of this lesson.
Give the location and dimensions of Galilee.
State the facts which occurred in Christ's life from his baptism to this lesson. [let the

teacher see that this is correctly done.]
What three things did Jesus?
Give the difference between teaching and preaching.
What did Jesus teach?
Why did Jesus work miracles?
What aroused the compassion of Jesus?

- What is meant by the figure, "As sheep without a shepherd"?
- Who had been the shepherd of the people?
- Who is the Good and Great Shepherd?
- Who are the shepherds in the church today?
- When will the church be what God intends for it to be?
- What other figure did Jesus use to show the need of the people?
- What is God's way of increasing the number of laborers?
- How does this differ from man's way?
- Where did Jesus go to find teachers and preachers?
- What is taught in 1 Cor. 1: 2, 26-31; 2: 1-10; 3: 18-23?
- What question in John 7: 15-18 did the false teachers ask about Jesus?
- Where did Jesus not get his learning, teaching and leave to preach?
- What reply did Jesus give to this question?
- Whom does God license to preach and teach his truth?
- What does Jesus think is necessary in order to learn his teaching, or to see the difference between his and the teaching of men?
- Who are true elders and preachers now?
- What kind of laborers does God send?
- What is deplorable in regard to censors?
- 1 How did Jesus spend the night before choosing the apostles?
- What should we learn from this?
- What must we do while we pray?
- State the difference between disciples and apostles.
- 2-4 Show how first the apostles were selected, appointed, and then sent away.
- Why must they be with Jesus before they were sent away?
- Why were they sent "two by two"?
- Name the groups.
- 5, 6 To whom were they sent, and to whom were they not sent?
- Who were Gentiles and who were Samaritans?
- Why not go to these?
- When were they sent to all nations?
- State the difference between the two commissions.
- What powers did Jesus confer upon them?
- Why were they to perform these miracles?
- Did Judas Iscariot have this power?
- Did miracles make the ones who could perform them spiritually better?
- What is it to make merchandise of spiritual matters?
- Why should they freely give?
- 7 What were they to preach?
- What does "at hand" mean?
- Who else preached the same?
- State clearly the difference between this commission and the second commission.
- What further instructions were given the apostles?
- What were "wallets" and "shoes"?
- Why were they not to provide any of these things?
- Did Jesus and his apostles ever carry money and bread?
- State the provision God makes for the support of preachers of the gospel today.
- What instruction did Jesus give the apostles later on?
- Does Jesus condemn the use of the sword and other carnal weapons?
- Show how he strongly condemns it.
- Does the Bible teach that works of benevolence and preaching the gospel should be bargained off for so much money?
- Where were the apostles to abide?
- What salutation was extended to such a house?
- What should they do, were the house not worthy?
- What is the significance of shaking off the dust of the feet?
- What did the apostles do at the conclusion of their preaching tour?

"Because the right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

—Tennyson.

LESSON II—OCTOBER 12

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Read: Matthew Chapters 5-7. *Lesson Text:* Matthew 6: 5-15.

MATTHEW 6. 5 And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you. They have received their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

7 And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Golden Text—Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. (Matt. 6: 10.)

Time—A. D. 28.

Place—Mount not known.

Persons—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes.

Devotional Reading—Psalm 65: 9-13.

Home Reading—

- | | | | |
|------|--------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Oct. | 6. M. | The Beatitudes. | Matt. 5: 1-12. |
| | 7. T. | Salt and Light. | Matt. 5: 13-20. |
| | 8. W. | Fulfilling the Law. | Matt. 5: 21-32. |
| | 9. T. | The Second Mile. | Matt. 5: 38-48. |
| | 10. F. | The Perfect Prayer. | Matt. 6: 5-15. |
| | 11. S. | God and Mammon. | Matt. 6: 24-34. |
| | 12. S. | Our Gracious God. | Psalm 65. |

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Supposed to be Mount Hattin, seven miles southwest from Capernaum and about three miles west of the Sea of Galilee. Of this place McGarvey says: "But the sides of the hill are too steep for the assembling of such a multitude as heard the Sermon on the Mount, and its summits are not sufficiently capacious. There is no reason at all for giving credence to the tradition." ("Lands of the Bible," page 318.) Again: "It was selected without reason in the period of the Crusaders." (Page 520.)

HINTS AND HELPS FOR TEACHERS

1. The Sermon on the Mount, it seems, was delivered during Jesus' first general tour through Galilee.
2. Some identify it with the sermon in the plain; but "he went

up into the mountain" and delivered this one, and "he came down with them, and stood on a level place," and delivered the other. (Luke 6: 17.) Luke (5: 17-39) records the healing of a leper, healing the paralytic, the call of Matthew and the feast at his house, and also the choosing of the twelve apostles before the sermon "on a level place;" while Matthew gives the healing, seemingly of the same leper, after the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 8: 1-14), and healing the paralytic, the call of Matthew and his feast, and choosing the twelve apostles, seemingly later on (Matt. 9 and 10). Matt. 4: 23 to 8: 4 seems to come in regular order and corresponds to Mark 1: 38-45 and Luke 5: 12-17.

3. The Sermon on the Mount is fuller than the one in Luke 6, and not in the same order. Luke gives other portions of this sermon in 11: 9-13; 13: 22-31.

4. No doubt Jesus preached these same principles everywhere and to all people, not always in the same order or in exactly the same words; and it is more than probable that Matthew records the sermon delivered at one time and Luke at another.

5. This sermon contains the basic principles of Christ's kingdom.

6. In obedience to these only can one enter into Christ's kingdom.

7. These principles, according to Matt. 28: 19, 20, are clearly and strongly taught throughout the New Testament.

8. The church of Christ is his training school on earth, in which his disciples are developed in the practice of these principles.

9. These principles come from God, as light and heat from the sun.

10. Christ came to earth, suffered, and died in order to restore God's rule here.

11. When all men live according to this sermon, God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

12. This sermon teaches implicit obedience to God and perfect reliance upon him.

13. This sermon is just the opposite of what the world admires and calls "great," just the opposite of what the world teaches to-day, just the opposite of what many preachers preach and most of the churches practice.

14. He who cultivates any one of the beatitudes or any one of the other principles of this sermon alone will not be blessed, but he who cultivates them altogether.

15. "The multitudes" (Matt. 5: 1) were the people spoken of in Matt. 4: 25. Jesus was interested in them. They and his disciples followed him "up into the mountain."

16. His disciples were closest to him, but the multitudes were in hearing distance and listened to him. (Matt. 7: 28, 29.)

18. He sat down to teach, according to the custom.

19. He taught his disciples and all among the multitudes who came to hear him.

20. The religion of Jesus is a taught religion of definite and fixed principles.

21. Note that the teaching of Jesus was so direct, so plain, so easy of comprehension, that "the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

22. The same difference exists to-day between those, who in humility and faith, teach the plain and powerful truth of God, and those who try to use the learning and wisdom of the world and teach for doctrine the commandments of men.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Right Motives Necessary

(Verses 1-4)

It is best to begin in this lesson with the first of the chapter.

In this chapter Jesus continues to teach the same important truths which he emphasized in the previous chapter—namely, his kingdom is a spiritual one, based upon principles which lay hold of the heart, control it, and, controlling it, govern the outward life.

The Sermon on the Mount begins with the heart—"the poor in spirit." Following this are the conditions of heart so necessary to acceptable service to God.

This lesson is against wrong motives and purposes in doing righteousness, giving alms, praying, and fasting. It is also against pride, show, display, and ostentation in the service of God. It teaches that God must be served truly and sincerely.

Any desire, purpose, or effort to serve God to be seen of men destroys the spirituality of the service and transforms it into a matter of pride, display, ostentation, and hypocrisy. For this Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites, saying: "But all their works they do to be seen of men." Jesus specifies much they did. (See Matt. 23: 1-12.)

Many religious people now delight in religious titles, wear religious clothes and love the chief seats in religious meetings.

Why do some brethren seek titles, honor and preferment among men? Can there be any other motive for these things except the one condemned by Jesus—namely, "to be seen of men," "to have glory of men?"

1. "Do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them." Righteousness must be done: "He that feareth him [God], and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him" (Acts 10: 35); "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he [Christ] is righteous" (1 John 3: 7); "Every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him" (1 John 2: 29); and to God's righteousness one must submit. (Rom. 10: 1-3.) Doing righteousness is doing the will of God. His will is the only standard of right, and whoever from the heart does that is righteous. Jesus came down from heaven to do God's will, and not his own. (John 5: 30; 6: 38; Luke 22: 42; Rom. 15: 1-3.) He was baptized "to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3: 15.)

In contrast with the above, doing God's will "to be seen of men" is hypocritical and vain. Any display now that is made of the worship of God, any musical programme that is arranged to please men, or any service that is rendered through pride and for show, is an abomination to God.

God's will must be done sincerely, truly—purely from the heart—in order to obey and honor him.

The influence of Christians—all who obey God from the heart—is great. They are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the

world" (Matt 5: 13), and by their consistent and godly lives they are to convict gainsayers and win others to Christ. (2 Tim. 2: 19; 1 Tim. 4: 12; Tit. 2: 7, 8; 1 Pet. 2: 15; 3: 1-6, 16, 17; 5: 3.) There can be no argument made in favor of Christianity so clear, strong, eloquent, logical, powerful, and convincing as truly pure, righteous, and godly lives; but whoever does righteousness, gives alms, prays, fasts, or does anything else in God's service to be seen of men, is a hypocrite and has no reward with God.

2-4. The spirit in which and the motive with which one is to "do alms" is plainly taught in the word of God. One must give cheerfully, freely, and regularly, helping all men as he has opportunity (Gal. 6: 10); and he must do this in humility and without display in obedience to God and to his glory.

Trumpets are sounded to attract the attention of large bodies of people, such as armies (1 Cor. 14: 8); and when hypocrites give alms, they sound a trumpet in synagogues and the streets in order to attract the attention of the greatest possible number.

II. "Have Received Their Reward"

"Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward." They give to be seen of men; they are seen of men and receive the praise of men; hence "they have received their reward," and this is all the reward they will receive.

God cannot accept and bless any service prompted by the motive to be seen of men, for such service is not offered to him. Any display of liberality is hypocritical and is condemned. The disposition to publish the gifts of the rich and to overlook the gifts of the poor to various causes is widespread. The disposition, too, to prize and praise the amount and not the motive is widespread. God looks at the heart and accepts the love which prompts the small as well as the large gifts. The widow who cast into the treasury her all in casting in her two mites gave more than the rich of their superfluity and was commended by Jesus. (Mark 12: 41-44.)

Jesus guards so carefully his disciples against the motive of giving to be seen of men that he charges them not to let the left hand know what the right hand does. God, who knows the heart and sees in secret, will recompense all who from pure motives give cheerfully and freely to his honor and glory.

III. The Wrong Way and Wrong Spirit of Prayer

5, 6. In praying, as in almsgiving and doing righteousness, Christ's disciples must "not be as the hypocrites;" they must pray to God and not to be seen and heard of men.

To "stand" and pray means to assume an attitude of prayer; for if this were not done, it would not be known that these hypocrites were praying. Those who pray to be seen of men take their position of prayer on the corners and not on the sides of the streets, because on the corners they can be seen from all directions. As in giving alms to be seen of men, these hypocrites pray to be seen of men; they are seen of men, and hence "have received their reward." This is all they will receive.

To be sure they are not praying to be seen of men, Christ's dis-

ciples must go into their "inner chambers," close the door behind them, and pray to God in secret.

Jesus does not in this condemn prayer in the congregation (see John 11: 41, 42; Acts 1: 14, 24, 25; 4: 23-31; 1 Cor. 14: 16); but he condemns secret prayer in public places, or the motive of praying to be seen of men.

7, 8. "Vain repetitions" are not humble repetitions of the same prayer. Jesus repeated his prayer (Matt. 26: 36-45); so did Paul. (2 Cor. 12: 8.)

"Much speaking" also is condemned, and for their "much speaking" the Gentiles thought they would be heard. All useless words, effort at display, and flourishes of rhetoric, etc., are condemned. The reason given for not using "vain repetitions" is: "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." Praying to God is not to inform him of our needs or to dictate to him what to do; it is for our good in different ways that God has us to express ourselves to him.

IV. The Right Way and Spirit of Prayer

9. In contrast with the prayers of hypocrites and heathen, Jesus says to his disciples, "After this manner therefore pray ye"—not always in this form or these exact words, but in this spirit and with this purpose. Jesus in his prayers did not use this exact form of words. As the occasion and his condition required; according to the will of God; and with all the elements, therefore, of acceptable prayer, he poured out his soul to his Father.

Jesus teaches his disciples not only to pray "after this manner," but in praying to "say"—to speak to God. We may breathe a prayer to God or pray in silence, as did Hannah, who "spake in her heart," while "her lips moved" (1 Sam. 1: 13); yet we must pray. It is not enough to have simply "the spirit of prayer." We are to "offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name." (Heb. 13: 15.) Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Paul, all godly men, and Jesus expressed themselves in words to God when they prayed.

This prayer is a divine model in brevity, simplicity, and comprehension. It embraces (1) the honor of God, (2) the extension of his kingdom among men, (3) the salvation of the human race, and (4) our temporal and spiritual wants.

"Our Father who art in heaven." This shows the tender relationship between God and the disciples of Jesus. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are." (1 John 3: 1.) "For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. 8: 15.) If we are children of God, we are "then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." (Verse 17.) Jesus shows that if a child can go to its earthly father for blessings, much more can we go to our merciful and all-wise Father in heaven.

To address God as "our Father" is to acknowledge ourselves as his children, and, therefore, under his control.

"Hallowed be thy name." This is a prayer for the glory of God's name, that it may be held in reverence and awe by all. "Holy and

reverend is his name." (Ps. 111: 9.) "Whereby we may offer service well pleasing to God with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12: 28, 29.)

10. "Thy kingdom come." John the Baptist, Jesus, the twelve apostles, and the seventy preached, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3: 2; 4: 17; 10: 7), which means, as Luke (10: 9) puts it: "The kingdom of God is come nigh." Then it had not fully come. After the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, upon the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost thereafter, it was set up, or did come; yet it has not finally triumphed over all nations "and filled the whole earth." (Dan. 2: 35.) For this triumph and extension we must continue to pray until "the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. 11: 15.) Every advance of the gospel is in part an answer to this prayer.

This petition looks both to the glory of God and the good of man; for it is glory to God for his kingdom to rule over the whole earth, and certainly no greater blessing could come to man.

"Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." All the angels in heaven do God's will (Ps. 103: 20); those who disobeyed him were cast out of heaven (2 Pet. 2: 4; Jude 6). When God's will, then, is so done on earth, there will not be left one human being in disobedience to him. This prayer, then, embraces our own disobedience to God and the salvation of the entire race. This means that God's will must be done at all times, by all persons, in all things. Jesus prayed: "Not my will, but thine, be done." When this is the case, heaven will be on earth. To fill the earth with the supreme rule of God is the object and prayer of every disciple of Jesus.

11. When we have thus prayed for the glory of God and the good of all men, we are permitted to pray for ourselves. Even then we must pray as directed. We are to ask, not for food for the entire future or to be consumed upon our pleasures (James 4: 1-3), but for "our daily bread," "day by day." In praying for bread "day by day" we can no more ignore the means which produce bread and still be fed than we can ignore the means of salvation and still be saved. (See Eph. 4: 28; 2 Thess. 3: 10-14; Tit. 1: 12; 3: 14.)

V. Forgiveness of Others Essential to Obtaining Forgiveness of God

12. This teaches the absolute necessity of forgiving others if we would be forgiven. "As we also have forgiven our debtors." This subject should be well studied. We are allowed here to ask God to do for us in the way of forgiveness only that which we have done for others.

13. "And bring us not into temptation." God does not tempt his children to do wrong. (James 1: 12-15.) This is a petition to God to save us from temptation by which we may be led into sin—the temptations which Satan presents to all.

"But deliver us from the evil one." God delivers his children from the "evil one" by teaching how to resist various temptations, how to grow in grace and strength, and by not allowing Satan to tempt them beyond their ability to resist him. (1 Cor. 10: 13.)

14, 15. Jesus adds: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses,

your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." He who refuses to forgive others has no promise of forgiveness while in that condition.

Full instruction as to how the wrongdoer may be brought to repentance and to the point of asking forgiveness is given in Matt. 18: 15-20, and the importance of extending forgiveness from the heart is further emphasized in Matt. 18: 21-35.

With this comprehensive, but brief, prayer before us, we should learn several important lessons on the subject of prayer: (1) We cannot be selfish in prayer, but must first seek the glory of God, the extension of his kingdom, the conversion and salvation of the world, and then pray for our own needed temporal and spiritual blessings; (2) our desire must be for God's will to be done, not ours; (3) we are not heard for our "much speaking." Prayers are not heard according to their perfection of rhetoric and beauty of diction or the pleasant voice of the petitioner.

Following this lesson are verses 16-18, on the true motive of fasting. Fasting as an outward form or show is condemned.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the Time, Place and principal characters of this lesson.

What is said about the place of the sermon on the mount?

When in Christ's public ministry was the sermon delivered?

Show why the sermon on the mount and the sermon on the plain were not delivered at the same time.

Show why Jesus must preach the same principles everywhere.

What does this sermon contain?

How only can one enter and live in Christ's kingdom?

Show that the apostles preached the sermon on the mount throughout the New Testament.

In what are people trained in the practice of these principles?

What did Christ come to the earth to restore?

When will God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven?

Of what is this sermon the opposite?

Will one be blessed by practicing one or two or a few of these principles; or when will one be blessed?

Who were the multitudes?

Did they hear this sermon?

What was Christ's position while teaching?

How is Christ's religion made known?

What astonished the multitudes?

What truths does Jesus continue to emphasize?

Against what especially is this lesson?

Why did the Pharisees and hypocrites do all they did?

What is said of religious titles and clothes?

1 What is righteousness?

When is one righteous?

What is here condemned by Jesus?

Show there is no conflict between that which Jesus condemns here and his command to let our light shine, that others may see our good works and glorify God.

What destroys the spirituality of any service?

2-4 Why do the hypocrites sound a trumpet when they give alms?

With what motive must alms be given?

What disposition concerning the gifts of the rich is prevalent?

What gift does God accept?

Whose gift does Jesus commend?

How careful are Christians to guard against doing alms to be seen of men?

5, 6 What is meant by "stand" in this verse?

Why stand on the street corners?

What reward do all such receive?

How and where should Christians pray?

Is this against praying in the congregation?

7, 8 What are "vain repetitions"?

What should be avoided?

Since God knows what we have need of before we ask him, why, then, pray?

- 9 After what manner does Jesus teach his disciples to pray?
What is meant by "this manner"?
What is said of speaking to God in prayer?
In what is this prayer a model?
How should we address God?
What is expressed by this?
Under what obligation do we place ourselves by calling God "our Father"?
- 10 What is meant by "hallowed"?
What is the next petition?
Has the kingdom come?
For what should we still pray?
What is the next petition?
How is God's will done in heaven?
What became of the angels who disobeyed God?
What does this petition embrace?
- What will bring heaven to earth?
- 11 For what, then, may we ask for ourselves?
What means must we use while we pray?
- 12 For what may we next pray?
What must we do for those who sin against us before we can expect to be forgiven?
- 13 What is the next petition?
Does God tempt us to sin?
What, then, is meant by this treatment?
For what next may we pray?
How does God deliver us from the evil one?
- 14, 15 What different things should we learn here concerning prayer?

"Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
That calls me from a world of care,
And bids me at my father's throne,
Make all my wants and wishes known;
In seasons of distress and grief,
My soul has often found relief,
And oft escaped the tempter's snare,
By thy return sweet hour of prayer.

"Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
The joy I feel, the bliss I share,
Of those whose anxious spirits burn
With strong desire for thy return!
With such I hasten to the place,
Where God, my Savior, shows his face,
And gladly take my station there,
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer.

"Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
Thy wings shall my petition bear
To Him, whose truth and faithfulness
Engage the waiting soul to bless.
And since he bids me seek his face,
Believe his word and trust his grace,
I'll cast on him my every care,
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer."

—W. W. Walford.

LESSON III—OCTOBER 19.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Read: Mark 4: 1-20. *Lesson Text:* Mark 4: 1-9.

MARK 4. 1 And again he began to teach by the sea side. And there is gathered unto him a very great multitude, so that he entered into a boat, and sat in the sea; and all the multitude were by the sea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things in parables, and said unto them in his teaching,

3 Harken: Behold, the sower went forth to sow:

4 and it came to pass, as he sowed, some seed fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured it.

5 And other fell on the rocky ground, where it had not much earth: and straightway it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth:

6 and when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And other fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing; and brought forth, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

9 And he said, Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Golden Text—The sower soweth the word. (Mark 4: 14.)

Time—A.D. 28, in the fall.

Place—By the Sea of Galilee, at Capernaum.

Persons—Jesus, the multitudes, and his disciples.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 1.

Home Reading—

- Oct. 13. M. Parable of the Sower. Mark 4: 1-9.
- 14. T. "Unto them in parables." Mark 4: 10-20.
- 15. W. Sowing and Reaping. Gal. 6: 7-10.
- 16. T. White unto Harvest. John 4: 31-38.
- 17. F. The Soul's Harvest. Luke 16: 19-31.
- 18. S. False Husbandmen. Luke 20: 9-18.
- 19. S. Fruit and Chaff. Psalm 1.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Both Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee have been described in previous lessons.

HINTS AND HELPS FOR TEACHERS

1. Jesus now uses a different method of teaching—that of speaking in parables. He draws from the world of nature and from the lives of men facts to illustrate and enforce the truths and principle of his spiritual kingdom.

2. This was not a new method of teaching; it was common among the Jews and in the East. Jesus did not use it, however, at first.

3. At the time of this lesson he gave a series of nine parables—seven in Matt. 13 and the one of the candle and the one of the growing grain in Mark 4: 21, 26-29.

4. All these parables should be read in connection with this lesson. They illustrate different features of the kingdom of heaven.

5. A parable, literally, is placing one thing by another, and is,

therefore, a comparison of two things. A parable is not a proverb, not a fable, not a myth, not an allegory. A parable is based on literal historic facts, or supposed cases which may occur, which are natural, and with which people are familiar; and why should Jesus use supposed cases when the world was full of real occurrences?

6. Smith's Bible Dictionary enumerates thirty-one parables of the Savior. Look at them all and see if they do not seem real occurrences.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Parable

1. "And again he began to teach by the seaside." Jesus had taught there before. (See Mark 1: 16; 3: 9; Luke 5: 1-3.) This was a convenient place to teach. Matthew (13: 1) says: "On that day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside." "And there is gathered unto him a very great multitude." Luke (8: 4) says: "They of every city resorted unto him." They had heard him as he went from city to city, had seen his miracles, and had followed him to Capernaum. Every class mentioned in this parable was represented. It is strange that such multitudes thronged Jesus, and yet so few truly followed him.

To avoid the pressure of this great multitude, Jesus sat in a boat "in the sea" and taught the people who stood on the encircling shore, where all could easily hear.

2. "He taught them many things in parables."

3. "Hearken." Jesus desired that all should hear and heed what he said.

"Behold, the sower went forth to sow." It was true then, as it is now, that farmers in that country lived in villages and towns as a protection against robbers, and literally "went forth to sow" in their fields. This was a real occurrence, and with it all were familiar. They were surrounded by grain fields, and some farmer at that very moment may have been sowing his crop of wheat in their sight.

There were no machines then for sowing grain; hence the sowing was all done by hand.

4. "The wayside" was not only where the road and fields joined, but was the many narrow footpaths trodden through the fields. The fields were not fenced, and many paths led across them. These paths were hard, and the seed lay naked upon them. Birds are said to be numerous in that country, it being a winter feeding place for many migratory ones. One writer speaks of having seen a hillside black with more than a thousand crows waiting to pick up the grain of the sower.

5. "The rocky ground" was not where the stones lay upon the surface, for in such places the harvest might be abundant, but where the rocks lay just under the surface and were covered with only a very thin soil. These rocks attracted the heat of the sun, which soon forced the grain up, for the very reason that the soil was not deep.

6. The hot sun soon "scorched" the tender plants, because the soil upon the rocks was parched and there was none in which they could take root and from which they could draw moisture and life.

7. Some seed fell among the roots and seeds of thorns; "and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit." The soil

was productive, but it produced thorns instead of grain, because the thorns choked out the grain.

8. "The good ground" is the opposite of the others. It is not hard, stony (shallow), or full of thorns, but produces an abundant harvest. It is said that while thirtyfold or sixtyfold is a good yield, yet a hundredfold is sometimes produced.

9. Having spoken the parable, Jesus said to all: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Matthew (13: 9, 43) says: "He that hath ears, let him hear." Jesus said this to impress all with the importance of giving heed to what he said. (See also Matt. 11: 15; Luke 8: 8; 14: 35; Rev. 2: 7, 11, 17, 29; 3: 6, 13, 22; 13: 9.) God intends for people to use their ears in order to learn the truth.

II. Why Did Jesus Speak In Parables?

(Verses 10-13.)

"They that were about him" were his disciples, and they said: "Why speakest thou to them in parables?" (Matt. 13: 10.) Why did Jesus speak in parables, and why was it given to his disciples, and not to others, to understand "the mystery of the kingdom of God?" The answer is given more fully in Matt. 13: 11-15.

When a mystery is understood, it is no longer a mystery, and the simplest thing may be a mystery to those who do not understand it.

The apostles and first disciples of Jesus thought he came to establish a temporal, political kingdom; and the spiritual nature of this kingdom was a mystery to them until they understood it. That the Gentiles should be fellow citizens and fellow heirs in this kingdom with the Jews was a mystery to the Jews until understood. (See Eph. 3: 1-12.)

Jesus did not speak to the multitudes in parables because he did not desire them to know the truth; if so, he would not have spoken to them at all. He taught both his disciples and the multitudes alike. Heretofore he had taught in direct, plain, positive precepts, as in the Sermon on the Mount, and the scribes and Pharisees had scoffed at his teaching and rejected it. They had hardened their hearts, stopped their ears, and closed their eyes, as the Jews had done in the days of Isaiah. They were determined not to believe. Now Jesus speaks in parables—not that he does not want all to know the truth, but that those who desire the truth may be separated from those who have rejected it. God has so arranged it that people must desire the truth in order to receive it, and yet all who desire it—hunger and thirst after it—have the blessed assurance that they can understand and receive it. This is the key to the whole matter.

Neither the multitudes nor the disciples understood the parable of the sower. The multitudes went away in indifference and did not want to know, while the disciples went to Jesus and asked an explanation. He explained it to all who wanted to know. This explanation has been recorded, and all now who desire to understand it can read it for themselves. God "is no respecter of persons."

The difference, then, is between people themselves. Some desire to know the truth, and they learn it; others have no desire to distinguish truth from error, and never learn the difference; and still

others stop their ears and close their eyes against the truth, and are determined not to receive it.

That people do not desire the truth and will not receive it is their own fault. On this principle the truth is hidden from the wise and prudent (worldly-wise) and revealed unto babes. (Matt. 11: 25.)

The process of conversion is given in Matt. 13: 15. People must see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn to God, and then he heals or saves them. Before these sneering, scoffing Jews, Jesus had worked numerous miracles, but they closed their eyes; he had spoken "as never man spake," but they would not hear; he had taught so that the simplest could comprehend him, but they would not understand. On the other hand, he says to his disciples: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." This is the difference. "For whosoever hath [desires to learn and improves his opportunities], to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not [does not desire to know the truth and does not improve his opportunities], from him shall be taken away even that which he hath." (Matt. 13: 12.)

All this is true and applicable to-day. Some "believe a lie" and are lost because they receive not "the love of the truth, that they may be saved." (2 Thess. 2: 8-12.) When people love the truth and will to do God's will, they have the assurance that they can understand God's will and be able to distinguish between it and the doctrines and precepts of men. (John 7: 16, 17.)

"Know ye not this parable?" If the disciples of Jesus did not understand this parable, whose application was easy, how could they understand other parables whose application was more difficult?

III. The Meaning of the Parable

(1) *The Word of God is the Seed.*

(Verse 14.)

"The sower soweth the word." Jesus is the great Sower. He came forth from heaven to sow the seed of the kingdom. (See John 7: 16-18; 8: 26-28; 12: 49, 50.) He sent forth the apostles into all the world to sow the seed. (Matt. 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 46-50.) Timothy was most solemnly charged to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4: 2) and to commit it "to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2: 2.) "The house of God," the church (Christians), is the "pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. 3: 15.) The church at Jerusalem, "except the apostles," were all scattered abroad," and they "that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." (Acts 8: 1-4.) All Christians, then, by the authority of Jesus, are sowers. All are to go forth and sow; the field will not come to them. They must "sow beside all waters"—everywhere (Isa. 32: 20); they must sow in the morning and in the evening—at all times (Eccles. 11: 6); they must sow sometimes in tears and toil (Ps. 126: 5, 6); but they must sow.

Notice how explicit Jesus is in defining the seed. "The sower soweth the word" (our lesson); "the word of the kingdom" (Matt. 13: 19); "the seed is the word of God." (Luke 8: 11.)

The kingdom of God among men is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14: 17.) It is a spiritual institution;

hence the word of God is spiritual seed. It cannot be any other kind. "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit [spiritual], and are [life-giving]." (John 6: 63.) The word of God is the seed from which spiritual life springs. "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth." (1 Pet. 1: 23.) "In Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel." (1 Cor. 4: 15.) "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth." (James 1: 18.) It is God's immutable law, in his spiritual kingdom as well as in his natural kingdom, that every seed yields fruit after its kind. (Gen. 1: 12.) The fact that men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles is applied by Jesus to his spiritual kingdom. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6: 7.)

The word of God, then, produces spiritual fruit. It can produce no other kind, and no other seed can produce that kind. The word of God is the seed from which must spring "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." To it all men must come for spiritual instruction and righteousness. There is not a spiritual idea or truth in the world which is not found in the word of God. We can have no clear conceptions of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the redemption of the race, heaven, or hell, except as we receive them from the revelation God has made by the Spirit through his word. It is as impossible to produce faith and "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5: 22, 23) in the spiritual kingdom without the word of God (Rom. 10: 17; Acts 15: 7; John 20: 30, 31) as it is to produce fruit in the vegetable kingdom without seed. As the giant oak, with all its network of roots, huge trunk, hundreds of feet of lumber, bark, sap, wide-spreading branches, and bushels of acorns, is inclosed in and springs from one little acorn, so from the seed, the word of God, spring all spiritual life and spiritual fruit—the very church of Jesus Christ in all its magnificent spiritual proportions, beauty of holiness, and power of godliness.

The word of God is incorruptible seed (1 Pet. 1: 23)—that is, it will never lose its spiritual power or life-giving principles. Seed in the vegetable kingdom may lose the life germ by corruption, and when this is the case, it will never produce fruit; but the word of God lives and abides forever. If there should not be a Christian on the earth for a thousand years and at the expiration of the thousand years men should receive the word of God into good and honest hearts, it would make Christians of them. It can never die.

Another fact most worthy of consideration is that all that is in a seed will come out under proper conditions, but a seed cannot produce that which it does not contain. A fig seed cannot produce a thorn tree. The same seed always produces the same kind of fruit. The word of God preached through the apostles by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven (1 Pet. 1: 12) produced Christians—the church; and the simple worship of God as revealed in the New Testament in the first century has produced the same in every succeeding century, produces the same to-day, and will ever produce the same. It can produce no more than this. What is more than this comes from some other seed. If the word of God ever produced a religious denomination, it would produce that same religious denomination at all times and everywhere. Then, certainly the word of God never produced

the various contending and clashing denominations of to-day, whose doctrines are as extreme as the poles.

Not only is this true, but Jesus says: "Every plant [every religious plant—human religious institutions and denominations, as such] which my heavenly Father planted not [which has not sprung from his word], shall be rooted up."

(2) *The Wayside.*

(Verse 15.)

"These are they by the wayside." The four classes of hearers mentioned in this parable represent all hearers for all time—the human family.

They are all alike in some respects and unlike in others. The word of God was preached to all alike; all could hear, understand, and receive it; all had, likewise, power to reject it; and all were alike responsible.

What, then, was the difference? The parable shows the difference. The "wayside" hearers did not reject the word of God because they could not hear and understand it; neither did God send it to them knowing they could not receive it. Their hearts were hardened by sin, for which they alone were responsible, and the truth made no impression upon them. Luke (8:12) says they heard the word, but the devil took it out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

The devil is no fool. He knows the power of the word of God, and that faith comes through hearing it, and that if it remains in the heart it will produce spiritual life. So as soon as possible—before it can have time to make an impression or to begin to grow—he "snatcheth" it away. (Matt. 13:19.)

While Satan has many ways of doing this, none seem more effectual than persuading sinners that the word of God is insufficient to produce faith and spiritual life, and that, as sinners, they cannot understand it, anyway.

(3) *The Rocky Ground.*

(Verses 16, 17.)

The "rocky-ground" hearers could also hear and understand the word of God, and did receive it with joy. So far this is right.

They not only received the word of God with joy, "but endured for a while"—endured temptation and continued in the service of God. Thus far they were right also; but they had "no root in themselves"—were shallow. They were not "rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:17) and "rooted and built up" in Christ (Col. 2:7). But the trouble was within themselves, not with God, the seed, or the sower. They had not the conviction, courage, and endurance to suffer tribulation and persecution for the sake of the word, and hence fell away and gave up hope. "Ye were running well; who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Gal. 5:7.)

Many to-day will not endure persecution.

(4) *The Thorny Ground.*

(Verses 18, 19.)

Like the others, this class also could hear, understand, and receive the word of God, and did receive it. It was in their hearts and growing

there, with the promise to produce fruit. The trouble was also within themselves. The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, the pleasures of this life, and the lusts of other things (see also Matt. 3: 22; Luke 8: 14) are the "thorns" which choke out the word. On "the cares of the world," see Matt. 6: 19-34; Phil. 4: 6, 7. On "deceitfulness of riches," see 1 Tim. 6: 9, 17-19. On "pleasures of life," see Prov. 21: 17; 1 Tim. 5: 6; 2 Tim. 3: 4; Heb. 11: 24-29. Ah me! Out of how many hearts these things are now choking the word of God! Such characters have not sufficient spiritual life to know the sad fact. God must be loved and served with the whole heart. (1 John 2: 15, 16.)

(5) *The Good Ground.*

(Verse 20.)

For the condition of heart mentioned in this verse men alone are responsible. If hearts are hard, stony, or filled with these "thorns," God is not responsible; if hearts are insincere and dishonest, God cannot be to blame. Men must be honest and sincere themselves.

A good and honest heart is not only one that tells the truth in a trade and pays its debts, but one that is sincere, that considers its own best interest, and deals fairly with the word of God. Men may be dishonest with themselves, with the word of God, and with God. A heart full of prejudice is not a good one and not ready to receive the truth. Men may twist the Scriptures so as to pervert their meaning (2 Pet. 3: 16); they may make merchandise of the gospel (2 Pet. 2: 3); and they may handle the word of God deceitfully. (2 Cor. 4: 2.) Those who do these things are dishonest, although they may tell the truth in all their dealings with men and pay all their debts. A dishonest man cannot become a Christian until he gives up his dishonesty. The heart which is disposed to make the word of God mean more or less than it does mean is not in a fit condition to receive the truth. A good and honest heart desires to know and to do just the will of God. Such a heart receives the word of God, holds it fast, and brings forth fruit with patience. It endures all opposition and triumphs over all obstacles. This is the only heart in the four classes benefited permanently by the truth.

The fruit is spiritual fruit, or "the fruit of the Spirit." (Gal. 5: 22, 23.)

Here again it is shown that the word of God is the seed which produces all spiritual fruit that can be borne in life. Then nothing else is necessary to make Christians or to produce spiritual fruit.

QUESTIONS

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| <p>Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give the Time, Place and principal characters of this lesson. What different methods of teaching did Jesus now begin to use? How many parables did he give on this occasion? What is a parable? Upon what are parables based?</p> | <p>boat? What positions did he and the multitudes occupy while he taught?</p> |
| <p>1. 2 To what place did Jesus go from the house? Had he taught there before? Who followed him? Why did Jesus teach from the</p> | <p>3 Why is it said the farmer "went forth to sow?" How was the sowing done? 4 What is the "wayside?" 5 What is the "rocky ground?" 6 What became of the seed which fell upon the rocky places? 7 Where did the other seed fall? What became of it? 8 What is the "good ground?" What was the yield?</p> |

9 Having delivered the parable, what did Jesus say to all?
(Questions on Verses 11-20.)
What question did his disciples ask Jesus?
Then why did Jesus speak in parables?
When does a mystery cease to be a mystery?
What are some of the mysteries which are now understood?
What condition of heart is necessary to the reception of the truth?
What was the difference between Christ's disciples and the multitudes?
What is the difference between people now?
State the process of conversion.
Upon what principle will more be given or that which one has been lost?
What gentle reproof did Jesus offer his disciples?
Who are the sowers?
When and where must they sow?
What is the seed?
What is the kingdom of God?
What kind of seed, then, is the word of God?
Whence spring all spiritual knowledge and fruit?
By what are all children of God begotten?
In what way is this seed incorruptible?
What can seed not produce?

What does the word of God produce?
What plants will be rooted up?
Whom do the four classes in the parable represent?
In what are these classes alike?
Who are the "wayside" hearers?
Why did they bring forth fruit?
Why does the devil snatch the word of God away from the people?
How does he do this?
Is God to blame for this?
Who are the "rocky-ground" hearers?
In what respect were they right?
Why did they not bring forth fruit?
Where does the responsibility rest in this case?
Who are the "thorny-ground" hearers?
What are the thorns?
What is the difference between these things represented by the thorns?
Who is responsible for one's condition of heart?
What is an honest and good heart?
What is it to be dishonest in this sense?
Is a good heart prejudiced against the truth?
What are the desires of an honest and good heart?
What is the condition of your heart?

"Be not selfish in thy greed,
Pass it on!
Look upon your brother's need,
Pass it on!
Live for self, you live in vain;
Live for Christ, you live again;
Live for him, with him you reign—
Pass it on!"

—Henry Burton.

LESSON IV—OCTOBER 26

STILLING THE STORM

Lesson Text: Mark 4: 35-41.

MARK 4. 35 And on that day, when even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over unto the other side.

36 And leaving the multitude, they take him with them, even as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him.

37 And there ariseth a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, insomuch that the boat was now filling.

38 And he himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion: and they awake him, and say unto him, Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?

39 And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Golden Text—Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him. (Mark 4: 41.)

Time—A. D. 28.

Place—Sea of Galilee.

Persons—Jesus and his apostles.

Devotional Reding—Psalm 107: 23-32.

Home Reading—

Oct. 20. M. The Stilling of the Storm. Mark 4: 35-41.

21. T. Walking on the Sea. Mark 6: 45-56.

22. W. Safety with God. Deut. 33: 26-29.

23. T. The Wonder-working God. Ex. 15: 11-18.

24. F. God our Salvation. Isa. 12: 1-6.

25. S. Security with God. Psalm 23.

26. S. God Ruleth the Sea. Psalm 107: 23-32.

INTRODUCTION

Hints and Helps for Teachers

1. Jesus and his apostles were still in Capernaum at the beginning of this lesson.

2. The Lake of Galilee has been described.

I. Reviewing from the Sermon on the Mount

On account of the length of the last lesson this review has been reserved for this time.

Upon the supposition that the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) and the sermon "on a level place" (Luke 6: 20-49) were delivered at different times, several events occurred between these sermons, some of which have already been considered.

It seems from Matt. 8: 1-4 that healing the leper followed the Sermon on the Mount, and corresponds to Mark 1: 40-45; Luke 5: 12-15. Just after this "he withdrew himself in the deserts, and prayed." (Luke 5: 16.)

When he entered again into Capernaum, he healed the paralytic. (Mark 2: 1-12; Luke 5: 18-26.) Following this are the call of Matthew (Matt. 9: 9; Mark 2: 13, 14; Luke 5: 27, 28); plucking the

ears of corn and the discourse upon the Sabbath (Matt. 12: 1-8; Mark 2: 23-28; Luke 6: 1-5); healing the man with "a withered hand" on the Sabbath (Matt. 12: 9-13; Mark 3: 1-5; Luke 6: 6-10); the opposition of the Pharisees and the Herodians (Matt. 12: 14; Mark 3: 6; Luke 6: 11); a whole night spent in prayer (Luke 6: 12); the call of the twelve apostles (Matt. 10: 2-4; Mark 3: 13-19; Luke 6: 13-16); and the sermon "on a level place." (Luke 6: 20-49.) Luke follows this sermon of the plain with the record of two specific miracles—healing the centurion's servant and raising from the dead the son of the widow of Nain—and several different kinds of miracles reported to John. (Luke 7: 1-23.)

Matthew follows the Sermon on the Mount with two chapters (8, 9) of miracles. He specifies nine—healing leprosy, paralysis, fever, an issue of blood of twelve years' duration, blindness, dumbness; casting out devils; stilling the tempest; and raising the dead. Then he groups many together in the expressions, "and healed all that were sick" and "healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness" among the people.

In all this is shown Christ's authority over every kind of disease and affliction, evil spirits, the raging elements, and death.

The purpose with both Matthew and Luke is not to give the chronological order of events, but to show that Christ's authority to teach and his claim to be the Son of God are confirmed by these miracles. Examples: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3: 2; see also John 5: 36; 14: 11; 20: 30, 31.) So also God bore the apostles witness, "both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." (Heb. 2: 4.) According to the best chronology, healing the centurion's servant is the next event after the sermon "on a level place." (Matt. 8: 5-13; Luke 7: 1-10.)

Following this are the raising of the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7: 11-17); the message from John the Baptist to Jesus and Jesus' testimony of John (Matt. 11: 2-19; Luke 7: 18-35); warnings to Chorazin and other cities (Matt. 11: 20-30); the woman—a sinner—saved (Luke 7: 36-50); another tour through Galilee (Luke 8: 1-3); healing a demoniac and Jesus' discourse on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12: 22-37); the interference by Jesus' mother and brethren (verses 47-50); and the parables by the Sea of Galilee and in "the house" (Matt. 13; Mark 4: 26-29); then our present lesson.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Jesus Needed Rest

35. "And on that day"—the day on which he spoke the parable of the sower and other parables to the "very great multitude" that gathered about him "by the seaside." (Mark 4: 1-3; see also Matt. 13: 1-36.) Pressed by the large crowd—one of the greatest that had gathered about him—"he entered into a boat, and sat," while the multitudes stood on the beach. This was a very busy day with him.

"When even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over unto the other side." Matthew (8: 18) says: "When Jesus saw great

multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side."

He did this for retirement and rest. It was an easy way to escape from the multitudes. The lake was only six miles wide, and the eastern shore was not thickly settled, as was the western shore.

At other times Jesus crossed this sea for retirement, rest, and prayer. (Matt. 14: 13, 23.) He did not enjoy absolute rest, however, at the end of this journey; for it was then that he healed the man possessed with a legion of demons. (Mark 5: 1-20.) When he returned from this retirement to the western shore, there were great multitudes awaiting him. (Verse 21.)

II. The Proper Use of Our Possessions

36. After teaching through the day, at Jesus' request, the disciples took him "even as he was, in the boat," without further preparation.

On other occasions Jesus sat in a boat and taught.

Peter, James, and John owned their boats, and Jesus taught from Peter's boat. (Luke 5: 1-11.) The boat used on this occasion was at the disposal of the disciples, and was probably the same one so used at other times. In this boat Jesus and his disciples returned. (Mark 5: 21.)

Peter's example in using his boat in the Master's cause is worthy of emulation, and should teach us a lesson. Our boats, our ships, our cars, our horses, and our buggies should be so used. "And other boats were with him"—boats owned by other disciples, or at their disposal. Matthew (8: 23) says: "His disciples followed him."

In giving the account of this voyage, Matthew tells of the proposition of the "scribe" to follow Jesus, whithersoever he might go, and the proposition of another disciple to be allowed to first bury his father before following Jesus. He tells this as between the command of Jesus "to depart unto the other side" and his entering into the boat. (Matt. 8: 18-23.)

Matthew (13: 36) also says that after Jesus spoke several parables to the people on this occasion "he left the multitudes, and went into the house." This was doubtless the house out of which he went to the seaside to teach the multitudes. It may have been Peter's house, in which Jesus found a home. (Luke 4: 38.) Mark (2: 1), in the margin, says "at home" for "in the house." This was probably Peter's house or some house where Jesus usually stopped. Into this house the disciples followed him and asked for an explanation of the parable of the tares. After explaining this, Jesus spoke other parables to his disciples. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence." (Matt. 13: 36-53.) This may not be the order of these occurrences.

It would seem natural for Jesus and his disciples to take refreshments in the house, after the work of teaching through the day, before starting across the sea. The one purpose, however, of Matthew, Mark, and Luke is to relate the miracle of stilling the tempest, not the order of events preceding it.

III. Stilling Storms

37. On this short voyage these boats encountered "a great storm of wind." Luke (8: 23) says, "And there came down a storm of wind on the lake;" Matthew (8: 24) says: "There arose a great tempest in the sea." This came up suddenly. "All travelers describe the storms as very sudden and violent, caused by the cold air that rushes down from the mountains into the heated depression of the lake." (Johnson.) This was not a ship; it was a small rowboat; "and the waves beat into" it, "insomuch that" it "was now filling," and was "in jeopardy." (Luke 8: 23.) Matthew says: "The boat was covered with the waves."

38. "And he himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion." Jesus "fell asleep" as they sailed before this storm arose. He was the only one asleep on the boat. That the noise of the storm and the rocking of the boat upon the rolling waves did not awake him shows into what a deep sleep he had fallen, and this shows how weary and exhausted he must have been. This condition was produced by the constant strain of teaching the multitudes and explaining the parables to his disciples.

Jesus became thirsty, hungry, weary, exhausted, and felt a great need of sleep and rest. What a privilege we should now consider it to be permitted to endure all these for his sake!

The storm greatly frightened the disciples. They went to him, awoke him, and said: "Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?" Matthew (8: 25) says: "Save, Lord; we perish." They were accustomed to the lake and the winds and the waves. This, then, was to them a terrific storm to fill them with such terror. While they were "of little faith," they knew to whom to go for salvation.

39. "And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." He, through whom all things were created, spoke, and the winds and the waves obeyed him.

"Jehovah hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers. . . . The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt; and the earth is upheaved at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein." (Nahum. 1: 3-5.)

To all the storms of trial and wild waves of trouble which disturb those who trust and obey him Jesus says: "Peace, be still." "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful." (John 14: 27.) "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 7.) Jesus is on board and mans his church, and it will never go down. "And it shall stand forever." (Dan. 2: 44.)

And, ah! when human hearts by storms are tossed,
When life's lone bark drifts through the dark;
And 'mid wildest waves where all seems lost,
He now, as then, with words of power and peace,
Murmurs: "Stormy deep, Be still—still—and sleep,
And, Lo! a great calm comes—the tempest's perils cease.

—Ryan.

IV. "Why Are Ye Fearful?"

40. "And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?" Matthew puts it: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Luke puts it: "Where is your faith?" The rebuke is the same. "The terror of the disciples would have been excusable but for the presence of Jesus. With him in the vessel it argued weakness of faith, because the many miracles which he had wrought should have convinced them that he had power over the winds and the waves. Notice here that fear and faith stand in opposition to each other." (McGarvey.)

41. "And they feared exceedingly"—not with such terror as the storm filled them, but in the presence of one whose voice the wind and the sea obeyed. They "said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Notwithstanding all the other miracles which they had seen Jesus perform, this one filled them with wonder and awe. Since God "gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap;" "layeth up the deeps in storehouses;" "spake, and it was done;" and "commanded, and it stood fast," why should they marvel that the Son of God stills the tempest?

Jesus worked every variety of miracle to leave even the weakest in faith no room to doubt his divine power, or that he is "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place, and principal characters of the lesson.
Upon the supposition that the Sermon on the Mount and the sermon "on a level place" were delivered at different times, what events occurred between them?
Why do Matthew, Luke, and others relate so many miracles of Jesus?
What events occurred between the sermon "on a level place" and our lesson?
- 35 On what day and at what time of the day did Jesus and his disciples start across the sea?
Why was Jesus in the boat by the seaside?
Why did he desire to cross over the sea?
Can you give other occasions when he did this?
What did he do for a demoniac when he reached the other side?
- 36 After teaching all day, did Jesus go across the sea without preparation for food and other refreshments?
Whose boat was this?
What good example does Peter set us in this particular?
- What facts are related by Matthew which are not given by Mark?
- 37 What arose?
Why are these storms sudden and terrific?
What kind of boat was this?
Why was it "in jeopardy?"
- 38 Where was Jesus in the boat, and what was he doing?
Who else was asleep?
What shows that Jesus was weary and in a deep sleep?
What did Jesus endure in this particular for us?
What should we be glad to do for him?
What effect did this storm have upon the disciples?
What did they say to Jesus?
- 39 What did he do?
Repeat Nahum 1: 3-5.
What does Jesus now give to all who trust and obey him?
What is the destiny of the church?
- 40 What did he say to his disciples? Why did he rebuke them?
In what respect was their faith small and weak?
What should they have known?
- 41 What did they experience and say when Jesus stilled the tempest?

LESSON V—NOVEMBER 2

THE PRODIGAL SON—TEMPERANCE LESSON

Lesson Text: Luke 15: 11-24.

LUKE 15. 11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight:

19 I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry:

24 for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Golden Text—I will arise and go to my father. (Luke 15: 18.)*Time*—Supposed to be the first of A. D. 30.*Place*—Perea.

Persons—Jesus, the publicans and sinners, the scribes and Pharisees. His disciples were with him all the while.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 51: 1-8.*Home Reading*—

- Oct. 27. M. The Prodigal Son. Luke 15: 11-24.
- 28. T. Seeking the Straying One. Matt. 18: 7-14.
- 29. W. The Good Shepherd. John 10: 11-18.
- 30. T. A Prayer for Restoration. 2 Chron. 6: 36-39.
- 31. F. The Offspring of God. Acts 17: 22-31.
- Nov. 1. S. The New Covenant. Jer. 31: 31-34.
- 2. S. A Prayer for Pardon. Psalm 51: 1-8.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Perea was the country called "beyond the Jordan," in the New Testament, was about the same as Gilead in the Old Testament, and lay south of Bashan.

INTRODUCTION

I. Hints and Helps for Teachers

1. "Temperance" means "self-control;" not only abstinence from intoxicating liquor.

2. There is not a more important lesson, not a more necessary one, or one which involves more good, than self-control. It leads to great usefulness and good; to peace here and salvation hereafter. The lack of it leads to the greatest shame and disgrace, misery and woe.

3. The tongue and temper, appetites and passions must be controlled, while the whole body must be brought into subjection to the gospel of Christ.

4. Strong drink has slain its thousands, has sent almost as many to perdition, and has left numerous destitute widows and orphans behind.

5. This terrible evil has not yet been overcome; but transgression of law has been added to it.

6. We have learned who the publicans were, and that the publicans among the Jews were despised by their fellow Jews. Many were corrupt and oppressive; some were honest and good men. Matthew, who became an apostle, we know was a publican and a noble man.

7. The Pharisees and Scribes complained that Jesus ate with "publicans and sinners."

8. Jesus drew the multitudes to him by his miracles of mercy; his goodness, sincerity, justice, righteousness, compassion, and love. He healed their afflicted ones; he associated with them, ate with them, and addressed his teaching to their comprehension; he opened to them the door of repentance, brought to them new hope, and offered to them God and heaven. Neither did he refuse to associate with the scribes and Pharisees nor to teach them. He came not to array one class against another, but to break down "the middle wall of partition," to destroy all castes, and to make of all one people in the kingdom of his love.

9. The Pharisees were a religious sect among the Jews. (Acts 23:8.)

10. The Scribes, who primarily transcribed the Scriptures, were also the interpreters of the law.

11. These scribes and Pharisees were sinners before God of the worst kind. Their morality and piety were outward and formal; they were veritable hypocrites, compared by Jesus to whitened sepulchers full of corruption; they would devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers; they were particular about small things, but neglected judgment, mercy, and faith; they were too self-conceited, too proud, and too self-righteous to repent and to enter the kingdom of God themselves, and they would not allow others to do so.

12. They murmured that Jesus ate with publicans and sinners. To do this was to put himself on an equality with these proscribed classes. It was a shock to their sense of propriety that a prophet sent from God should do this.

II. The Force of the Parable of the Prodigal Son

Jesus answers the criticism of his conduct in eating and associating with publicans and sinners in the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son. These parables justify his course and show why he should associate with such classes, while they teach us the important principle of seeking the salvation of all.

Seeking in mercy the lost sheep and hunting in patience the lost coin demonstrate the patience and love of Jesus in seeking the salvation of the lost. The parable of the prodigal son shows the penitence, action, and free will of the sinner in returning to God and God's compassion and mercy in forgiving and receiving him. Jesus uses the strongest parable last.

Even these scribes and Pharisees could not but approve of the compassion and mercy of the forgiving father and condemn the actions of the elder son. They claimed to be righteous; the "publicans and sinners" were self-confessed sinners.

The elder son represents them and all sinners like them, and the prodigal son represents the publicans and all penitent sinners returning to God. (See Luke 15: 1, 2.)

This parable of the prodigal son may serve to illustrate the condition of the Jews and the Gentiles and such sinners of all time, but it was applied by Jesus as just stated. When he makes an application of his parables, we must accept it. In the two preceding parables Christ seeks the lost; in this parable the lost sinner seeks his Father's house; while the three parables represent the joy of heaven over repentance.

This is a pathetic, beautiful, and sublime parable. It appeals to the sympathy, awakens the emotions, and arouses the compassion of the most callous. While it lives in the wonderful and inspired story of the cross, illustrating the loving forgiveness of God, it has also been embalmed in oratory, poetry, and song, and speaks in silent eloquence from the canvas. It has been called "the crown and pearl of all parables."

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Prodigal Had His Choice

11. This "certain man" represents God, full of compassion and love for sinners. The younger son—"the prodigal son"—as just seen, represents the publicans and sinners, who confess they had wandered away from God; the elder son represents the scribes and Pharisees who claimed to have remained with God.

12. The "firstborn," under the law of Moses, inherited a "double portion" as a birthright (Deut. 21: 17); and, therefore, this "younger" one would inherit only one-third of his father's estate. He demanded his "portion" before his father's death. "It has been an immemorial custom in the East for sons to demand and receive their portion of the inheritance during their father's lifetime; and the parent, however aware of the dissipated inclinations of the child, could not legally refuse to comply with the application." (Clarke's "Commentary.")

This boy was tired of home restraints and the correction of a father. He was self-willed, undutiful, and determined to go wrong. He wanted "liberty" (!); he wanted to spend his own money in his

own way, and that was in the gratification of his strong appetites and passions. O, if he could only have seen the consequences! In a short while he is a ragged, degraded, profligate wanderer.

See, young man; see! "For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." (Gal. 6: 8.) Let this be branded upon your hearts. There is no exception to this rule.

Many a criminal began, just as this prodigal, by growing weary of home and the society of father and mother. The world is fascinating and enticing, but beware!

The father yielded to the demand and "divided unto them his living."

In this, too, is seen the sinner's free will.

The inheritance may represent all the rich profusion of God's goodness bestowed upon men. He permits them to use these blessings and their abilities as they choose. He sets before men "a blessing and a curse" (Deut. 11: 26-28), "life and good, and death and evil," and exhorts them to "choose life" by loving and obeying him (Deut. 30: 15-20); but if they will choose death, he must allow them to do so, while in mercy he warns them of the fearful consequences.

Certainly men can live as they choose and serve whom they please. If men cannot act in their own free wills on earth as they choose, they cannot give an account for themselves at the judgment. On this point see Rom. 1: 21-32.

13. He had time to reflect upon his determination to go, but nothing had changed his purpose; so "not many days after" he "gathered all together"—took his "portion"—and departed "into a far country." Where he went we do not know.

Any place of sin is "a far country" from innocence, purity, righteousness, and God.

Think of it! He left home—its dear amenities, its sacred purity, its hallowed influences, and its loving protection against sin. He left upon the high tide of appetite, passion, and worldly pleasure. He sought the society of the dissipated as more congenial to his present tastes and desires. But what he had did not last long. One travels rapidly on the down grade. He "wasted his substance [threw it to the winds] with riotous living." Luke (15: 30) gives us an idea of the meaning of "riotous"—"hath devoured thy living with harlots." It means dissipation, revelry, and licentiousness.

These publicans and sinners had thus turned away from God; but all sinners, whether they be of this class or not, are wasting and devouring the blessings and privileges of God—wasting their time and talent, life and health, body and soul, in the service of sin.

II. The Sad Picture

14. This is the sad side of this picture. It is enough to make us weep to think of a dissolute, ungrateful son thus squandering the hard earnings of an industrious, economic and fond father. But soon all was gone.

The down grade was steep, and he traveled with accelerated speed. Just when he reached the bottom in the valley of destitution a famine arose.

Sin is always a famine—a famine to the soul. The world, with its pleasures, emoluments, and glories, cannot satisfy the hungry

soul. Of this, Solomon, in his varied experience, cried: "All is vanity and a striving after wind!"

"And he began to be in want." His money was gone, his seeming friends had forsaken him, and he had nothing to eat. Those who help to spend one's money in "riotous living" will forsake him and curse him when his money is gone; God and his children take him up and help him in destitution.

15. He is too proud yet to repent and return to his father; so he joins "himself to one of the citizens of that country," who sends "him into the fields to feed swine." This was an unlawful and disgraceful calling among the Jews, because the hog was an unclean animal. His sin sinks him deeper into shame and disgrace.

16. "Husks" were the pods of the carob tree, just a little similar to our "honey locust." "The pods do not open. They contain a large quantity of sweet mucilage, and are used for feeding cattle, horses, and pigs, and sometimes as the food of the very poorest people." It seems in his extremity of hunger he ate this food of the swine, for "no man gave unto him." Trying to satisfy the soul on the pleasures of sin is like feeding on "husks."

17. He had been like one delirious, or intoxicated, mad, and foolish. But "he came to himself:" his senses returned. Starvation stared him in the face. To go farther was utter destruction. All this cooled his passions and brought him to his right mind. His reason again asserted itself, and he said his father's many hired servants had bread enough, and to spare, while he was perishing with hunger. Sin entices, fascinates, and infatuates, and worldly honors promise much; but he who feeds on them will certainly die of hunger.

All persons must come to themselves sooner or later, or they will never amount to anything in life, or be saved in the life to come.

III. The Prodigal Repented

18. In his sober, better judgment he repented, and determined to return to his father.

Repentance is a change of purpose, a change of heart, which leads to a change of life. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation." (2 Cor. 7: 10.)

This prodigal furnishes a fine illustration of repentance. First, he is honest with himself and his father. He did not conceal the fact that he had done wrong. He determined to confess his sins frankly and freely.

He who conceals his sins or refuses to confess them has not repented. A penitent is ashamed of his sins, but he is not ashamed to confess them.

These publicans and sinners confessed they had wandered away from God and were sinners; they came to Jesus for his love and blessings and pardon. David confessed his sins freely (2 Sam. 12: 13; 24: 10, 17); those whom John baptised confessed their sins (Matt. 3: 6), many of whom were publicans and harlots (Matt. 21: 32; Luke 7: 29, 30); we must confess our sins. (James 5: 16; 1 John 1: 9.)

19, 20. This prodigal confessed that he had sinned, first "against heaven" and then against his father; and so he had.

All sin is a violation of God's commandments and is sin against

him. Like the prodigal, the penitent confesses any wrong he may have done others. Please let us remember this.

He never blamed another for his sins; he never even laid them to his own "weakness." He frankly said: "I have sinned." He made no excuse.

Another element of repentance is a feeling and an acknowledgment of unworthiness. "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." "But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner;" and he "went down to his house justified" rather than the self-righteous Pharisee. (Luke 18:13, 14.) "Jehovah is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as are of a contrite spirit." (Ps. 34:18.)

IV. The Father's Joy

The prodigal put his resolution into action and turned away from his disobedience and sin and went to his father.

This the sinner must do. In God's house are innumerable blessings—soul food and raiment to wear. "In thy presence is fullness of joy; in thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Ps. 16:11.) God's love and heaven are great inducements to repentance, while solemn warnings come from the regions of sin and perdition. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. 55:7.)

This boy went away trusting in himself; he returned distrusting himself, but trusting in the love of his father.

The father longed and hoped for his return, prayed for his return, watched for his return, that he might forgive him and bless him; and when he saw him coming, "yet afar off," he "ran" to meet him, to welcome him, and to receive him. In his gladness he "fell on his neck, and kissed him." The idea is that he kissed him again and again. This represents the anxiety and yearning of God's loving heart for the salvation of sinners; and when one repents, God is just as ready to forgive him. (See 2 Cor. 5:18-21.)

22. "But the father said" means that he did not intend for his boy to be as a hired servant. He commands the servants to "bring forth quickly the best robe," to strip the boy of his travel-stained and ragged garments, and to put the robe on him, put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. The ring and the shoes showed that he was a free man, not a hired servant; slaves went barefooted.

Every penitent sinner who returns in loving and humble obedience to God is thus received, and for every one there is a robe of righteousness.

Truly, all who are saved from sin can say: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities." (Ps. 103:10.)

V. The Elder Son

23, 24. This was a common way in that country of showing one a welcome. (See Gen. 18:6-8.) This was a feast of merriment and gladness; the whole family must assemble in joy; "for this my son

was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And they did; "they began to be merry."

So is a sinner dead in his trespasses and sins (Col. 2: 13)—dead to his best interests and the good he may do, separated from God and the heavenly family.

This glad, happy feast of welcome represents the joy in heaven over a sinner who repents. Well may the saints on earth be glad. But this carnal feast does not represent feasting and dancing in heaven, or justify modern dancing on earth, or instrumental music in the worship of God. It is foolish to so argue.

We must study the rest of the parable. The elder son "was angry, and would not go in." The scribes and Pharisees were angry because Jesus received the outcasts; they would not eat with publicans and sinners. So the very highly respectable self-righteous in the church do not like to see the despised and outcasts coming home to God; they do not like to associate with such.

The elder son claimed not to have transgressed; so did the scribes and Pharisees. The father pleads with him, entreats him, and shows that his brother has returned and that it is suitable to rejoice. Unless he can lay aside his envy and welcome the prodigal, he will become the "lost" one.

So with such who claim to be the children of God now. Let us all rejoice and be glad over the lost when found.

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place, and principal characters of the lesson.
At what did the scribes and Pharisees complain?
Who were the scribes?
Who were the Pharisees?
Who were the publicans?
What is the object of the three parables of this chapter?
Which is the strongest?
What is the difference between the first two and this one?
State the facts without giving the application of this parable.
Whom does the "younger son" represent?
Whom does the "elder son" represent?
What is said of the pathos and beauty of this parable?
- 11 Whom does the "certain man" represent?
 - 12 What was the "portion" of the first-born under the law?
What did the younger demand?
What was the custom then?
Why did he make this demand?
To what does all this lead?
What does this choice of this boy represent?
Did the father grant his request?
 - 13 What did the boy do?
How did he spend his money?
 - What does the sinner waste?
 - 14 What was the result?
What then came?
 - 15 What did he do?
Why was feeding swine a disgrace?
 - 16 What are "husks"?
 - 17 What is meant by "he came to himself?"
How does a sinner come to himself?
 - 18 What did he determine to do?
What is "repentance?"
Give all that one who has repented will do.
(The teacher will see that it is correctly done.)
 - 19, 21 Against whom had he sinned?
Why did he not make some excuse for his sins?
How did he show his unworthiness?
 - 20 What did he do?
What must sinners do?
What does this longing and anxiety of the father represent?
 - 22 What did his father do for him?
What does God do for the penitent?
 - 23, 24 How did the father show his joy?
What does this feast represent?
What did the elder brother do and say?
Whom does he represent?

LESSON VI—NOVEMBER 9

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

Read: Matt. 14: 13-21; Mark 6: 32-44; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 16-71.

Lesson Text: John 6: 1-15.

JOHN 6. 1 After these things, Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick.

3 And Jesus went up into the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.

5 Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?

6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

7 Philip answered him, Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many?

10 Jesus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would.

12 And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost.

13 So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over unto them that had eaten.

14 When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world.

15 Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

Golden Text—I am the bread of life. (John 6: 35.)

Time—A. D. 29, just before the passover (John 6: 4) and soon after the death of John the Baptist.

Place—"A desert place" near Bethsaida; not Bethsaida near Capernaum, but on "the other side of the sea of Galilee" (John 6: 1), on the northeastern shore, just east of where the Jordan flows into the sea.

Persons—Jesus, the twelve, and the multitude.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 107: 1-9.

Home Reading—

- Nov. 3. M. The Feeding of the Five Thousand. John 6: 1-15.
4. T. The Feeding of the Israelites. Ex. 16: 13-20.
5. W. The Feeding of Elijah. 1 Kings 17: 1-16.
6. T. The Bread from Heaven. John 6: 27-33.
7. F. Jesus, the Bread of Life. John 6: 41-51.
8. S. Jesus Explains his Words. John 6: 52-63.
9. S. God, the Great Provider. Psalm 107: 1-9.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

"Bethsaida" means "house of figs." There seems to have been two cities by this name—one on the western shore of the sea of Galilee, near Capernaum and Chorazin (Matt. 11: 21; Mark 6: 45-53; Luke 10: 13), the "city of Andrew and Peter" and Philip (John 1: 44); the other on the northeastern shore, as stated under "Place," near which Jesus fed the five thousand. (Mark 6: 31-44; Luke 9: 10-17.)

INTRODUCTION**I. Hints and Helps for Teachers**

1. Learn all the facts.
2. Feeding the four thousand occurred later than feeding the five thousand.
3. Between chapter 5 and chapter 6 John passes over about a year of Jesus' history.
4. This miracle is the only one recorded by all four of the evangelists—that is, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Feeding the four thousand later on is recorded by Matthew and Mark only. Many other miracles were recorded by at least three of these writers.
5. As has been stated, John wrote after the other three and passes over much they had recorded and records much they had left unwritten.
6. It must be remembered that when more than one record the same miracle, one may record a fact which the others omit. In such a case we can obtain all the facts only by putting together all which they all record. This is true with reference to every Bible subject. We must put together all the Bible says on every subject before we can know all that God teaches on it.

II. Why Jesus Sought a Desert Place

In this miracle recorded by the four we see all the motives which co-operated in prompting Jesus to seek retirement in "a desert place" over the sea and beyond Herod's jurisdiction.

(a) The desire of Herod to see him (Luke 9: 9, 10), which desire he had no intention of gratifying; (b) the needed rest for himself and his apostles, just returned from toilsome journeyings, for "they had no leisure so much as to eat" (Mark 6: 30, 31); (c) and the news of the death of John the Baptist. (Matt. 14: 13.) Jesus was deeply grieved and the multitudes were greatly enraged over the sad, cruel murder of John the Baptist. These facts prompted Jesus to seek the privacy of the desert.

Herod feared the multitudes, or he would have beheaded John the Baptist before this. (Matt. 14: 5.) They were now ready to revolt, and, with their misconceptions of the nature of Christ's mission, to crown and proclaim him king—which they really attempted, anyway.

(John 6: 15.) Hence he withdrew into privacy for meditation and rest and to allow the excitement among the people to subside.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Facts

1-5. Upon hearing of the death of John the Baptist (Matt. 14: 12) and upon the return of the apostles from their preaching tours (Mark 6: 30; Luke 9: 10), Jesus and his disciples went into "a desert place apart," across the northern end of the sea of Galilee.

They crossed the sea in a boat. The multitudes from all the cities, intensely interested, saw them "going," recognized them, and followed them, running "together there on foot," and "outwent them." That the multitude was great we learn from the fact that it numbered about five thousand men, besides the women and children. The multitudes followed him "because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick." (John 6: 2.) The public roads passed around the head of the sea, and the people took these roads on foot and "outwent" the boat, which they could see almost all the journey. When the boat landed, they were there awaiting Jesus.

Again all opportunity for rest was gone, and again, in his sympathy for the people, Jesus lost sight of his own personal needs and "came forth" out of the boat; and seeing the "great multitude," "he had compassion on them" and "welcomed them," "because they were as sheep not having a shepherd," "and spake to them of the kingdom of God, and them that had need of healing be cured." (Matt. 14: 14; Mark 6: 34; Luke 9: 11.) The compassion of Jesus is frequently mentioned in the New Testament. (Matt. 9: 36; 15: 32; 20: 33, 34; Mark 1: 41; 5: 19; Luke 7: 13.)

This was near the passover, and the people were collecting to attend this annual feast at Jerusalem. It was in the spring, when the grass was fresh and green. (Verse 10.)

If the feast in John 5: 1 is a passover, it was the second one since Jesus began his public ministry and one year since he cleansed the temple the first time. (John 2: 18.) The one of this lesson would be the third one.

From John 6: 3, it seems that Jesus retired with his apostles a while into a mountain; but from the other writers it appears that the multitudes followed and there was no time for rest, and he spent the day teaching them and healing the afflicted. Matthew (14: 15) says "when even was come," Mark (6: 35) says "when the day was now far spent," and Luke (9: 12) says "and the day began to wear away," the conversation between Jesus and the apostles about feeding the people took place.

Jesus had compassion on them, not only because they were hungry, but because they were destitute of the bread of life. They had no spiritual food and no shepherds, save the blinded and bigoted scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus asked Philip about feeding them: "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" All the twelve thought it would be impossible for them to buy a sufficient quantity; hence they came "and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and country round about, and lodge, and get provisions: for we are here in a desert place" (Luke 9: 12); "and buy themselves

somewhat to eat" (Mark 6: 36; see also Matt. 14: 15.) To this Jesus replied: "They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat." (Matt. 14: 16; see also Mark 6: 37; Luke 9: 13.) The apostles replied through Philip: "Shall we go and buy two hundred shillings' worth of bread, and give them to eat?" (Mark 6: 37); or: "Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little." (John 6: 7.) This was the estimate of the apostles as to how much it would take to buy enough for all to have a little. A "shilling" was equal to about seventeen cents in our money; hence "two hundred shillings' worth" would be about thirty-four dollars' worth. But a shilling then would buy five or six times as much as it will now. It was the ordinary price of a day's work by a common laborer. The apostles either did not have much money, or, having it, did not think it sufficient. Jesus then asked: "How many loaves have ye? go and see." (Mark 6: 38.) They did not know; but when they had ascertained, they reported through Andrew: "There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many?" (John 6: 9.)

II. Jesus Can Feed the Soul

6. Jesus knew before he raised these inquiries what he would do, but he did this for the spiritual benefit of the apostles—"to prove" Philip. They, like ourselves, were sometimes slow to learn.

7, 8. These verses are embraced in explanations under verse 5.

9. This was plain, common food—the food of the poor classes. It was all the apostles could command at that time and place. The multitude, as well as Christ and the apostles, were so greatly interested as to lose sight of temporary needs.

In compassion Jesus fed the multitude, while at the same time by the miracles he wrought he demonstrated his divine power and showed his authority to teach. By healing the bodies of men he showed his power to heal their souls; by feeding their bodies he showed his power to feed their souls. He is the bread of life.

That a lad should have five loaves and two fishes is only a mere incident, from which Jesus draws no lesson. We might just as well give to the five loaves and two fishes some spiritual signification. He was no better than a thousand other lads because he happened to have these.

III. Jesus Gives Thanks

10. When the five loaves and the two fishes were reported, Jesus said: "Bring them hither to me." (Matt. 14: 18.) Then he directed the apostles to seat the men upon the grass in companies of fifties and hundreds. (Matt. 14: 19; Mark 6: 39, 40; Luke 9: 14.) This was orderly, and was done for convenience in waiting upon them. It was comfortable and convenient to sit upon the ground, for "there was much grass in the place," it being about the first of April. The apostles, in obedience to Jesus, went about arranging the companies as he had directed. There "were about five thousand men, besides women and children." (Matt. 14: 21.) It was customary then, and is yet, in the East for men to eat alone, reclining, and for women and children to eat to themselves, sitting.

11. This done, Jesus then took the loaves and the two fishes; "and looking up to heaven" (Matt. 14: 19) as the source of all bles-

sings, he gave thanks, then broke the loaves and distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples distributed them to the multitudes; and "likewise also of the fishes as much as they would." Thus Jesus gave thanks when he fed the four thousand men, besides women and children," with seven loaves and a few fishes (Matt. 15: 32-39; Mark 8: 1-9); so Paul gave thanks after the fast in the ship at sea. (Acts 27: 35.)

If Jesus, who could magnify the few loaves and the small fishes until they fed thousands of people, first gave God thanks for them, should not we, in our helplessness and dependence upon God, offer thanks for the great abundance with which he has blessed us?

God does not ignore means and human effort in blessing men. Jesus could have called down bread from heaven and had the angels to serve it to the multitudes; but here are the five loaves and two fishes and the disciples, and he used them all. Let the five loaves and two fishes which we have be offered to God, and he will take them and do the rest.

IV. Jesus Teaches Economy

12. All of the hungry multitude ate "as much as they would," and "were filled." Then Jesus directed the disciples to "gather up the broken pieces that remain," assigning as the reason "that nothing be lost." God teaches economy in nature and all through the Bible. Jesus could magnify loaves and fishes again; he could make bread of stones; yet God wastes nothing and teaches us to follow his example. These "broken pieces" will do for food on other occasions. There is nothing wasted which does not bring a corresponding want after a while. Wastefulness is sin.

13. After all had eaten, there were twelve basketfuls left. Jesus not only gave here an object lesson in economy, but by this amount left he showed this was a miracle beyond all doubt.

14. So all present recognized it and said: "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world." All expected such a prophet. (Deut. 18: 15, 16; Luke 7: 20; John 1: 21.)

They misconceived the mission of the Christ and the nature of his kingdom. All, not excepting the apostles, thought he would reign as a temporal, political king on earth. This miracle wrought the multitude up to the highest pitch, so that they desired to crown him and proclaim him king at once. That meant, too, that they would follow him and fight with carnal weapons to sustain his kingdom. Therefore John (6: 15) says, "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountains himself alone," and Matthew (14: 23) says "to pray," where he spent most of the night. (Verse 25.) To this place of solitude and prayer he had started that morning, but he had been intercepted by the multitude.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place, and Persons.
Where were the two Bethsaldas?
What was the desert?
Who are meant by the four evangelists?
What one miracle do they all re-

cord?
Which one wrote after the other three?
What does he omit which the others record?
What does he record which the others omit?
When two or more record a miracle, or anything else, how

- can we get all the facts?
 Give the different motives of Jesus for going over the sea into a desert place at this time.
- 1-5 How did Jesus and his disciples cross the sea?
 What did the multitude do?
 Who reached the place first?
 How did Jesus receive the multitude?
 Why?
 What did he teach them?
 What did he do for the diseased?
 What is said of his compassion?
 Is he still interested in us?
 Why did the multitude follow him?
 What time of year was it?
 How many passovers does this make in Christ's public ministry?
 Where did Jesus go with his disciples?
 Was he allowed to remain there?
 When did he propose to feed the multitude?
- 6 Why did Jesus raise the question? Repeat the conversation, in order, which occurred between him and the apostles in regard to this.
 (Let the teacher see that this is done correctly.)
- 7 How much in our money is "two hundred shillings' worth?"
- 8, 9 How many loaves were there?
- How many fishes?
 What kind of food was this?
 How did Jesus show his power to heal and to save souls?
- 10 What did Jesus direct the disciples to do?
 After whose customs did the Jews arrange their feasts?
 How were the tables arranged?
 Why seat the multitude in companies?
 What was the custom regarding women and children?
 How many men were there?
- 11 What did Jesus do next?
 Why did he give thanks?
 Who else gave thanks for food?
 Should we?
 Can you cite any passage showing that we should?
- 12 Did all eat enough?
 Was any left?
 What did Jesus tell them to do with it?
 Why?
 What lesson does he teach by this?
- 13 What shows this to be a miracle?
- 14 What did all the multitude say?
 What were their conceptions concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom?
 What did they try to do by force?
 What would they do for Jesus?
 What did Jesus do?

"I do not ask to see
 The distant scene; one step enough for me.

"I know not the way I am going,
 But well do I know my guide.

"So I go on not knowing, I would not if I might.
 I would rather walk in the dark with God than go alone in the light.
 I would rather walk with him by faith than walk alone by sight."

LESSON VII—NOVEMBER 16.

PETER'S CONFESSION

Read: Mark 8: 27-29; Luke 9: 18-20. *Lesson Text:* Matt. 16: 13-20.

MATTHEW 16. 13 Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is?

14 And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

18 And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

19 I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20 Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.

Golden Text—Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (Matt. 16: 16.)

Time—A.D. 29, in the autumn.

Place—Near Caesarea Philippi.

Persons—Christ and his apostles.

Devotional Reading: Ps. 84: 1-4.

Home Reading—

Nov. 10. M. Peter's Confession. Matt. 16: 13-20.

11. T. Peter's Protest. Matt. 16: 21-28.

12. W. Peter's Petition. Matt. 17: 1-9.

13. T. Peter's Loyalty. John 6: 60-71.

14. F. Peter's Love. John 21: 15-25.

15. S. Precious Promises. 2 Peter 1: 1-10.

16. S. Blessings of the Sanctuary. Psalm 84.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Caesarea Philippi, originally Paneas, was enlarged and adorned by Philip, tetrarch of Trachonitis, and named for Tiberias Caesar and himself. It was situated on the eastern and most important source of the Jordan, at the foot of Mount Hermon, which rises seven or eight thousand feet above it. It was built on a ledge of limestone rock, and was strongly fortified. It was the northern extremity of Palestine, and was twenty-five or thirty miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee. It is a small town now of about fifty houses, but with many ruins of towers, temples, columns, and the most remarkable castle of the Holy Land.

INTRODUCTION**Hints and Helps for Teachers**

1. The great confession which Peter and the other apostles made and the good confession which Jesus made before Pilate and which

Timothy witnessed before many witnesses (1 Tim. 6:13-17) is of vast importance.

2. After feeding the five thousand of the last lesson Jesus retired to a mountain to pray. He spent most of the night in prayer; "and in the fourth watch of the night" (between three o'clock and six o'clock in the morning) he went, walking on the stormy sea, to his disciples, who had rowed all night against contrary winds and had gone only about three and one-half miles. (Matt. 14: 22, 23; John 6: 16-21.)

3. On the next morning, after the labor of the preceding day and a sleepless night of prayer, he met the multitude and began another day of arduous work, during which he instructed the people concerning "the bread of life." (John 6: 22-71.)

4. Soon after this discourse upon "the bread of life" came "the passover" mentioned in John 6: 4.)

5. Those who attended this passover from Galilee and reported his marvelous works and increasing fame helped to arouse those in authority at Jerusalem.

6. So "there came to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes" (Matt. 15: 1), no doubt sent by the authorities there to counteract his mighty and wide-spreading influence in Galilee. They openly and boldly attacked him, charging his disciples with transgressing "the tradition of the elders." They held the traditions of the elders of equal authority with the law of Moses. These traditions they supposed were handed down orally from one generation to another from the time of Moses, while the law was written.

7. Jesus replied to this accusation, not by denying that his disciples did it, but by attacking the traditions themselves as wrong and showing that these Jews had set aside and transgressed God's law by their traditions. He showed how they did it, and condemned them strongly as hypocrites and vain worshipers, because they taught for doctrines the commandments of men.

8. Any worship at all to-day which springs from human authority is vain, and every human addition to God's word in a greater or less degree makes void some command of God. (See Matt. 15: 1-9; Mark 7: 1-13.)

9. Following this stern and severe rebuke to these scribes and Pharisees, he delivered a sermon to the multitude on purity, showing that it is not what one eats that defiles him, but the condition of his own heart. (Matt. 15: 10-20.)

10. When his disciples reported that the Pharisees were offended at what he said, he replied to them, saying: "Every plant [every religious doctrine or religious institution] which my Heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit."

11. The apostles were not to cease to oppose the errors of these blind leaders, but to disregard their criticisms and to preach the truth right on, regardless of the offense it gave them, while trying to teach them was casting pearls before swine or throwing that which is holy to dogs.

12. Preaching the truth offends some to-day; still it must be preached.

13. Wearied by these contentions and the importunate multi-

tudes which thronged him every where, depriving him of sleep, rest, and repose, he sought again solitude for this purpose, for communion with God, and for a convenient season to further instruct the apostles. When he went over the sea to "a desert place," the people followed and interfered. (Mark 6: 31-34.) This time he went in quite a different direction—"into the borders of Tyre and Sidon" (probably into the hills east of these cities), beyond the limits of Galilee and upon Gentile soil. This is the first recorded instance in the history of Jesus when he went out of Palestine.

14. Here Jesus healed the daughter of the Syrophenician woman, of an unclean spirit.

15. "From the borders of Tyre" Jesus went through Sidon "unto the Sea of Galilee" and "through the midst of the borders of Decapolis." Here he healed a deaf and dumb man. (Mark 7: 32-37.)

16. On a nearby mountain he healed many, and fed the four thousand, besides the women and children, on seven loaves and a few small fishes. (Matt. 15: 29-38.)

17. From this place he recrossed the sea in vicinity of Magadan and Dalmanitha (Matt. 15: 39; Mark 8: 10), which were on the western shore.

18. He was again attacked by the Pharisees—this time in company with the Sadducees, and he reproved their hypocrisy.

19. Again he crossed the Sea to Bethsaida, where he fed the five thousand, warned his disciples against the teaching of the Sadducees and Pharisees, and healed a blind man. (Matt. 16: 5-12; Mark 8: 13-26.)

20. Thence it is probable Jesus went "into the parts of Cesarea Philippi."

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. "What Think Ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?"

13. Mark (8: 27) says: "Jesus went forth, and his disciples, into the village of Cesarea Philippi." "Parts," as Matthew puts it, means the country surrounding this city, and Jesus went through the towns of that country, no doubt, teaching the Jews. Again, Mark (same verse) says, "and on the way;" and Luke (9: 18) states that Jesus was alone praying with his disciples when he asked the question: "Who do men say that the Son of man is?"

In his humility and because he was in the flesh, he calls himself "the Son of man." He frequently thus spoke of himself.

All the miraculous, benevolent works of Jesus were to convince the world that he is the promised seed of Abraham, the long-looked-for Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God. If he is not this he is false, a blasphemer, and an impostor.

The multitudes had flocked to him by the thousands, and had seen and enjoyed his various and numerous miracles. Now what do they say of him? He knew, of course; but he desired an expression from the apostles and to bring out and to strengthen their faith.

14. "Some say John the baptist." This was the opinion of Herod Antipas and of some others. (See Matt. 14: 1-12; Mark 6: 16-29.) Herod thought John had risen from the dead. Elijah, of old, had restored the true worship of God, and his return to the earth was expected. (Mal. 4: 5; Matt. 17: 10.) Others said he was "Jeremiah,

or one of the prophets." They thought he was one of the old prophets risen from the dead. They all classed him with the prophets, which was a high honor, but not yet sufficient honor for Jesus. He was much more than this. But for their misconceptions and preconceived erroneous opinions as to what the Messiah was to do and to be, they doubtless would have accepted him as the Son of God and the Christ.

All his disciples, with the apostles, had these erroneous conceptions; but they were willing to learn, and did learn, of him until they were led into the clear sunlight of the true nature of his spiritual kingdom. If one will only study and learn, one can come to the knowledge of the truth.

II. The Confession

15. He then asked an expression from the apostles themselves. He asked them all: "Who say ye that I am?"

16. Peter—not pert, but impulsive, decisive, bold, and courageous—answered at once. There was no hesitancy or delay. He spoke his sincere and deep conviction, but he answered for all the rest: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He is not only Jesus of Nazareth, a carpenter, and the son of Mary, but the Son of God and the Christ.

Other men were named "Jesus" (Acts 13: 6; Col. 4: 11), but there is only one Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." (Acts 2: 36.) Paul says "that this Jesus [who was crucified and raised from the dead], whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ." (Acts 17: 3.)

Two propositions concerning Jesus of Nazareth are true and must be believed—(1) that he is the Christ, and (2) that he is "the Son of the living God."

"The living God" is no false and lifeless God, but the "I Am that I Am." (Ex. 3: 14.) "Even from everlasting, to everlasting, thou art God." (Ps. 90: 2.)

The "word" which was with God in the beginning, and which was God, "became flesh, and dwelt among us." (John 1: 1-14.) "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2: 9; see also Col. 1: 15-17.)

This proposition shows the relationship of Jesus to God, and, therefore, his divinity.

"Messiah" is the Hebrew word and "Christ" is the Greek word for "anointed." It shows the work or office of Jesus Christ. Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed (Lev. 8; 1 Sam. 16: 12, 13; 1 Kings 19: 15, 16.) Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power (Acts 10: 38), and is Prophet, Priest, and King. He was "made" "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2: 36), and was made high priest (Heb. 7: 20-28.) David was anointed king long before he was "crowned" and began to serve; so was Jesus. (See Acts 2: 32-36; Phil. 2: 5-11; Hebrews 2: 9; 7: 12-14, 8: 1-6.)

What else people believe about Jesus, they must believe in him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," in order to be saved by him. (Be sure to read here Rom. 3: 26; 10: 6-10.) They must receive his teaching as a prophet (Matt. 7: 24-29); accept him as a sacrifice

on the cross for their sins, whose blood cleanses from all sin (1 John 1: 7), and without which there is no remission of sins (Heb. 9: 15-28, especially 22); trust in him as Advocate, Mediator, and Priest (1 John 2: 1, 2; 1 Tim. 2: 5, 6; Heb. 8: 6; 7: 25; 9: 24; Rom. 9: 34); and must place themselves under him as King to be governed entirely by his laws. (Heb. 5: 8, 9.) The apostles and disciples grew into the firm conviction of the confession made here.

Those in the boat with him the night he walked on the water said, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matt. 14: 33); and after the discourse on the bread of life, Peter said: "And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." (John 6: 69.)

17. "Simon Bar-Jonah" means the son of Jonah, or John. (John 1: 42.)

Appreciating and confessing this great truth brought Peter, and with him all who believe it, into the rich blessings of God, for Jesus owns and confesses such persons before God and the angels. (Matt. 10: 32, 33; Luke 12: 8, 9.)

"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee," because flesh and blood could not make such a revelation. People knew by "flesh and blood" that Jesus was the son of Mary and a descendent of Abraham, as Matthew and Luke show (Matt. 1; Luke 3: 23-38); but they could not know by "flesh and blood" that he was the Son of God. God must make this revelation. So he revealed it to Mary (Luke 1: 26-35), to Joseph (Matt. 1: 18-21), to John the Baptist, to Peter, and to others when he sent down the Spirit upon Jesus and said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3: 17; see also John 1: 29-34.) Besides all the miracles of Jesus were done in the presence of his disciples as the testimony of God to this fact: to reveal to them and to the world that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." (John 20: 30, 31.) The apostles were Christ's witnesses to the world. Guided by the Spirit of God they made this revelation to the world. Hence "no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." (1 Cor. 12: 3.)

Human wisdom and science could not invent or discover the remedy for sin. "The world through its wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. 1: 21); man by searching can not find out God (Job. 11: 7; Rom. 11: 33); God must reveal his will and the remedy for sin, or the way of salvation to men. Hence it is absolute folly to trust in the wisdom of the world or the philosophies and science of men for the way of salvation. The wisdom of men is foolishness with God. (See 1 Cor. 1: 20-30; 3: 18-23.)

III. The Foundation of the Church

18. Jesus, continuing his address to Peter, said: "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." This declaration has called forth a great deal of controversy. Jesus does not say he would build his church on Peter, but he says: "Thou art 'Petros' [a small stone], and upon this Petra [bed rock] I will build my church." We build houses of stone, but we lay the foundation upon a rock. (Matt. 7: 24, 25.) All Christians are "living stones" ("lithoi"—building stones, not rock) in this "spiritual house;" while Jesus under this figure is the "chief corner stone" (1 Pet. 2: 4-8, and

under other figures he is "Petra"—rock (1 Pet. 2:8; Rom. 9:33; 1 Cor. 10:4). In the figure under consideration Peter is not the foundation, but the doorkeeper. (Verse 19.) There is (1) a builder Jesus; (2) a foundation, a solid rock; (3) "a spiritual house," the church; (4) a doorkeeper, Peter; (5) the gates of the unseen world as a mighty power opposing this work.

Now, what is the foundation, the solid rock? It is the central truth of the whole Bible, the glorious fact that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Destroy this truth, and all the prophecies, promises, and purposes of God to redeem the race are absolutely false. This fact is the fulfillment of every promise and prophecy and the consummation of every purpose of God to save men from sin and the grave. Peter could not be in the same figure and at the same time both the rock foundation and the doorkeeper. But, aside from all doubtful verbal criticism, this matter is infallibly settled by what the apostles understood Jesus to mean. They never once thought he meant Peter was the foundation, and Peter never once claimed it. In his preaching on Pentecost, and ever afterwards, Peter held up Jesus, the Son of God, "made" "both Lord and Christ," as the one item of faith and as the foundation of Christ's church. Paul says: "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3:11.) "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone of sure foundation." (Isa. 28:16.) No one can doubt this means Jesus, the crucified and risen Savior, the Son of God. Peter so declares it. (See, again, Rom. 9:33; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:4, 6, 8.)

Then the apostles were eyewitnesses of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and must be in order to be apostles (Acts 1:15-26; 26:16, 17); hence they could have no successors, inasmuch as there can be no successors to eyewitnesses.

The gates of a city represent its power, and "the gates of Hades" represent the power of the grave, or unseen world, as a mighty city. Christ's enemies slew him, hoping to destroy him and his proposed kingdom. But the grave could not contain him; he conquered it, broke open "the gates of Hades," and came forth. "Hades" is put sometimes for "destruction." (Matt. 11:23.) Jesus meant, therefore, not only that he would arise from the grave and establish his church, but that it should never be destroyed. "And it shall stand forever." (Dan. 2:44.) There have always been faithful disciples of Jesus on earth, and always will be. (See Heb. 12:18-29, especially 28.) All other institutions of every kind will be destroyed.

IV. In One Way Only Could Peter and the Other Apostles Remit or Retain Sin

(Intervening Verses, 19, 20.)

The study of verses 19, 20 is necessary, because they show how sins are remitted or retained.

19. Jesus further says: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." "Will bind" and "will give" are future and show that the church or kingdom was not yet built when Jesus said this.

"The Kingdom of heaven" in this verse is used synonymously with "church" in the previous verse. Keys are used to open and close doors. All the apostles had the same power of loosing and binding. (John 20: 19-23.) That only means that Jesus had committed to them the important work of making known to the world the conditions of pardon or entrance into his kingdom. All who complied with these conditions were forgiven; all who did not were not forgiven. The apostles could not forgive sins in the sense of absolving from sin; neither can any other man. Paul says God committed to the apostles as his ambassadors the ministry and word of reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5: 18-20.) They awaited in Jerusalem the guidance of the Holy Spirit before they undertook to tell the people what to do to be saved. (John 14: 26; 16: 13, 14; Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 8.)

In giving the keys to Peter, Jesus gave him only the privilege of taking the lead in this matter, because he was suited to that work. He was chief speaker on the day of Pentecost, and told people what to do to be saved; and several years later he says God made choice among the apostles that from his mouth the Gentiles "should hear the word of the gospel, and believe" (Acts 15: 7), which occurred at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10).

Jew and Gentile entered the church just alike. Even now when people either do or refuse to do as God directs through the inspired apostles that which they do is either "loosed" or bound in heaven. (Matt. 18: 15-18.)

This is a very important matter, and shows that there is no other way of learning how to be saved and how to live the Christian life, save through the teaching of the inspired apostles. If we do what God through them directs us to do, our sins are pardoned, or "loosed," in heaven; if we do not do that, whatever else we may do or not do, our sins are bound upon us, or not forgiven.

V. The Time to Preach That Jesus is the Christ

20. Jesus charged his disciples to tell no man he was the Christ, because the time had not yet come for this. He was not yet exalted to God's right hand and made "both Lord and Christ." One of the mightiest proofs of his divine Sonship was yet to be presented—his resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 1: 4.)

Although the apostles had the firm conviction that he was the Christ, yet they still entertained erroneous ideas of the nature of his kingdom, and did until after his ascension to heaven and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Before his crucifixion and ascension they asked nothing of God in prayer in his name. (John 16: 24.)

After his death on the cross, "God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name," etc. (Phil. 2: 8-11.)

This restriction to tell no man he was the Christ lasted only until his resurrection and ascension. (See Matt. 17: 9; 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 45-47.)

PETER REBUKED JESUS

In verses 21 and 22 of the chapter from which this lesson is taken Peter rebuked Jesus.

This is the first plain and distinct statement Jesus had made

of his death and resurrection. He had made indistinct references to it before (John 2: 19-22; 3: 14; Matt. 12: 38-40), but "from that time" he repeated plainly the statement many times. (Matt. 17: 22, 23; 20: 18, 19; 26: 2, 12, 31, 32.) Still, after his resurrection it is said: "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." (John 20: 9.) With their erroneous ideas, it was hard for them to learn the truth. So it is with people now.

The Sanhedrin was composed of the elders, chief priests, and scribes.

Jesus' suffering was foretold in such chapters as Isa. 53.

Jesus "spake the saying openly" (Mark 8: 32), but Peter took Jesus aside to say this to him. It was such a shock to Peter and so contrary to all his conceptions of the kingdom for Jesus to speak of yielding to the Jews and of suffering death that he impulsively and at once rebuked him—told him not to think it, not to talk so, and that it would never be. He thought such a thing unworthy of him who possessed such powers and who had come to establish a splendid earthly kingdom. He still thought Christ would rule by the sword.

JESUS REBUKED PETER

In verse 23 Jesus rebuked Peter.

Mark (8: 33) says: "But he turning about, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter." Peter had taken him to one side; so when he turned to his disciples, his back was to Peter. In this attitude he said: "Get thee behind me, Satan." Jesus suited his action to his language, and literally turned his back upon Peter. This suggestion was from Satan, although made through Peter's honest intentions. It was a renewal of Satan's temptation not to suffer on the cross, and Jesus promptly resisted it. In this Peter was a "stumbling-block." To cause one to stumble is to lead him into sin. Had Jesus acted upon this suggestion, the world never would have been saved. Otherwise good men to-day, like Peter, would thwart the purpose of God to save the race by suggesting ways and methods different from his. This was a severe rebuke to Peter, but that spirit then was no more of Satan than the same spirit is now. When Jesus repeated this statement, concerning his death, all the apostles were sorry; but Peter did not again rebuke him. (Matt. 17: 23.)

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place, and Persons.
Where and what was Caesarea Philippi?
Who built and named it?
What is said of this confession?
How did Jesus spend most of the night after feeding the five thousand and after the people attempted to crown him king?
Where were the apostles and how did Jesus reach them?
What sermon did he deliver on the next day?
What passover followed this?
What report was made concern-

ing him to the authorities at Jerusalem?
What steps did the authorities take to counteract Jesus' influence?
What accusation was made against Jesus?
What reply did he make?
What is "tradition?"
When is God now worshiped in vain?
What is meant by rooting up every plant which God has not planted?
Into what country did Jesus go? Why did he go there?
Whom did he heal there?
Where did Jesus go from Tyre?

- What miracles did he perform there?
 Thence, where did he go and what did he do?
 Who again attacked?
 Thence where did he go?
- 13 Why does he speak of himself as "the Son of man?"
- 14 What were the different opinions concerning Jesus?
 Why did not the people accept Jesus as the Christ?
- 15 Why did he ask the apostles the question of this verse?
- 16 Who answered it?
 Did he answer for all?
 Give the answer.
 What does "living God" mean?
 What does "Jesus" mean?
 Were any other men named "Jesus?"
 What does "Christ" mean?
 What two propositions concerning Jesus of Nazareth are true and must be believed?
 What does this proposition show?
 Who were anointed?
 How was Jesus anointed?
 Then what is it to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?
- 17 What does "Bar-Jona" mean?
 Why was Peter blessed for making this confession?
 Why could not "flesh and blood" make this revelation?
 How did God reveal this truth?
- 18 Repeat the five facts of this figure.
 What is the difference between "stone" and "rock?"
 What is Peter in this figure?
 What, then, is the rock foundation?
 What are all Christians in this "spiritual house?"
 What is Jesus?
 Did Peter and all the apostles understand Jesus in this verse to say Peter was the foundation?
 What did they preach as the foundation?
 Why could not the apostles have successors?
 What is meant by "gates of Hades?"
 Why could not they prevail against the church?
 Will the church ever be destroyed?
 What do "will build" and "will give" show?
- 19 In these verses are the "church" and "kingdom" synonymous?
 What is meant by "keys?"
 Did all the apostles have the same power?
 What is meant by their binding and loosing?
 What privilege was granted to Peter?
 How are our sins pardoned or bound and loosed now?
 What important fact does this teach the world?
- 20 Why did Jesus charge them not to tell that he was the Christ?
- 21 Had Jesus made before this any reference to his death?
 What did he make in this verse?
 Why did not the apostles understand him?
- 22 Why did Peter rebuke him?
- 23 What rebuke did Jesus give Peter?
 What is the force of this temptation?
 How do some suggest such things now?
- John 21: 15-17.
- 15 How could this be the third time Jesus manifested himself to his disciples and yet his seventh appearance?
 Why did he give his attention directly to Peter?
 In what ways was Peter fitted to be a leader?
 What are the similarities between this meeting and the one when Jesus first called Peter to be an apostle? (See Luke 5: 1-11.)
 What does Jesus mean by the question, "Lovest thou me more than these?"
 What did Jesus tell Peter to do?
 What is the test of love?
- 16 What did Jesus ask the second time, and what did Peter say?
 What does "tend my sheep" mean?
- 17 Why did Jesus ask this question three times?
 What is the difference between the word Jesus used for love and the one Peter used?
 Why, then, did Jesus when asked the question a third time, adopt the word used by Peter?
 What answer did Peter give this time?
 What effect did Peter's experience and discipline have upon him?
- 18, 19 What kind of death did Jesus say Peter would die?

LESSON VIII—NOVEMBER 23

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Read: Matt. 17: 1-8; Mark 9: 2-8. *Lesson Text:* Luke 9:28-36.

LUKE 9. 28 And it came to pass about eight days' after these sayings, that he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray.

29 And as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling.

30 And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah;

31 who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

32 Now Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: but when they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they were parting from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah: not knowing what he said.

34 And while he said these things, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him.

36 And when the voice came, Jesus was found alone. And they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of the things which they had seen.

Golden Text—This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him. (Luke 9: 35.)

Time—A.D. 29.

Place—Most probably Mount Hermon.

Persons—Jesus, Moses, Elijah; Peter, James, and John.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 85: 1-7.

Home Reading—

Nov. 17. M. The Transfiguration. Luke 9: 28-36.

18. T. Moses before God. Ex. 34: 29-35.

19. W. The Translation of Elijah. 2 Kings 2: 1-11.

20. T. The Heavenly Approval. Matt. 3: 13-17.

21. F. The Voice from Heaven. 2 Peter 1: 16-21.

22. S. The Glorified Christ. Rev. 1: 10-18.

23. S. Confidence in God. Psalm 86: 1-7.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

It is more than probable that this "high mountain" was Mount Hermon, or some spur of it, on a terrace of which Ceasarea Philippi was built, and near which Jesus and his apostles were. It is more than nine thousand feet above the sea, and could be seen from almost all parts of Palestine. It is the chief mountain of the Anti-Lebanus range.

The mountain of Lebanon, including Anti-Lebanus, forms the northern boundary of Palestine.

Mount Hermon is frequently mentioned in the Bible (see Deut. 3: 8, 9; 4: 48; Josh. 11: 3, 17; 12: 1, 5; 1 Chron. 5: 23; Ps. 89: 12; 133: 3; Song of Solomon 4: 8.)

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Out of a Night of Prayer Into the Transfiguration

28. Matthew (17: 1) and Mark (9: 2) say "after six days," and Luke says after "about eight days." Luke counts the parts of the days before and after the entire "six days." There is no discrepancy.

"After these sayings" means after the confession made by Peter and the conversation which followed in our last lesson. What Jesus and the apostles did during this intervening time has not been recorded. Very much that Jesus did was not recorded. (John 20: 30, 31; 21: 25.)

"He took with him Peter and John and James," the three who stood with him in the death chamber of Jairus' daughter, who a few months after this lesson were with him in dark Gethsemane, and who were afterwards called "pillars." (Gal. 2: 9.) These were nearest to Jesus, because they were fitted in character for this position. This was not favoritism or partiality. As they had proved faithful in little, they were prepared for greater opportunities. Learning what was committed to them, they were advanced to higher studies. This principle is true to-day, and should encourage all to noble efforts. The other nine were left at the foot of the mountain. (Mark 9: 14-20.)

Mark (9: 30) says: "And they went forth [after Peter's confession, the transfiguration, and the healing of the demoniac] from thence, and passed through Galilee."

II. Why Must Jesus Pray?

As on other occasions, Jesus withdrew from the world below and went up into this mountain "to pray"—to spend the night in prayer. He usually went alone. (Mark 1: 35, 36; Luke 6: 12; Mark 6: 46.) This time he took these three.

Why did Jesus pray alone? He went out a great while before day to be alone in prayer. He spent whole nights alone in prayer. Why alone? The presence of others would interfere with his perfect communion with his Father. In Gethsemane he left the eight at the gate and left the other three who were with him on the inside and prayed alone. They could not understand and appreciate his prayer. There is the desire to be alone now, to pray in the still quiet hours of the night, when one wishes to pour out the soul unreservedly to God for wisdom and courage, guidance and grace, and yearns to lay hold upon the strong arm of the Almighty One for support in weakness or distress. When all pray "with one accord" (Acts 4: 24), the case is very different; but when others cannot understand and appreciate the prayer one prefers to be alone and undisturbed by the presence of others. Sometimes the apostles themselves slept while Jesus prayed.

There are numerous examples of Christ's praying. His prayers were not empty forms and ceremonies. He realized the need of prayer. He felt the infirmities of the flesh (Heb. 4: 15) and the power of temptation. At every important crisis in his life much time was spent in prayer. He prayed on the banks of the Jordan when he was baptized; he prayed all night before choosing his apostles;

he prayed most of the night just after they sought to make him an earthly king; he prayed in this lesson as the approaching cross cast its shadow over him, and Satan, through Peter, again tempted him; he prayed at the grave of Lazarus; he prayed in the trouble of his soul at Jerusalem (John 12: 27-30); he prayed for his disciples in the night in which he was betrayed (John 17); he prayed in the deepest sorrow in Gethsemane; he prayed on the cross for his enemies and murderers; he gave thanks for the loaves and fishes when he fed the multitudes on two different occasions; and when he instituted the Lord's Supper, he prayed and blessed the loaf and cup; but these are not all the occasions on which he prayed. "In the days of his flesh" he "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears." (Heb. 5: 7.) Since Jesus thus prayed, how much more do we need to pray? If, in the midst of all the strife, contention, troubles, and divisions in the church to-day, all the disciples of Christ would spend several whole nights in sincere and earnest prayer to God, these things would vanish as fog before the sun, the peace of God would flow among them as a river.

We should pray for all things for which the Bible directs and encourages us to pray, while in everything we should give thanks.

III. Transfigured

29. Matthew (17: 2) says: "And he was transfigured before them." "As he was praying"—that is, during his prayer he was transfigured.

"Transfigured" means to change the form. The original word is "transformed" in Rom. 12: 2; 2 Cor. 3: 18; and in these passages it denotes a spiritual change.

Jesus was transfigured in that "the fashion of his countenance was altered" (Luke 9: 29); "his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light," "and dazzling" (Luke 9: 29), and "glistening, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them." (Mark 9: 3.)

Nothing but the purest, whitest, most brilliant, and most glorious objects—snow, light, sun—within our knowledge could be used to express the brightness of Christ's garments and the radiant glory of his face.

The light which shone from this same face around Saul of Tarsus was brighter than the sun at noon, and smote him blind (Acts 9: 3; 22: 6, 11; 26: 13) to the earth. To John on Patmos it was "as the sun shineth in his strength," and he fell at the feet of Jesus "as one dead." (Rev. 1: 16, 17.) It shone from the face of Moses when he came down from the mountain, so that he had to put a veil over it while he talked to the people. (Ex. 34: 29-35.) This was but a reflection from Moses' face of the true light.

In the beginning Jesus shared this light with God. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1: 1.) Jesus was "the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance." (Heb. 1: 3.)

This same presence and glory light up the great city of God on high. "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb." (Rev. 21: 23.)

Humanity cannot look upon this light without physical pain, blindness, or death; so Jesus veiled this glory in the flesh when he came to earth, that he might sympathize with men and that they might be able to approach him. He was changed, transfigured, then, when he came to this earth.

Now on this mountain he appears as he was in glory with God before he came. This brightness not only shone around him, but it shone from within him and through his flesh and garments, transforming them into exceeding whiteness and brightness. This is a glimpse, a foretaste, of what Christians will be in heaven. "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3: 21); and "we know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." (1 John 3: 2.)

From these and other circumstances it seems plain that in heaven in glorified bodies Christians will preserve their identity.

IV. "Moses and Elijah"

30. From the beginning until angelic appearances ceased, God, through angels, or messengers, talked to men on earth. "Angel" means messenger. Men could not look upon God's face directly and live. (See also Ex. 33: 20-23.) Moses saw his glory, but not his face. So God sent messengers to talk with him. It is sometimes said they had seen God because they saw the messengers he sent, but no mortal eyes could stand the brightness of God's face. (See Gen. 16: 7-13; 18; 19: 1; Judg. 6: 11-23; 13.) On this occasion Moses and Elijah returned from the spirit land and talked with Jesus.

Moses was a prophet and the lawgiver to the children of Israel. He was the highest type, in the Old Testament, of Jesus. "When he was grown up," he gave up Egypt—its rich treasures, throne, and honors—and suffered affliction with the people of God as a slave in order to save them from Egyptian bondage. (Heb. 11: 23-29.) Jesus gave up the riches and glories of heaven for the poverty of earth (2 Cor. 8: 9), and "the form of God," and took "the form of a servant," and died on the cross to save the race from sin and the grave. He, too, was a Prophet and Lawgiver. He was "that prophet" of all prophets of whom Moses was a fit type. (See Deut. 18: 15-22; Acts 3: 22-26.) The pupil should be sure to read these references. Space will not allow their quotation here. The law of Moses went from Sinai; the law of Jesus, from Mount Zion; and the word of the Lord, from Jerusalem. (Isa. 2: 1-5; Mic. 4: 1, 2; Heb. 12: 18-29.)

The passage, "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the sojourners of Gilead" (1 Kings 17: 1), gives us all we know about Elijah's early life. He has been called "the grandest and the most romantic character that Israel ever produced." (Read 1 Kings 17-19, 21; 2 Kings 2.) It was Elijah who prayed, and it did not rain for three years and six months; and then he prayed for rain, and it came. (James 5: 17, 18.) He lived, in round numbers, nine hundred years before Christ; he lived when the kingdom of Israel, under the very wicked king, Ahab, and his still more wicked wife, Jezebel, was most corrupt. He was the law restorer and preserver. He reproved the king, the queen, and false prophets alike. He was a fit type of John

the Baptist, in whose spirit and power John came. (Mal. 3: 1; 4: 5, 6; Luke 1: 17.) Elijah never died; he "went up by a whirlwind into heaven" in "a chariot of fire" drawn by "horses of fire." (2 Kings 2: 11.)

Moses died in the land of Moab, and was buried there in a valley, and no man knows of his grave (Deut 34: 5-7); but it seems, since Michael, the archangel, and the devil contended about his body, that it was withdrawn from the grave by him who had the power of death. (Jude 9.)

Moses was the head of the law, and Elijah was the head and representative of the prophets.

The New Testament speaks of the law and the prophets. (Matt. 5: 17; 7: 12.) It seems fitting that the great lawgiver and the greatest of the old prophets should return from the state of the dead to confirm the truth that Jesus, indeed, is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, in whom all center.

How the apostles knew Moses and Elijah, it is not stated; but most likely Jesus told them. Moses and Elijah were in spirit bodies, but these bodies bore a striking resemblance to their earthly bodies. They, with Jesus, in this glorified state, are examples of the complete redemption of the race.

31. Moses and Elijah "appeared in glory" with Jesus. They were in glorified bodies, and the halo of light which emanated from him surrounded them.

They spoke to Jesus "of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem"—not only his death, but his ascension; his departure, as the word really means—which was soon to be accomplished at Jerusalem. They talked upon the most important matter of earth and heaven. As the angel from God, strengthened Jesus in Gethsemane for his death in answer to his prayer (Luke 22: 43), may we not conclude that Moses and Elijah also encouraged him on this occasion to endure the cross and despise the shame? Did they and this glorification come in answer to his prayers?

32. The three apostles "were heavy with sleep." This took place in the night. (Verse 37.) They climbed the mountain the evening before, were up through the night engaged in prayer, and were overcome with sleep, as in the garden. Moses and Elijah came, and Jesus was transfigured while the disciples were thus "heavy with sleep;" and "when they were fully awake [when they had succeeded in driving sleep back], they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him." It must have been just before daylight.

V. Good to Be There

33. "As they were parting from him"—leaving—Peter made this proposition. He would detain them. This visitation was too brief. It was good to be in such company. It increased their faith and enlarged their conceptions of Jesus, his work, and the glorified state of the redeemed. It must have produced a reaction from the shock and gloom they experienced a few days previous, when Jesus announced that he must suffer and die at Jerusalem.

By "tabernacle" Peter meant booths made of the boughs of trees, as in the feast of tabernacles. He would make one for each and have them remain. He did not know, or realize, what he said;

"for they became sore afraid" (verse 6). They seemed confused and lost in wonder and delight.

VI. The Chief Significance of the Transfiguration

34. Jesus made no reply to this proposition. That which followed was the reply. The request was not granted, but God gave a better answer to Peter's prayer. So will he give to ours.

"A bright cloud overshadowed them," and "they entered into" it. This was the representative of God's glory. He was in the cloud, and veiled by it from their sight. They feared as they were enveloped in this cloud. It must have been like the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night which attended the Israelites.

35. Out of this cloud came the voice of God, saying: "This is my beloved Son," or as the golden text says, "This is my Son, my chosen." This was a repetition of the testimony God had borne to Jesus on the banks of the Jordan; but God adds here: "Hear ye him." This is the chief significance of the whole affair. They had heard Moses (the law) and Elijah (the prophets); now they must hear Jesus.

If the world had heard truly Moses and the prophets, it would have been ready to receive Jesus. (Luke 24: 25-27, 44; John 5: 45-47.)

The Mosaic dispensation was ending, and Jesus must be heard.

Jesus fulfilled the law in a double sense: (1) He kept every precept of it in spotless perfection; (2) he was the end to which the law led. (Gal. 3: 24.) "It was added because of transgressions" until Christ should come. (Gal. 3: 19.) In his death on the cross at Jerusalem he took it out of the way. (2 Cor. 3; Eph. 2: 14-22; Col. 2: 14, 15.) Having arisen from the dead, he established his kingdom, which shall stand forever. (Dan. 2: 44.)

Jesus is the Prophet and Lawgiver now. He is the one who speaks from heaven and the Mediator of the new covenant. (Heb. 12: 22-25.) To hear him is to hear God. "Hear ye him."

VII. When Tell the Vision

36. Matthew (17: 6) says when they heard this voice, "they fell on their face, and were sore afraid." They were awe-stricken at the voice and presence of God, and hid their eyes from the sight. Jesus kindly went to them, gently touched them, and lovingly bade them arise; "and lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only." (Matt. 17: 8.) All had gone, and Jesus had returned to his natural appearance.

They told no one these things, because Jesus said: "Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead." (Matt. 17: 9.) They did not yet understand what this vision meant and what rising from the dead meant. After Jesus arose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and sent down the Holy Spirit upon them, they understood clearly everything Jesus had done and taught. Then they told it to everybody. From them Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who recorded the transfiguration, learned it.

Peter delighted to refer to it. It made a lasting impression upon him, and he understood its import. "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there

was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount. And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." (2 Pet. 1: 16-19.)

"The word of prophecy" was always true and sure, but God's voice here pointed Jesus out more specially and directly as the anti-type of Moses and the Son of God in fulfillment of all prophecy.

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place and Persons.
Locate and describe Mount Hermon.
- 28 Why do Matthew and Mark say "after six days" and Luke "about eight days?"
What is meant by "after these things?"
Why was not all that Jesus did recorded?
Whom did Jesus take with him on the mountain?
At what other places were they with Jesus?
Why did he take these?
What mountain is this supposed to be?
Why?
Why did Jesus go upon the mountain?
Why did Jesus pray?
Why did Jesus sometimes pray alone?
When now do we seek to be alone when we pray?
Tell the different times and places Jesus prayed.
For what should we pray?
How often?
- 29 What occurred while he prayed?
What does "transfigured" mean?
How was Jesus transfigured?
Upon whom did this light shine at other times?
What was Jesus before he came to earth?
Why could not men see God's face and live?
How did Jesus veil himself to come to us?
Where did this light about Jesus come from?
Of what is this a picture or glimpse?
How will Christians be in heaven?
- 30 How did God appear to men from the beginning?
- How much of God's glory was Moses permitted to see?
Who came and talked with Jesus?
Who was Moses?
In what was he a type of Jesus?
From what place did the law of Moses go?
From what place did Christ's law go?
Who was Elijah?
Did you read these chapters about him?
What was the condition of Israel when he lived?
At what time did he live?
Of whom was he a type?
What became of him?
What became of Moses?
What did Moses and Elijah represent?
How did the apostles here know them?
- 31 In what did they appear with Jesus?
About what did they talk with him?
Why did they talk about this?
- 32 Why were the apostles heavy with sleep?
When was this scene?
- 33 What proposition did Peter make?
Why did he say this?
- 34 What answer was given to this request?
What did this cloud represent?
- 35 What did God say?
What is the chief significance of all this?
Of what is Jesus a fulfillment?
How did he fulfill the law?
When did it end?
Whom must we hear?
- 36 What did the apostles do when they heard God's voice?
What did Jesus do?
Why must they not tell the vision?
When must they tell it?
What did Peter say of it long afterwards?

LESSON IX—NOVEMBER 30.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Lesson Text—Luke 10: 25-37.

LUKE 10. 25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?

30 Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion,

34 and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee.

36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?

37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Golden Text—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. (Luke 10: 27.)

Time—Autumn, A.D. 29.

Place—Probably Perea.

Persons—Jesus, the lawyer, and characters of the parable.

Devotional Reading—Psalm 86: 1-7.

Home Reading—

Nov. 24. M. The Good Samaritan. Luke 10: 25-37.

25. T. David and Jonathan. 1 Sam. 19: 1-8.

26. W. Love. 1 Cor. 13.

27. T. Jesus Teaches about Forgiveness. Matt. 18: 15-22.

28. F. "A cup of cold water." Matt. 10: 40-42.

29. S. The Master's Command. Matt. 5: 43-48.

30. S. Brotherly Love. 1 John 4: 7-21.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Jericho was an ancient city and an important city of the Bible. It was called "the city of palm trees" (Deut. 34: 3); it had a king, and was fortified by gates and a strong wall: it was a city of wealth

(Josh. 6); it was on the borders of Ephraim (Josh. 16: 1-7), and was allotted to Benjamin (Josh. 18: 11, 12, 21); after its destruction it was rebuilt by Hiel (1 Kings 16: 34); a school of the prophets was there, and there Elisha healed the waters (2 Kings 2: 15-22); there Jesus healed two blind men, and was entertained by Zacchæus, a rich publican (Matt. 20: 29-34; Mark 10: 46-52; Luke 19: 1-10); it was eighteen or twenty miles northeast and "down" from Jerusalem, six or seven miles north from the Dead Sea, and five miles west of the Jordan. Between Jerusalem and Jericho, along the road infested with robbers, was laid the scene of this parable of the good Samaritan.

INTRODUCTION

Hints and Helps for Teachers

1. The greatest consideration of life is responsibility—responsibility to God and men. Christianity embraces all responsibility.
2. The parable of this lesson shows two things—(1) What it is to love one's neighbor as oneself (2) Who one's neighbor is. (3) This is a most important lesson, and should be understood and practiced by all, because love is the only road to heaven. (4) If there was ever a time when love was needed—love for God, love for neighbors, love for enemies, and love for brethren—this is the time.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Love—The Soul of the Lesson

25-29. The question which brought forth the parable of the Good Samaritan was asked by a lawyer in order to test Jesus or to catch him in his answer. Jesus' enemies attempted this at different times. Jesus had taught that he came to fulfill the law and the prophets, and the lawyer thought that in answer to his question Jesus would say something new and different from the law. Should Jesus do this, the lawyer could excite prejudice against him as attempting to destroy the law. But Jesus came not to destroy either the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them. The lawyers and Pharisees destroyed the law and the prophets by their traditions.

The lawyer's question was: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" There is no question so important as this: Jesus answered the lawyer's question by asking another: "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" The lawyer quoted Deut. 6: 5; Lev. 19: 18.

To thus love God is to love him with all the powers of one's being—physical, mental, and spiritual.

The heart is the inner man, the seat of spiritual life—thoughts, intentions, imaginations, purposes, desires, aspirations, will, affections, hatred, love, and all sensibilities. "Heart," "soul," and "mind" are used here to teach that with all one's inner nature and powers one must love God; while "with the strength" means the physical powers must be devoted to his service. The Christian's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and must not be abused and destroyed by sin. (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; 6: 19.)

When one thus loves God, the whole man is fully offered to God and laid out in his service.

To love God is to obey him, and to love men is to serve them. No

obedience, no love; no service, no love. Love for God and men comprises the whole of Christianity; because "on these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets." (Matt. 22: 40.)

Love, as described in the Bible, is not a mere sentiment and animal passion. "God is love," but God is not animal; he is Spirit. God's love sent Jesus to live for, to die for, and to do all he did for sinners in order to save them. God manifested his love in what he did. (John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 8; 1 John 3: 16; 4: 9-11.) Had God's love done nothing for the race, it could not have saved.

So our love for God is active. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5: 3.) "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (John 14: 15, 21.)

Our love for men is active. In service we manifest our love for men. As Jesus laid down his life for us, so "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth." (1 John 3: 16, 18.) All the love some seem to have is "with the tongue" and "in word." "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (1 John 3: 14, 15.) But we do not know that we love "the brethren" by some animal emotion or feeling. "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments." (1 John 5: 2.) "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." (See Rom. 13: 8-10.) Our love for enemies is active. We are to love our enemies as God loves his. "But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." (Rom. 12: 20.) "But I say unto you. Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you." (Matt. 5: 44.)

All the above quotations and numerous others which could be made show that love is an active principle; and no action, no love.

II. Love of Oneself

Self-respect and love of self are not selfishness. The hog or any other brute and the animal in man are selfish; but love is unselfish. To love oneself is to seek one's own greatest good; to sin is to hate oneself. "Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul" (Prov. 29: 24), because in this way he destroys it. Selfishness leads to sin, and is hatred of oneself. He who does not strive to save his soul hates his soul. So he who would lead his neighbor into sin hates his neighbor, while he who seeks his neighbor's good loves him. To do for one's neighbors what in righteousness, justice and mercy one would have them do for one is to love them as oneself. Love not only works no ill to men, but seeks the greatest good of all.

Jesus said, "Thou hast answered right," because he had answered according to the word of God. "This do, and thou shalt live"—that is, have eternal life.

This must be done now.

In his attempt to ensnare Jesus, the lawyer himself was so entrapped that he was placed upon the defensive and sought some way to justify his own conduct.

"Desiring to justify himself"—that is, to show that his conduct toward others was right—he asked: "And who is my neighbor?" The Jews considered those of their own nation only their neighbors. I ask now with all emphasis: "And who is my neighbor?"

Are the people of my own nation only, or of two or three nations only, my neighbors? Whom must I love as myself, and whom must I not love?

III. The Parable

30. Jesus answered the lawyer's questions by this parable. It is not stated who his "certain man" was; but since he went from Jerusalem, it is probable that he was a Jew. The fact, too, that Jesus is showing the lawyer that others as well as his Jewish brethren are his neighbors leads to the conclusion that this man was a Jew.

As stated in Geographical Notes, the road from Jerusalem down to Jericho was infested with thieves and robbers. It is considered dangerous yet to travelers unprotected by guards. The traveler of our lesson "fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead."

31. "And by chance a certain priest was going down that way"—from Jerusalem to Jericho.

The priests were descendants of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi, whose duty it was to make offerings for the people. It was also their duty to teach the people by precept and example the true worship of God. (Lev. 10: 9-11; 2 Chron. 15: 3.)

The law of God required mercy to burdened beasts as well as to suffering humanity. (Ex. 23: 4, 5; Deut. 22: 1-4.)

A priest ought to have been a good, merciful, and holy man; but this one was destitute of all such characteristics. He saw the robbed, naked, wounded, and suffering man lying helpless on the road, but "passed by on the other side," leaving him unaided.

32. The Levites waited upon the priest in his service of the temple. (Lev. 3: 5-10.) They were taken in lieu of the firstborn of the children of Israel. (Lev. 3: 11-13.) Like the priests, they should have known and practiced the law; but this Levite, like the priest, "saw" the wounded sufferer and passed him without assistance.

33. The Samaritans, as we have already learned, were a mixed race, and were looked upon by the Jews as enemies and dogs. "For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." (John 4: 9.) Yet this Samaritan had sympathy for the unfortunate traveler, and was more willing to sacrifice for him and to help him and showed more of the spirit of God than the self-righteous priest and Levite. According to their own interpretation of the law, since this traveler was a Jew, they should have helped him as neighbors. If any one had excuses for not helping him, that one was this Samaritan, for whom the wounded Jew had no respect; but the Samaritan "was moved with compassion."

These different characters make this parable very forcible.

34. The Samaritan went to the Jew and "bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine." He applied these remedies as he bound up the wounds.

Oil and wine were highly esteemed curative and soothing remedies.

The Samaritan then set the wounded man "on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." The inn here was more than a common caravansary, in which there was no room for Joseph and Mary when Jesus was born. (Luke 2: 7.)

This inn was a house for travelers kept by a host, and somewhat like a hotel.

This treatment of the wounded man by the Samaritan shows personal service, which required time and delay as well as expense. Personal attention requires more self-sacrifice and is more blessed than money put into the hands of others—of some committee, for instance. To bind up wounds, to dress sores, and to spend the night with a suffering stranger requires self-denial and shows a willingness to suffer with another.

No amount of money, no committees, no aid societies can take the place of and bring to us the blessing of serving others ourselves. Such work cannot be done by proxy.

35. The Samaritan nursed this man through the night, and "on the morrow," realizing it was safe to leave him, placed money in the hands of the host for further necessities. Not only so, but he requested the host to use more money if necessary, promising to replace it.

"Two shillings" were about thirty-four cents; but money then would buy many times as much as it will with us, and, besides, that amount seemed all that was necessary.

IV. The Application

36. Which of these—the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan—"proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?"

Jesus shows by this not only who is our neighbor, but also what it is to love our neighbor as ourselves. In this way he would break down also the wall of race prejudice between the Jews, the Samaritans, and others. Any man is our neighbor. The Samaritan, though a stranger, was neighbor to the wounded Jew and did a neighbor's part by him.

Jesus would bring together into one spiritual family and brotherhood all the nations of earth.

37. The lawyer could make but one answer to Jesus' question; there was but one to make. "He that shewed mercy on him." Then the conclusion was supremely logical and irresistible: "Go, and do thou likewise."

Thus the tempter fell into the pit he had dug for Jesus, and was caught in his own trap.

This is God's divine command to all now. This is love for men. Such service now on the part of those who claim to be Christians would "reach the masses," open their ears to the truth, and make all men brothers. More than all, such sympathy, self-sacrifice, and personal service would bring to us the greatest good.

We are blessed as we help and bless others.

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place, and Persons.
What is the only road to heaven?
25-29 What brought forth the parable of the good Samaritan?
Why did this lawyer think Jesus would teach something new and contrary to the prophets?
How did Jesus have the lawyer answer his own questions?
What is it to love God as the first commandment requires?
What is love?
How does God manifest his love?
How do men manifest their love for God and for one another?
What is it to love one's enemies?
What is it to love oneself?
Who hates and who loves himself and his own soul?
What is it to love one's neighbor as oneself?
What did Jesus say to the lawyer's answer?
What must one now do to inherit eternal life?
In order to justify himself, what question did the lawyer then ask?
In what did the lawyer seek justification?
Whom must we love now, and whom hate?
30 How did Jesus answer this question?
Who was this "certain man?"
Where and what was Jericho?
How much was it below Jerusalem?
What was the nature and dangers of the road from Jerusalem to Jericho?
What befell this traveler?
31 Who were the priests?
What did this one do?
What should he have done?
32 Who were the Levites?
What were their duties?
How did this Levite treat this traveler?
33 Who were the Samaritans?
How did the Jews treat them?
How did the Samaritan treat this traveler?
Who above all should have cared for him?
Why do these characters make this lesson so forcible?
34 What did the Samaritan do for the traveler?
What was the use of the oil and wine?
What was the "inn?"
How much time did the Samaritan spend with this traveler?
What did all this require and show?
35 How much money did the Samaritan leave with the host?
How much is that in our money?
Why did he not leave more?
What instruction did he leave?
36 What question did Jesus ask the lawyer?
What lesson does Jesus teach by this parable?
37 What answer did the lawyer make?
What did Jesus tell him to do?
Can money take the place of personal service?
How can the church now "reach the masses?"

"Traveling to the better land,
O'er the desert's scorching sand,
Father! let me grasp thy hand,
Lead me on, lead me on."

LESSON X—DECEMBER 7

THE MAN BORN BLIND

Read: John 9: 1-41; Matt. 5: 10-16. *Lesson Text:* John 9: 13-17, 26-38.

JOHN 9. 13 They bring to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

14 Now it was the sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Again therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he received his sight. And he said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and I see.

16 Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them.

17 They say therefore unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet.

26 They said therefore unto him, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

27 He answered them, I told you even now, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? would ye also become his disciples?

28 And they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses.

29 We know that God hath spoken unto Moses: but as for this man, we know not whence he is.

30 The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes.

31 We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and do his will, him he heareth.

32 Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind.

33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.

34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, he said, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee.

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshiped him.

Golden Text—One thing I know that whereas I was blind, now I see. (John 9: 5.)

Time—A.D. 29 in the autumn, at the feast of tabernacles.

Place—Jerusalem.

Persons—Jesus, the disciples, the man born blind, his neighbors, and the Pharisees.

Devotional Reading—Rev. 19: 1-8.

Home Reading—

- Dec. 1. M. Jesus Heals a Blind Man. John 9: 1-12.
2. T. The Attitude of the Pharisees. John 9: 24-34.
3. W. The Attitude of Jesus. John 9: 35-41.
4. T. Shining Christians. Matt. 5: 10-16.
5. F. A Prayer for Light. Psalm 119: 17-24.
6. S. "The light of the world." John 8: 12-20.
7. S. The Marriage of the Lamb. Rev. 19: 1-8.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

There was "the upper spring of the waters of Gihon," which Hezekiah stopped "and brought them straight down on the west side of the city of David." (2 Chron. 32: 30.) This pool or spring was in the Kidron valley and was the same as En-Rogel, which means "Spring of the water channel," or "well of the fuller fount." On En-Rogel see Josh. 15: 7; 18: 16; 2 Sam. 17: 17; 1 Kings 1: 9. Hezekiah made from En-Rogel "a rock aqueduct-tunnel through the hill to Siloam, near the mouth of the Tyropoeon" valley. See the mouth of this valley on a map, which locates this pool.

The following inscription copied from Nelson's Bible is very interesting: "The inscription which was cut on the wall of the conduit which fed the pool of Siloam, states that the excavators began to work at the ends and met in the middle of the tunnel. When as yet the two bodies of miners were separated by a distance of three cubits, they heard each other's voices; they hewed away 'pickaxe against pickaxe' and the waters flowed from the spring to the pool, a distance of one thousand two hundred cubits (2 Kings 20: 20; 2 Ch. 32: 30.) This is the oldest extant Hebrew record of the kind. It was discovered by a boy wading in the conduit in 1880."

"Siloam" means "sent," as verse 7 states. "Siloam," "Shelah" (Nehemiah 3: 15) and "Shiloah" (Isa. 8: 6), are the same. Compare Luke 13: 4 and Neh. 3: 15. Siloam was a large pool on the Southeast of Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION**1. Hints and Helps for Teachers**

1. We must study the whole of the case. (John 9: 1-41.)
2. Opening the eyes of this blind man occurred during the feast of Tabernacles in the fall before Jesus was crucified.
3. Other important and interesting things occurred then. (See John 7, 8, 9, 10: 21.)

II. Other Blind Eyes Opened

Besides opening the eyes of the blind man of this lesson, Jesus opened the eyes of many others—two at Capernaum (Matt. 9: 27-31); another at Capernaum (Matt. 12: 22, 23); one at Bethsaida (Mark 8: 22-26); two at Jericho (Matt. 20: 29-34; Mark 10: 46-52; Luke 18: 35-43); and others, we know not how many. (Matt. 11: 4, 5; 21: 14.)

Blindness was common in that country. It is stated upon authority of those who have visited that country and have investigated the matter that in Egypt "one in every hundred is blind, while in this country there is only one in nineteen hundred," and that Palestine is next to Egypt in this respect. This is said to be due to its glare of

almost tropic suns and burning sands, and sometimes to the lack of cleanliness. But not so many are born blind; no more are born blind there than in other countries.

III. The Cause of Suffering

The cause of human suffering should be studied, understood, and removed as far as possible.

In John 8: 59 the Jews took up stones to cast at Jesus for declarations which seemed to them blasphemy; but he "hid himself, and went out of the temple."

Verse 1 states that "as he passed by," he saw this blind man—not casually, but he looked upon him with pity and sympathy.

Human suffering and helplessness always aroused his compassion.

The man was a beggar. (John 9: 8.) He was in a hopeless and helpless condition.

To be spiritually blind is worse and still more hopeless. (Matt. 13: 15, 16.)

While Jesus looked in sympathy on this human sufferer, his disciples asked the question of verse 2, a troublesome question—not to Jesus, but to men. They did not stop to consider that it was impossible for the man to have been born blind for any sins of his own; neither did God hold him responsible and punish him for any sins of his parents.

So far as accountability and responsibility for moral guilt or sins are concerned, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." (Ezek. 18: 20; read Ezek. 18: 19-32; 33: 10-20.)

Yet children suffer bodily affliction and other troubles as a consequence not only of their own sins, but of their parents' sins, even unto the third and fourth generation. (Ex. 20: 5.)

In a general way, then, all affliction comes from sin. Death came through sin. (Rom. 5: 12.) Had there been no sin first, there would have been no thorns to prick our feet or briars to pierce our hands, no pain, no sorrow, no death. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life eternal." (Gal. 6: 7, 8.)

One begins to reap in this life many times the evil fruit of his sad sowing. By his own sins of drunkenness or licentiousness, for example, one sows in his own body the seeds of numerous diseases and transmits them, with evil tendencies, to his children. He may repent afterwards of his sins and be saved; still, he suffers bodily afflictions all his life for his sins.

The Jews did not have as clear conceptions of future punishment and rewards as are presented in the gospel of Jesus. It was a current opinion among them that all bodily afflictions came as punishment for sin. Job's friends thought he was a great sinner because he was a great sufferer.

Men, however, were sometimes smitten with bodily afflictions for their sins. The Syrian army and Elymas were smitten with blindness (2 Kings 6: 18; Acts 13: 8-12); Jeroboam, with a paralyzed

arm or hand (1 Kings 13: 4-6); Uzziah, with leprosy (2 Chron. 26: 16-23); and the wicked Herod was eaten with worms while alive. (Acts 12: 23.) Drought, famine, pestilence, the sword, captivity, and national destruction are sent upon people for their sins. Yet all bodily affliction is not punishment for one's sin, as in this blind man's case. Paul suffered from "a thorn in the flesh," but not as punishment for his sins. (2 Cor. 12: 7-10.)

God overrules the afflictions, misfortunes, and sorrows of his children for their good, their greatest good. Such become training and discipline to them, and yield in them "peaceable fruit" when rightly received. (Heb. 12: 7-13.)

In verse 3 Jesus replied, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents"—that is, that he was born blind. Jesus does not teach that they were sinless, but that their sins were not the cause of this blindness. This blindness may have resulted from physical inability and weakness in themselves or in their progenitors without sin on their part.

What is meant by, "But that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Jesus says something similar to this concerning the death of Lazarus: "This sickness is not unto death [because Jesus would raise him from the dead], but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." (John 11: 4.) Lazarus did not die and the man was not afflicted with blindness for over twenty-one years simply and only to furnish Jesus subjects upon whom to show his power. This death and blindness came as natural results in the providence of God; and, having occurred, Jesus used them as opportunities to manifest the glory of God.

IV. The Works of God

In verse 4 Jesus says: "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."

Jesus came to do the work of God. All he did was the work of God. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." (John 10: 37.) "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do." (John 17: 4.) All his teaching came from God. (John 7: 16-18; 12: 48-50.) He came to do God's will. (John 5: 30; 6: 38.) He pleased God always, and not himself. (John 8: 29; Rom. 15: 3.) All his miracles were manifestations of God's goodness and glory, and were divine attestations to truth which he preached. By these God confirmed the truth. (John 5: 36; 10: 38; 14: 11; 20: 30, 31; Heb. 2: 3, 4.) At the age of twelve he said he must be about his Father's business. (Luke 2: 49.) He industriously worked at it all his life, taking time occasionally to rest, and finished it on the cross. (John 19: 30.)

The "day" of life is the time to work. Death is the "night," in which no man can work. God has something for us all to do, a work for us to accomplish; and if, like Jesus, at the end of life we would say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," we must do this work now zealously.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest." (Eccles. 9: 10.)

V. Jesus the Light of the World

About to give sight to the blind, Jesus first made in verse 5 the very important and significant announcement that he is "the light of the world." He is the "dayspring from on high" (Luke 1: 78) and "the sun of righteousness." (Mal. 4: 2.) "For everything that is made manifest is light." (Eph. 5: 13.) Jesus is the manifestation of God's goodness and glory. (Heb. 1: 3.) He is a manifestation of absolute obedience to God's will. He is "the light of the world" in both precept and example. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1: 4.) "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8: 12.) We must follow Jesus in order to walk in the light. Like him, we must implicitly obey God. (John 12: 35, 36; 1 John 1: 5-7.) The most impressive thing in all Christ's life is that he came down from heaven to do God's will and was obedient unto the death of the cross. (Phil 2: 8.) How can men, then, hope to reach the light and be saved without obedience to God?

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Faith Without Works Is Dead

Jesus thus spoke as above to emphasize the fact that what he was about to do was the work of God and that God should have the glory. He then anointed the blind man's eyes with an ointment of clay and spittle. These have no virtue in themselves, especially to cure one born blind. Jesus used them as a test of this man's faith and to show that whatever means God ordains must be used in order to be blessed, whether man sees any virtue in them or not. Others whom Jesus healed manifested their faith in some way—by going to him and requesting help, for instance. He volunteered to heal this man, but the man must manifest his faith. In faith man obeys and God blesses.

Verse 7 declares that the blind man obeyed, "and came seeing." He went from the pool seeing from the moment he washed.

Naaman dipped seven times in the Jordan, and was healed of leprosy (2 Kings 5: 8-14); the bitten Israelites looked at the brazen serpent, and were healed. (Num. 21: 7-9.)

Nowhere in the Bible can it be found that God blesses a man through faith before that faith is expressed in action. Faith without works, or action, is dead. (James 2: 14-26; see also Gal. 5: 6.)

Jesus says now, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16: 15, 16); and: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2: 38.) This faith does, as the blind man went and washed and then came seeing; and God forgives and saves in this obedience, just as he opened the blind eyes, and a blind man ought to see that.

He seemed to be a well-known beggar, verses 8 and 9 state, for he "sat and begged" at a public place, and his "neighbors" all knew him; but they could scarcely believe that he was the same man, since his eyes had been opened. Hence they raised the question: "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some said, "It is he;" others,

"He is like him;" he said, "I am he." His statement settled the question.

II. Cast Out of the Synagogue

At the blind man's statement his neighbors were astounded, and asked in verse 10 and 11: "How then were thine eyes opened?" He explained the details of the occurrence, and said: "The man that is called Jesus" did this.

13-15. He was then taken to the Pharisees for further investigation. They carried him through a preliminary trial, and asked him, as his neighbors had done, how he received his sight. Again he stated the facts clearly.

16, 17. Not able to dispute the fact, these Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath. This trial resulted in division among the Pharisees themselves. In this divided condition they asked the man his opinion of Jesus, and he answered: "He is a prophet."

After this preliminary trial the blind man, whose eyes were now open, was taken before the official power in Jerusalem. In verse 18 "the Jews" as in other places (John 1: 19; 2: 18, 20; 5: 10, 15-18; 6: 41, 52; 7: 1, 11, 13, 15; 8: 22, 48, 52, 57; 10: 24, 31, 33 etc.) represent the rulers. These Jews examined this man, cross-examined him, and were unable to meet his arguments. They refused to believe that he was born blind and that he had received sight, until, as verse 19 states, they had called in his parents and had asked them concerning him.

As verses 20 and 21 say, his parents acknowledged that this man was their son and that he was born blind; but, being ungrateful cowards, they declined to state how his eyes had been opened and threw all responsibility upon him, saying, "ask him, he is of age; he shall speak for himself." They said this, as verse 22 declares, "because they feared the Jews [the rulers]: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man should confess" Jesus to be the Christ, "he should be put out of the synagogue."

There was nothing involved—no danger—in these parents' owning this man as their son and stating the fact that he was born blind. Had there been, they would have denied these facts too. They lacked courage, gratitude to Jesus, and common respect for their brave and noble son.

Some brethren now are very bold (!) when there is no danger in making a show of courage; but they straddle and dodge and cringe when to speak out clearly and boldly involves loss of popularity, or money, or personal comfort, or might bring persecution. For instance, for Christians to engage in carnal warfare—bloodshed, devastation and ruin, and making widows and orphans by the thousands—is either obedience to God or disobedience to him; but were not some brethren during war times afraid to say which?

The son of these cowardly parents was not afraid. He was a beggar and had been blind, but he was true, courageous, and declared the truth in the face of danger, involving persecution. When called before the rulers again and asked the second time concerning the fact of how he had received his sight, being told to "give God the glory" and that Jesus was a sinner, he openly answered again that Jesus had opened his eyes, call him a sinner or not. He knew how his eyes had been opened, if his parents had declared they did not. Let

the authorities say what they chose about Jesus, he knew Jesus had opened his eyes and was a prophet of God.

26, 27. Next the authorities asked again how Jesus had opened this man's eyes, and what Jesus did. The man responded: "I told you even now [as we would say, I have just told you all the facts], and ye did not hear [or would not believe me], wherefore would ye hear it again?" This means they would not believe it, should he tell them again. And in sarcasm, it seems, he asked: "Would ye also become his disciples?"

28, 29. They reviled him for this question, while they felt the force of it, and said: "We are Moses' disciples. We know that God hath spoken through Moses; but as for this man, we know not whence he is."

30. To this the man replied: "Why, herein is a marvelous thing!" This is a wonderful statement you make, "that ye know not whence he is, and yet he has opened my eyes." "You are great teachers! unerring guides to the blind! Yet cannot tell whence a man is who has performed so great a miracle as opening the eyes of one born blind! If you cannot tell this how can you tell the difference between the false and the true prophets?"

This man could tell, as could Nicodemus. "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3: 2.)

31. This man grew stronger as he proceeded. God had heard Jesus and had opened his eyes and he knew for this reason Jesus was a prophet and no sinner. His reason was: "We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and do his will, him he heareth."

How did the rulers and the man—"we"—"know that God heareth not sinners, etc?" God had taught that, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (Ps. 66: 18.) "Jehovah is far from the wicked; but he heareth the prayer of the righteous" (Prov. 15: 29.) "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Prov. 28: 9.) "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil." (1 Pet. 3: 12.) "If we ask anything according his will, he heareth us." (John 5: 14, 15.) Prayer must be in faith (Heb. 11: 6; Jas. 1: 5-8); it must be in penitence (Acts 8: 22); it must be in humility and deep reverence for God (Luke 18: 9-14); it must be in the spirit of forgiveness (Matt. 6: 12, 14, 15); it must be in submission to God's will, as our lesson states; and in accordance with any other condition of acceptable prayer. Hence this man knew Jesus was not what these rulers said he was; but a prophet who feared God and did righteousness, or the will of God.

32, 33. Continuing his proof that Jesus was from God, this man said: "Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind;" and, "If this man was not from God, he could do nothing" of this kind.

34. In response, but in hopelessness, the authorities attributed this man's blindness to sin—sins of his parents—and said he was "altogether born in sin," and then asked if he would presume to

teach them. Unable to answer his humble straightforward, frank and true reasoning, "they cast him out."

This has been the course all such characters and councils have pursued ever since. True and Godly men who have contended humbly and steadfastly for the will of God in their love for the truth and with the same heroic courage, have been reviled, cut off, "cast out," or even crucified by the very professed conservators of the right way of the Lord.

III. Jesus Accepted As the Son of God

35-38. Having heard that this man had been cast out of the synagogue, Jesus, in sympathy and compassion, sought him and said to him: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" This man knew Jesus was a prophet and was from God, but he did not know he was "the Son of God," so he asked: "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?" Jesus said to this man that "the Son of God" was standing before him, and he it was then speaking to him. The man then declared his faith in Jesus as "the Son of God" and worshiped him.

"Worship" here, as the margin says, means an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature or the Creator.

Physical healing is not conversion, and did not necessarily lead to it: It led to conversion frequently, but not always. Ten lepers were physically healed, but only one, and he a Samaritan, returned to glorify God, and to him Jesus said: "Thy faith hath made thee whole." (Luke 17: 11-19.) The nine were not spiritually benefited, it seems. Opening this blind man's eyes finally led him to accept Jesus as "the Son of God."

IV. The Chief Point in the Lesson

The chief point in this whole chapter is Christ's sermon on himself as "the light of the world." (Verses 5, 39-41.) He came into the world to save the world, but his coming revealed the difference between those who would walk in the light and those who would not. Publicans and sinners in spiritual darkness who desired the light entered into the kingdom before the Pharisees and Sadducees, who professed to have the light. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Closing their eyes against the light, they added the sin of rejecting Christ to all their other sins.

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place, and Persons.
Locate and tell what you know of the pool of Siloam.
Name others whose eyes Jesus opened.
What causes so much blindness in the East?
Where did Jesus go from the place of the last lesson to the place of this one?
Give the three annual feasts of the Jews.
Where was Jesus going when he

saw this blind man?
How long had the man been blind?
How old was he?
What question did the disciples ask?
Could one be born blind for his own sins?
For whose sins is one responsible?
How, then, do children suffer on account of their parents' sins?
Of what is all suffering, sorrow, and death the result?
What must one reap?
What was the current opinion

- among the Jews about bodily afflictions?
 Were men ever bodily afflicted for their sins?
 Give examples.
 What else was sent because of sin?
 How can we be benefited by our afflictions, misfortunes, etc.?
 What reply did Jesus give to this question?
 Were the parents sinless?
 What use did Jesus make of these afflictions?
 How did the death of Lazarus and this blindness come?
 Whose work did Jesus do?
 Can you give any other passages on this statement?
 Whose will and whose pleasure did Jesus seek?
 How did he accomplish so much?
 What must we do?
 How is Jesus "the light of the world?"
 What is the most impressive thing in all Christ's life?
 How did Jesus open this man's eyes?
 What is meant by "clay?"
 Why require this of the blind man?
 What did the blind man do?
 When does God bless one through faith?
 What obedience is required of men for the remission of sins?
 Where was the pool of Siloam?
 Was this blind man rich?
 What did his neighbors say about him?
 What did he say?
 11 What effect did this have upon them?
 What did they ask him?
 What did he reply?
 To whom did they carry this man?
 For what purpose?
 On what day was this?
 To whom was he sent from the Pharisees?
 What course did the rulers pursue with him?
 How did his parents show their base cowardice?
 Why, then, did they acknowledge him at all as their son?
 When are courage and faith put to the test?
 What next was done with this man?
 What did the rulers say of Jesus?
 What reply did this man make to that?
 26, 27 When asked again how Jesus had opened his eyes, what reply did this man make?
 28, 29 What reply did the rulers make?
 30 Why was what the rulers said "a marvelous thing?"
 31 What reason did this man give for knowing God was with Jesus?
 What scriptures show that God does not answer those who do not intend to obey him?
 Give the conditions of prayer which God will answer.
 32, 33 What further reason did this man give for believing God was with Jesus?
 34 What hateful thing did the rulers say to this man?
 What did they do with him?
 What course have such people pursued ever since?
 What did the rulers do with him?
 35-38 What did Jesus do when he heard this man had been cast out?
 State the conversation which followed.
 Are physical healings and conversions the same?
 Give examples of some who were healed, but not converted.
 What is the chief point in this chapter?
 How does Jesus give sight to the spiritually blind?

"Let the world despise and leave me,
 It has left my Savior, too;
 Human hearts and looks deceive me;
 Thou art not, like man, untrue;
 And, while thou shall smile upon me,
 God of wisdom, love, and might,
 Foes may hate me, and friends may shun me;
 Show thy face, and all is light."

—Henry F. Lyte.

LESSON XI—DECEMBER 14.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

Read: John 11: 1-44. *Lesson Text:* John 11: 31-44.

JOHN 11. 31 The Jews then who were with her in the house, and were consoling her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up quickly and went out, followed her, supposing that she was going unto the tomb to weep there.

32 Mary therefore, when she came where Jesus was, and saw him, fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

34 and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept.

36 The Jews therefore said, Behold how he loved him!

37 But some of them said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Jesus saith, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time the body decayeth; for he hath been dead four days.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me.

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Golden Text—I am the resurrection, and the life. (John 11: 25.)

Time—January or February, A.D. 30.

Place—Bethany, near Jerusalem.

Persons—Jesus, his disciples, the family of Bethany, and the Jews.

Devotional Reading—Ps. 91: 1-7.

Home Reading—

Dec. 8. M. The Death of Lazarus. John 11: 1-14.

9. T. The Raising of Lazarus. John 11: 31-44.

10. W. The Raising of the Widow's Son. 1 Kings 17: 17-24.

11. T. The Raising of the Shunammite Child. 2 Kings 4: 29-37.

12. F. The Raising of Dorcas. Acts 9: 36-43.

13. S. Risen with Christ. 1 Cor. 15: 20-28.

14. S. The Security of the Godly. Psalm 91: 1-7.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

"Bethany" means "house of dates." It was a village about two miles east of Jerusalem, just over the crest of the mount of Olives. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament. It was the home of

Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Jesus often lodged there (Matt. 21: 17; 26: 6.) From there Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Near there—"over against Bethany"—from the Mount of Olives Jesus ascended to heaven.

INTRODUCTION

1. Hints and Helps for Teachers

1. Jesus' Sermon on "The Light of the World" and the one on "The Good Shepherd" were delivered at Jerusalem during the feast of Tabernacles in the fall before his crucifixion. Other important occurrences at that time are recorded. (John 7, 8, 9, 10: 21.)

2. Between the feast of tabernacles, and the feast of dedication (John 10: 22) some suppose that Jesus returned to Galilee, and thence went back to Jerusalem through Galilee and Samaria eastward to the Jordan and through Perea, "beyond Jordan." It is supposed that Matt. 19: 1; Mark 10: 1; Luke 9: 51 record the final departure from Galilee.

3. Others suppose that Jesus remained at Jerusalem or in Judea during this interval, making a final and mighty effort to teach and save the nation.

4. As has been stated, it is not necessary to know, and not possible to give, the exact chronological order of the events in Christ's history. We can group the events together and know that they occurred during a certain period of his life. The feast of dedication marks a point of time in his history.

5. This feast was "instituted to commemorate the purging of the temple and the rebuilding of the altar after Judas Maccabaeus had driven out the Syrians—B.C. 164." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

6. It began about the 20th of our December and continued eight days. It was observed somewhat like the feast of tabernacles, and in all the towns and cities of Judea as well as in Jerusalem. It was not by divine appointment, and Jesus did not observe it as such.

7. Jesus used the occasion as an opportunity to teach the people. The discourse he preached then is recorded in John 10: 22-38.

8. The Jews "sought again to take him; and he went forth out of their hand. And he went away again beyond the Jordan into the place where John was at the first baptizing [see John 1: 28]; and there he abode. And many came unto him; and they said, John indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there." (John 10: 39-42.)

9. During the feast of tabernacles and the feast of dedication, which were only nine or ten weeks apart, the Jews tried twice to arrest Jesus (John 7: 30, 32, 45; 10: 39); twice to mob him (John 8: 59; 10: 31); and, it seems, laid secret plans to assassinate him (John 7: 19; 8: 37).

10. During the time between the feast of dedication and our lesson it is probable Jesus dined with the Pharisee and gave the parables of the lost coin, lost sheep, and prodigal son. (Luke 14: 1 to 17: 10.)

11. John alone gives an account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Some have supposed there was a special reason for this: but why should there be, when John omits the account of raising

Jairus' daughter and of raising the son of the widow who lived at Nain?

II. The Family at Bethany

(Verses 1-3.)

In order to appreciate the lesson we must know the family of Lazarus.

Martha, Mary, and Lazarus constituted this happy family of Bethany. It is not certain that Martha was the oldest of the three, but that is indicated by the order of their names in verses 5 and 19 and Luke's (10: 28, 30) reference to Martha and her work. Mary's name is mentioned first, it seems, because the anointing referred to had made her more prominent. Martha appears to have been at the head of the household, was energetic and active, and "was cumbered about much serving." Mary was retiring and reflective. To Martha Jesus said: "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10: 40-42.) Owning their home, the costliness of the ointment used in anointing Jesus (John 12: 5), the guests at the funeral, and the family burying place—these indicate that this family was in good financial circumstances. Jesus was accustomed to visit this family. (Matt. 21: 17; Mark 11: 11, 12; Luke 10: 38-42.) "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." (Verse 5.) "Lazarus was sick"; and these sisters sent to Jesus while he was at Bethabara, or Bethany, "beyond the Jordan" (John 10: 39, 40), about thirty miles away, "saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." There is in this an implied request for assistance; and the statement of both Martha and Mary, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (verses 21, 32), shows that they believed Jesus could have healed the fatal sickness of Lazarus. In their distress these sisters turned to Jesus, because they knew of his sympathy, willingness, and ability to help.

We now should "carry everything to God in prayer," but not without the use of means, for means are gifts of God.

III. Lazarus Dies

(Verses 4-16.)

Jesus said: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby"—that is, the final result of this sickness was not death. Jesus would raise Lazarus from the dead, and thereby lead many to believe in himself as the Messiah, and thus glorify God and himself. Lazarus soon died (we know not just when), and, according to the custom in that warm climate, was buried probably on the day of his death. (See Acts 5: 6, 10.) After hearing of Lazarus' sickness, Jesus remained where he was two days, for reasons not given. That Lazarus had been dead four days was no hindrance to divine power; but the longer he had been dead when Jesus raised him, the greater seemed the miracle to men. The apostles were opposed to Jesus' returning to Judea for the reasons given. To them Jesus said: "Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I must go, that I may awake him out of sleep." The Bible frequently speaks of death as sleep. Jesus knew by his divine power that Lazarus was dead.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. Jesus the Resurrection and the Life

31. When Jesus reached Bethany, he found that Lazarus "had been in the tomb four days already." (Verse 17.)

On learning of Jesus' approach, Martha went out to meet him, and said, as stated above, that if Jesus had been there, Lazarus had not died, and, with yet some hope, added: "And even now I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give it thee." (Verses 18-22.)

To prepare her for what he was about to do, Jesus said: "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha replied that she knew he would "rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Leading her on in development of faith, Jesus said: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die [physically], yet shall he live [be raised and live eternally]; and whosoever liveth [physically] and believeth on me shall never die [eternally]." Jesus himself is "the resurrection, and the life." He has "the keys of death and Hades." (Rev. 1: 18.)

Martha then confessed Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world," and, confessing this, acknowledged that he possessed the power to raise the dead; yet from verse 39 it appears that she did not see clearly how at that time he could restore Lazarus to life.

Martha returned to the house and secretly informed Mary that Jesus had come and called for her. As Mary arose quickly to go to Jesus, the Jews who were there to console her thought she had gone to the tomb to wail there.

It was the custom of female relatives—daughters, sisters, wives—to weep at the grave of loved ones, at times, for months, and there they were joined by their friends.

32. Coming to Jesus, Mary "fell down at his feet" and repeated the words of Martha. This shows again the difference between the sisters. Martha did not fall at Jesus' feet. These sisters had, doubtless, expressed themselves thus to each other. Doubtless the presence of the obtruding Jews prevented further conversation between Jesus and Mary.

II. Jesus Groaned and Wept

33, 34. "He groaned in the spirit." "The word translated 'groaned' occurs five times in the New Testament—verses 33, 38; Matt. 9:30; Mark 1:43; 14:5. . . . In all cases . . . it expresses, not sorrow, but indignation and severity." (Cambridge Bible.) In Matt 9:30 and Mark 1:43 it means to charge sternly (see margin of the version used in preparing these lessons), and in Mark 14:5 it is rendered "murmured." The margin at verses 33, 38 says: "Moved with indignation." His indignation must have been aroused over the hypocritical lamentations of the Jews, his enemies, weeping in empty form. "And was troubled"—was moved with emotion. Without stopping to console Mary, he asked where Lazarus had been buried. Martha and Mary answered: "Lord, come and see."

35. "Jesus wept"—shed tears, or wept silently. The word "wept" in verse 35 is different from the one in verses 31, 33. Jesus wept in sympathy with Martha and Mary. In sympathy with humanity, Jesus

attended the wedding at Cana and wept on the way to the tomb of Lazarus. It is neither wrong nor a sign of weakness to weep. "Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep." (Rom. 12: 15.) Jesus wept over sinful Jerusalem.

36. Some of the Jews, not all present, said: "Behold, how he loved him!" They were moved by the earnest love of Jesus for his friend.

37. "But some of them"—others, not those who had just spoken—said: "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?" This was said sneeringly, meaning that if Jesus opened the blind man's eyes recently at Jerusalem, he could have prevented Lazarus' death; he did not do it, because he could not do it, and went to the tomb weeping instead; and, hence, it was doubtful that he opened the blind man's eyes.

38. "Groaning in himself"—that is, moved with indignation—at the sneering doubts expressed above, Jesus went on to the tomb. "It was a cave, and a stone lay against it." Graves were cut sometimes perpendicularly in the rock and sometimes horizontally in the sides of the hills. Sometimes natural caves were used. They would contain whole families. On graves, see Gen. 23: 9; 35: 8; 50: 5; 2 Chron. 16: 14; Isa. 22: 16; Matt. 27: 60. The stone was placed against the entrance of the cave to protect the bodies from wild beasts.

III. Jesus Prayed

39. Jesus directed that the stone be removed. Through respect for her brother—not wanting him seen disfigured by decay—the practical Martha objected to the removal of the stone by suggesting that, since Lazarus had been four days dead, decomposition had begun. She did not understand Jesus' purpose in having the stone removed.

40. Jesus reminded Martha of what he had said in verse 4 to the messenger sent him and what he had said to her in verses 25, 26—that if she would believe, she should "see the glory of God." The glory of God was seen in his power over death, the exaltation of Jesus as the Messiah, and the blessings these would bring to the world. The faith of these sisters must be manifested in obedience. Faith must lead to obedience in order to bless.

41. "So they took away the stone."

Jesus then "lifted up his eyes to heaven" and prayed. On another occasion it is said that in praying he lifted up his eyes to heaven. (John 17: 1.)

"Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me." The prayer here referred to is not recorded, but was offered, probably, with reference to what he was here about to do. Jesus said on another occasion that "the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." (John 5: 19; see also verses 20-29.) God and the Son are one.

42. "And I knew that thou hearest me always." Not only in the prayer referred to was Jesus heard, but he was heard in all prayers. Even in Gethsemane, while the cup was not removed, he was "heard for his godly fear" (Heb. 5: 7-9), and God sent an angel to strengthen him. (Luke 22: 43.)

"But because of the multitude that standeth around I said it." Then in thanking God that he had heard one prayer, Jesus would not leave us to infer that he had offered other prayers which had not been answered. He desired the multitude to know that the power he exercised was from God and proved his relationship to God.

"That they may believe that thou didst send me." Jesus knew God had always heard him; but he wanted the multitude to know it, and he wanted the multitude to know that God, and not another, had sent him.

IV. Lazarus Raised

43. Having prayed, "he cried with a loud voice," as awakening one out of sleep and with authority: "Lazarus, come forth!" He, doubtless, cried aloud that all standing around might hear and realize that he performed the miracle of raising Lazarus.

44. "He that was dead came forth." The decomposition of the body was stayed, and soundness and health were restored; the blood flowed again in the veins; and the spirit came back from the abode of spirits and dwelt again in the tabernacle of clay. "Bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin," Lazarus arose. It was the custom to bind the spices and winding sheet around the body with bands and to bind the face with a napkin to prevent the lower jaw from falling. From Martha's remark in verse 39 it is probable the spices (John 19: 40) were omitted. These graveclothes would hinder Lazarus in walking; hence Jesus said: "Loose him, and let him go."

He who raised Lazarus "shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of god" (1 Thess. 4: 16); and "all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and those that have done evil, unto the resurrection of Judgment." (John 5: 28, 29.)

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place, and Persons.
Locate and describe Bethany.
What occurred there?
What discourses were preached during the feast of Tabernacles in the fall before Jesus was crucified?
What else occurred there?
What did Jesus do between the feast of tabernacles and the feast of dedication?
When and by whom was the feast of dedication instituted, and why observed?
When was it observed?
If not by divine appointment, why did Jesus attend it?
Why did Jesus leave Jerusalem after this feast?
Where did he go?
Why did many believe on him there?
Give the different efforts the

Jews made in a short while to arrest and kill Jesus.
How many persons did Jesus raise from the dead?
Learn from the Bible and relate who else raised the dead?
Who constituted this family at Bethany?
Why is it thought that Martha was the oldest member?
State the difference between Martha and Mary.
Why is it thought that this family was in good circumstances?
Why did Jesus frequently visit this family?
Where was Bethany?
What important events occurred there?
What affliction befell Lazarus?
Why did Martha and Mary send to Jesus?
What reply did Jesus make to this?
How was the sickness not unto death?

- How long did Jesus remain where he was before going to Bethany?
 Why were the apostles opposed to Jesus' returning to Judea?
 How does Jesus speak of death?
 How did he know Lazarus was already dead?
- 31 Who went first to meet Jesus?
 What did she say to him?
 How does she express some hope yet?
 What reply did Jesus make?
 When did she say Lazarus would rise?
 What reply did Jesus make to this?
 How is Jesus the resurrection and the life?
 What confession did Martha then make?
- 32 What then did Martha do?
 Why did she secretly inform Mary?
 Where did the Jews think Mary had gone?
 What did Mary do and say?
- 33, 34 What does "groaned in the spirit" mean?
 Why was Jesus indignant?
 Why was he troubled?
 What did Jesus ask?
 What reply did the sisters make?
- 35 Why did Jesus weep?
 Repeat Rom. 12: 15.
 At what else did Jesus weep?
- 36 What did some of the Jews present exclaim?
- 37 What did others say?
 What was meant by this?
- 38 Why was the indignation of Jesus aroused this time?
 What was the grave?
 Describe the tombs of that country.
 How long had Lazarus been dead?
- 39 Why did Martha oppose removing the stone?
- 40 What did Jesus say to Martha?
 Why would this be to the glory of God?
 How did these sisters manifest their faith?
- 41 Repeat the prayer Jesus offered at this time.
- 42 Why did he offer this prayer?
 (See that the points are brought out clearly.)
 Did God always hear Jesus?
- 43 What did Jesus then do?
 Why did he cry with a loud voice?
- 44 What then occurred?
 Why did Jesus command them to loose him?

"Jesus wept: those tears are over
 But his heart is still the same;
 Kinsman, Friend and Elder Brother,
 Is his everlasting name.

"Jesus wept: and still, in glory,
 He can mark each mourner's tear;
 Living to retrace the story
 Of the hearts he solaced here.

"Jesus wept: that tear of sorrow
 Is a legacy of love;
 Yesterday, to-day, to-morrow,
 He the same shall ever prove."

LESSON XII—DECEMBER 21

THE CONVERSION OF ZACCHÆUS

Lesson Text—Luke 19: 1-10.**LUKE 19.** 1 And he entered and was passing through Jericho.

2 And behold, a man called by name Zacchæus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich.

3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner.

8 And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold.

9 And Jesus said unto him, Today is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Golden Text—The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19: 10.)*Time*—A. D. 30, shortly before the crucifixion.*Place*—Jericho.*Persons*—Jesus and Zacchæus.*Devotional Reading*—Ps. 24: 1-6.*Home Reading*—

Dec. 15. M. The Conversion of Zacchæus. Luke 19: 1-10.

16. T. The Conversion of Saul. Acts 9: 1-9.

17. W. The Conversion of the Jailer. Acts 16: 25-36.

18. T. The Conversion of the Jews. Acts 2: 41-47.

19. F. The Conversion of the Gentiles. Acts 10: 34-48.

20. S. A Prayer for Conversion. Psalm 85: 1-7.

21. S. Fruits of Conversion. Psalm 24.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

See description of Jericho under Geographical Notes of Lesson IX.

INTRODUCTION

1. Hints and Helps for Teachers

1. At the time of this lesson Jesus and his disciples were journeying toward Jerusalem. It was Jesus' death march.

2. Jesus was in the lead, and the disciples "were amazed" and "afraid" as they followed behind. They knew the Jews had determined to kill Jesus (John 11: 1-8, 16); that twice he had retired from Jerusalem to escape death at their hands (John 10: 40; 11: 46-54); but now he seemed determined to return.

3. "He took again the twelve" and showed them once more what he must suffer at Jerusalem, and with clear, prophetic vision described the very details of his trial and the manner of his death

(Matt. 20: 17-19; Mark 10: 32-34); "and they understood none of these things." (Luke 18: 31-34.) Luke (18: 35-43) tells of Jesus opening the eyes of the blind man.

4. No better comment on their misunderstanding of "these things" can be found than the request made in this journey shortly after this by James and John, through their mother, that one might sit on his right hand and the other on his left in his kingdom. They dreamed of earthly thrones and crowns and could not think of their leader suffering on the cross. Jesus was patient and forbearing, and again explained the principles of true greatness.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

I. The Publicans

1. Jesus "entered and was passing through Jericho" on this journey to Jerusalem.

As we have learned already, the original publicans were rich Roman knights, who bought up the taxes of a certain province by paying so much money cash into the Roman treasury. Or a joint stock company was formed, when these taxes surpassed the ability of one man, and the profits were divided among the stockholders. These men, themselves, did not collect the taxes, but divided up the provinces into districts, and sublet these districts to others, usually to inhabitants of the country who knew the resources of the people and how much tax they could pay. These subagents were the "publicans" of the New Testament.

The Jews considered their subjugation to the Romans as degradation and paying tribute to them as dishonoring to God; hence the question: "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" (Matt. 22: 17.) Therefore publicans among the Jews were not only odious as taxgatherers, but were considered also as traitors to their nation and as apostates from the religion of their God. They were classed with sinners, harlots, and heathens. (Matt. 9: 11; 11: 19; 18: 17; 21: 31, 32.)

Almost everything was taxed, and, being allowed to fix more or less arbitrarily the value of exports and imports and demand payment, publicans had every opportunity to extort from the people more than was due and to practice fraud. Hence, John the Baptist exhorted this class, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you;" and Zacchæus said: "If I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold." (Verse 8.)

Publicans were not necessarily dishonest. John and Jesus found many ready to obey the truth (Luke 3: 12; 7: 29, 30; Matt. 21: 31, 32), and from this class Jesus chose an apostle.

II. Zacchæus

Zacchæus was a son of Abraham (verse 9), was a "chief publican," and "was rich." His name means "pure." He had had good opportunities for accumulating wealth; but as he states, he did not do so by "false accusation or dishonest means." He probably had supervision over the other publicans of his district. The trade of the countries east of the Jordan passed through Jericho to Jerusalem, and there the custom was paid. Let us contrast Zacchæus with the rich young ruler.

3. He had heard before of Jesus, and doubtless of his treatment of publicans. His was not an idle curiosity. He was curious "to see Jesus who he was"—which one in that great crowd was he; to see his bearing, to look into his face, and to hear him, that he might judge for himself whether or not he was a prophet from God. He made efforts to see him, but being "little of stature," he "could not for the crowd." He could not get through the crowd, and he could not see over their heads.

4. He saw the direction the crowd and Jesus were traveling; so he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree which grew by the way.

A sycamore tree was a kind of fig tree, with large trunk and low and wide-spreading limbs, an easy tree to climb, and a fine shade tree. Amos, the prophet, was "a dresser of sycamore trees." (Amos 7: 14.)

This action of Zacchæus demonstrates several things. One is: "Where there is a will, there is a way." Zacchæus overcame all difficulties. Jesus promises that he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness shall be filled. Would you meet with Jesus now? Then go where he is.

It is a delusion for Christians (professed Christians) to persuade themselves that they desire to see Jesus and to be with him and to be like him as he is, when they neglect and refuse to meet with him in his own appointments. (See Acts 20: 7; Heb. 10: 25.) He who will not climb a tree (of difficulties) to see Jesus cannot be saved. Zacchæus was humble and modest, felt his unworthiness, and would not intrude himself upon Jesus.

III. Jesus Announced That He Would Lodge with Zacchæus

5. "When Jesus came to the place, he looked up" and saw Zacchæus in the tree. How did he know he was there, and how did he know his name and his heart? How did he know Nathaniel? (John 1: 45-51.) Also, it is stated: "For he himself knew what was in man." (John 2: 25.) Thus he knew Zacchæus. Zacchæus was not in that tree in order to be conspicuous; he doubtless thought he was concealed in the thick foliage; but Jesus knew him.

This seemed to have the same effect upon Zacchæus as formerly upon Nathanael. Calling him by name, asking him down in haste, and above all, stating an intention to lodge with him, surprised him greatly and convinced him that Jesus was a teacher of divine wisdom.

Jesus had accepted invitations to eat with publicans and with Pharisees, but here he does not wait for an invitation. Perhaps this would not have been extended, because Zacchæus felt unworthy and knew he belonged to an ostracized class.

How long Jesus remained there, whether for a midday meal or for the night, is not stated, neither is it necessary to know; but probably he spent the night.

6. Although greatly surprised, Zacchæus felt himself more greatly honored, and hastened down and "received him [Jesus] joyfully." Zacchæus sought to see Jesus, and is blessed with a visit from him, which leads to his salvation. Any family is blessed with Jesus in the home; and he abides in any home which receives him.

7. To eat with publicans and sinners was to place himself on social equality with them. So "when they saw it [not his disciples, but the multitude], they all murmured [complained and found fault

with him], saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner."

The scribes and Pharisees in the sight of God were the greatest sinners, but among them the term "sinner" meant an outcast, with no religious affiliation. "Sinners" were the offcast and despised, proscribed class, whether publicans, harlots, or heathens. It was contrary to their sense of propriety, and they thought it contaminating for a teacher to associate with this class.

Christ's disciples today should follow his example in seeking and saving the lost. Do not cast one off and despise him forever because he is lost.

IV. Zacchæus' Declaration of Generosity and Honesty

8. It seems that Zacchæus made the statement of this verse in his house before his family and guests; for he had "received" Jesus "gladly," the multitude said that Jesus had "gone" to lodge with a "sinner," and Jesus said that "today is salvation come to this house." Zacchæus did not say this in self-justification or in a boastful spirit, but in humility rather, as an excuse for Jesus' going with him. Jesus had respected and honored him, and he would now endeavor to serve and honor Jesus.

"Half of my goods I give to the poor." Many think that he meant by this that it was not his custom to give half his income to the poor, but upon his conversion he then vowed to give half he possessed to the poor. This may be the meaning, but his language indicates that it had been his custom to give half his income to the poor. Although a publican, he was a generous man, and tried to do good. Many Christians do not do half so well.

"If I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold." This is neither an admission that he had accumulated his wealth by fraudulent practices nor a denial that he had ever cheated any one. Had all his riches been accumulated by fraud, he could not restore fourfold. He meant, then, that whatever, under numerous and strong temptations, he had exacted more than was due, upon reflection and examination of his conduct, he restored fourfold. Many think he had never done this before, but now, since his conversion, he would at once do so. He was frank and honest to confess his sins, and showed his repentance by making restoration. (See Ex. 22: 1; 2 Sam. 12: 6; Lev. 6: 1-6.)

Zacchæus knew he was liable to do wrong, and did do wrong. There is hope for one who confesses his sins and acknowledges his weaknesses, there is none for him who does neither.

9. "Today is salvation come to this house." Salvation came to that house through Jesus, because, as seen above, Zacchæus was ready to receive it. "For as much as he also is a son of Abraham," was said, doubtless because the Pharisees thought publicans were unworthy of salvation.

10. "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." This Jesus said as justification for eating with Zacchæus and other publicans and sinners. Of all classes the Jews considered these lost: but it was the mission of Jesus to save such. This gracious truth he demonstrated by his life.

Let the lives of Christians be such as to show that they, too, are seeking and endeavoring to save the lost. It is much easier to criticize, as did the Pharisees, than to seek the lost and to try to save

them. When it comes to personal work, very few church members, it seems, are engaged in the work of trying to save people.

QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the Time, Place, and Persons.
- Where was Jericho and what was done there?
 - Where was Jesus going?
 - What did Jesus explain to his disciples?
 - What shows they did not understand this?
 - What does "Zacchaeus" mean?
 - Who was he?
 - What was his business?
 - Who were "publicans?"
 - Why did they have such good opportunities for defrauding?
 - Why were they hated?
 - With whom were they classed?
 - Were they necessarily dishonest?
 - How was Zacchaeus a "chief publican?"
 - What was his financial condition?
 - Why did he desire to see Jesus?
 - Why could he not see him while on the ground?
 - What did he do?
 - What is a "sycamore tree?"
 - How can we meet with Jesus now?
 - What did Jesus say to him?
 - How did Jesus know his heart?
 - What effect did this have on Zacchaeus?
 - How did he receive Jesus?
 - Why did the multitude murmur?
 - Who were the "sinners?"
 - What evidence did Jesus here give that he is the Savior?
 - How should the church treat such?
 - What did Zacchaeus say?
 - Where did he make this statement?
 - What did he mean by saying, "Half of my goods I give to the poor?"
 - What did he mean by "I restore fourfold?"
 - When is the best time to give one's goods?
 - What demonstrates the frankness and honesty of Zacchaeus?
 - What are evidences of repentance?
 - What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus?
 - Why did salvation come to his house?
 - Upon what does God look?
 - Why did Jesus say Zacchaeus was a "son of Abraham?"
 - Why did he say he came to seek and to save the lost?

"Man worships with the heart; for wheresoever
One burning pulse of heart-felt homage stirs,
There God shall straightway find his own, and never
In church or desert, miss his worshippers."

LESSON XIII—DECEMBER 28.

REVIEW: CENTRAL PERIOD OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

Golden Text.—He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. (John 14: 9.)

Home Reading—

- Dec. 22. M. The Choice of the Twelve. Matt. 10: 1-8.
 23. T. The Feeding of the Five Thousand. John 6: 1-15.
 24. W. Peter's Confession. Matt. 16: 13-20.
 25. T. The First Christmas. Luke 2: 8-20.
 26. F. The Transfiguration. Luke 9: 28-36.
 27. S. The Raising of Lazarus. John 11: 30-44.
 28. S. The Judgment Day. Matt. 25: 31-46.

Let us note these facts: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1: 1); "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1: 14);

"He who was manifested in the flesh,
 Justified in the Spirit,
 Seen of angels,
 Preached among the nations,
 Believed on in the world,
 Received up into glory." (1 Tim. 3: 16.)

So, then, as the golden text states, he who saw Jesus, "full of grace and truth, the embodiment of Divine wisdom and love, saw the Father."

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men." "And the witness in this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life." (1 John 5: 11, 12.)

With these scriptures before us we understand the following: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1: 18.) Jesus declares the Father in all his attributes. So, whosoever hears Jesus, hears the Father, whosoever receives Jesus, receives the Father; and whosoever rejects Jesus, rejects the Father. (Matt. 10: 40; Luke 10: 16; John 13: 20.)

QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Explain by the scriptures quoted how he who saw Jesus saw the Father and, yet, no man has seen God at any time.

Lesson I.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Name the twelve apostles. What was the difference between choosing them and sending them out?

Lesson II.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give the proper spirit of almsgiving and prayer. Repeat the prayer after whose manner Jesus teaches his disciples to pray.

Lesson III.—Give the subject. Re-

peat the Golden Text. State the facts and give the meaning of the parable of the Sower.

Lesson IV.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. After what day did Jesus still the tempest. Relate the facts.

Lesson V.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give the facts of the Prodigal Son. State clearly the lesson Jesus teaches by this parable.

Lesson VI.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What miracle do Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John record? State the facts of feeding the five thousand.

Lesson VII.—Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text. What confession did Peter make? Did the other apostles make this confession? Did Jesus and God ever make it, and when? What did Jesus build on this truth?

Lesson VIII.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Describe the transfiguration. State the main significance of this wonderful scene.

Lesson IX.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. State the facts of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Give the lesson which Jesus draws from this.

Lesson X.—Give the subject. Re-

peat the Golden Text. Give the list of the ones to whom Jesus gave sight. State the serious difference between this blind man and his parents. Is working a miracle upon one or through one equal to conversion, and why not?

Lesson XI.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. State the facts of raising Lazarus. Give the purposes of this miracle.

Lesson XII.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who was Zacchæus? Give the facts which led to his conversion.

“When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love and praise.

“Unnumbered comforts on my soul
Thy tender care bestowed,
Before my infant heart conceived
From whom the comforts flowed.

Ten thousand thousand gracious gifts
My daily thanks employ;
Nor is the least a cheerful heart
That tastes those gifts with joy.

“Through all eternity, to Thee
A joyful song I'll raise;
But, O eternity's too short
To utter all the praise.”

—Joseph Addison.