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PREFACE

This is volume thirteen of the Annual Lesson Commentary, and the third one prepared by the present author. The task was undertaken with a deep sense of its importance; the work, though requiring extreme care, has been done with genuine pleasure, and the book is offered to the public with a sincere desire that its study may influence human hearts to honor Christ and the church.

The writer cordially accepts Paul's statement that "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness"; and is convinced that a careful, honest study of God's word will make one "wise unto salvation." The "Lesson Notes" are designed to point out or emphasize what the lesson text teaches.

It has been the constant aim to make the commentary a practical aid to Bible study. To this end the comments have been as brief as seemed consistent with the grave matters discussed, and as comprehensive as space permitted. Knowing that man's salvation depends upon a knowledge of his duties as revealed in God's word every effort possible has been made to keep basic truths before the reader.

For whatever good that may be accomplished through the efforts made to produce this volume thanks should be rendered to God whose divine words have supplied the facts presented and furnished the motive for its preparation.

JOHN T. HINDS.

LESSONS FOR 1934

FIRST QUARTER

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BIBLE DICTIONARY OF PROPER NAMES

Arranged and Compiled by H. LEO BOLES

A

- Aaron (bright or shining), Ex. 4: 14. Brother of Moses and first high priest.
 Ab, Abba (father), Gal. 4: 6. Name given to God.
 Abednego (servant of Nego), Dan. 1: 7. One of Daniel's companions.
 Abel (breath, vanity), Gen. 4: 1. Second son of Adam.
 Abiathar (father of abundance), 1 Sam. 23: 9. High priest and fourth in descent from Eli.
 Abigail (father is joy), 1 Sam. 25: 14. Wife of Nabal; became David's wife.
 Abimelech (Melech is father), Gen. 26: 1. King of Gerar in the time of Isaac.
 Abishai (my father is Jesse), 1 Sam. 26: 6-9. The Eldest of the three sons of Zeruiah, David's sister, and brother of Joab.
 Abner (father is light), 1 Sam. 14: 50. King Solomon's captain.
 Abraham, Abram (father of a multitude, exalted father), Gen. 12: 1. Founder of the Hebrews and father of the faithful.
 Absalom (father is peace), 2 Sam. 15: 1. Third son of David.
 Achaia (trouble), Acts 18: 12. A Roman province which included Greece.
 Achan (trouble), Josh. 7: 19-26. Stole golden wedge, etc. Stoned by Joshua.
 Adam (ruddy, one made or produced), Gen. 3: 15. Name of the first man.
 Adonijah (my Lord is Jehovah), 2 Sam. 3: 4. Fourth son of David.
 Agabus, Acts 11: 27. A Christian prophet who came from Jerusalem.
 Agag, 1 Sam. 15: 8. Title of the kings of Amalek.
 Agrippa, Acts 12: 20. One of the Herods.
 Ahab (father's brother), 1 Kings 18: 19. Son of Omri, seventh king of Israel; very wicked.
 Ahimelech (brother of Melech), 1 Sam. 22: 11. High priest at Nob; gave David the showbread to eat.
 Ai (heap), Josh. 7: 2. City lying east of Bethel, destroyed by Joshua.
 Alexander, Mark 15: 21. Son of Simon, the Cyrenian.
 Alexandria (from Alexander), Acts 18: 24. Capital of Egypt.
 Alpha (first letter of Greek alphabet), Rev. 1: 8. It means the beginning.
 Altar, Gen. 8: 20. Place for worship and sacrifice.
 Amen (true), Isa. 65: 16. Close of prayer.
 Amos (burden), Amos 1: 1. Minor prophet.
 Amphipolis (a city surrounded by the sea), Acts 17: 1. A city of Macedonia, through which Paul and Silas passed on their way from Philippi to Thessalonica.
 Amram (an exalted people), Ex. 6: 18. Father of Moses.
 Ananias (Jehovah hath been gracious), Acts 5: 1. Husband of Sapphira, smitten dead.
 Anathema (cursed), Gal. 1: 9. A word used by Paul to show condemnation.
 Anise (dill), Matt. 23: 23. A small garden plant.
 Anna (grace), Luke 2: 36. A prophetess at Jerusalem.
 Annas (humble), Acts 4: 6. The son of Seth; was appointed high priest A.D. 7.
 Antichrist (opposed to Christ), 1 John 2: 18. Only John uses this word as applied to the enemies of Christianity.
 Antioch (from Antiochus), Acts 11: 20. City in Syria, also in Pisidia.
 Apollonia (belonging to Apollo), Acts 17: 1. A city in Macedonia.
 Apostle (one sent forth), Matt. 10: 2-4; 2 Cor. 8: 23. The official name of the twelve disciples sent out by Jesus.
 Apphia (fruitful), Phile. 2. A Christian woman addressed jointly with Philemon.
 Aquila (an eagle), Acts 18: 2. A Jew whom Paul found at Corinth, husband of Priscilla.
 Archelaus (prince of the people), Matt. 2: 22. Son of Herod the Great.
 Archippus (master of the horse), Col. 4: 17. A Christian teacher in Colosse.
 Areopagus (Mars Hill), Acts 17: 22. The rocky heights in Athens, opposite the western end of the Acropolis.
 Arimathea (height), Matt. 27: 57. A city of Judea.
 Aristarchus (the best ruler), Acts 20: 4. A companion of Paul on his third missionary journey.
 Asa (physician, healer), 2 Chron. 14: 8. Third king of Judah; reigned forty years.
 Asia (), Acts 19: 26. Continent, also Roman Province.
 Athens (city of Athena), Acts 17: 21. The capital of Attica, and the chief city of Grecian learning.
 Augustus (venerable), Luke 2: 1. The first Roman emperor.
 Azotus (Ashdod, a stronghold), Acts 8: 40. City nearly midway between Gaza and Joppa.

B

- Baal (owner, or lord), Num. 22: 41. The male god of the Phenician and Canaanitish nations.
 Babel (confusion), Gen. 10: 10; 11: 1-9. Tower built on the Plain of Shinar.
 Babylon (from Babel), Jer. 24: 5. The land of the Chaldeans.
 Balaam (from Baal), Num. 23: 19. A prophet of Midian who tried to curse Israel.
 Barabbas (son of Abba), John 18: 40. The robber who was released at the trial of Jesus.
 Balak (making waste), Num. 22: 24. King of the Moabites.

- Baptist, the (the baptizer), Matt. 3: 1. The same as John the Baptist.
 Barak (lightning), Judg. 4: 1-24. Defeats Sisera's army.
 Barbarian (any one not a Greek), Rom. 1: 14. Applied to those who were not of the Greek nation.
 Bar-Jesus (son of Jesus), Acts 13: 6. A false prophet.
 Barnabas (son of consolation or exhortation), Acts 4: 36. An early disciple of Christ and traveling companion of Paul.
 Barsabbas (son of Sabas or rest), Acts 1: 23. Voted on as an apostle to take Judas' place.
 Bath-sheba (daughter of the oath), 2 Sam. 11: 3. Wife of Uriah; became David's wife.
 Belial (worthlessness), 2 Cor. 6: 15. An expression for lawlessness.
 Belshazzar (may Bel protect the king), Dan. 5: 2. The last king of Babylon.
 Benjamin (son of the right hand), Gen. 35: 16. The youngest son of Jacob.
 Berea (well watered), Acts 17: 10. A city of Macedonia.
 Bernice (bringing victory), Acts 25: 13. The eldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I.
 Bethany (house of dates), Mark 11: 1. A village situated near the Mount of Olives.
 Bethel (the house of God), Gen. 12: 8; 28: 11-19. City about twelve miles north of Jerusalem.
 Bethesda (house of mercy), John 5: 2. Market place near Jerusalem.
 Bethlehem (house of bread), 1 Sam. 7: 12. City of David, birthplace of Christ.
 Bethphage (house of figs), Luke 19: 29. Place on the Mount of Olives, on the road between Jericho and Jerusalem.
 Bethsaida (house of fish), John 12: 21. The home of Andrew, Peter, and Philip.
 Bildad (Bel hath loved; or, son of contention), Job 2: 11. The second of Job's three friends.
 Bilhah (timid, bashful), Gen. 29: 29. Concubine of Jacob, and mother of Dan and Naphtali.
 Blasphemy (speak against), Matt. 12: 32. Speaking evil against God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit.
 Blastus (sprout), Acts 12: 20. The chamberlain of Herod Agrippa I.
 Boanerges (sons of thunder), Mark 3: 17. Name given to the two sons of Zebedee.

C

- Caesar (Latin name), John 19: 12. In the New Testament, always the Roman emperor.
 Caiaphas (depression), Matt. 26: 3. High priest of the Jews.
 Cain (possession), Gen. 4: 1. Oldest son of Adam; killed his brother Abel.
 Caleb (capable), Num. 13: 6. One of the faithful spies.
 Cana (place of reeds), John 2: 1. Place of Christ's first miracle.
 Canaan (low, flat), Gen. 10: 6. Fourth son of Ham; name applied to Palestine.
 Candace (name of dynasty), Acts 8: 27. Not the name of an individual, but of a dynasty of Ethiopian queens.
 Capernaum (village of Nahum), Matt. 4: 13. Village located on the western shore of Galilee.
 Carpus (wrist), 2 Tim. 4: 13. A Christian at Troas.
 Cesarea (Kaisareia, Caesar), Acts 8: 40. City on coast of Palestine.
 Cesarea Philippi (from Caesar and Philip), Matt. 16: 13. City twenty miles north of the Sea of Galilee.
 Chinnereth (lute, harp), Josh. 19: 35. Another name for the Sea of Galilee.
 Chorazin, Matt. 11: 21. One of the cities in which Jesus did many mighty works.
 Christ (anointed), 1 Tim. 1: 2. The same as Messiah.
 Chuzas (the seer), Luke 8: 3. The house steward of Herod Antipas.
 Cilicia (the land of Celiz), Acts 9: 30. A province in the southeast of Asia Minor.
 Circumcision (cut around), Lev. 12: 3. A Jewish custom.
 Claudius (lame), Acts 18: 2. Fourth Roman emperor; reigned from 41 to 54 A.D.
 Cleopas (from Cleopatra), John 19: 25. One of the two disciples to whom Jesus talked on the way to Emmaus.
 Colosse, Col. 1: 2. A city of Phrygia in Asia Minor.
 Corinth, Acts 18: 1-18. City of Greece, about forty miles west of Athens.
 Cornelius (of a horn), Acts 10: 1. A Roman centurion of the Italian cohorts stationed in Cesarea.
 Crescens (growing), 2 Tim. 4: 10. An assistant of Paul, said to have been one of the seventy disciples sent out by Christ.
 Crispus (curled), Acts 18: 8. Ruler of Jewish synagogues at Corinth.
 Cummin, Matt. 23: 23. Small plant with an aromatic flavor.
 Cyprus, Acts 4: 36. An island in the Mediterranean Sea, about a hundred and forty miles long and sixty miles wide.
 Cyrene, Acts 2: 10. The principal city of that part of Northern Africa which was anciently called Cyrenaica.
 Cyrus (the son), 2 Chron. 36: 22. The founder of the Persian Empire.

D

- Damascus, Acts 9: 11. One of the most ancient cities in the world, located in Syria.
 Daniel (God is my judge), Dan. 1: 3. The fourth of "the greater prophets."

- Darius (lord), Dan. 6: 1. The name of several kings of Media and Persia.
 David (well beloved), 1 Sam. 16: 1. Youngest son of Jesse; second king of Israel.
 Deborah (a bee), Gen. 35: 8; Judg. 4: 5. Name of Rebekah's nurse; also a prophetess.
 Decapolis (ten cities), Matt. 4: 25. A district east of the Jordan and south of the Sea of Galilee.
 Delilah (languishing), Judg. 16: 4-18. Delivered Samson to the Philistines.
 Demetrius (belonging to Demeter), Acts 19: 24. A maker of silver shrines at Ephesus.
 Demas (governor of the people), Col. 4: 14. Companion of Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome.
 Denarius (containing ten), Matt. 18: 28. A Roman silver coin, worth about sixteen cents.
 Derbe (juniper), Acts 14: 20. City not far from Iconium.
 Deuteronomy (the giving of the law the second time), Fifth book of the Bible.
 Diana (Latin name), Acts 19: 24. The Ephesian goddess.
 Dispersion (scattered), James 1: 1. Applied to the Jews who lived out of Palestine.
 Dorcas (gazelle), Acts 9: 36. A disciple raised from the dead by Peter at Joppa.

E

- Easter (passover), Acts 12: 4. Translated "Passover" in the Revised Version.
 Eden (pleasure), Gen. 2: 8-14. The first residence of man.
 Edom (red), Gen. 32: 3. Name given to Esau and his country.
 Egypt (land of the Copts), Ex. 1: 14. Place where Israel was held in bondage.
 Egyptian (Native of Egypt), Acts 21: 38. An inhabitant of Egypt.
 Elder (old man), Gen. 24: 2. Name applied to rulers of the city and officers of the church.
 Elijah (Jehovah is my God), 1 Kings 17: 1. Prophet in the days of Ahab.
 Elisabeth (God is an oath), Luke 1: 36. Wife of Zacharias and mother of John the Baptist.
 Elisha (God is my salvation), 1 Kings 19: 16. Prophet who succeeded Elijah.
 Elymas (a wise man), Acts 13: 6. A sorcerer who opposed Paul.
 Endor (fountain of Dor), 1 Sam. 28: 7. Home of the witch with whom Saul communed.
 Enoch (dedicated), Gen. 4: 17. Walked with God and was translated.
 Epaphras (lovely), Col. 1: 7. A fellow laborer and prisoner with Paul.
 Ephesus (permission), Acts 19: 29. The capital of the Roman province of Asia.
 Ephraim (double fruitfulness), Gen. 41: 50. Younger son of Joseph.
 Epicureans (from Epicurus), Acts 17: 18. Those who believed in getting the greatest pleasure out of life.
 Erastus (beloved), Acts 19: 22. One of Paul's attendants at Ephesus.
 Esau (hairy), Gen. 25: 25. Twin brother of Jacob.
 Esther (a star), Esth. 7: 3. Jewish wife of King Ahasuerus.
 Ethiopia (burnt faces), Acts 8: 27. The country south of Egypt.
 Eunuch (bed keeper), Acts 8: 34. A man deprived of his virility.
 Euodias (fragrance), Phil. 4: 2. Christian woman at Philippi.
 Euraulo, Acts 27: 14. Compounded from two words meaning east and north.
 Eutyclus (fortunate), Acts 20: 9. A youth of Troas who went to sleep and fell out the window. Paul restored him to life.
 Eve (life), Gen. 2: 21. Name given to the first woman.
 Exodus (a going out), Name given to the second book of the Bible.
 Exorcist (casting out), Matt. 12: 27. One who pretended to cast out evil spirits.
 Ezekiel (God is strong, or God doth strengthen), Ezek. 1: 3. The third of the major prophets.
 Ezra (help), Neh. 12: 1. Wrote the book which bears his name.

F

- Felix (happy), Acts 24: 26. A Roman officer who held Paul in prison.
 Festus (festival), Acts 24: 27. Roman officer who succeeded Felix.
 First-born, Ex. 13: 12. First male born into the family, who inherited the name and property of the father.
 First Fruits, Ex. 22: 29. First ripe fruit given to Jehovah.
 Frankincense, Ex. 30: 34-36. A sacrificial fumigation.

G

- Gabbatha (a platform), John 19: 13. Place where the judgment seat of Pilate was.
 Gabriel (man of God), Luke 1: 19. The angel that appeared to Elisabeth and Mary.
 Gadarenes (Gerasenes), Mark 5: 1. Place where Jesus healed two demoniacs.
 Gaius (Latin name), Acts 19: 29. A Macedonian who accompanied Paul in his travels.
 Galatia (land of the Gauls), Acts 18: 23. The central district of Asia Minor.
 Galilean (an inhabitant of Galilee), Acts 2: 7. The people of the northern part of Palestine or province of Galilee.
 Galilee (circuit), Luke 17: 11. The northern country of Palestine.
 Gallio (Latin name), Acts 18: 12. The Roman proconsul of Achaia when Paul was at Corinth.

- Gamaliel (recompense of God), Acts 5: 24. A noted teacher of the law in Jerusalem; Paul's teacher.
 Gaza (the fortified), Acts 8: 26. One of the cities of the Philistines.
 Gennesaret (garden of the princes), Matt. 14: 34. A name given to the fertile plains on the western shore of the Lake of Galilee.
 Gentile (nation), Acts 11: 18. Any one who was not of the Jewish race.
 Gethsemane (an oil press), Matt. 26: 36. Garden near Jerusalem.
 Gideon (he that cuts down), Judg. 6: 34. The fifth recorded judge.
 Gilboa (a bubbling spring), 1 Sam. 28: 4. Mountain where Saul was killed.
 Golgotha (skull), Matt. 27: 33. The Hebrew name of the spot where Christ was crucified.
 Goliath (an exile), 1 Sam. 17: 4. The famous giant whom David killed.
 Gomorrah (submersion), Gen. 14: 2-8. The city which was destroyed with fire from heaven.
 Greece, Greeks, Grecians, Dan. 8: 21; Isa. 66: 19; Acts 20: 2. Names of the country and people who preceded the Roman Empire.

H

- Hadad, Gen. 25: 15. An early king of Edom.
 Hades (hell), Matt. 16: 18. Used in the Revised Version for "hell."
 Hagar (flight), Gen. 16: 1. An Egyptian handmaid of Sarah, concubine to Abraham, and mother of Ishmael.
 Ham (black), Gen. 14: 5. The name of one of the three sons of Noah.
 Hannah (grace), 1 Sam. 1: 2. One of the wives of Elkanah, and mother of Samuel.
 Hazeel (whom God sees), 2 Kings 8: 7-15. A king of Damascus, anointed by Elisha.
 Heber (alliance), Gen. 46: 17. Grandson of Asher.
 Hebrew (from Eber, beyond, or on the other side), Gen. 14: 13. Posterity of Abraham.
 Hebron (alliance), Josh. 15: 54. City about twenty miles south of Jerusalem.
 Hell (Gehenna), Matt. 5: 22. Place of torment for the wicked.
 Hellenist (Grecian), Acts 6: 1. Term applied to Greek-speaking Jews, or Grecian Jews.
 Herod (herolike), Luke 3: 19. The Herod family were alien by race and Jewish in faith; Roman rulers over Palestine.
 Herodians (from Herod), Matt. 22: 15. Party among the Jews who were supporters of the Herodian family.
 Herodias (from Herod), Matt. 14: 8-11. Granddaughter of Herod the Great.
 Hezekiah (Jehovah strengtheneth), 2 Kings 18: 5. Thirteenth king of Judah and son of Ahaz.
 Hierapolis (holy city), Col. 4: 13. A city of Phrygia.
 Hiram, 2 Sam. 5: 11. The king of Tyre, who sent workmen and material to help build the temple.
 Hittites (descendants of Heth), Josh. 9: 1. One of the Canaanitish tribes.
 Hophni, 1 Sam. 2: 12. One of the wicked sons of Eli.
 Horeb (desert), Ex. 3: 1. A mountain (See Sinai).
 Hosanna (save, pray), Matt. 21: 9. The cry of the multitude on Jesus' triumphal entrance into Jerusalem.
 Hosea (salvation), 2 Kings 15: 30. One of the minor prophets.
 Hoshea (salvation), Isa. 7: 16. Same as Hosea or Joshua.
 Hymeneus (belonging to Hymen, the god of marriage), 1 Tim. 1: 20. He denied the true doctrine of the resurrection.

I

- Ichabod (inglorious), 1 Sam. 4: 21. The son of Phineas and grandson of Eli.
 Iconium, Acts 14: 1. Paul visited this city with Barnabas on his first missionary tour. Located north of Antioch, in Pisidia.
 Illyricum, Rom. 15: 9. District lying along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea.
 Immanuel (God with us), Matt. 1: 23. The name applied to Christ.
 Inn (lodging place), Luke 2: 7. Similar to our rooming houses or hotels.
 Isaac (laughter), Gen. 35: 27. The son of Sarah by Abraham.
 Isaiah (Jehovah is salvation), Isa. 1: 1. One of the major prophets of the Old Testament.
 Ishmael (may God hear), Gen. 16: 15. Son of Abraham by Hagar, the Egyptian handmaid.
 Israel (persevere with God, prince to God), Gen. 32: 28. Name given to Jacob and the nation which came from the twelve tribes.
 Isaachor (there is a reward), Gen. 30: 17. The ninth son of Jacob; one of the twelve tribes.
 Italy, Acts 18: 2. A well-known country.

J

- Jachin (he doth establish), 1 Kings 7: 21. One of the two pillars which was set up in the porch of the temple.
 Jacob (supplanter), Gen. 25: 26. Son of Isaac and Rebekah, twin brother of Esau.
 Jambres, 2 Tim. 3: 8. One of the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses.
 James (the Greek form of "Jacob"), Matt. 10: 2. Son of Zebedee, brother of John, and one of the twelve apostles.

- Jannes, 2 Tim. 3: 8. An Egyptian magician who joined Jambres in opposing Moses.
 Jason, Acts 17: 5. Entertained Paul and Silas; attacked by Jewish mob.
 Jebusites (from Jebus), Num. 13: 29. One of the Canaanitish tribes in Palestine.
 Jehoiada (Jehovah knows), 2 Sam. 8: 18. High priest at one time.
 Jehoshaphat (Jehovah hath judged), 1 Kings 15: 24. Fourth king of Judah, son of Asa.
 Jehovah (I Am, the Eternal Living One), Lev. 24: 15. One of the names given to God.
 Jehu (Jehovah is he), 2 Kings 9: 2. Founder of the fifth dynasty of the kings of Israel.
 Jephunneh (it will be prepared), Num. 13: 6. Father of Caleb, a good spy.
 Jeremiah (whom Jehovah appoints), Jer. 1: 1. One of the major prophets.
 Jericho (place of fragrance), Josh. 13: 16. First city destroyed by Joshua; its walls were thrown by faith.
 Jeroboam (whose people are many), 1 Kings 11: 28. The first king of the divided kingdom of Israel.
 Jerusalem (the city of peace), 2 Chron. 25: 23. The religious and political capital of the Israelites.
 Jesse (wealthy), Ruth 4: 18-22. The father of David, and son of Obed, the son of Boaz, by the Moabitess, Ruth.
 Jesus (Jehovah is salvation), Matt. 1: 21. One of the names given to Christ, the Messiah.
 Jew (a man of Judah), Mark 7: 3. A name applied to members of the kingdom of Judah after the separation of the ten tribes; later applied to all Israelites.
 Joab (Jehovah is Father), 2 Sam. 14: 1-20. Nephew of David and captain of his hosts.
 Job, Job 1: 1. Probably one of the patriarchs.
 Joel (Jehovah is God), 1 Sam. 8: 2. One of the minor prophets.
 Johanna (grace or gift of God), Luke 3: 27. The name of a woman.
 John the Baptist (Jehovah's gift), Matt. 3: 1. A forerunner of Christ.
 John (from Johanan), Luke 1: 11. Name given to son of Zacharias, later called "John the Baptist."
 Jonah (dove), 2 Kings 14: 25. The fifth of the minor prophets.
 Joppa (beauty), Acts 11: 5. A town on the southwest coast of Palestine.
 Jordan (the descender), Josh. 2: 7. The river which bounds the eastern border of Palestine.
 Joseph (may he add), Gen. 37: 2. The elder of the two sons of Jacob by Rachel.
 Joshua (Jehovah is salvation), Ex. 17: 9. Moses minister and successor as leader of the children of Israel.
 Jot (the English form of the Greek iota, the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet), Matt. 5: 18. It was formed like an English comma (,).
 Jubilee (joyful shout), Lev. 25: 11. Every fiftieth year was called the year of jubilee.
 Judah (praised), Gen. 37: 26. The fourth son of Jacob by Leah.
 Judas Iscariot (Judas of Keriath), John 6: 71. The name of the betrayer of Jesus.
 Julius (fr. Greek), Acts 27: 1. A Roman Centurion.
 Jupiter (a father that helps), Acts 14: 12. The national god of the Hellenic race.
 Justus (just), Acts 18: 7. A Christian at Corinth with whom Paul lodged.

K

- Kadesh, Kadesh-Barnea (holy), Num. 13: 3. Place where Miriam died, and the farthest point reached in the wandering in the wilderness.
 Kidron, or Kedron (turbid), Luke 22: 39. Name of brook or valley, southeast of Jerusalem.
 Kish (a bow), 1 Chron. 23: 21. The father of Saul.
 Kohath (assembly), Ex. 6: 16. One of the three sons of Levi.

L

- Laban (white), Gen. 24: 10. Father of Leah and Rachel; father-in-law of Jacob.
 Laodicea (justice of the people), Col. 4: 16. A town in the Roman province of Asia.
 Laodiceans, Col. 4: 16; Rev. 3: 14. The inhabitants of Laodicea.
 Lazarus (whom God helps), John 11: 1. Brother of Martha and Mary; lived at Bethany; raised from the dead by Jesus.
 Leah (weariest), Gen. 29: 16. Daughter of Laban; first wife of Jacob.
 Lebanon (white), Deut. 1: 7. Mountain range north of Palestine.
 Levi (joined), Gen. 29: 34. Name of the third son of Jacob by Leah.
 Levite (joined), Luke 10: 32. One of the tribe of Levi.
 Leviticus. Third book of the Bible.
 Libertines (from liberty), Acts 6: 9. Applied to Jews who had been taken prisoners and then set free.
 Lois (agreeable), 2 Tim. 1: 5. The grandmother of Timothy.
 Lord's Day (first day of the week), Rev. 1: 10. Corresponds to our "Sunday."
 Lot (veil, or covering), Gen. 11: 27. The son of Haran and nephew of Abraham.
 Lucius, Acts 13: 1. One of the teachers at Antioch.
 Luke (light-giving), Acts 13: 1; Col. 4: 14. Traveled with Paul and wrote the book that bears his name.
 Lycaonia (land of Lycanion, or wolf land), Acts 14: 11. A province in Asia Minor.

Lydia (strife), Acts 16: 14. First European convert at Philippi.

Lysias (fr. Greek), Acts 23: 26. A Roman Officer.

Lystra, Acts 16: 1. One of the cities visited by Paul on his first and second missionary tours; home of Timothy.

M

Macedonia (extended land), 2 Cor. 8: 1. A province in Europe, north of Greece; Gospel first preached there by Paul.

Magdalene (inhabitant of Magadan), Matt. 27: 56. Mary Magdalene, present at crucifixion of Christ.

Magi (wise men), Matt. 2: 1-12. Those who visited the babe Jesus.

Malachi (my messenger), Author of the last book of the Old Testament.

Malchus (king, or kingdom), Matt. 26: 51. The name of the servant of the high priest whose right ear Peter cut off in the garden of Gethsemane.

Manmon (riches), Matt. 6: 24. Word used to personify wealth.

Manaen (comforter), Acts 13: 1. Foster brother of Herod and teacher and prophet in church at Antioch.

Manasseh (forgetting), Gen. 4: 51. The oldest son of Joseph.

Manna (What is this?), Ex. 16: 14-36. Food given the children of Israel in the wilderness.

Mark, Acts 12: 12. One of the evangelists and writer of the book that bears his name.

Martha (a lady), Luke 10: 38. Sister of Lazarus and Mary.

Mary (a tear). A common name in the New Testament; mother of Jesus.

Matthew (gift of Jehovah), Matt. 10: 3. One of the twelve apostles and writer of the first book of the New Testament.

Matthias (gift of God), Acts 1: 26. The apostle elected to fill the place of the traitor, Judas.

Melchizedek (king of righteousness), Gen. 14: 18-20. King and priest of God; type of Christ as priest.

Mercury (herald of the gods), Acts 14: 12. The god of commerce and bargains.

Mesach (guest of a king), Dan. 1: 4. One of Daniel's friends in captivity.

Mesopotamia (between the rivers), Deut. 23: 4. Country between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Messiah (anointed), Matt. 20: 20. A prophetic name applied to Jesus.

Methuselah (man of the dart), Gen. 5: 25. The son of Enoch, and the oldest man recorded among the patriarchs.

Midian (strife), Gen. 25: 2. A son of Abraham by Keturah.

Melita (premeditation), Acts 28: 1. An island in the Mediterranean Sea.

Miletus, Acts 20: 15. City on the coast, thirty-six miles to the south of Ephesus.

Mint, Luke 11: 42. An herb which the Jews used as their tithe.

Mite, Mark 12: 41-44. A coin current in Palestine in the time of Jesus, worth about one-fifth of a cent.

Moab (of his father), Deut. 2: 11. Son of Lot by his eldest daughter.

Molech (king), Jer. 49: 1. The god of the Ammonites.

Moriah (chosen by Jehovah), Gen. 22: 2. The mount where Abraham offered Isaac.

Moses (drawn), Ex. 2: 5. The leader of God's people.

Myrrh, Ex. 30: 23. One of the ingredients of the oil of holy ointment.

Mysia (land of beech trees), Acts 16: 7. Region about the frontier of the provinces of Asia and Bithynia.

N

Naaman (pleasantness), 2 Kings 5: 18. Captain of the army of Syria; a leper, cleansed by Elisha.

Nabal (fool), 1 Sam. 25: 3. First husband of Abigail, one of David's wives.

Naomi (my delight), Ruth 1: 2. Wife of Elimelech and mother-in-law of Ruth.

Naphtali (wrestling), Gen. 30: 8. The fifth son of Jacob; son of Bilhah, one of Rachel's handmaids.

Nathan (a giver), 2 Sam. 7: 2. Name of the prophet who rebuked David.

Nathanael (gift of God), John 1: 47. An early disciple of Jesus; some think the same as Bartholomew.

Nazareth (from Nazareth), Matt. 2: 23. A name sometimes given to Jesus.

Nazareth (the guarded one), Matt. 2: 23. A village in Galilee and home of Jesus.

Nazirite (one separated), Num. 6: 1-21. Person who takes a peculiar vow to be set apart from others for the service of God. Sometimes spelled "Nazirite."

Neapolis (new city), Acts 16: 11. First place Paul landed in Europe, about twelve miles from Philippi.

Nebo (prophet), Num. 32: 3. Mountain on the east side of the Jordan.

Nebuchadnezzar (may Nebo protect the crown), Jer. 46: 2-12. The most powerful of the Babylonian kings.

Nehemiah (consolation of the Lord), Ez. 2: 2. One of the leaders of the first expedition from Babylon to Jerusalem.

New Testament (new covenant). Name given to the Holy Scriptures after the advent of Christ.

Nicodemus (conqueror of the people), John 3: 1. A Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews and teacher of Israel who visited Jesus at night.

Nicolaitans (followers of Nicholas), Rev. 2: 6. A sect whose deeds were severely condemned.

Niger (black), Acts 13: 1. One of the teachers and prophets in the church at Antioch.

Nile (blue, dark), Gen. 15: 8. The principal river of Egypt.

Nimrod (rebellion, or the valiant), Gen. 10: 8. A grandson of Ham.

Nineveh (abode of Ninus), Gen. 10: 11. The capital of the ancient kingdom of Assyria.

Ninevites, Luke 11: 30. The inhabitants of Nineveh, to whom Jonah preached.

Numbers. The fourth book of the Old Testament.

Nymphas (bridegroom), Col. 4: 15. A wealthy Christian in Laodicea.

O

Old Testament. Name given to the Holy Scriptures before the advent of Christ.

Olives, Mount of, 2 Sam. 15: 30; Acts 1: 12. Mount near Jerusalem.

Omega, Rev. 1: 8. Last letter of the Greek alphabet.

Onesimus (profitable, useful), Col. 4: 9. The name of the servant of Philemon.

Ophir (abundance), 1 Chron. 29: 4. A seaport from which Solomon obtained gold for the temple.

P

Padan-aram (table-land of Aram), Gen. 28: 2. Name applied to country which bordered on the Euphrates to distinguish it from the mountainous district.

Palestine (land of strangers), Ex. 15: 14. One name for the land of Canaan.

Palsy (contracted from paralysis), Matt. 12: 10-13. A disease which caused the loss of the power of motion.

Pamphylia (of every tribe), Acts 13: 13. One of the provinces on the coast of Asia Minor.

Paphos (boiling or hot), Acts 13: 6. City on Island of Cyprus, which Paul and Barnabas visited on first missionary journey.

Parable (placed beside, a comparison), Matt. 24: 32. A form of teaching by comparison.

Paradise (orchard of pleasure, pleasure ground), 2 Cor. 12: 4. A term applied figuratively to the celestial dwelling of the righteous.

Parthians (from Parthia), Acts 2: 9. People who lived in Parthia.

Passover (commemorating the death angel's passing over the houses of Israel in Egypt), Ex. 12: 1-51. The first of the three great annual feasts of the Jews, held on the fourteenth day of the first month.

Patmos, Rev. 1: 9. Name of an island in the Aegean Sea, twenty miles south of Samos; place where John was banished.

Patriarch (father of a tribe), Acts 7: 8. Name given to the head of a family or tribe in Old Testament times.

Paul (small, little), Acts 23: 6. Name given to the apostle to the Gentiles.

Pentateuch (five). Greek name given to the first five books of the Old Testament.

Pentecost (fiftieth), Acts 2: 1. Feast which came fifty days after the Passover.

Perga (fr. Greek), Acts 13: 13. A city in Pamphylia.

Pergamos (height, elevation), Rev. 1: 11. A city of Mysia, about three miles to the north of the River Caicus.

Pergamum, Rev. 1: 11. Same as Pergamos.

Persia (pure, splendid), Ezek. 38: 5. Name given to an ancient empire.

Peter (a rock or stone), John 1: 42. Name given to Simon, the brother of Andrew, one of the twelve apostles.

Pharaoh, Ex. 1: 8. Common title of the kings of Egypt.

Pharisees, Matt. 15: 7. A religious sect among the Jews. They believed in a resurrection of the dead.

Philadelphia (brotherly love), Rev. 3: 9. Town on the borders of Lydia and Phrygia.

Philemon (loving), Col. 4: 9. Name of Christian to whom Paul addressed his Epistle in behalf of Onesimus.

Philetus (beloved), 2 Tim. 2: 17. Associated with Hymeneus.

Philip (lover of horses), John 1: 44. One of the twelve apostles.

Philistines (immigrants), Jer. 47: 4. One of the tribes that inhabited Caphtor, or Crete.

Phebe (radiant), Rom. 16: 1. The name of a Christian woman.

Phrygia (dry, barren), Acts 16: 6. Name of a province in Asia Minor.

Pilate (armed with a spear), Luke 13: 1. Judge of Roman court who permitted Christ to be crucified.

Pisgah (peak), Num. 21: 20. Highest point of Mount Nebo.

Pontus (the sea), Acts 2: 9. Province of Asia Minor.

Pretorium (palace), Matt. 27: 27. Place where court was held.

Priest, Gen. 14: 18. One who officiated at the altar.

Priscilla (from Prisca, ancient), Acts 18: 26. Wife of Aquila.

Prophet (one who speaks for another), Ex. 15: 20. God's mouthpiece to the people.

Proselyte (a stranger, a newcomer), Matt. 23: 15. Name given by Jews to foreigners who accepted the Jewish religion.

Proverbs (a comparison), Num. 21: 27. Books supposed to have been compiled by Solomon.

Publican (Roman taxgatherer), Luke 3: 13. Name of one who gathered taxes for the Roman government.
 Pyrrhus, Acts 20: 4. The father of Sopater of Berea.

Q

Quartus (fourth), Rom. 16: 23. A Christian of Corinth.
 Quaternion, Acts 12: 4. A guard of four soldiers.

R

Rabbi (master), Matt. 23: 7. Title signifying "teacher."
 Raca (fool), Matt. 5: 22. A term of reproach.
 Rachel (ewe, or sheep), Gen. 29: 31. Younger daughter of Laban, and beloved wife of Jacob.
 Rahab (fierceness, pride), Isa. 51: 9. A name sometimes given to Egypt.
 Rebekah (ensnarer), Gen. 22: 23. Sister of Laban, wife of Isaac.
 Red Sea (a seaweed resembling wool), Ex. 14: 2. Body of water crossed by Israelites.
 Rehobam (enlarger of the people), 1 Kings 14: 21. Son of Solomon and first king of Judah.
 Reuben (behold a son), Gen. 29: 32. Jacob's oldest son.
 Revelation. Last book of the New Testament.
 Rhoda (rose), Acts 12: 13. The name of a maid who announced Peter's arrival.
 Rome, Rev. 17: 9. The name of a world empire.
 Rue, Luke 11: 42. A garden plant tithable in the time of the Savior.
 Rufus (red), Mark 15: 21. Name of an early Christian.
 Ruth (a female friend), Ruth 1: 4. The Moabitess who became the wife of Boaz.

S

Sabaoth (armies), James 5: 4. Name applied to the Lord.
 Sabbath (a day of rest), Ex. 16: 22. The seventh day of the week.
 Sabbath Day's Journey, Acts 1: 12. About three-fourths of a mile.
 Sabbatical Year, Ex. 23: 10. Each seventh year.
 Sadducees (followers of Zadok), Matt. 3: 7. Religious sect opposed to the Pharisees.
 Salamis (salt), Acts 13: 5. City in the eastern part of the Island of Cyprus.
 Samaria (watch mountain), 1 Kings 16: 23. Name of a city thirty miles north of Jerusalem; also of the country surrounding it.
 Samaritan (watch mountain, Samaria), Luke 10: 33. An inhabitant of Samaria.
 Samson (like the sun), Judg. 15: 20. One of the strongest men; one of the judges of Israel.
 Samuel (asked of God), 1 Sam. 3: 1-18. The last judge of Israel.
 Sanhedrin (a council chamber), Matt. 26: 57. The supreme court of the Jewish nation.
 Sapphira (bright color, beautiful), Acts 5: 1-11. Wife of Ananias.
 Sarah (princess), Gen. 20: 12. Wife of Abraham, mother of Isaac.
 Sarai (my princess), Gen. 11: 29. First name of Sarah.
 Sardis (red), Rev. 1: 11. A city of Asia Minor, and Capital of Lydia.
 Satan (adversary), Matt. 16: 23. Name applied to the devil.
 Saul (desired), 2 Sam. 1: 23. Name of the first king of Israel; first name of the apostle Paul.
 Sceva (implement), Acts 19: 14. A Jew residing at Ephesus when Paul visited that city.
 Scribes (to write), 1 Kings 4: 3. Those who transcribed the law.
 Scythian, Col. 3: 11. Name applied to the people who lived north of the Black Sea.
 Septuagint (the seventy). The Greek Version of the Old Testament.
 Sergius Paulus, Acts 13: 7. Name of the proconsul of Cyprus.
 Sheba (an oath), 2 Sam. 20: 1-22. Name of queen who visited Solomon.
 Shem (name), Gen. 5: 32. The oldest son of Noah.
 Shiloh (place of rest), Judg. 21: 19. A city in Ephraim.
 Shittim (the acacias), Num. 25: 1. Name of country opposite Jericho; also species of wood.
 Silas (woody), Acts 15: 22. Traveling companion of Paul; same as Silvanus.
 Siloam (sent), John 9: 7. Name of pool in the days of Jesus.
 Simeon (heard), Gen. 29: 32. Second son of Jacob; common name among the Jews.
 Simon (hearing), Luke 4: 38. Another name for Peter.
 Sinai (thorny), Ex. 19: 1. Mountain where the law was given.
 Smyrna (myrrh), Rev. 2: 8-11. A city of Asia Minor, situated on Aegean Sea, forty miles north of Ephesus.
 Sodom (burning), Mark 6: 11. Ancient city of Syria, destroyed by fire.
 Solomon (peaceful), 2 Sam. 12: 24. David's son who succeeded him to the throne.
 Sopater (savior of his father), Acts 20: 4. One of the companions of Paul.
 Stephen (crown), Acts 6: 5. Name of one of the seven chosen at Jerusalem; the first Christian martyr.
 Susanna (a lily). One of the women who ministered to Jesus.
 Sycamore (mulberry), Amos 7: 14. A fruit tree in Palestine.
 Symeon (Simon), Acts 13: 1. A teacher and prophet in the church at Antioch.

Synagogue (congregation), Matt. 13: 54. Place where the Jews met for worship.
 Syntyche (with fate), Phil. 4: 2. Female member of the church at Philippi.
 Syria, Judg. 10: 6. Name of country.
 Syrophenician, Mark 7: 26. A mixed race of people.

T

Tabernacle (tent), Ex. 25: 9. Constructed by Moses as a place of worship.
 Tabitha (gazelle), Matt. 9: 25; Mark 5: 41. Also called "Dorcas."
 Tares (darnel), Matt. 13: 25. A weed similar to wheat in its early stages.
 Tarsus, Acts 9: 11. Chief town of Cilicia, home of Paul.
 Taverns, the Three (inn), Acts 28: 15. On the Appian road, where Paul lodged for a time.
 Temple, 1 Kings 7: 15-22. House built by Solomon for worship.
 Ten Commandments, Ex. 34: 28. The name given to the Decalogue.
 Tertullus (fr. Greek), Acts 24: 1. A Roman Orator.
 Tetrarch, Matt. 14: 1. Name given to the governor of the fourth part of the country.
 Theophilus (friend of God), Luke 1: 3; Acts 1: 1. Person to whom Luke wrote his Gospel and Acts of Apostles.
 Thessalonica, Acts 17: 2. Town in Macedonia where Paul established a church; wrote two letters to the church.
 Thomas (twin), Matt. 13: 55. One of the apostles.
 Thyatira, Rev. 2: 20. A city on the borders of Mysia.
 Tiberias, John 6: 1. Another name given to the Sea of Galilee.
 Timothy (worshipping God), Acts 16: 1. Paul's companion. Paul wrote two letters to him.
 Titus (honorable), Gal. 2: 1. An early Christian to whom Paul wrote one letter.
 Transfiguration, Matt. 17: 1-13. The event in the earthly life of Christ which marked his glorified state.
 Troas, Acts 16: 8. A seaport of Asia Minor.
 Trogylum, Acts 20: 15. A town in Asia Minor.
 Trophimus (nutritious), Acts 21: 27. Accompanied Paul to Jerusalem.
 Tychicus (fateful), Acts 20: 4. Companion of Paul on some of his journeys.
 Tyrannus (sovereign), Acts 19: 9. Paul taught in the school of Tyrannus.
 Tyre (a rock), Matt. 15: 21. City on the east coast of the Mediterranean.

U

Ur (light, or the moon city), Gen. 11: 28. The land of Abraham's nativity.
 Uriah (light of Jehovah), 2 Sam. 23: 39. One of David's brave men.
 Uzzah (strength), 2 Sam. 6: 6. Priest who touched the ark and died.

V

Vows, Gen. 28: 18-22. A solemn promise made to God to perform or to abstain from performing a certain thing.
 Vulgate, The. The Latin version of the Bible.

W

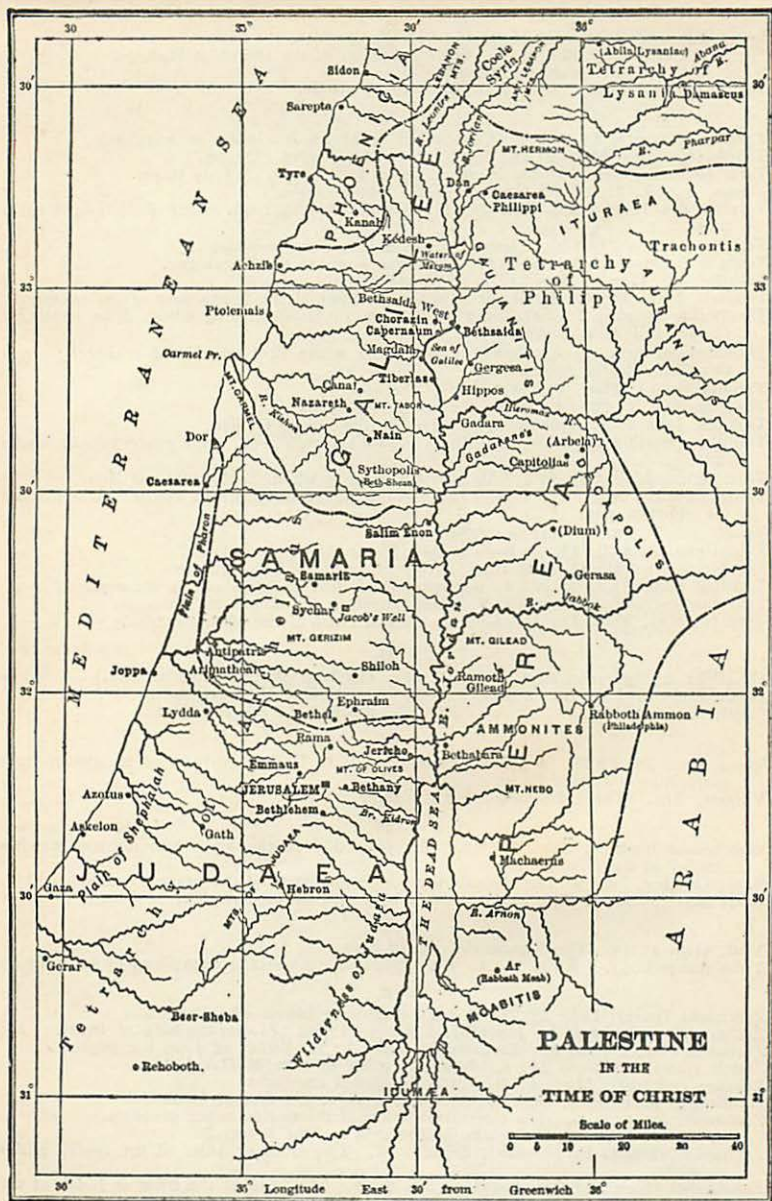
Watches of Night, 1 Sam. 11: 11. The Jews divided the night into military watches instead of hours.
 Wave Offering, Ex. 29: 24. An offering which accompanied the peace offerings.
 Way, Acts 19: 9. A term used for the Gospel or Plan of Salvation.

Y

Year, Gen. 1: 14. The highest division of time.
 Yoke (subjection), 1 Kings 12: 4. An implement for working oxen; sign of authority.

Z

Zacchaeus (pure), Luke 19: 5. A tax collector, publican who lived near Jericho.
 Zachariah (remembered by Jehovah), 2 Kings 10: 30. Fourteenth king of Israel.
 Zacharias (Greek form of "Zachariah"), Luke 1: 5. Father of John the Baptist.
 Zadok (just), 1 Chron. 24: 3. Name of priest in time of David.
 Zebedee (my gift), Matt. 4: 21. Father of James and John.
 Zebulun (a habitation), Gen. 30: 20. The tenth of the sons of Jacob.
 Zechariah, Ex. 5: 1, 6. The eleventh in order of the twelve minor prophets.
 Zenas, Tit. 3: 13. A believer who is described as "the lawyer."
 Zephaniah (hidden by Jehovah), Zeph. 1: 1. The ninth in order of the twelve minor prophets.
 Zerubbabel (born at Babel, Babylon), Ez. 6: 18. The head of the tribe of Judah at the time of the return from the Babylonian captivity.
 Zeruah (Balsam), 1 Sam. 26: 6. Mother of Joab, sister of David.
 Zidon, or Sidon, Gen. 10: 15; Luke 6: 17. An ancient city of Phenicia on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean.



FIRST QUARTER

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

STUDIES IN MATTHEW

(FIRST HALF OF A SIX MONTHS' COURSE)

AIM: To present a clear and comprehensive view of the entire Gospel of Matthew; to keep in mind the Messianic character of the gospel; to observe the well-balanced relationship between Jesus' ministry of teaching and his ministry of mercy; to develop faith in Jesus as the Son of God; and to indicate the way to complete Christian living.

Lesson 1—January 7, 1934

BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS

Matt. 2: 1-12.

1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise-men from the east came to Jerusalem saying,

2 Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written through the prophet,

6 And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,
Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:
For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
Who shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

7 Then Herod privily called the Wise-men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him.

9 And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1: 21.)

TIME.—B.C. 4.

PLACE.—Bethlehem of Judea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his parents, the wise men, and Herod.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 9: 2-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 1.	M.	.....	The Word Made Flesh (John 1: 1-14)
January 2.	T.	.....	The Virgin Mother (Matt. 1: 18-25)
January 3.	W.	.....	Jesus Born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2: 1-12)
January 4.	T.	.....	The Flight Into Egypt (Matt. 2: 13-18)
January 5.	F.	.....	Jesus at Nazareth (Matt. 2: 19-23)
January 6.	S.	.....	Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2: 41-52)
January 7.	S.	.....	The Promised Child (Isa. 9: 2-7)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Time and Place of Jesus' Birth (Verse 1).
 - II. Herod's Inquiry Answered (Verses 2-6).
 - III. Herod's Scheme Continued (Verses 7, 8).
 - IV. The Wise Men Worship Jesus (Verses 9-11).
 - V. Herod's Scheme Defeated (Verse 12).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

The Writer.—During the first six months of this year our lessons are in the book of Matthew. The writer of this book has generally been conceded to be the apostle Matthew, also called "Levi." (Mark 2: 14; Luke 5: 27.) "Matthew" means *God's gift*, and it may have been a new name taken at the time he was called to follow Jesus; he never refers to himself by the old name, Levi. The record gives very little concerning him personally, or the work that he did in the Master's vineyard. The call to follow Jesus and the feast he made are reported by Matthew himself, and by both Mark and Luke. He was a publican, which means that he collected taxes from his own people for the Roman government. Nothing is known about the extent of his apostolic labors, or the time and manner of his death. That he was one of the twelve and received the same miraculous endowment as the others puts the stamp of divine approval upon his book and makes it entirely credible.

When Written.—The exact time when Matthew wrote cannot be fixed with any certainty. Two passages (Matt. 27: 8; 28: 15) indicate that considerable time had elapsed since the crucifixion. As Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24: 15-23), which occurred in A.D. 70, and Matthew makes no mention of that event, it is all but certain that he wrote before that time. Suggested dates are from A.D. 41 to A.D. 65. Matthew would surely have mentioned the fall of Jerusalem, if it had occurred before he wrote.

Purpose in View.—The general purpose in writing the four gospel records was to make believers in Christ. (John 20: 30, 31; Luke 1: 1-4.) The contents of Matthew's book strongly indicate that he wrote especially for the Jews, and to prove that the gospel of Christ is a fulfillment of the law and the prophets. He traced the genealogy back only to Abraham, and presented Jesus as their expected Messiah. He represented Christ's government as a kingdom, to enter which the Jews would have to abandon their own. (Matt. 21: 42, 43.) He frequently referred to their Scriptures as being fulfilled in the events he described.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Time and Place of Jesus' Birth (Verse 1)

According to Prophecy.—The birth of Jesus would be a matter of little consequence unless his claims of being the Son of God could be established by facts. If his birth was according to prophecy, and therefore miraculous, it becomes a vital proof in sustaining his divinity. That his conception was miraculous is unmistakably asserted by Matthew (1: 18-23), with the claim that it was in fulfillment of Isa. 7: 14, saying a *virgin* "shall bring forth a son." Isaiah's words were to encourage Ahaz, king of Judah, and were intended to apply directly to the situation at that time. They may be understood to mean that before one then a virgin would have a son old enough to know right from wrong, the kingdom of Judah would be delivered from her enemies. In a higher and secondary sense Matthew applies the words literally to Christ, whose miraculous birth exactly fits the sentiment of the words; hence, is their fulfillment. Without his miraculous birth—combining the divine and human—we could not account for his perfect life.

"In Bethlehem."—Called Bethlehem "of Judea" because there was another Bethlehem in Galilee. (Josh. 19: 15.) It was a village some five miles southwest of Jerusalem. The word means "house of bread," a very appropriate name for the birthplace of him who is the true "bread which came down out of heaven." (John 6: 41.) Being the "city of David"—his ancestral home (1 Sam. 16: 1, 18)—was another good reason why one to sit upon David's throne should be born there.

"The Days of Herod."—Christ was born a few months before the death of Herod, which, according to the corrected chronology, occurred four years before the date A.D. 1. The exact time of year is not known—December 25 being entirely uncertain. There would be no practical value in knowing the exact date. Herod descended from Abraham through an Edomite father and an Ishmaelite mother. As a king, subject to the Roman emperor, he ruled Judea thirty-six years. He was called Herod the Great, and was a man of great ability and courage, but also a great tyrant. He repaired and beautified the temple, did much for the nation, but brought upon himself everlasting shame because of his heartless cruelties, terrible crimes, and horrible murders.

II. Herod's Inquiry Answered (Verses 2-6)

The Wise Men.—The original word for "wise men" is *magoi*, from which we derive our word "magician." The persons referred to were a class of priests and philosophers, learned men, probably from Persia, devoted to astronomy and religion. If they were honest seekers for truth at first, they had degenerated in New Testament times to sorcerers and plain hypocrites. (Acts 8: 9-11; 13: 6-8.) The wise men, whatever their nationality, probably knew of the Hebrew prophecies concerning a coming ruler. (See Num. 24: 17; Dan. 9: 24; Mic. 5: 2.) The promptness with which they concluded that the predicted king had been born is proof that they thought the time for his appearance had arrived. Accustomed to viewing the heavens for portentous appearances, they would have been ready to receive the appearance of the strange star as evidence that the ruler had been born. The miraculous movements of the star enabled them to find the right babe.

As a babe, he was "born king"—was of the right lineage to *become* king; seated at the right hand of God, he is a *reigning* king.

Herod Troubled.—The wise men's report greatly troubled Herod. He had obtained his kingdom and maintained his rule through crime and bloodshed. He was naturally disturbed by the possibility of an insurrection, which would certainly come if the Jews should make one of their own nation king. Herod's friends in Jerusalem were disturbed for the same reason as he; the others were troubled because they preferred his rule, with all his cruelties, to the devastation produced by insurrections. True to his wicked heart, Herod at once conceived the plan to destroy the newborn king.

The Prophet's Words.—Herod knew, if one was "born" king of the Jews, his birth must be a matter of prophecy. His question meant: Where must he be born to fulfill the prophecies? Getting the answer to that question was the first step in his iniquitous scheme. The priests and scribes promptly referred to Mic. 5: 2, where Bethlehem is named as the place. The word "governor" in the text shows he was to be a ruler, but the word "shepherd" in the Revised Version means that he was to rule as a shepherd—to lead and direct with gentleness.

III. Herod's Scheme Continued (Verses 7, 8)

Another Inquiry.—By his question to the chief priests and scribes Herod learned *where* the Christ was to be born; his next step was to find from the wise men just *when* the star appeared. This would be the approximate time of his birth. As a protection for his wicked designs Herod obtained this information privately. Any one so well known as a hypocritical tyrant would have been suspected of some evil plan if he had shown any public concern in a future claimant to the throne. He was careful to learn from them "exactly" when the star appeared. In such a critical undertaking he did not want to take any chances on detection before he could accomplish his purpose.

Wise Men Dismissed.—The angel of the Lord announced to the shepherds the birth of Christ the very day it occurred (Luke 2: 11); the wise men may not have known the exact day, but understood from the appearance of the star that he had been born. Herod dismissed them with instructions to search accurately till they found the child. He was not thus particular to avoid murdering other children, but to be sure he was destroying the future claimant to the throne. His general slaughter of infants later is proof that he was not actuated by any merciful motives.

Herod's Duplicity.—Herod's hypocrisy is clearly manifest in his asking the wise men to bring him word of the child's location, so that he might "come and worship him." Such pretended devotion to religion would have dispelled any suspicions the wise men might have had regarding his motives. Men with wicked designs take great care in laying their plans.

IV. The Wise Men Worship Jesus (Verses 9-11)

The Star's Leading.—It is not stated whether the star they saw in the east led them to Jerusalem or not. It may have, or they may have gone there because it was the place where the Messiah would rule if an earthly king, as they supposed he would be; certainly it was the

place where the Christ would begin his spiritual rule. If the star led their every move till they reached the house where Christ was, then there can be no question that the entire event was miraculous; the star was not a natural one, moving in a natural way. An ordinary star would have stood over all Bethlehem alike. To make their testimony of any value as evidence that the "babe of Bethlehem" was the Christ it was necessary that they locate the proper child. A failure here would have shown their leading was false.

"Fell Down."—According to Oriental methods of showing reverence, the wise men fell down before the child. Their worship could hardly be considered the simple adoration due the heir to an earthly throne. Their probable knowledge of the Jewish prophecies regarding the Messiah, and their miraculous guidance to the child in Bethlehem, would indicate a deeper devotion and a higher appreciation of his kingship.

Offered Gifts.—They presented gifts, which was according to another Eastern custom. Approaching one of distinguished rank required the presenting of valuable gifts. They showed their regard for Jesus, and their faith that he was to become an illustrious ruler, by their offerings. The following passages show the practice of gifts of respect: Gen. 43: 11; 1 Kings 10: 2, 10. Frankincense and myrrh were two gums obtained from trees. Both were useful, and therefore valuable. These with gold, the most precious metal, made their offerings very appropriate.

V. Herod's Scheme Defeated (Verse 12)

"Warned of God."—Probably Herod so concealed his duplicity that the wise men would have returned as he requested, if they had not been prevented. The same divine power that led them to Jesus prevented their return to Herod. This defeated his scheme, for the precise information which they were able to give would have enabled him to slay the child. God is able to accomplish his purposes regardless of wicked devices. Being warned not to return to Herod, the wise men went another way, probably the road east to Jericho.

Joseph Warned.—Joseph, like the wise men, was warned in a dream to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt to prevent Herod taking the child's life. He was to remain there till the Lord brought him word. Herod, in his rage at being mocked by the wise men, slew the children of Bethlehem in his desperate effort to destroy Jesus. Herod's death was announced to Joseph by an angel of the Lord in Egypt. Finding Archelaus, Herod's son, reigning in his stead, Joseph was afraid to stop in Judea. Again being warned in a dream, he went into Galilee to the city of Nazareth, from which fact Jesus was called a Nazarene. This name, on account of the character of Nazareth, expresses the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding his humility. His sojourn in Egypt and the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem were also matters of prophecy. (Verses 15, 17, 18.)

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. All the great things that may be accomplished in material affairs cannot atone for the sins that flow from a corrupt heart. Herod, with unrestrained hatred, sought to destroy life; Jesus, with unlimited mercy, sought to save life. Each had been properly estimated.

2. The common rule is that wicked men become troubled and angry when the necessity of righteousness is forced upon them. Unless better judgment leads to repentance, they usually become desperate.

3. Pretended religion is the hypocrite's most convenient garb. In this he follows his master, Satan, who "fashioneth himself into an angel of light."

4. Those who allow themselves to be led by divine truth will always reach the Lord, who will accept their worship and offerings.

5. Wicked schemes may appear successful for a time, but must ultimately fail. The judgment comes to all.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

State and explain the writer's names.
What do we know about Matthew's life?
State and explain his former business.
When was the book of Matthew written?
How is this proven?
What was the general purpose of the four gospels?
For whom was Matthew especially written?

I

Why was it necessary for Christ's birth to be according to the Scriptures?
What prophecy was fulfilled in his birth?
Why was the prophecy originally given?
How apply the words then, and now?
Why say Bethlehem "of Judah"?
Show the fitness of this name.
In what other way is the city described?
When was Christ born?
How was Herod a descendant of Abraham?
What do we know of Herod's life?

II

Who were the "wise men"?
What about them in New Testament times?
What did they probably know about Hebrew prophecies?
What is meant by "born king"?
Why was Herod so troubled by the wise men's report?
Why was "all Jerusalem" troubled also?
What did Herod's question mean?
How did the prophet describe the coming one?

III

What question did Herod ask the wise men?

Why ask it privately?
Why did he want to know "exactly" the time?
When did the angels announce Christ's birth to the shepherds?
What did the wise men know from the star?
Why did Herod want them to find the exact location?
How was Herod's hypocrisy manifested?

IV

Why did the wise men go to Jerusalem?
What kind of a star was it?
Why was it necessary that they find the right child?
Why fall down before the babe?
What shows they understood he was more than an earthly king?
Why offer gifts?
What shows the appropriateness of their gifts?

V

Why was it necessary to warn the wise men not to return to Herod?
How were they warned?
What way did they probably return home?
What warning was given Joseph?
How long was he to remain in Egypt?
How did he learn he should return?
Why did he go to Nazareth?
What feature of the prophecies was fulfilled in his home in Nazareth?
What other prophecies were fulfilled in these events?

Practical Thoughts

What estimate has the world placed upon Christ and Herod?
What is commonly true of wicked men?
What is the hypocrite's most convenient garb?
What will be the result of following divine truth?
What must finally happen to wicked schemes?

Lesson II—January 14, 1934

BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Matt. 3: 13 to 4: 11.

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffereth him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him;

17 And lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

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.—*"It behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren."* (Heb. 2: 17.)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 27.

PLACE.—River Jordan east of Jericho; wilderness of Judea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, John the Baptist, and Satan.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 2: 11-18.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 8.	M.	Preaching of the Baptist (Matt. 3: 1-12)
January 9.	T.	Baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3: 13-17)
January 10.	W.	Temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4: 1-11)
January 11.	T.	A Common Temptation (1 Tim. 6: 3-10)
January 12.	F.	Enduring Temptation (James 1: 12-18)
January 13.	S.	Christ Tempted as We Are (Heb. 4: 11-16)
January 14.	S.	Christ Helps the Tempted (Heb. 2: 11-18)

LESSON OUTLINE—

Introductory Study.

- I. Jesus Baptized by John (Matt. 3: 13-17).
 - II. General Statement Regarding the Temptation (Matt. 4: 1).
 - III. The First Temptation Described (Verses 2-4).
 - IV. The Devil's Second Effort (Verses 5-7).
 - V. Satan's Third Failure (Verses 8-11).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

God's Messenger.—John the Baptist occupies the unique place of a personal connecting link between the old and new covenants. That his mission and work were of divine authority the following passages show: "There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John." (John 1: 6.) "The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias." (Luke 3: 2.) The latter text refers to his call as a prophet. (Compare Jer. 1: 2; Ezek. 6: 1.) He lived and died under the Jewish law; his work prepared material to be used in Christ's kingdom. (See Mal. 4: 5, 6; Mark 1: 2; Luke 1: 16, 17.)

Christ's Forerunner.—Isaiah, prophesying of John's work, said: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." (Matt. 3: 3.) This prophecy was based upon the ancient custom of people of distinguished rank sending heralds ahead to announce their coming, and to give commands for the construction of suitable roads over which to pass. This not only shows the inferior rank of John, that he must decrease (John 3: 28-30), but that Christ, the born king, had not become reigning king at the time John began his work; in fact, Jesus had not then begun his public ministry. Malachi referred to John as the Elijah that must first come—typically called Elijah because he came in "the spirit and power of Elijah." (Luke 1: 17.) These passages are final as proof that Christ's church or kingdom did not begin when John began his preaching in the wilderness. Preparation precedes beginning.

John the Baptizer.—John "preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins" and baptized all who confessed their sins. (Mark 1: 4, 5.) Many Jews rejected John's baptism (Luke 7: 30), which they would not have done if it had been a part of the Levitical system. His baptism was a new thing from heaven (Matt. 21: 25-27); hence, he is called *the* Baptist, not *a* Baptist. It is significant that this title is never in the Scriptures applied to any one but John. No inspired writer ever designated Christ, any of his apostles, nor any New Testament congregation with the word "baptist." The words "baptism," "baptize," and "baptist" all belong to the same family; the root meaning is dip or immerse. As certain as baptize means to immerse, baptist means one who immerses. The greatest scholars admit this. John the Baptist equals John the baptizer, or John the immerser. Correctly speaking, no one is a baptist, nor can be, who does not perform the act of baptism. In the Scriptures it is applied to none save John, even in the correct sense.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jesus Baptized by John (Matt. 3: 13-17)

Time and Place.—The exact time of Christ's baptism cannot be determined. Luke (3: 23) says he was about thirty years of age when he began to teach. As John was six months older than Jesus (Luke 1: 24-26), it is probable that he began his ministry that long before Jesus began his. Evidently, Jesus began teaching soon after his temptation, which lasted forty days and which occurred, apparently, immediately after his baptism. This fixes with sufficient certainty his baptism in his thirtieth year, some time after John began. This was necessary, else John could not be his forerunner. The place was in the river Jordan, probably east of Jericho about where the Israelites crossed into Canaan.

Why Jesus Was Baptized.—Jesus came from Nazareth, some sixty miles north, for the express purpose of being baptized, according to our lesson text. "Why?" thought John, who sought to hinder him. The same question arises in all thoughtful minds. John, knowing the purity of Christ and his own sinfulness, said it was more needful that he be baptized of Christ. This is positive proof that John's baptism was in order to remission of sins, else there would have been no point in his objecting to Christ's demand. Jesus said it was proper to "fulfill all righteousness"—be obedient to all God's requirements. Jesus was a Jew and obeyed Jewish laws till his death; John's baptism was from heaven—a divine requirement—and it was necessary to have Jesus' example of obedience to that. A failure would have presented Jesus as an example of disobedience. Besides, it was ordained as the way to "manifest" Christ to Israel (John 1: 31-34), and had to be, or reject God's purpose. It is true that it was not in order to the remission of personal sins in Christ's case, for he had none to be remitted; for a like reason it was not "because of remission," for he had had none remitted. Christ was baptized to honor God and to be manifested to Israel; sinners are baptized to honor God and for the remission of personal sins. The difference between the Savior and the lost makes the difference in the design of baptism.

What Act Performed?—The clear statement is that Jesus was baptized "in the Jordan." (Mark 1: 9.) The Greek literally says "into the Jordan," which means that the baptismal act immersed or dipped him into the Jordan. After the baptism he came "up out of the water" (Mark 1: 10); went up "from the water" (Matt. 3: 16). The baptism occurred in the water; language could not be more certain. Accepting the plain meaning of baptism—an immersion—these statements are true to facts; rejecting that, leaves them without any consistent reason.

II. General Statement Regarding the Temptation (Matt. 4: 1)

In the Wilderness.—Matthew says Jesus was "led up" of the Spirit into the wilderness; Mark says the Spirit "driveth him forth." (Mark 1: 12.) It is not known, the particular place in the wilderness that the temptation occurred. The wilderness of Judea, lying along the west shore of the Dead Sea and somewhat north of that sea, is a rough, mountainous section, thinly settled, and infested with wild beasts. (Mark 1: 13.) The gloomy silence and solemn ruggedness of such a place made it the ideal location for Satan to wage his first

battle with the world's Redeemer. Somewhere in this wilderness is where that battle occurred.

"To Be Tempted."—The war between Jesus and man's archenemy had to be waged; by the Spirit's leading, the first battle was fought as soon as Jesus had the Father's public indorsement. The salvation of mankind was the issue at stake. The Greek word for "tempt" means simply to *try*, to *attempt*. It may be applied to trying in the sense of *testing*, as metals are tested by fire, or character is tested by circumstances. In this sense God tried Abraham when he commanded him to offer Isaac. It can also be applied to trying one with a view to induce him to do wrong. It is then called temptation, the thing the devil does, but which God never does. (James 1: 12-14.)

III. The First Temptation Described (Verses 2-4)

Preparation for the Test.—That Christ's human nature made him subject to temptation is the unquestionable assertion of the Scriptures. (Heb. 2: 17, 18; 4: 15.) The forty days' fast, during which he "ate nothing" (Luke 4: 2), left him in the most dangerous physical condition to meet the first temptation. Mark and Luke indicate the forty days' fast as a part of the temptation. It was, at least, a very favorable preparation for the devil's effort. Other cases of fasting forty days are found in Ex. 34: 28; 1 Kings 19: 8. Matthew says that "he afterward hungered." The return of the terrible pangs of hunger, after that long fast, gave Satan every advantage in the contest. Nothing short of the most weakened physical condition was sufficient to make Christ's victory decisive.

Satan's Suggestion.—Forty days before, the Father had declared Jesus to be his Son. As Satan's words to Eve insinuated his doubt of God's threat, so his "if" implied his doubt that Jesus was God's Son. His suggestion virtually asked Jesus to also doubt it until he could make a practical test for himself. The suggestion was both subtle and plausible. Jesus was tortured with hunger; there was nothing wrong in eating, neither could there be any wrong in changing stones into bread. Satan's words meant: "If you *really* are the Son of God, as He said, you have the power to do it. Why not exercise that power, since you need the bread and there is no harm in it?" Such exquisite craftiness is specially dangerous. Only the most unfaltering trust in God is able to meet it.

"It is Written."—Jesus promptly replied: "It is written." Behind this bulwark of safety he defended his faith and integrity with complete success. It is the only unbreakable line of defense that Christ's followers can use to defeat the devil's devices. Then Jesus quotes Deut. 8: 3, where Moses reminded Israel that God fed them with manna in the wilderness that he might make them know that "man doth not live by bread only, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah." The Israelites not only were dependent upon the manna for food, but were also dependent upon the power of God who gave it. If so, then, they were required to do "everything" God said; their life depended on obedience to God as well as upon eating bread. Christ's reply implies that God's power to give Israel the manna was evidence that it could preserve him from the necessity of performing a miracle to test God's words in proclaiming him his Son. It was equivalent to saying: "My Father can preserve my life with or without bread; if he wants to do it by changing stones into bread, I

will await *his* command for that." Such trust will always gain a victory.

IV. The Devil's Second Effort (Verses 5-7)

Another Location.—When Balak failed to get Balaam to curse Israel at one place, he changed locations for other efforts. (Num. 23: 13, 14, 27, 28.) The devil pursued a like course and changed locations to make his other attempts. The scene is changed from the wilderness, especially suitable for the first temptation, to a pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem, equally suitable for the second. Satan can be depended upon to make his efforts under the most alluring circumstances for his success. Posing as "an angel of light," it should never be forgotten, is his leading rôle. The devil "taketh him" (Luke says "led") into the holy city. This means that he was allowed such compelling influence over Jesus as would prepare for the second temptation. It is not known just what part of the temple is meant by "a pinnacle," but it was a place sufficiently high for the suggestion to be carried out.

Second Suggestion.—This suggestion, like the first, was virtually asking Jesus to test the truthfulness of God's words and prove the reality of his Sonship by a miracle. If Jesus was the Son of God, in the sense of the Messiah, unquestionably he had power to perform a miracle. Since he possessed such power, if God's Son, why not demonstrate its reality? Again, the force of this temptation was its great plausibility. As the promised Messiah, his claims must be proved; the sooner done, the better. What better place and opportunity could be afforded than in the "holy city," where his kingdom must begin, and in the sight of those to whom he would look to find followers? Then, in "It is written," would be found assurance of his protection from any harm. Marvelous but deadly reasoning. Let saints beware of like temptations.

Jesus' Reply.—The Scripture, of which the devil quoted the substance, is found in Ps. 91: 11, 12. His crafty perversion of the Psalmist's words the Savior detected and quickly revealed. David said respecting God's care: "A man's goings are established of Jehovah; and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for Jehovah upholdeth him with his hand." (Ps. 37: 23.) "Jehovah preserveth the faithful." (Ps. 31: 23.) If the passage quoted by Satan is true, so are the others. The meaning is that, if one should "fall" in "faithful" service to God, he would be properly protected; not that God's angels would bear him up when he threw himself down to test God's faithfulness to fulfill his promises. That would be tempting or making trial of the Lord, indicating doubt instead of faith. To show this perversion of the Scriptures, Jesus quoted Deut. 6: 16: "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God." Applying Scripture in conflict with other Scriptures that reveal man's plain duties is perversion of God's word, by either Satan or man. Exposing one's self to dangers without God's command for such service is tempting God; no protection is promised in such cases.

V. Satan's Third Failure (Verses 8-11)

Satan's Promise.—In Luke's account this temptation has second place (Luke 4: 6), but Matthew's use of the words "then" and "again" indicates he was giving them in the order of their occurrence. The

particular mountain is not known. In the first trial Satan appealed to the appetite; in the second, to pride; in this, to the love of money. These three appeals are, perhaps, the hardest to resist. Satan, knowing that Jesus was to be King, offered him "all kingdoms" and their glory, which includes wealth, splendor, and honors. Human nature staggers under such glorious anticipations. Rightfully and legally the kingdoms did not belong to Satan, yet he said they had been "delivered" to him; this we know is the fact, for it is certain that he controls them. (2 Cor. 4: 4.) In a practical sense, he was able to deliver them to Jesus, else there would have been no point in the temptation, without accusing the Lord of being unable to detect the deception. The only condition imposed was that Jesus should acknowledge the gift by worshipping Satan.

Christ's Rebuke.—Indignantly Jesus demands that Satan leave his presence, and said the expressed condition was a violation of Scripture. (Deut. 6: 13.) Satan had deceitfully appealed to Scripture; by Scripture he had been defeated. He left the field of battle, and the victory for right was complete. Angels then ministered to Jesus.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Christ insisted on obeying a command from heaven; we should be ashamed to hesitate in obeying a like command from him.

2. Satan takes advantage of human needs, social preferments, political and financial desires, as helpful circumstances in leading men into sin. We should not be "ignorant of his devices."

3. In Jesus we have our most striking example of meeting temptations by what is written in God's word. This defense is perfect.

4. Those who pervert the plain meaning of Scripture texts are imitating the devil either ignorantly or dishonestly.

5. Angels ministered to Jesus after he successfully resisted Satan's temptations; God's blessings rest upon those whose faith overcomes the world. (1 John 5: 4.)

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What was the nature of John's work?
What prophecies referred to him?
Of what are these prophecies proof?
Why called John "the" Baptist?
What does the word "Baptist" mean?

I

At what place was Jesus baptized?
Why did John object to baptizing Jesus?
Give two reasons why he was baptized.
How does his baptism and ours differ in purpose?
How is it known that he was immersed?

II

Describe the wilderness of Judea.
What is the meaning of the word "tempt"?

In what senses can it apply to both God and Satan?

III

Why was Christ subject to temptations?
Who else fasted forty days?
What is implied in Satan's use of the word "if"?
Show the plausibility of Satan's words.
How did Jesus meet them?
Where did Jesus get the words quoted?
Why were they spoken to Israel?
How did they apply to Jesus?

IV

Who did the devil imitate in changing locations?
How does Satan appear to men?
In what was this temptation like the first?
What shows its plausibility?
What scripture did the devil quote?
What modifying truth is taught in other Psalms?
What meaning must be given that quoted by Satan?

What scripture did Satan's perversion violate?

V

What is the correct order of these temptations?

To what did Satan appeal in each?

In what sense do the kingdoms of this world belong to Satan?

What condition did the devil impose?

What reply did Jesus make?

Practical Thoughts

How should Christ's obedience affect us?

How does Satan plan his temptations?

How does this lesson teach us to meet them?

What is true of those who pervert the Scriptures?

What will secure us God's blessings?

Lesson III—January 21, 1934

JESUS BEGINS HIS MINISTRY

Matt. 4: 12-25.

12 Now when he heard that John was delivered up, he withdrew into Galilee;

13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali:

14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

15 The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,

Toward the sea, beyond the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles,

16 The people that sat in darkness

Saw a great light,

And to them that sat in the region and shadow of death,

To them did light spring up.

17 From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

18 And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men.

20 And they straightway left the nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they straightway left the boat and their father, and followed him.

23 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.

24 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.

25 And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matt. 4: 17.)

TIME.—Probably early summer, A.D. 27.

PLACES.—Capernaum and places in Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Peter, Andrew, James, John, and the multitudes.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 61: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 15. M.-----Jesus Retires to Galilee (Matt. 4: 12-17)

January 16. T.-----Jesus Calls the Four (Matt. 4: 18-25)

January 17. W.-----A New Teaching (Mark 1: 21-28)

January 18. T.-----Teaching, Preaching, Healing (Mark 1: 29-39)

January 19. F.-----Israel's Repentance (Judg. 10: 6-16)

January 20. S.-----Penitence Rewarded (Ezek. 18: 25-32)

January 21. S.-----The Spirit of Jehovah (Isa. 61: 1-9)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Jesus Departs Into Galilee (Verses 12-16).
 - II. General Statement of Jesus' Work (Verse 17).
 - III. Jesus Calls Four Disciples (Verses 18-22).
 - IV. A Fuller Description of Jesus' Teaching (Verse 23).
 - V. Immediate Results of His Labor (Verses 24, 25).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Text Omissions.—It is perfectly evident, by comparing the four gospel records of Christ's life, that each writer sometimes leaves wide gaps in his narrative, and does it generally without any word or hint that he is omitting valuable parts of the story. Those competent in Bible chronology place one such gap between verses 11 and 12 of our lesson chapter, showing that a considerable period of time elapsed between this and the last lesson. The events occurring in this interval, which Matthew omits, are recorded in John 1: 18 to 3: 36.

The Omitted Events.—That we may have the connected history, the following brief reference is made to the omitted events: Apparently Jesus returned to John soon after the temptation, when John declared that he was the "Lamb of God" (John 1: 29-34); during the next two days John repeated this testimony, and Jesus secured as disciples Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael, and possibly John (John 1: 35-51); three days later, Jesus, his mother, and his disciples attended a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee (John 2: 1-11); he next abode for a short time in Capernaum, then returned to Jerusalem for the Passover, cleansed the temple, and had his conversation with Nicodemus (John 2: 12 to 3: 21); then, after a brief ministry in Judea (John 3: 32-36), he went to Galilee the second time, which is the departure mentioned in the first verse of our lesson.

A Common Practice.—Omissions and filling gaps are common to all historians. Two or more persons would not write a history covering much time and many events, and record every occurrence or every incident in precisely the same words. If inspired, they *would* not do it, for any additional copies needed could be made from one; if uninspired, they *could* not do it. The fact that four different writers prepared records of Christ's life, differing in many ways, each supplying something omitted by the others, fitting perfectly into the gaps left, is certain proof that their writings were inspired of God.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jesus Departs into Galilee (Verses 12-16)

Three Departures to Galilee.—As pointed out in the Introductory Study, Jesus' first departure into Galilee occurred soon after his temptation. This departure was not recorded by Matthew. The second, according to verse 12 of our lesson, was after the imprisonment of John the Baptist. It closed his successful but short ministry in Judea, which began after his visit to the Passover and his conversation with Nicodemus. (John 4: 1-3.) On his second journey to Gal-

ilee he talked with the woman of Samaria, reaching Galilee two days later. (John 4: 43.) The third recorded departure for Galilee was from Nazareth. (Verse 13.) It is uncertain just when this visit to Nazareth occurred, but the many things done in and near Capernaum (see Mark's record, beginning with 1: 14) could not have taken place during Jesus' first brief stay there; hence, the visit to Nazareth must have been made after coming to Galilee the second time. How long after is the uncertain feature.

Why Leave Judea?—Jesus had left Jerusalem for the outlying districts of Judea, and through his disciples was baptizing more than John. When the report of Jesus' work reached John, he again bore witness to Jesus' being the Christ. John's boldness in rebuking Herod soon resulted in his imprisonment. The excitement this produced, together with the fact that the Pharisees had learned of the success Jesus was having (John 4: 1, 2), were the probable reasons for his seeking a territory where opposition would be less violent. Jerusalem, in Judea, was the headquarters of his most bitter enemies among the Jews. A long ministry first in another country was wisest and best. Jesus, though the Son of God, is the world's greatest example of doing the wisest thing at all times. Christians should imitate his example, and not deliberately expose themselves to dangers and temptations.

Dwelt in Capernaum.—This was a city on the northwest coast of the Sea of Galilee, here called "Galilee of the Gentiles" because a large element of the inhabitants were Gentiles. Matthew says that his residence in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali was in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. (Isa. 9: 1, 2.) These tribes were part of the kingdom of Israel, taken captive by the Assyrians some seven hundred years before. The scattering Jews remaining, or that had returned, together with the Gentiles that had come into the country before Christ's time, made a population that really sat "in darkness" and "the shadow of death." This the prophet had foreseen; Jesus' ministry there to bring them light was its fulfillment. These people, far removed from Jerusalem, the headquarters of the Pharisees and scribes, Christ's bitter enemies, would be more ready to receive his teaching. Later, Jesus said the "poor have good tidings preached to them." (Matt. 11: 5.) His ministry in Galilee was a demonstration of that fact—an example to be imitated by his followers now.

II. General Statement of Jesus' Work (Verse 17)

"From That Time."—By this expression Matthew, doubtless, refers to the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee after John was imprisoned, mentioned in verse 12. He records many things respecting Jesus that occurred before that, but here he means the preaching in Galilee. His forerunner had been put in prison, and his own teaching seemed to assume that intensive and continuous nature that characterized it to the close.

"At Hand."—John had announced Christ's coming, and the establishment of his kingdom as "at hand"; John's voice now being stilled by enforced imprisonment, Jesus assumes the rôle of herald and puts the stamp of approval on John's preaching by declaring the same message—the kingdom at hand. John's words meant that the kingdom was yet future, though soon to begin, for the king had not appeared to even begin his public ministry. Jesus, preaching the same thing as

John, showed that it was still future. The kingdom in fact did not begin till Christ was crowned, which occurred after he had suffered death. (Heb. 2: 9.) Everything preceding that time belongs to the period of preparation, which is declared to be the purpose of John's work. (Mark 1: 2; Luke 1: 17.) Jesus finished that preparatory work after John's imprisonment by selecting and instructing special material with which to begin his kingdom.

III. Jesus Calls Four Disciples (Verses 18-22)

"Come Ye After Me."—The west coast of Lake Galilee was the scene of many incidents in Christ's Galilean ministry. The occasion of these four disciples being called there was that they were fishermen, engaged in their work at the time the call came. If we had only Matthews' record, it would be natural to conclude that this was their first personal knowledge of Jesus, but from John's record (1: 35-42) we learn that Andrew and Peter, possibly John also, were made disciples soon after his temptation and before his first visit to Galilee thereafter. After becoming his disciples, they had, no doubt, attended the Passover that was not far away, after which they probably returned to Galilee and their fishing in the lake. Jesus' call, in their case, then, must have meant for them, as his disciples, to leave their occupation and become his constant followers. This constant association prepared them for the higher and more strenuous efforts in his service.

"Fishers of Men."—Their occupation as fishermen furnished the occasion for the beautiful expression, "fishers of men." All figurative references to the Lord's work rest upon some striking resemblance between the natural and spiritual. Fishermen risk the dangers of winds and waves to accomplish their purpose; their success depends upon the skill and knowledge with which they manage their equipment, understanding the nature of the fish, and the persistence with which they use their tackle. Likewise, those who catch men must persevere in spite of opposition and reproach, understand the gospel as God's power, and fearlessly but kindly urge men to accept it. Passing on, he saw two other fishermen—James and John—and extended the same call to them.

"Straightway" Followed Him.—The promptness with which these four disciples, at the call of Jesus, left their occupation, equipment and all, to become fishers of men, should stimulate every one to straightway enter the Lord's service, without stopping to question what effect it will have on his business. Those who hesitate for social, commercial, or financial reasons, proclaim themselves unworthy to follow Jesus. So Jesus himself teaches. (Matt. 10: 37-39; Mark 10: 29, 30.) If Luke (5: 1-11) refers to the same incident, which seems probable, then the miracle which it adds to our lesson story might, in some measure, account for the readiness with which they obeyed the call to follow the Lord. We have the record of that miracle and many others as proof that Jesus' call to service for all men is divine. Refusing or hesitating to obey that call is pure ingratitude.

IV. A Fuller Description of Jesus' Teaching (Verse 23)

Territory Extended.—Casting an unclean spirit out of a man in the synagogue in Capernaum, and the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1: 21-34), probably occurred before Jesus and his disciples

visited other cities of Galilee. Before starting, he retired to a desert place to pray, where his disciples later found him. He proposed that they visit other cities, saying he was sent for that purpose. (Mark 1: 35-39.) In this incident we have an example for earnest prayer before any important undertaking, and the fact that our efforts in Christ's cause should include more than our own home town or congregation. "Go ye into all the world" is still appropriate, if the Lord's kingdom is to grow.

"In Their Synagogues."—Strangers who entered synagogues were often invited to speak. (Acts 13: 14, 15.) Doubtless, Jesus was frequently extended this courtesy, which accounts for his "teaching in their synagogues." The sacrificial system for the nation belonged to the temple in Jerusalem. Synagogues were congregational meeting places for personal teaching and worship. The synagogues probably began during or soon after the Babylonian exile. On this tour of the cities Jesus preached "the gospel of the kingdom." Of course, he preached it just as he did when he first began—that is, that it was "at hand." The expression still means the same thing. The kingdom, therefore, was still future at that time.

Divine Healings.—In the miracles of Jesus and his apostles we have cases of genuine divine healings. Their purpose was to show Jesus' power and confirm his claims (Mark 2: 10, 11), just as he granted his apostles such power to prove or confirm their words (Acts 14: 3). It should be noticed that Jesus did not fail to heal any. No difference what the nature of the disease was, or the character of the bodily affliction, all responded promptly at his word of command. Curable diseases ceased instantly when he spoke the word; incurable diseases departed, just as promptly. The constant failures of so-called "healings" in this modern day on all recognized incurable maladies, by contrast, are proven false claims. Christ's words, delivered to us by his apostles, are already sufficiently confirmed by miracles; further miracles, if possible, would be wholly unnecessary.

V. Immediate Results of His Labor (Verses 24, 25)

The Report Spread.—The record says the report "went forth into all Syria." Just how much territory this was meant to include is not known, but it is certain that such unusual healings and remarkable teaching would be spread far and wide. Travelers from one place to another would carry tidings of the wonderful teacher and his more wonderful works. This attracted many others and caused them to bring their sick, whom he also healed.

A Great Multitude Followed.—The extent to which his fame spread is indicated by the statements that there followed him great multitudes. They came from the districts of Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the regions beyond (east) of the Jordan. "Decapolis" means "ten cities," comprising a section east of the Jordan. The fame of Jesus, as the Messiah sent of God, has in the centuries following spread to every country in the world. Those same miracles, in the divine record, have led millions of sin-sick souls to obey Christ's commands for pardon. His power to heal the body is proof of his authority and power to save the soul. The sick need a physician.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Those who sit "in darkness"—ignorant of their duty to God—are in the "shadow of death"—in danger of being lost. Those who value the real worth of souls will want to imitate the Master, and take the light to them.

2. Repentance literally means a change of mind, particularly in reference to the will power; repentance from sin means a determination to quit the practice of sin, and a desire strong enough to make the determination effective. Without this, no one can serve God acceptably.

3. The call of the apostles to service by Jesus involved tireless labor, bitter suffering, and cruel death, but also ultimate glory. Their success should stimulate us to bear "our light afflictions" gladly that we, too, may share in that final glory.

4. Those who imbibe the spirit of Jesus will want to extend their field of labor in bringing the gospel to every one possible.

5. Those competent and faithful in service need not worry about their fame; those who see their work will take care of that and spread it for them. The Lord will not forget it; the laborers should.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What do chronologists say regarding verses 11 and 12?
Where do we find the omitted events recorded?
What occurred immediately after the temptation?
What happened the next two days?
Trace Jesus' movements from then till our lesson begins.
How do omissions in history affect the record?

I

How many departures did Jesus make for Galilee?
When did his second departure occur?
When and from what place did the third departure begin?
Where did Jesus go after leaving Judea?
What reasons had he for changing his work to Galilee?
In what way was his decision to change an example to us?
Locate and describe Capernaum.
What prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus going there?
Of what teaching is Jesus' ministry there an example?

II

What did Matthew mean by "from that time"?
What was the theme of Jesus' preaching?
When did the kingdom begin in fact—as an independent institution?

How must all work preceding his crowning be considered?

III

Where were these four disciples called?
Why were they called there?
What do we learn from John 1: 35-42?
What did this call mean?
Why was their future work referred to as "fishers of men"?
In what ways was catching men like catching fish?
How should we be affected by their promptness in obeying?
What teaching does Jesus give on this subject?
What lesson can we get from Luke 5: 1-11?

IV

What probably occurred just before his Galilean tour?
What other important incident happened before starting?
What reason did he give for going?
What is learned from Acts 13: 14, 15?
What were synagogues?
When did their use probably begin?
Show by scriptures the purpose of the miracles?
What distinction is there between his miracles and the so-called healings of this day?

V

What is said about the immediate results of his tour?
What is meant by "Syria"?
What shows the extent of his fame?
From what places did the multitudes come?
What does "Decapolis" mean?
Where were these cities located?

How far has his fame spread since that time?

Practical Thoughts

What is the condition of those who sit "in darkness"?

What does repentance mean?

Why should we be stimulated for service by the Apostles' experience?

What will be true of those who imbibe the spirit of Jesus?

What should faithful servants not worry about?

Lesson IV—January 28, 1934

STANDARDS OF THE KINGDOM

Matt. 5: 1-12, 43-48.

1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him:

2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

43 Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy:

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you;

45 That ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.

46 For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same?

48 Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5: 8.)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Mountain near Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the twelve, and the multitudes.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 15.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 22.	M.	True Blessedness (Matt. 5: 1-12)
January 23.	T.	Loving Our Enemies (Matt. 5: 43-48)
January 24.	W.	The "Golden Rule" (Luke 6: 27-38)
January 25.	T.	Whole-Hearted Seeking (Ps. 119: 1-8)
January 26.	F.	Mutual Love (Rom. 12: 9-21)
January 27.	S.	Christian Duties (Eph. 4: 25-32)
January 28.	S.	A Citizen of Zion (Ps. 15: 1-5)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Matthew's Introductory Statements (Verses 1, 2).
 - II. Blessings Pronounced Upon Character (Verses 3-8).
 - III. Blessings Promised for Service (Verses 9-12).
 - IV. Proper Treatment of Enemies (Verses 43-45).
 - V. Superiority of Christian Love (Verses 46-48).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Between the Lessons.—An interval of some time is understood to have elapsed between the events recorded in this and the last lesson. This is a part of what is called the "Sermon on the Mount." (Matt. 5: 1 to 7: 29.) Some of the things transpiring in the interval mentioned are recorded by Matthew himself in chapters following this sermon. This will not appear surprising when we remember that historians often relate incidents without reference to the order of occurrence. The value of many transactions depends upon natural merit, not the order in which recorded. Moral standards have intrinsic value, and may be discussed or related at any time.

Connecting Links.—Our last lesson closed with Jesus spreading through Galilee the doctrine that his kingdom was "at hand." Before leaving that territory he healed the paralytic and called Matthew to follow him. (Mark 2: 1-14; Luke 5: 17-28.) After leaving, he attended a feast of the Jews (probably the Passover) in Jerusalem. (John 5: 1). After more healings and teachings, we find him again in Galilee, where on the lake shore he continued his mission of mercy. Finally he retired to a mountain and selected twelve of his disciples, "whom he named apostles." (Luke 6: 12-16.) Following this came the sermon of which our lesson is a part.

Luke's Account.—Some think that Luke's report (6: 20-49), because of striking similarities, though much briefer, is another account of the same sermon; others, because of equally striking differences, think they were two different sermons. In either case, no conflict can be found in the two accounts. Teachers often repeat important lessons with varied forms of expression, sometimes going more into detail, at other times being more general, and enforcing the lesson on different occasions with a few or many examples. Doubtless Jesus pursued this natural course. With the same natural liberty, each writer made his own choice respecting the particular discourse of Jesus, or what special feature of it, he wished to record. Inspiration protected them against misrepresenting facts or contradicting each other. That is all that is necessary to make each record entirely credible.

LESSON NOTES

I. Matthew's Introductory Statements (Verses 1, 2)

In the Mountain.—Jesus went "up into the mountain" before selecting his apostles, and before the preaching of this sermon; but the exact location, in either case, is unknown. It is supposed to be a hill or mountain not far from Capernaum. He may have selected the place because convenient and suitable for speaking to those who might

follow him. The sermon's value is in his teaching, not the place it was delivered. The "multitudes" mentioned refers to the great numbers who had been attracted to him by his healings and matchless teaching. A secluded place would give some relief from the crowds, and be more suitable for teaching those that followed him.

"Sat Down."—According to common custom, Jews who read stood up; those who spoke sat down. (Luke 4: 16-28; John 8: 2.) Understanding this, the disciples, seeing him sit down, probably thought he was ready to teach them, and gathered about him. Jesus had just designated twelve of his disciples as apostles; but the term "disciples," meaning learners, is here likely used to include all present who had been influenced by his teaching to accept him as a leader. Matthew says Jesus taught "them"—his disciples—but he also makes a concluding statement (7: 28, 29), which shows that others, besides the disciples, were present. John the Baptist and Jesus had both preached repentance as a character preparation for the kingdom that was "at hand." This sermon, dealing with moral standards, has been called "a divine commentary" on that preaching.

II. Blessings Pronounced Upon Character (Verses 3-8)

"The Poor in Spirit."—Verses 3-12 are frequently referred to as the "Beatitudes"—a word meaning blessings, because the word Jesus used means "blessed." It expresses the genuine happiness or spiritual satisfaction that comes to those whose character and conduct are assurance of divine approval here and hereafter. The happiness Jesus describes is very different from what the world offers. That is uncertain, often sinful, and must soon end; what he promises is unfailing, grows stronger, and finally becomes glorious. Jesus does not say poor in earthly possessions, but "poor in spirit." The word "poor" has a very general application, and describes all kinds of destitution and want. In the case of Lazarus (Luke 16: 20) it is translated "beggar." The lack of temporal possessions does not guarantee happiness, for many poor in that sense are neither satisfied nor happy; many with such blessings are still poor in spirit; all the poor in spirit are "rich toward God." As one deprived of temporal possessions realizes his need and dependence on the kindness of others, so one poor in spirit recognizes his own sinfulness, his utter inability to live without God's assistance. Realizing his dependence upon divine mercy, he gladly trusts himself "in well doing unto a faithful Creator." (1 Pet. 4: 19.)

The Kingdom Theirs.—Citizenship in Christ's kingdom, with all its rights and privileges, and a glorious admission into the everlasting kingdom, will all be theirs. The reason is that the poor in spirit, feeling their deep soul need, will seek the kingdom as their first duty. (Matt. 6: 32.)

Those That Mourn.—We must not apply Scripture in a way to conflict with evident facts or plainly revealed duties of man. The words are without verbal qualification, but a limitation must be understood. Mourning is explained to be "manifested grief"; all people who grieve will not be comforted. Even all who mourn over their sins will not be comforted, unless their grief comes from genuine sorrow and leads to repentance and reformation. Paul says that "godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation," while the "sorrow of the world worketh death." (2 Cor. 7: 10.) There is unspeakable comfort to those

who, in righteousness, mourn over the loss of godly friends, or whose sorrow for sins leads them to salvation, but none for those whose sorrow is of the world.

The Meek.—The Jews expected the Messiah's kingdom to be one of wealth and power, established and defended by the sword. His promise that the meek should inherit the earth was to them, doubtless, an astonishing statement. The meek are gentle, humble, submissive, and long-suffering, maintain righteousness in spite of tribulation, enduring afflictions without vicious resentment, but boldly "striving for the faith of the gospel." Jesus said, "I am meek" (Matt. 11: 29), yet he demanded justice (John 18: 23). No one endured more than Paul without malice, but when necessary he asserted his rights. (Acts 25: 10, 11). As the meek have not literally inherited this material earth, we are safe in saying that Jesus did not mean that, though this trait will enable them to enjoy its best blessings. The Christian's inheritance is "reserved in heaven" (1 Pet. 1: 4); the final state is described as "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Pet. 3: 10).

Hungering After Righteousness.—Hunger and thirst are nature's keen desires that can be satisfied only by food and drink. Here they express the soul's earnest longing for the rewards of righteousness, received only by obeying Christ, the "water of life" and "bread from heaven." Those truly hungry and thirsty, physically or spiritually, need to know only where food and drink may be obtained; strong desires lead to eating and drinking, filling the soul with joy.

Merciful.—Mercy involves sympathy, kindness, help, the desire to alleviate sufferings or remove afflictions. Its most striking exemplification, perhaps, is found in the willingness to forgive offenses. In this we become godlike and imitate Jesus. Without this characteristic we need not expect God's mercy to cover our sins. (James 2: 13.)

Pure in Heart.—The heart is the fountain whence come all the deeds by which man is accounted good or bad, saint or sinner. (Matt. 12: 34; 15: 18, 19.) Solomon advised to "keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4: 23.) Only a good tree bears good fruit. The same fountain does not send forth both sweet and bitter water. (James 3: 11.) The pure in heart shall see God—finally enjoy in his presence the fullness of the inheritance he has in reservation for us. (1 John 3: 2, 3.)

III. Blessings Promised for Service (Verses 9-12)

For Peacemakers.—This is another promise in strong contrast with world ideas. Earthly kingdoms are usually established and defended by the carnal sword; Christ's kingdom, by the "sword of the Spirit." Again, there is an implied condition; peace to meet divine approval must be established justly and righteously. There are good reasons why a blessing should rest upon peacemakers. First, the very effort made is proof that the peacemaker is himself a peaceable person, contributing his part to the desired end. Second, if he succeeds in reconciling the contentious, he improves general conditions and makes it easier to induce sinners to enter the kingdom of peace. Making peace, like destroying evil trees, often removes the fruitful source of endless strife—one of Satan's most effective means of keeping people out of Christ's kingdom. Those who earnestly try to make peace, but fail, will receive the same credit for their efforts. They shall be called the children of God because they manifest a spirit like his. He is the

God of peace (1 Cor. 14: 33), giving his Son to reconcile the world to himself. Those striving to promote peace are entitled to be called children of God for the additional reason that they are followers of Christ, the Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9: 6.)

Those Persecuted.—People may be persecuted when they are morally no better than the persecutors. The divine blessings are not promised to those thus suffering. Persecuted for righteousness' sake means to endure evil treatment because of faithfulness in Christ's kingdom. Such will receive the rewards promised for loyal citizenship.

Those Reviled.—In this beatitude Jesus expresses the condition on which the blessing will be received—being evil spoken of "falsely, for my sake." Being reviled when the charges are true entitles no one to God's favor. If one does not deserve the evil charges, he can rejoice for two reasons: (1) He will receive a great reward; (2) he will be imitating the prophets who were worthy of God's favor in ancient days. The manner of this reviling is expressed in Luke 6: 22.

IV. Proper Treatment of Enemies (Verses 43-45)

Old and New Teaching.—In contrasting his teaching with what they had been hearing, Jesus did not mean to reject the authority of the Mosaic law; for he had already said he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it, and those breaking the least commandment of it would be called least in the kingdom. (Matt. 5: 17-19.) But he does show that any false interpretations or unwarranted conclusions drawn from it by the Jews were to be rejected. Loving one's neighbor was commanded. (Lev. 19: 18.) Hating enemies was an unwarranted conclusion. The Jews, on entering Canaan, were forbidden to make peace with their enemies, lest they drift into idolatry. (Ex. 34: 11-17.) This, and the wars they had to wage, easily developed the sentiment of hating enemies. (See Ps. 139: 21, 22.) This idea, resulting from the operation of the law, was in fact a false conclusion.

Loving Enemies.—Refusing to grant Israel the privilege of making political alliances with other nations, or close social affiliations, was to prevent idolatry; it did not mean that Israelites were to hate the people. Neither should loving enemies mean we should indorse their evil or participate in their sins. Hating "every false way" is divine teaching (Ps. 119: 104); desiring the good of sinners and praying for persecutors is equally so. Jesus is our best example. (Luke 23: 34.) Doing this, we again imitate the Father who sends material blessings on both evil and good—we are worthy children.

V. Superiority of Christian Love (Verses 46-48)

What Reward?—Jesus enforces his command to love enemies with a reference to rewards, showing the superiority of his command over the ordinary human practice. What approbation, praise, or thanks does one deserve who loves only those who love him? Jesus gives no direct answer, but we know that such selfish love deserves no commendation. The hated publicans did as much. If they saluted only their brethren, or did good to those who returned good, but to none others, they deserved no praise; publicans and sinners did as well. (Luke 6: 32, 33.) The nature of Christ's kingdom necessarily requires its standards of acceptance to be above those acceptable in the kingdoms of this world.

Be Ye Perfect.—This command, seemingly impossible, is not incon-

sistent with human frailties. Literally, the word "perfect" means finished, or completed, not sinless. God is sinless; man is sinful. God, as a sinless being, finishes his work; man, subject to sin, can finish his. When man, with his human limitations and weaknesses, does the work belonging to his sphere, he is perfect as God, in a higher sphere, is perfect in his work.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Entrance to all worth-while institutions requires more or less preparation. Jesus makes repentance an indispensable condition of entering his kingdom.

2. Actions, however commendable in themselves, to be fully acceptable must be prompted by true character—come from an honest and good heart.

3. True citizenship in any kingdom is measured by the loyalty and service rendered.

4. Doing good to all men, as occasion and ability will allow, deserves the highest praise, because it is a godly characteristic.

5. Christian conduct must rise above worldly standards, or Christ will not be revealed to those who see us.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Of what is this lesson a part?
Explain the order in which Matthew records it.
Where did our last lesson leave Jesus?
Give the connecting links till his return to Galilee.
What was done just before preaching this sermon?
How has Luke's report been considered?
Account for the differences in the two records.
How were the writers protected by inspiration?

I

What is known about the place where this sermon was preached?
Why select such a place?
What Jewish custom did he observe?
To what disciples was the sermon addressed?
Who else were present?
What has this sermon been called?

II

Why are verses 3-12 called "beatitudes"?
What is expressed by the word Jesus used?
What kind of poverty is meant?
How are the "poor in spirit" rich?
What does one thus poor realize?
Why is the kingdom theirs?

What limitation must be understood on verse 4?
What contrast does Paul make on sorrows?
Why would verse 5 seem astonishing to the Jews?
Of what are Jesus and Paul examples?
How will Christians inherit the earth?
What is the lesson in verse 6?
What is the best exemplification of being merciful?
Why pronounce a blessing on the "pure in heart"?
What is meant by "shall see God"?

III

What condition is implied in verse 9?
Why should peacemakers be blessed?
How does general peace benefit Christ's kingdom?
How are God and Christ presented to us?
When are the persecuted blessed?
What condition does Jesus express in verse 11?
What are the reasons for the persecuted rejoicing?

IV

What had Jesus already said of the law?
What did he mean in referring to the old teaching?
What led to the teaching: hate your enemies?
What should we hate?
Who is our best example?

V

How does Jesus enforce his command?
What does the nature of Christ's kingdom require?

How can we be perfect as God is perfect?

Practical Thoughts

What is necessary in entering all institutions?

When are actions fully acceptable?
How is true citizenship measured?
Why does doing good to man deserve praise?
Why must Christians conduct rise above worldly standards?

Lesson V—February 4, 1934

PUTTING GOD'S KINGDOM FIRST

Matt. 6: 19-33.

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.

22 The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is thy darkness!

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?

26 Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?

27 And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?

28 And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 Yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6: 33.)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Mountain near Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the twelve, and the multitudes.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 19: 7-14.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 29.	M.	True Prayer (Matt. 6: 5-15)
January 30.	T.	True Treasure (Matt. 6: 19-23)
January 31.	W.	Our Father's Care (Matt. 6: 24-34)
February 1.	T.	God's Kingdom First (Mark 10: 23-31)
February 2.	F.	Dependence Upon Christ (John 15: 1-8)
February 3.	S.	A Very Present Help (Ps. 46: 1-11)
February 4.	S.	The Works and Word of God (Ps. 19: 7-14)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Value and Security of Heavenly Treasures (Verses 19-21).
- II. A Supreme Purpose Necessary to Success (Verses 22-24).
- III. Jesus Shows Anxiety to be Without Value (Verses 25-30).
- IV. The Reasoning Concluded (Verses 31, 32).
- V. Man's Supreme Duty Defined (Verse 33).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Citizenship Duties.—The obligations resting upon citizens in all kingdoms fall into three general classes: (1) Proper respect for, and loyalty to, the king as supreme ruler; (2) strict obedience, in all governmental affairs, to all commands having the king's approval; (3) considerate and fair treatment of all fellow citizens, because all are equally entitled to the government's privileges and protection. In these particulars Christ's kingdom is like earthly kingdoms. Due regard, therefore, must be had for divine wisdom as the only reliable source of information respecting work and worship. (2 Cor. 10: 4, 5.) The commands of Christ to citizens of his kingdom must be obeyed without human changes. (Gal. 1: 8-10.) The Golden Rule (Matt. 7: 12) must be accepted as the standard to regulate conduct in affairs affecting others.

Right Motives.—Before men's actions can be approved or condemned with exact justice, the motives prompting them must be carefully weighed. This is recognized as necessary in all human courts. Acts accounted crimes when performed by responsible persons with evil motives are considered unfortunate accidents when performed by those incapable of such evil intent. Likewise, leaving off some sinful practice is no evidence of genuine repentance, if done to accomplish a wicked purpose. Entering church fellowship for political or financial gain is nothing short of plain dishonesty. Eating the Lord's Supper without discerning the body (1 Cor. 11: 29) is to condemn one's self. Jesus illustrated the necessity of proper motives by references to Jewish practices then common. Sounding a trumpet to call attention to almsgiving, praying on street corners to be seen of men, using vain repetitions, and a pious attitude to attract attention to themselves, are represented by him as plain hypocrisy.

Proper Spirit.—After denouncing those actuated by wrong motives, Jesus tells his disciples that their almsgiving and prayers, and by implication all other acts of worship, should be free from ostentation and hypocrisy. Nothing in dress, attitude, or manner in religious services should appear to make us conspicuous, or turn the minds of worshippers away from God. This stern rebuke lays the ax at the root of many modern religious practices. With a sample prayer (Matt. 6: 9-13), not for endless repetition, but to show the proper manner and spirit of prayer, Jesus exemplified the spirit of all true worship.

LESSON NOTES

I. Value and Security of Heavenly Treasures (Verses 19-21)

Earthly Treasures Disappointing.—Treasures are things of special value laid up—kept in a place or manner supposedly safe—for future

use or pleasure. This command is not to be understood as absolutely forbidding the making of any preparation for future needs. If so, food and fuel could not be provided against winter's cold and hunger, or common wants in times of sickness and calamity. It means rather to make heavenly treasures our first consideration, because of the disappointing nature of all temporal things. See John 6: 27; 1 Pet. 3: 3, 4 for similar expressions. Wealth usually means "gold, silver, precious stones," or their equivalent in other possessions; but treasures are things which, for any reason, we esteem of great value. It is certain that anciently "goodly" raiment was considered as rich treasures. (Josh. 7: 21; 2 Kings 5: 5.) Jesus' reference to the moth destroying treasures shows the same idea prevailed in his day.

Danger of Loss.—With earthly treasures there is constant fear of destruction or loss. The danger in each case depends on the nature of the treasure. Garments, however valuable, may be destroyed by moths or made useless by the ravages of time; gold and silver, if buried—the common method then—instead of being used, will rust. (James 5: 2, 3.) Damage, decay, or destruction tell the story of things seen, which are temporal in nature. (2 Cor. 4: 18.) Added to this is the danger that thieves may break through and steal. But, worse than all this, if successfully kept till death, there is the possibility that afterwards they may be used to do more harm than they ever did us good. Solomon asked who knew whether the one who received his possessions after death would be a wise man or a fool. (Eccles. 2: 19.) Jesus declared that a man who laid up treasures for himself, and was not rich toward God, was a fool. (Luke 12: 20, 21.)

Heavenly Treasures Safe.—The joy of treasures consists largely in the fact that they are safely kept. Citizens in God's kingdom are joint heirs with Christ to an inheritance in heaven that cannot be defiled, corrupted, or will not fade away; it is safely guarded and ready to be revealed at the last day. (1 Pet. 1: 4, 5.) In short, none of the dangers that menace our earthly treasures can harm those left in God's keeping. Where the treasure abides, the heart dwells; hence the great value in a heavenly citizenship (Phil. 3: 20), and abundant treasures there—a motive to put God's kingdom first.

II. A Supreme Purpose Necessary to Success (Verses 22-24)

A Physical Illustration.—In order to give heavenly treasures their proper precedence over all earthly things it is necessary to have an unwavering purpose to that end; or, in the language of Paul: "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth." (Col. 3: 2.) Jesus enforces his exhortation by reference to a well-known physical fact—the relationship of the eye to the body. He says the eye is the "light of the body," by which he evidently means the eye is the medium through which light is conveyed to the mind. This light enables the body to do its work and safely go from place to place. The eye being "single" means that it gives to the mind a clear, unwavering, well-defined vision; this it does by a straight, steady gaze at the object. Failing in this, the mind is confused, the body is in danger. The mind is to the inner man what the physical eye is to the body. (Eph. 1: 18; Rom. 7: 25.) When not diseased by the "precepts of men," and constantly set on

things above, it gives a "single" or true vision. Following its lead, the spiritual man moves in safety because "full of light."

An Evil Eye.—An eye being "evil" is just the opposite of being "single." It presents a dim, blurred vision that confuses the mind, and leads to evil; it is often more dangerous than total blindness. One with blurred vision often risks his own sight; one who is blind knows he must depend upon others. One who fully recognizes human weakness knows he must depend wholly upon God for spiritual light; those confused with indistinct visions trust in human speculations and their own feelings. Jesus called such confusing light "darkness," and exclaimed: "How great is that darkness!"

Double-Minded Are Unstable.—James says that one who doubts is like a surge of the sea driven by the wind—moves in any direction the wind blows. He also says such a man is "unstable in all his ways." (James 1: 6-8.) A double-minded person is one with divided affections, trying to gain the earth and secure heaven at the same time, which is just as impossible as going in opposite directions at the same time. The singleness of purpose in serving God, Jesus illustrates by what is known to be true in serving men. "No man can serve two masters," he says. Of course he means masters with conflicting interests and requiring contradictory services. He uses the words "love" and "hate" in their ordinary Jewish sense of comparison—preferring one before the other. (Gen. 29: 30, 31; Luke 14: 26; Matt. 10: 37.) "Mammon" means riches. God is jealous and will not take second place in our affections. If our single desire is to lay up riches here, we cannot serve God, cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (Luke 18: 25); if our supreme purpose is to serve God, riches, if honestly possessed, may help in enriching that service.

III. Jesus Shows Anxiety to be Without Value (Verses 25-30)

Why the Command?—"Take no thought" has been replaced in the Revised with, "Be not anxious." This, as we now use the words, expresses the correct idea. Evidently, his general design was to show the futility of anxiety about supplying personal wants. The direct reason for the command was its bearing upon the duty of laying up treasures in heaven. Those disturbed with anxiety about providing for temporal wants will be hindered, if not prevented, from making God's kingdom the matter of first concern. The life is more valuable than food to sustain it; the body, than the raiment that covers it. Likewise the spirit is more valuable than the body in which it dwells. Hence, provision for the spirit should have the leading place in our plans.

A Second Argument.—A second reason to support the command not to be anxious about temporal wants is a reference to man's superiority over the animal creation. The birds of the heaven, for example, neither sow, reap, nor gather into barns; yet God has made provision for their feeding—more reason to conclude that man, to whom God stands related as a Father, would also be cared for sufficiently. True it is that God's provision for man's needs carries with it conditions expressed or implied; man's coöperation and efforts are required. The same is true of birds; instinct takes care of their side. Man, with intelligence, should take care of his. For reasons, understood or inexplicable, man sometimes suffers want; so do birds. The lesson still

remains. Anxiety does no good; birds with their nature *cannot* have it; man with superior nature *should not* have it.

Third Argument.—In verse 27, Jesus shows the folly of anxiety by man's inability to change the laws of nature. Being anxious about future needs will not change the laws by which they are supplied. Man cannot change his height by thought, however earnest the wish may be. A similar argument has reference to man's inordinate desire for beautiful raiment. The lilies of the field neither toil nor spin, yet, according to natural law, they grow with a beauty surpassing the royal robes of the world's greatest kings. God has placed the most beautiful and gorgeous outward adorning on objects where it lasts but a day, month, or year. That which he esteems most is what the "hidden man of the heart" puts on: "the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit." (1 Pet. 3: 3, 4.) The fact that he clothes the perishable lily with transient beauty is evidence that he will care for man's needs, both temporal and spiritual. Not so to conclude is to merit the Lord's rebuke: "O ye of little faith!"

IV. The Reasoning Concluded (Verses 31, 32)

Command Repeated.—In stating the conclusion, Jesus repeated the command not to be anxious from verse 25. He used the logical word "therefore," which means that this requirement was a correct deduction from the illustrations and reasonings he had just presented. It is certain that a proper sense of fairness will admit that the conclusion does logically follow. Nothing more is required in reaching conclusions. The anxiety that allows us to think of nothing else than what we can have to eat and wear will leave no place in our hearts for things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

An Exalted Position.—Jesus intimates that any other view would belittle the exalted position of citizenship in God's kingdom. The Gentiles, aliens, were anxious about all temporal things. If the children of God have no higher ideals and aspirations than sinners, what advantage is there in being a Christian? Who, outside, would see any need for entering the church?

A Final Appeal.—As a final consideration to prompt acceptance of his conclusion, Jesus said: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." God, knowing our needs and having a Father's love, will supply them in a way best for his children. In this divine care we should place our trust. Being anxious is not necessary to obtain God's blessings; being anxious about temporal needs is both harmful and dangerous to us.

V. Man's Supreme Duty Defined (Verse 33)

First Things.—This statement of man's first duty is not surprising, for, even in common affairs, some things take precedence over others. That of the most value, or most necessary in accomplishing some end, is given first place. Less important things occupy a secondary position. In human matters, saving life is recognized as the first duty, regardless of circumstances. As spiritual life is of more value than the whole world, so saving the soul is man's first and supreme duty. This is accomplished by seeking God's kingdom and his righteousness. It is carrying out the first commandment. (Matt. 22: 36-38.) Nothing can supersede it.

Other Things Added.—This probably means that giving the king-

dom of God the first place in our affections will not interfere with our receiving the common blessings of life. Certainly they will be received only in a right and proper way. Serving God will not lessen our ability to receive them justly and honestly. Christians should not expect them to be added otherwise.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Peter declares that the material elements "shall all be dissolved with fervent heat." (2 Pet. 3: 10.) Treasures laid up in God's keeping remain for the "new heavens and a new earth."

2. The eye is the only organ by which natural light is carried to the mind. The word of God gives all the spiritual light we have. Hearing that word fills the mind with that light.

3. The Father, who created man with his capacity for enjoying both temporal and spiritual blessings, has graciously and abundantly provided the things to be enjoyed.

4. A loving Father, who knows our needs, will not make a mistake and provide the wrong thing. Trust in him is not misplaced.

5. Things of great value have to be sought, in most cases; it is always true in spiritual matters. Man's greatest blessings are found in the church or kingdom of God. They alone completely satisfy, because they lead to eternal life.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

How many classes of duties rest upon citizens?
Name them.
How must we consider divine wisdom?
What must be the standard of Christian conduct?
What is necessary in judging conduct?
Give some examples of wrong motives.
What examples did Jesus give?
How did he describe such people?
What lesson is taught in his sample prayer?

I

What is meant by "treasures"?
How is Christ's command to be understood?
Explain John 6: 27.
How may different kinds of treasures be damaged or destroyed?
What are other dangers?
What does Solomon say about them?
Describe the heavenly inheritance.
What is the great value in heavenly citizenship?

II

What is necessary if we lay up treasures in heaven?
What does Jesus say of the eye?
What did he mean by "single"?
What is meant by "evil" eye?

Why is that worse than blindness?
Who is a "double-minded" person?
What kind of masters did Jesus mean?
How did Jesus use the word "hate"?
What does the word "mammon" mean?

III

What command did Jesus give?
What was the design in giving this command?
How would anxiety affect laying up heavenly treasures?
How does it show we should first provide for the spirit?
What is the second argument made?
What is required in receiving God's blessings?
What is shown in the third argument?
What illustration is given?
What lesson is learned from the lilies?
What adorning does God deem best?
Who have little faith?

IV

What is meant by the word "therefore"?
Why is such anxiety so dangerous?
Why refer to the Gentiles?
What final appeal did he make?
Why is anxiety unnecessary?

V

What is true in human affairs generally?
How do we decide which should be first?
What is most important in all human affairs?
What is man's supreme duty?
How will other things be added?

Practical Thoughts

What treasures are secure?

What is the source of all spiritual light?

What provisions has God made for man?
 Why can we implicitly trust him?
 Where are man's greatest blessings found?

Lesson VI—February 11, 1934

TIMELY WARNINGS

(TEMPERANCE LESSON)

Matt. 7: 12-27.

12 All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.

13 Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby.

14 For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.

15 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.

16 By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 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.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock.

26 And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."* (Matt. 7: 19.)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Mountain near Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the twelve, and the multitudes.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 2: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 5.	M.	Warning Against Hypocrisy (Matt. 7: 12-20)
February 6.	T.	Warning Against Insecurity (Matt. 7: 21-29)
February 7.	W.	Warning Against Indulgence (Dan. 1: 8-21)
February 8.	T.	Warning Against Drunkenness (Isa. 28: 1-10)
February 9.	F.	Warning Against Lawlessness (Isa. 42: 18-25)
February 10.	S.	Warning Against Evil Influence (Rom. 14: 13-23)
February 11.	S.	Wise Counsel (Prov. 2: 1-8)

ANNUAL LESSON COMMENTARY

45

LESSON NOTES

I. The Golden Rule (Verse 12)

"Therefore."—This word probably indicates an inference drawn from the preceding eleven verses. Rash judgments, hypocrisy, and unwise efforts with haters of truth, all relate to conduct affecting others. Condemning such naturally suggested a general rule applying to all moral actions. Christ's statement is called the "Golden Rule" to indicate its great practical value in all human relationships.

The Rule Defined.—The rule accomplishes two important ends: (1) It is the underlying principle of self-control (true temperance), making one act toward others with justice and mercy; (2) it directly benefits others in causing them to receive what is helpful and good for them, instead of what is harmful and bad. It may be described as the law of brotherly love practically applied. Treating others as we would wish to be treated, if the circumstances were reversed, is really the acid test of genuine Christian character. Strict observance makes one impartial and fair in his estimates of the acts of others; it will prevent their willful harm; it will not allow slander, cheating, stealing, murder, or any other crime against men. Drunkenness and indorsing or supporting the liquor traffic will be prevented by it. Intoxicating drinks as beverages have never been anything but harmful. Those supporting the traffic violate the spirit of the Golden Rule.

Jesus' Explanation.—Concerning this rule, Jesus said: "For this is the law and the prophets." It is the basic principle upon which rest all moral regulations found in either the law or the prophets. The nature of man always remaining the same, this rule is appropriately extended to Christ's kingdom. Man's social relationships make it universally applicable. This rule, though simplicity itself, would really be misapplied if one wished some unlawful or sinful thing done. Common sense, however, will not allow such a perversion of it.

II. Two Ways and Their Destinations (Verses 13, 14)

Application of the Words.—Having just spoken the Golden Rule, Jesus may have intended in these verses to show that following it was the difficult way, in contrast with another way in which full liberty would be given for fleshly desires; also, that the greater reward would amply repay for all the difficulties encountered. The words, however, easily suggest other practical lessons, though that might be the primary reason they were spoken.

The Imagery.—The picture here presented is that of ancient cities, surrounded by walls and entered through gates. One city represents life; more fully expressed, it means the destination where life will be received. This must mean heaven and eternal life. The other city represents the place of destruction. This can only mean hell, where the wicked will be eternally banished. According to the imagery, travelers passed through the gates into the cities after they had finished their journeys, not when they entered the ways. A broad way and a wide gate would be easily seen and used by throngs; a narrow pathway might be overlooked, and a small gate missed. A striking contrast, surely.

Practical Lessons.—The many classes into which human wisdom divides mankind will be utterly worthless at the judgment. Jesus

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Golden Rule (Verse 12).
- II. Two Ways and Their Destinations (Verses 13, 14).
- III. Warnings Against False Teachers (Verses 15-20).
- IV. Only the Obedient Enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Verses 21-23).
- V. The Wise and Foolish Builders (Verses 24-27).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Uncharitable Judgments.—It has been suggested that the fifth chapter of Matthew deals with *actions*; the sixth chapter, with *motives* prompting actions; and, it may be added, that the seventh chapter presents *warnings* against evil actions. This, though correct, is but a general view of the sermon. The prohibition against judging (7: 1) is intended as a practical working of the principle of justice in personal conduct. It squarely condemns the unfairness in unjust, uncharitable, and censorious condemnations—and this, often, when the one who judges may be guilty of equal or greater crimes than those he condemns. It does not forbid the judging of, and withdrawal of fellowship from, those in the church that walk disorderly. That is required. (Matt. 18: 16, 17; 2 Thess. 3: 6; 2 John 10.) In the sermon itself Jesus says: "Beware of false prophets" (7: 15, 16). This implies the necessity of personal judging to the extent of deciding between the false and the true. (See Rom. 16: 17; 1 Cor. 5: 12, 13.)

The Reason Assigned.—Being free from uncharitable judging is decidedly best for all parties concerned. It leads to a fairer decision, and leaves the heart of the judge in a much better condition. That such is the general teaching of the Scriptures is clear from 1 Cor. 13: 4-7. Without knowing the exact state of another's heart, which most of the time at least is impossible, a judgment respecting his motives may be entirely wrong; hence, his condemnation unjust. Our decisions must rest upon conduct—judging the tree by its fruit. The human rule is to pay one back in the same measure, both in quantity and kind; the divine law is that each shall receive "according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5: 10)—receive a reward as his conduct deserves. Those disposed to judge unjustly should remember that sooner or later they must be judged as their deeds deserve.

A Distinction Required.—Before reporting the statement with which our lesson begins, Matthew gives another warning of a practical nature. In this Jesus advises against doing the unreasonable or absurd thing—giving that which is holy to dogs, or pearls to swine. Perhaps this was to offset any extreme practices that might have resulted from his command not to judge. Dogs and swine represent those so corrupt and wicked that the truth would not reach them. The whole case may be stated thus: Do not uncharitably pass judgment—try to remove a mote from another's eye when there is a beam in your own—but do not be so lacking in discriminating judgment as to waste effort on those viciously wicked.

puts all in two ways here, and two classes there. (Matt. 25: 31-46.) Those who boast of being liberal and broad-minded, granting to each one the privilege of going to heaven on a way of his own choosing, find no comfort in the Savior's "narrow" way and "strait" gate. He declares himself to be the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one can come to the Father but by him. (John 14: 6.) The narrow way has divine approval; only those obeying Jesus walk in it. People can enter the broad way and walk in it without serious thought or special effort; going with the crowds, like drifting with the tide, requires neither zeal nor resistance. A narrow pathway and small gate have to be looked for. Jesus said: "Strive to enter in by the narrow door." (Luke 13: 24.) The reason so many are in the broad way is that they do not find the narrow way; they do not find it because they do not seek it.

III. Warning Against False Teachers (Verses 15-20)

"Beware."—After stating the necessity of walking in the narrow way to enter heaven, Jesus warns against the danger of being misled by false teachers who, as professed servants of God, claim to direct travelers to that way. Literally the word for "beware" means to bring one thing to another. To bring the mind to a thing means to consider it, or give heed to it. If the thing considered may be false or dangerous, then we should beware of it—consider it with much caution.

"False Prophets."—In the general sense the word "prophets" refers to those who foretell future events. The term, however, literally means to *speak forth*, and may appropriately apply to any one who speaks or teaches by divine direction. A false prophet, then, must necessarily be one whose teaching is untrue—contrary to the word of God. The curse of God rests upon all teaching in his name which is not in accord with what the apostles have taught. (Gal. 1: 8, 9.) Near the close of his ministry Jesus predicted the coming of false prophets. (Matt. 24: 24.) He may have had direct reference to them in our text, but the principle and the literal meaning of the word make it safe to include all false religious teachers. Because false teachers may be honestly mistaken does not change the deadly nature of their false doctrines. Here Jesus mentions only the hypocrites—outwardly like sheep, inwardly like wolves—assuming an air of holiness when the heart is full of evil. In this they imitate their master—Satan. (2 Cor. 11: 13-15.)

Known by Fruits.—Illustrating by a well-known fact in nature, Christ shows that men, like trees, should be known by their fruits. Leaves, bark, and blooms are the tree's outward adorning; fruit is its contribution to man's needs. When the fruit tree fails to bear, it has failed in its mission, and by the accepted test should be cut down. The Savior applies the illustration more to quality than quantity. Thorns do not produce grapes, nor thistles figs; such is not expected because contrary to the nature of the tree. Plants "bearing after their kind" is universally true. A good tree is one bearing, according to its nature, fruit that is useful; its nature allows nothing else. A corrupt tree is one bearing worthless fruit. Such trees are cut down.

The Application.—Trees, being inanimate, cannot act contrary to their nature. Man, being a free moral agent, can change from evil

LESSON NOTES

I. The Golden Rule (Verse 12)

"Therefore."—This word probably indicates an inference drawn from the preceding eleven verses. Rash judgments, hypocrisy, and unwise efforts with haters of truth, all relate to conduct affecting others. Condemning such naturally suggested a general rule applying to all moral actions. Christ's statement is called the "Golden Rule" to indicate its great practical value in all human relationships.

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II. Two Ways and Their Destinations (Verses 13, 14)

Application of the Words.—Having just spoken the Golden Rule, Jesus may have intended in these verses to show that following it was the difficult way, in contrast with another way in which full liberty would be given for fleshly desires; also, that the greater reward would amply repay for all the difficulties encountered. The words, however, easily suggest other practical lessons, though that might be the primary reason they were spoken.

The Imagery.—The picture here presented is that of ancient cities, surrounded by walls and entered through gates. One city represents life; more fully expressed, it means the destination where life will be received. This must mean heaven and eternal life. The other city represents the place of destruction. This can only mean hell, where the wicked will be eternally banished. According to the imagery, travelers passed through the gates into the cities after they had finished their journeys, not when they entered the ways. A broad way and a wide gate would be easily seen and used by throngs; a narrow pathway might be overlooked, and a small gate missed. A striking contrast, surely.

Practical Lessons.—The many classes into which human wisdom divides mankind will be utterly worthless at the judgment. Jesus

puts all in two ways here, and two classes there. (Matt. 25: 31-46.) Those who boast of being liberal and broad-minded, granting to each one the privilege of going to heaven on a way of his own choosing, find no comfort in the Savior's "narrow" way and "strait" gate. He declares himself to be the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one can come to the Father but by him. (John 14: 6.) The narrow way has divine approval; only those obeying Jesus walk in it. People can enter the broad way and walk in it without serious thought or special effort; going with the crowds, like drifting with the tide, requires neither zeal nor resistance. A narrow pathway and small gate have to be looked for. Jesus said: "Strive to enter in by the narrow door." (Luke 13: 24.) The reason so many are in the broad way is that they do not find the narrow way; they do not find it because they do not seek it.

III. Warning Against False Teachers (Verses 15-20)

"Beware."—After stating the necessity of walking in the narrow way to enter heaven, Jesus warns against the danger of being misled by false teachers who, as professed servants of God, claim to direct travelers to that way. Literally the word for "beware" means to bring one thing to another. To bring the mind to a thing means to consider it, or give heed to it. If the thing considered may be false or dangerous, then we should beware of it—consider it with much caution.

"False Prophets."—In the general sense the word "prophets" refers to those who foretell future events. The term, however, literally means to *speak forth*, and may appropriately apply to any one who speaks or teaches by divine direction. A false prophet, then, must necessarily be one whose teaching is untrue—contrary to the word of God. The curse of God rests upon all teaching in his name which is not in accord with what the apostles have taught. (Gal. 1: 8, 9.) Near the close of his ministry Jesus predicted the coming of false prophets. (Matt. 24: 24.) He may have had direct reference to them in our text, but the principle and the literal meaning of the word make it safe to include all false religious teachers. Because false teachers may be honestly mistaken does not change the deadly nature of their false doctrines. Here Jesus mentions only the hypocrites—outwardly like sheep, inwardly like wolves—assuming an air of holiness when the heart is full of evil. In this they imitate their master—Satan. (2 Cor. 11: 13-15.)

Known by Fruits.—Illustrating by a well-known fact in nature, Christ shows that men, like trees, should be known by their fruits. Leaves, bark, and blooms are the tree's outward adorning; fruit is its contribution to man's needs. When the fruit tree fails to bear, it has failed in its mission, and by the accepted test should be cut down. The Savior applies the illustration more to quality than quantity. Thorns do not produce grapes, nor thistles figs; such is not expected because contrary to the nature of the tree. Plants "bearing after their kind" is universally true. A good tree is one bearing, according to its nature, fruit that is useful; its nature allows nothing else. A corrupt tree is one bearing worthless fruit. Such trees are cut down.

The Application.—Trees, being inanimate, cannot act contrary to their nature. Man, being a free moral agent, can change from evil

to righteous deeds. While the heart remains wicked, he cannot bear fruit acceptable to God; but purifying his heart (James 4: 8), he can. Fruit is good when it comes to the required standard; man's work is spiritually good only when in harmony with God's word. (1 John 4: 6.)

IV. Only the Obedient Enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Verses 21-23)

The Case Stated.—As a further warning against sinful ways, false teachers, and destructive destinations, and to encourage the righteous to persistent efforts, Jesus declared that only those who do the Father's will shall enter the kingdom of heaven. He presents this vital truth by contrasting two kinds of doing, just as he contrasted two different ways, two kinds of prophets, and two kinds of trees. On another occasion he said that many "shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." (Luke 13: 24, 25.) When life's journey is ended and the door of opportunity is closed, our knocking will be in vain. Of course it is right to say, "Lord, Lord," if our service in his cause makes us worthy of his favor. Jesus declares that such belated calls upon the Lord will not open the door of mercy when it has been finally closed. With stinging directness, he asks: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6: 46.)

The Plea of Many.—Naturally, multitudes in the broad way will make no claim of serving the Lord. They may cry for mercy, but not on the score of service. Others, with pretense of obedience to God, will claim a right to divine favors. Jesus represents them as confidently recounting what they had done in his name—prophesying, casting out demons, and many mighty works. Doing things in the name of Jesus means by his authority, not simply pronouncing his name. (Acts 19: 13-15.) Many religious workers, though apparently doing great things, act without Christ's authority, and will be rejected.

The Divine Reply.—Jesus said his reply will be: "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." His words mean: I never approved of your work. Though religious, they are pretenders or mistaken enthusiasts whose work the Lord has never commanded or approved. This does not prove that Christians cannot apostatize and be lost. Jesus here is not referring to the saved that backslide or apostatize, but those false religious teachers whose works were never authorized by the Lord—an entirely different class.

V. The Wise and Foolish Builders (Verses 24-27)

Hearing and Doing.—After warning against false teachers and showing the fatal results of religious works without his authority, Jesus shows that salvation comes not alone by hearing his words, but by doing them. His statement accords with a universal principle: Not the hearers, but doers of the law are justified. (Rom. 2: 13; James 1: 25.) By the expression, "these words of mine," he doubtless referred to the entire sermon, which, in principle, included all of man's duty to God. The words, then, would be equally applicable to any commands resting on these principles.

An Illustrated Warning.—Jesus closes the sermon with a warning against hearing and not doing, illustrated by contrasting two builders. The one doing his words is like a man who "dugged and went deep"

(Luke 6: 48), and built his house upon a rock. Neither floods nor winds destroy it, because it is built on a rock. So of the man whose life is modeled after Christ's teaching. Life's storms may rob him of all his earthly treasures, but cannot destroy his heavenly inheritance. To such the judgment will be a day of rejoicing. The disobedient hearer builds upon the sand, deluded by the thought that his house will successfully stand any storm that may come. The sad feature of the case is that he may not realize his mistake until the judgment tests "each man's work of what sort it is."

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Correct principles lead to correct practices, if diligently applied. The Golden Rule is the only perfect panacea for the world's moral ills.
2. The final test of all roads that men travel is the destinations to which they lead. Beauty, convenience, and comfort are all well enough in their place as we travel on, but they must yield first place to safety. Where will the road take us—to life or destruction?
3. Truth and facts are sustained by relevant proof, not by assertions, however bold. Jesus said: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (John 14: 15.)
4. Reaching any destination depends on entering a way that leads to it, and patiently going the full distance. Heaven will be reached by entering the church, and being faithful till death.
5. Structures on the sand may be built with as much care as those on the rock, but are not safe against the storm.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What statement did Jesus make on judging?
What kind of judging does it prohibit?
What kinds are not prohibited?
Why is charitable judging best for all?
How do the human rule and divine law differ?
What other warning does Matthew report?
What lesson is in the reference to dogs and swine?

I

What is indicated by the word "therefore"?
Why is it called the "Golden Rule"?
What two important ends are accomplished by it?
How would you practically define the rule?
What will result from its strict observance?
How does it condemn the liquor traffic?
What explanation did Jesus give?
What is its meaning?

II

What may have caused Jesus to speak of the two ways?
What is the picture presented in these verses?
How should the application be made?
Where does the imagery place the gates?
Into what classes does Jesus divide humanity?
Show the value of the narrow way.
What is necessary to reach the good destination?

III

Why did Jesus speak these verses?
What is indicated by the word "beware"?
How is the word "prophets" to be applied?
What is true of all false teachers?
What prophecy did Jesus utter of them?
To whom does Jesus here refer?
How shall men be known?
What illustration did Jesus use?
What is meant by the "good" and "corrupt" trees?
What distinction must be made between men and trees?

IV

What further warning, and why given?
How does he present this vital truth?
When will our seeking be in vain?
What direct question did he ask?

What two classes will ask for mercy in vain?

What is meant by "I never knew you"? Does this prove that Christians cannot be lost? Why?

V

What truth did Jesus state in this section?

With what does his statement accord? What is meant by "these words of mine"?

How did Jesus illustrate his lesson? How do you apply the illustration?

Practical Thoughts

What is true of correct principles?

What is the final test of all roads?

How are truth and facts sustained?

Upon what does reaching heaven depend?

When is careful building successful?

Lesson VII—February 18, 1934

JESUS' POWER TO HELP

Matt. 9: 1-13.

1 And he entered into a boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city.

2 And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven.

3 And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

5 For which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk?

6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.

7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

8 But when the multitudes saw it, they were afraid, and glorified God, who had given such authority unto men.

9 And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

10 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples.

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Teacher with the publicans and sinners?

12 But when he heard it, he said, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.

13 But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt. 9: 13.)

TIME.—Early in A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Capernaum and on the seacoast near by.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the twelve, the paralytic, and the multitudes.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 35: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 12. M.-----Jesus' Power to Help (Matt. 9: 1-13)

February 13. T.-----Jesus Helps a Centurion's Servant (Matt. 8: 5-13)

February 14. W.-----Jesus Helps Demoniacs (Matt. 8: 28-34)

February 15. T.-----Prayer and Power (Mark 1: 35-45)

February 16. F.-----Helping in the Name of Jesus (Acts 16: 14-18)

February 17. S.-----The Son of God Supreme (Heb. 1: 1-9)

February 18. S.-----Jehovah's Gracious Reign (Isa. 35: 1-10)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Jesus Forgives the Palsied Man's Sins (Verses 1, 2).
 - II. Jesus Replies to the Charge of Blasphemy (Verses 3-5).
 - III. Jesus Demonstrates His Divine Power (Verses 6-8).
 - IV. The Call of Matthew (Verse 9).
 - V. Jesus Justifies the Call of Sinners (Verses 10-13).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Lesson Text.—The eighth and ninth chapters of Matthew, as will readily be observed, are mainly given to a report of miracles performed by the Lord. This record furnishes the basis for the subject of our lesson, as well as the lesson text. It is evident that Matthew was intending to furnish only evidence of Jesus' power, without any effort to follow the exact order in which the miracles occurred. According to scholars, some of these miracles were performed before he preached the Sermon on the Mount, from which our last three lessons were taken; some of them, after that time. The miracles, if real transactions as reported, are irrefutable proof of Christ's power, regardless of when they occurred. Historians frequently gather evidence of propositions without taking account of the sequence of the events.

Power and Authority.—The words "power" and "authority" are very closely related. Each is sometimes used to express the real meaning of the other. Power means ability, capacity, or physical energy to do things; authority more commonly means privilege or delegated right to act. Their Greek representatives have the same distinction, and the same liberty in use. In human affairs physical force may often be used as a natural right; in other cases authority must be granted before such power can be exercised. Both power and authority are necessary for agents carrying out the divine will. Miracles being, in some measure, temporary suspensions of natural law, require more power than man possesses. If they occur, it must be through special power delegated to the worker. Unquestionably, then, the reality of a miracle is proof of divine authority vested in the performer.

The Human Side.—The distinction between the divine and the human side of things follows the Bible record from beginning to end. It holds in both temporal and spiritual matters. Miracles are on the divine side; obedience, on the human side. In spiritual things man must have God's authority for his actions. With unfaltering trust he can accept divine power and divine authority—the reality of the former, the certainty of the latter. In this cluster of miracles one incident is remarkable. The centurion, a Gentile, besought Jesus to heal his servant, but admitted his unworthiness for him to come into his house. He said: "But only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." (Matt. 8: 5-13.) Jesus commended his great faith. There is no need that we should perform miracles now, but great need that we believe that God's words—commands, promises, and threats—will be proved true.

ment, it is not reported. Presumably they did not, probably restrained by the evident favorable sentiment among the multitude. The people were moved with solemn fear, said they had seen "strange things," and praised God for giving such power to mankind. They probably did not comprehend the full meaning of Jesus having authority to forgive sins, but we, with the fullness of truth, know it meant that he is the Son of God in a divine sense.

IV. The Call of Matthew (Verse 9)

Bible Brevity.—In harmony with the Bible characteristic of reporting most important events in few words, the call of Matthew is told in thirty-two English words—twenty-two in the Greek. It also differs from purely human accounts of such matters in its direct and simple statement of facts, free from all personal praise. Matthew might have said: "In passing along the sea, the Lord observed my work and called me to the high honor of apostleship." The Spirit that revealed divine truth restrained the hand from penning such self-praise. As a publican, his business of collecting taxes for the Roman government was very unfavorable to him; this, with perfect candor, he tells. As shown by the records in Mark and Luke, he was also called "Levi"; as an apostle, he is always called "Matthew."

He Obeyed.—The call to follow Jesus was obeyed promptly. This, however, need not be understood as meaning that he ignored the natural responsibility to turn his business over to some legal authority. Such hasty action was not necessary to become a follower of Jesus, though it would have been proper if Jesus had required it. Matthew, as some others of the apostles, may have already been a disciple of Jesus, this call being for him to become a constant follower. It required him to completely leave his business, as indicated in Luke 5: 28.

V. Jesus Justifies the Call of Sinners (Verses 10-13)

Jesus Eats With Sinners.—Matthew mentions a feast where Jesus ate with many publicans and sinners. Matthew, avoiding self-praise, did not tell who made the feast; but Luke says it was Levi (Luke 5: 29), who, as we noted, was Matthew himself. Having been a publican, he may have arranged the feast that some of his fellow taxgatherers and other sinners might hear the gracious words of his new Master. Gratitude for his own favors could easily have suggested it.

The Pharisees Murmur.—Mark and Luke include the scribes with the Pharisees in this murmuring, showing that this complaint was made by the same parties who charged him with blaspheming when he forgave the paralytic's sins. The law of Moses did not forbid eating and drinking with other nations; but Jewish custom, based on tradition, did, and it was very rigidly observed. It took a miracle to remove this prejudice from the minds of the apostles. (Acts 10: 28; 11: 3-18.) Their complaint was plausible, as they viewed it, for two reasons: Being a Jew, they thought Jesus should not violate a custom which had been accepted as law; if Jesus were righteous, why should he associate with sinners? To do so, they thought, would disprove that he was the coming king. They made this complaint to the disciples, perhaps privately.

Jesus Replies.—To their murmuring Jesus made a twofold reply. (1) Referring to a well-known fact, he said that only sick people need a physician. Physicians visit the sick. Sin is the disease that

afflicts the soul. If those with whom he was eating were sinners, then he, the great Physician, should visit them with the soul remedy. This completely justified his action. (2) He quoted a prophecy (Hos. 6: 6), the spirit of which their objection violated. As God preferred mercy above sacrifice, sinners needed mercy more than anything else; he was justified in ignoring social customs to bring them what they needed. If men were absolutely righteous, they would not need a Savior; but men being sinners, they must have one. Jesus' acts harmonized with man's needs.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Jesus saw the faith of the four men through their determined and persistent efforts to bring their friend to him. A sober thought: Does he see our faith in efforts to bring our friends to him?

2. It is easy to draw wrong conclusions when we assume to be true what is really false. We should "hate every false way." (Ps. 119: 104, 128.) Only truth will make us free. (John 8: 31, 32.)

3. God's works are always adequate to the purpose in view. The disease was incurable; the way he reached Jesus prevented deception regarding the man; the healing occurred in the presence of both foes and friends; the cure was instantaneous and thorough.

4. Promptly leaving a business in conflict with serving the Lord shows that Jesus made no mistake in placing Matthew in the apostleship. It is an example worthy of imitation by all Christians.

5. Christians should follow Christ's example respecting sinners—take the truth to them, but be not a partaker in their evil deeds.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What was the evident purpose of chapters eight and nine?
In what order did these events occur?
Define and distinguish between power and authority.
What does a miracle require?
Of what is this proof?
What distinction runs through all Bible history?
What is especially remarkable about the centurion?

I

When did the healing of verses 2-8 occur?
Where does verse 1 clearly belong?
Why is it not a part of that chapter?
How can we see men's faith?
Whose faith did Jesus mean?
How did they show their faith?
What was the probable motive of the palsied man?
What did he need worse? What indicated that?
Why did Jesus forgive him rather than leave him to the law?

II

What charge was made against Jesus?
By whom was it made?
In what way did they make it?
Who gives their course of reasoning?
What was it?
Why was their conclusion not true?
How did Jesus know what they reasoned?
What question did he ask?
What did they know about the correct answer?

III

Why would the scribes have admitted the cure a miracle?
What question were they considering?
When is a miracle evidence of some special truth?
Why is it proof in such cases?
What passages teach this?
What is true when divine power is exerted?
What distinguishes between real miracles and pretended ones?
How did the miracle affect all present?

IV

What Bible characteristic is seen in reporting events?
How many words used to give Matthew's call?
What else distinguishes it from human accounts?

Why did not the historians praise themselves?
 What indicates Matthew's perfect candor?
 What is likely regarding the way he left his business?

V

How is it known who made the feast Jesus attended?
 Who attended his feast?
 Who made the complaint against Jesus?
 Upon what was their complaint based?
 What was required to free apostles from this prejudice?

Why did their complaint appear plausible to them?
 What reply did Jesus make?
 Explain the two points.

Practical Thoughts

What solemn question confronts us?
 How should we feel toward everything false?
 What is always true of God's works?
 In what particular is Matthew a fine example?
 How should we act toward sinners?

Lesson VIII—February 25, 1934

THE TWELVE SENT FORTH

Matt. 9: 35 to 10: 8; 10: 32, 33.

35 And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

36 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.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few.

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.

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 Thaddeus;

4 Simon the Cananean, 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.

32 Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven.

33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest." (Matt. 9: 37, 38.)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Mountain near Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the twelve.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 10: 8b-15.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 19.	M.	.....	The Twelve Sent Forth (Matt. 9: 35 to 10: 8)
February 20.	T.	.....	The Twelve Encouraged (Matt. 10: 24-33)
February 21.	W.	.....	A Prophet's Call (Jer. 1: 1-10)
February 22.	T.	.....	The Missionary Spirit (Isa. 42: 1-9)
February 23.	F.	.....	Progress through Persecution (Acts 8: 1-8)
February 24.	S.	.....	The Need of Laborers (John 4: 31-38)
February 25.	S.	.....	The Missionary Challenge (Rom. 10: 8-15)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Jesus Moved With Compassion for the Multitudes (Matt. 9: 35-38).
 - II. Jesus Confers Authority Upon the Twelve (Matt. 10: 1).
 - III. The Twelve Named (Verses 2-4).
 - IV. The Twelve Receive Their First Commission (Verses 5-8).
 - V. Rewards for Confessing or Denying Christ (Verses 32, 33).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Lesson Connection.—In the verses between the last lesson and this Matthew reports Christ's remarks on fasting, and three cases of healing—the daughter of Jairus, two blind men, and a dumb man with a demon. The question of fasting was raised by John's disciples. John in preparing material for the kingdom "at hand," had required a moral reformation; but the Jewish law, not having been annulled, was still applicable, and the ordinary Jewish customs had not been disturbed. This explains why John's disciples, like the Pharisees, continued to observe the custom of frequent fasting, and wondered why Jesus' disciples did not. Jesus explained that fasting naturally belonged to seasons of distress and bereavement, and that his disciples would have the proper occasion for fasting when he left them. He illustrated the point of always doing the appropriate thing by a reference to patching old garments and putting new wine in new wine-skins. This shows that periodical times for formal fasting is contrary to the nature of the service, and is an invention without the warrant of the Scriptures.

Apostles Instructed.—After relating the selection of the twelve and the giving of their commission, Matthew devotes the remainder of the tenth chapter to the minute instruction and encouragement Jesus gave them for the work. No body of servants were ever sent to their task with better or more appropriate instruction as to how it should be done. While he spoke directly to the twelve, and some things mentioned were applicable to them only, yet the general principles of service fit all workers in the Lord's kingdom. The sacrifices, certain opposition, need for perfect reliance upon God's mercy and help, and the certainty of just rewards were the things concerning which he forewarned them; all Christians need the comfort and help that such instruction gives. The miraculous qualification given for their apostolic labors is none of our affair; not being apostles, we do not need it; those claiming to have such are mistaken.

A Great Truth.—In this speech is found one of the most vital truths known to man. It is the statement that men "are not able to kill the soul," (Verse 28.) Whatever else man may do to man, he cannot destroy the soul, nor prevent the Lord's properly rewarding it. This is sufficient cause for man's faithfulness till death. Incidentally, it is unmistakable proof that the soul, or spirit, does not cease to exist at the death of the body. The body dies, not the spirit. (James 2: 26.)

LESSON NOTES

I. Jesus Moved with Compassion for the Multitudes (Matt. 9: 35-38)

A Preaching Tour.—With Capernaum as headquarters, Jesus doubtless made many journeys into different parts of Galilee. We could hardly expect every event to be mentioned or minutely described in a life so full of interesting things. Our text mentions a general tour of Galilean cities, which was probably the third one of like nature. In this he followed his usual custom of teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and disease. It is not here stated just what was included in his preaching the kingdom; but, as there had been no change in his work up to that time, we are forced to conclude that he preached that the kingdom was "at hand," just as he did when he began. (Matt. 4: 12, 17.) This shows that the actual establishment of his kingdom had not occurred when he made this tour, which immediately preceded his sending out of the twelve.

"Distressed and Scattered."—By saying the multitudes were distressed, Jesus meant that they were like laborers wearied and about to fall under their burdens, or like those whose minds were so confused by traditions and false teachings that they knew not where to turn for light and relief. His infinite love and pity went out to them rather than to the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, whose hypocrisy he condemned unsparingly. He touchingly spoke of the people "as sheep not having a shepherd," wandering, bewildered, and in constant danger of being devoured. Ignorant because they had no true shepherds, they were subject to every kind of delusion from false teachers. The multitudes are still in the same condition regarding the gospel of the kingdom.

Harvest and Laborers.—With three general circuits of Galilee, many had already heard Jesus and been blessed by his labors; yet he said the harvest was still plenteous and the laborers few. That was a good reason for sending the apostles out in separate groups, under this, their first commission. More people could be taught, and the twelve would receive their first great lesson in independent evangelism—a fitting part of preparation for that world-wide commission received later. They were not only to work, but pray for more laborers. Work and pray is still the road to successful service.

II. Jesus Confers Authority Upon the Twelve (Matt. 10: 1)

Their Selection.—How long they had been selected as apostles before being sent forth is not definitely known. Apparently the selection occurred just before the Sermon on the Mount was preached. The record of it is found in Mark 3: 13-19; Luke 6: 12-16. Matthew does not mention it directly, but his statement, "called unto him his twelve disciples," implies that they had already been chosen.

"Named Apostles."—Matthew mentions them simply as "his twelve disciples." Their position and work being distinct, they were often referred to as "the twelve." (Matt. 26: 47; Mark 14: 20; 1 Cor. 15: 5.) Referring to their selection, Mark says he "appointed" twelve that they might be with him. Luke says he "chose" twelve whom he "named apostles." From that time "apostles" became their common designation. The word literally means "one sent," and was given as

their special title because of the peculiar distinction of being called and sent by Jesus personally. Common usage limits the word "apostle" almost exclusively to the twelve and Paul, though it is not strictly so limited in the New Testament. Jesus himself, because sent of the Father, is called the "Apostle and High Priest." (Heb. 3: 1.) Barnabas, because sent with Paul on a missionary tour by the church at Antioch, was also called an "apostle." (Acts 14: 14.) Paul was an apostle of Christ; both were apostles of the church.

Extent of Authority.—The seventh verse shows the purpose of their journey was to preach the gospel of the kingdom; their authority for this was the plain command of Jesus. To be effective their preaching had to be sustained by adequate proof. When Jesus was with them, they could leave that to him; without him, they had to defend themselves. Matthew says Jesus gave them authority to cast out unclean spirits and to heal all manner of disease. This authority meant that they would be endued with power to do the work. The Lord would not authorize a work and fail to give the power to perform it. This commission sustains the general Bible teaching that miracles were for the purpose of confirming the things taught.

III. The Twelve Named (Verses 2-4)

The Different Lists.—Matthew, Mark, and Luke all list the names of the twelve. Mark and Luke give their lists when reporting the choosing (Mark 3: 16-19; Luke 6: 14-16); Matthew does not mention the choosing, but gives his list when they were sent forth. (In Acts 1: 13, Luke repeats the names of the eleven to whom Jesus spoke the last commission before his ascension; in verses 20-26 he describes the selection of Matthias, who "was numbered with the eleven apostles." This repetition of names was probably given to show that the very persons to whom Jesus gave the command to tarry in the city till endued with power from on high were present and received the power just as he promised.)

Different Names.—All the lists follow the same general outline, though the names are not given in precisely the same order in each. All begin with Peter; the three in the Gospels end with Judas Iscariot; and the one in Acts has but eleven names, Matthias not being selected at that time. Matthew and Mark give the name Thaddeus, a name not in Luke's lists, while he gives that of Judas the son of James, a name not found in the other lists. This seeming discrepancy may be accounted for by supposing the same person had two names. Simon was called "Peter," and Thomas was called "Didymus." (John 20: 24.)

"The First, Simon."—Matthew alone uses the expression "the first" in naming Peter, though the others also begin their lists with his name. While Matthew by these words may have only meant that he would begin his list with Simon Peter, yet we know that in some ways Peter was preëminent among the apostles. He was one of the first two that became disciples of Jesus, the first to confess him; he was naturally impulsive and fitted to lead the way in every work. (Since he was first in confessing Christ, he was given the privilege of receiving the first converts, from both Jews and Gentiles, into the church.) There is no hint that he was ever considered as supreme head of the church, ruler over the other apostles, or had any authority they did not have. (See Matt. 19: 27, 28; John 20: 22, 23; Gal. 2: 11-14; 1 Pet. 5: 1.)

IV. The Twelve Receive Their First Commission (Verses 5-8)

Limited to Israel.—Later, Jesus said he was sent only to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15: 24), and with very few exceptions limited his work to them. (See for exceptions John 4: 7-27; Matt. 8: 5-13; 15: 21-28.) He also said there were "other sheep" to be brought into the fold (John 10: 16), but the time would not arrive for that till after the kingdom was established. Heaven's kingdom—reign or rule is a better translation here—was to be taken from fleshly Israel and given to another nation, a spiritual one. (Matt. 21: 42, 43; 1 Pet. 2: 9.) Since the new kingdom was to be established with the same people that had the old (Heb. 8: 8-13), it was appropriate that the apostolic work should be limited to them till the old was abolished. This forbade their preaching to either Gentiles or Samaritans. The latter were a mixed race, with Jewish and idolatrous ancestors.

The Preaching.—The apostles were told as definitely what to preach as to whom they should preach. (John the Baptist began his preparatory work, preaching the kingdom is "at hand" (Matt. 3: 1, 2); Jesus later began preaching the same thing (Matt. 4: 17); under this commission the apostles, in beginning their independent work, are required to continue the same teaching—the kingdom "at hand." The expression when first used by John did not mean that the kingdom had been established, for Jesus had not yet begun his public ministry. It must have meant that the kingdom was soon to be established.) If so, then it meant the same when used by Jesus and the twelve on their preaching tour. This is final that the kingdom was not established at that time, and further explains why their work was specifically limited to the Jews.

Miracles Required.—Jesus not only gave them authority to heal and cast out evil spirits, but plainly commanded them to do these works. The command included raising the dead and healing lepers—things about which there could be no question but that divine power was necessary. All miracles are alike easy when divine power is present. When not present, there are no miracles. Pretense and reality are very different things. They received this power to heal, without price; they were to use it in the same way. It was not wrong for them to receive something from those for whom they labored (Luke 10: 7), but they were not to make merchandise of their gifts in healing for a price. Such yet is a sure proof of false teachers.

V. Rewards for Confession or Denying Christ (Verses 32, 33)

"Before Men."—Confessing Christ is logically a condition necessary to salvation, if there were no Scripture statements on the point. Baptism is made a condition of receiving remission of sins. (Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 38.) Since the Scriptures also require the baptism of believers, without the confession in some form it could not be known who should be baptized. This makes the confession a necessity in obtaining pardon. The words of Jesus here literally say, "Confess in me," and probably refer to the practical, consistent, and repeated confession that his followers make both by word and deed. Such confession should be made on all proper occasions and in all proper ways. It means that we should put the stamp of our approval upon his divinity, the truth of his teaching, and the necessity of being in his king-

dom. (Those who fail in this are considered as denying him.) All this occurs before men.

"Before My Father." Our acceptance with the Father depends upon having the approval of Christ. All authority has been given into his hands, and every knee must bow in submission to his will. The record shows that those who do it will, at the judgment, hear Jesus say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father" (Matt. 25: 34); those not willing to overcome the hindrances of earthly ties, or resist the allurements of the world, will hear him say: "Depart from me, ye cursed." (Matt. 25: 41.)

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Jesus had compassion on the multitudes because, like sheep wandering without a shepherd, they were lost. The lost condition of the world now should touch his disciples with a like feeling.

2. Those who claim to do things in Christ's name, and for his kingdom, must have his authority; those without such authority are false teachers, regardless of moral conduct.

3. Listing the names of the apostles when chosen, and when they began operating under both commissions, is a full guarantee that the right ones were qualified and ready when the kingdom began.

4. The Lord's authority to any one to perform miracles always carried the guarantee of power to do the work. A failure to do the work was proof that no authority had been granted, or that some condition had not been met as required. The source of all authority and power would not fail in the simple matter of healing.

5. We should remember the possibility of professing to know God, yet by our works denying him. Such disobedient ones are "abominable" to God. (Tit. 1: 16.)

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What does Matthew report between this and the last lesson?
Why did John's disciples continue the custom of fasting?
What lesson did Jesus give on fasting?
What is included in the remainder of the tenth chapter?
What in it is applicable to us?
What great vital truth does it contain?
Of what is it unmistakable proof?

I

What journey is mentioned by the text?
What did Jesus do on this journey?
What was included in his preaching?
What does it show?
How does Jesus describe the multitudes?
How was he affected?
What did he say of the harvest?
Why did he send them forth in separate groups?

II

How long had they been selected before being sent?
How were the apostles often referred to?
When did they receive the title "apostles"?
What does it mean?
What is the common usage of the word?
What the scriptural?
What was the purpose of their journey?
Why given authority to perform miracles?

III

When and by whom were the names listed?
Why the names repeated in Acts?
What true regarding the order of the names?
Account for different names in the lists.
What did Matthew mean by "the first" in reference to Peter?
In what ways was Peter preeminent among them?
What special honor did Jesus give him?
Of what is there no hint in the Scriptures?

IV

To whom did Jesus say he was sent?
What exceptions did he make?

What change in the kingdom had to be made?
 Why was it appropriate that preaching be limited then to Jews?
 What were they told to preach?
 Compare it with the preaching of John and Jesus.
 What miracles are mentioned?
 What is meant by "freely give"?

V

Why is confession necessary to salvation?
 What did Jesus here mean by "confess"?
 Who denies him according to this text?

Upon what does acceptance with God depend?

How does Jesus describe the judgment?
Practical Thoughts

What feeling should Christ's disciples have for the lost?
 What is necessary to do things in Christ's name?
 How is it known that the right apostles were present on Pentecost?
 What did God's authority guarantee?
 What should we remember about confession?

Lesson IX—March 4, 1934

JESUS' TESTIMONY CONCERNING HIMSELF

Matt. 11: 2-6; 16-19, 25-30.

2 Now when John heard in the prison the works of the Christ, he sent by his disciples

3 And said unto him, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see:

5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them.

6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.

16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, who call unto their fellows

17 And say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn.

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon.

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! And wisdom is justified by her works.

25 At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes:

26 Yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight.

27 All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.

28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11: 28.)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Somewhere in Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the twelve, two of John's disciples, and the multitudes.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 1: 12-18.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 26.	M.	-----	Jesus' Testimony Concerning Himself (Matt. 11: 2-6)
February 27.	T.	-----	A Gracious Invitation (Matt. 11: 25-30)
February 28.	W.	-----	Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. 12: 1-8)
March 1.	T.	-----	A Withered Hand (Matt. 12: 9-21)
March 2.	F.	-----	A House Divided (Luke 11: 14-23)
March 3.	S.	-----	A Man of Sorrows (Isa. 53: 1-6)
March 4.	S.	-----	The Living One (Rev. 1: 12-18)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. An Inquiry Received from John the Baptist (Verses 2, 3).
 - II. Jesus Replies to John's Inquiry (Verses 4-6).
 - III. Both Jesus and John Rejected by Many (Verses 16-19).
 - IV. Christ's Prayer (Verses 25, 26).
 - V. Christ's Gracious Invitation to Service and Rest (Verses 27-30).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Prophet, Priest, and King.—The combined honor of prophet, priest, and king is the claim made for Jesus as the divine Son of God. The happiness promised mankind depends upon that claim being true. Moses declared that God would raise up a prophet like himself, whom the people must hear or be destroyed. (Deut. 18: 15, 17-19.) Peter and Stephen both assert that Jesus was that prophet. (Acts 3: 22, 23; 7: 37.) A prophet said that one called the "BRANCH" would build the temple of the Lord, sit upon the throne, and rule as both king and priest. (Zech. 6: 12, 13.) The high priesthood of Christ is fully presented in the Hebrew letter. Isaiah said a son—the "Prince of Peace"—would be born to rule upon David's throne forever. (Isa. 9: 6, 7.) The angel Gabriel told Mary that her son, whose name would be Jesus, would do that very thing. (Luke 1: 31-33.) To these general predictions may be added the following: His descent had to come through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, his kingship through the lineage of David, he had to be born of a virgin, born in Bethlehem, and dwell in Nazareth. All these prophetic requirements centering in Jesus did not happen by chance; they prove his claims are true.

Personal Testimony.—The direct personal testimonies to the Divinity of Jesus are as decisive as the prophetic. When baptized he was endorsed by the Father in these words: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Holy Spirit abiding in him, and delivering his words to the apostles after his departure (John 16: 13, 14), became also his personal witness. At his transfiguration the Father repeated his testimony and added: "Hear ye him." (Matt. 17: 5.) John the Baptist, who was sent to manifest Christ to Israel, declared him to be the "Lamb of God"—the sacrifice to take away sins. (John 1: 29-34.) After three and one-half years of close association, the apostles say they saw him many times after his resurrection, and witnessed his ascension to heaven.

His Own Works.—Jesus appealed to his own works as evidence of

his claims. (John 5: 36; 10: 38.) Nicodemus said no man could do the works Jesus did "except God be with him." (John 3: 2.) His many miracles, including the raising of the dead, could not have happened by chance, or have been the work of an imposter. His infinite foresight, his matchless wisdom, and his death and resurrection, "according to the Scriptures," proclaim him a worthy King and Priest upon his throne, where he is now seated at God's right hand. (Heb. 10: 12, 13; I Cor. 15: 25.)

LESSON NOTES

I. An Inquiry Received from John the Baptist (Verses 2, 3)

John in Prison.—The text says that John was in prison when he sent his messengers to Jesus. He is supposed to have been in prison about six months at that time. The Jewish historian, Josephus, says the place was Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea. Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, had been rebuked by John for taking his brother's wife; for which reason he had caused his imprisonment, rather than having him killed as his wife desired; for he knew he was a righteous man. (Mark 6: 17-20.) During the time of John's imprisonment, the work of Jesus had increased and his fame had spread. Hearing this occasioned John's inquiry. Being allowed to call his disciples to him (Luke 7: 19) indicates that he was allowed special privileges, not usually accorded prisoners. Herod's good opinion of him probably accounts for this.

Why the Inquiry?—Commentators have been troubled to find a satisfactory explanation of the reason for John's asking this question. Since he had heard the Father's announcement at Christ's baptism, and had himself testified that Jesus was the Lamb of God, why, it may be asked, did he now ask if Jesus were really the one? Was he only trying to strengthen the faith of his disciples by asking for an announcement from Jesus? was his long imprisonment beginning to weaken his own faith? or was he simply becoming somewhat discouraged by what he considered an unnecessary delay? The best servants of God are still human and subject to discouragements. John's question probably expressed the real desire of his heart. He doubtless had the common expectation of an earthly kingdom, and understood "at hand" to mean in the very near future. The tedious prison hours and Christ's apparent delay in proclaiming himself king combined to make him ask if he might have misunderstood. Such is at least reasonable, and is in no way uncomplimentary to John.

II. Jesus Replies to John's Inquiry (Verses 4-6)

Things Seen and Heard.—Instead of replying directly to John's questions, Jesus advised his messengers to return and tell him what they had seen and heard. Luke tells us (Luke 7: 21) that "In that hour"—the time John's messengers were present—"he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and on many that were blind he bestowed sight." Since assertions have to be sustained by adequate fact, seeing the works of Jesus was more satisfactory than a direct answer to the questions. The general purpose of miracles to confirm words would assure John that Jesus was a prophet of God. As other prophets had performed miracles, just the exercise of that power

would not be proof that Jesus was "he that cometh"—the Messiah; but, as John had heard Jesus proclaimed as God's Son, his miracles were proof. Heaven's announcement could not be false and Jesus do the things mentioned. This John certainly knew. The answer to John was wise, appropriate, and convincing.

The Things Done.—All the maladies mentioned by Matthew were of the incurable kind requiring divine power for their removal. There is no question regarding their cure being miraculous. To these he adds: "the dead are raised up." Whether the messengers of John saw any dead raised is not stated. There is no contradiction in the text; for, they were to tell him what they had *heard* as well as what they had seen. Jesus had raised the widow's son, apparently before this. (Luke 7: 11-17.) Matthew also reports the raising of the daughter of Jairus. (Matt. 9: 18-26.) Of these the messengers may have heard. What they saw was ample proof that these accounts were true. Preaching the gospel to the poor, quite different to the treatment they received from the scribes and Pharisees, was a fulfillment of prophecy. (Isa. 61: 1-3.) The answer sent was an implied request for John to compare Christ's work with the prophecies. (See also Isa. 35: 5, 6.)

A Beatitude.—Jesus' humble origin, manner of life, and general deportment had caused the Jewish leaders to reject him as unworthy to redeem and rule Israel. He wanted to protect John against taking offense because his plans and work did not harmonize with the common expectation. John may have thought that it was already time for Jesus to publicly declare his kingship. Jesus offered comfort in the assurance of a blessing for one who was not overcome by disappointment.

III. Both Jesus and John Rejected by Many (Verses 16-19)

The Case Illustrated.—To show the bad spirit with which the people generally rejected the preaching of John and his own, Jesus referred to the very common spectacle of grown people acting like children. It is well known that children act in play what they see their elders do in reality. The picture here presents two groups of children, one of which refuses to join in the play because displeased with what the other group suggests. First, it is a marriage procession with piping—music—but the sullen group refuses to have any part; next, it is a funeral with wailing, but still sulking they refuse to join the mourners. Such bad humor and contrariness will not be pleased, though the play be ever so delightful to those of a different spirit.

The Application.—In verse 18, Jesus makes the application to John; in the following verse, to himself. John came "neither eating nor drinking"—preaching in the wilderness, and living on a simple diet—and for that reason they rejected his preaching and declared that he possessed a demon. Jesus, on the other hand, came "eating and drinking"—attending marriages, feasts, and living in the customary way—and the same group rejected him for that reason, like children refusing to join in the mirth. With no regard for consistency, those who said that John had a demon, charged Jesus with being a glutton, a winebibber, and a friend of sinners. John and Jesus both preached repentance and the kingdom "at hand"; the Pharisees, scribes, and all

they could influence rejected the preaching and slandered both preachers.

Wisdom Justified.—The preaching of both Jesus and John revealed the wisdom of God. Some accepted the preaching of both; they were children of wisdom—acted as wisdom directs. The majority rejected both preachers, and in doing so rejected the wisdom of God back of it. Luke, in his narrative of the same event, says that those baptized by John “justified God,” but the lawyers and Pharisees “rejected for themselves the counsel of God” in not being baptized by him. (Luke 7: 30.)

IV. Christ's Prayer (Verses 25, 26)

Revealed to Babes.—All the prayers of Jesus are models of appropriateness in form and expression. “At that season Jesus answered” probably means that his prayer was an answer to questions arising from the perverseness and sins he had described. Jesus did not mean that he disapproved of wisdom and understanding, for both are highly commended in the Scriptures. He meant those “wise in their own conceits” (Rom. 12: 16); wise according to the world's view (1 Cor. 1: 25-27); directly referring, perhaps, to the scribes and Pharisees, whose self-righteousness and hypocrisy closed their ears against the truth. The reason the truth is hid from such people is that, blinded by Satan, they have closed their eyes to the light. (2 Cor. 4: 3, 4; Matt. 13: 15.) “Babes” here mean the obscure, teachable, sincere who, like children, are ready to learn. This is the reason it was revealed to them. Only that class receives the truth now.

“Well-pleasing.”—In this dispensation of God's mercy, Jesus, as he ever did, acquiesced in his Father's will. Whatever be our notions about justice, and the fitness of things, we must admit, after all, that the divine will is our best reason for doing things. Possessing infinite wisdom and infallible justice, his will must be the only perfect standard of conduct. The wisdom of erring man is not safe to depend upon in matters of eternal moment. Happy is the man whose confidence in divine wisdom cannot be shaken!

V. Christ's Gracious Invitation to Service and Rest (Verses 27-30)

Christ's Authority.—Verse 27 shows why he had a right to extend this invitation to the needy. Having all things delivered to him is final proof that he was the “one to come”—the answer to John's question—and of his authority to invite others to himself. All things necessary to the establishment and government of his kingdom were his by divine decree. All power to do his personal work he then had in fact; all authority in heaven and on earth was bestowed, after that work was finished, and he took his seat at God's right hand as crowned king. (Matt. 28: 18; Eph. 1: 19-23; Heb. 10: 12, 13.) The nature of Divinity is inexplicable to man. The unity of Father and Son is a mystery known only to themselves. Since Christ alone can reveal the Father, he alone has the right to offer rest to those who come to him. Being the way, truth, and life (John 14: 16), there is none other to whom the weary and burdened can come and find real rest.

Soul Rest.—As physical labor and rest are ordinary life conditions

for both saints and sinners, Jesus must here refer to things of the Spirit. The Jews were bearing grievous burdens in their customs and traditions—a yoke too heavy to be borne (Acts 15: 10); to them the teachings of Christ would bring comfort and peace. In him the heathen would find a rest of which they knew nothing. The full measure of the rest and peace could not come till the establishment of his kingdom, but those who accepted his personal teaching would be among the first to receive it; they would be ready.

An Easy Yoke.—The word “yoke” indicates labor, service, or burdens. In an unfavorable sense it may refer to slavery, afflictions, punishments, or burdensome laws. In a good sense, as used here, it means the duties and restraints of Christ’s gospel. Christ’s yoke requires continued and persistent service, and enforces some restraints that demand an energetic fight against the lusts of the flesh. It is easy in the sense of being good, serviceable, and of the greatest comfort—will produce the most wholesome results, and lead to an everlasting reward. When compared with the burdensome requirements of the Jewish system, the superstitious rites of heathenism, the dogmas of Catholicism, or the foolish and expensive customs of the world, the duties and restrictions of Christianity are easy in the fullest sense. Being meek and lowly in character himself, his kingdom could not be oppressive, or his requirements harsh—a reason why we should learn of him and keep his commandments.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. The answers to our questions may not always be what we want, or come in the way we think they should, but divine wisdom will make no mistake—will give us what we need.

2. Jesus pronounced a blessing upon those who would not be offended because he failed to meet world expectations. Blessed are those now who will not turn from him because his church is not the kind of kingdom that pleases the world.

3. Those who reject the truth because it does not favor all their whims and fancies are guilty of childish folly.

4. One thing for which we should be deeply grateful and always thank God is that we are permitted to be governed by his will—the only guarantee that our conduct will be right.

5. We should not come to Christ thinking that he will require no service or allow unrestrained liberties; we should be attracted by the delightful labor and glorious rest he offers.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What combined honors does Christ have?
What is the proof that he was prophet and priest?
What is the proof of his kingship?
Give another proof that his claims are true?

What testimony was given by the Father?
What was given by John the Baptist?
What other evidences did he present?

I

How long had John been in prison?
Where was the prison located?
Why was he put in prison?
Why did not Herod put John to death at first?
What occasioned John’s inquiry to Jesus?
What difficulty does this text present?
Did John’s question express his real desire?

II

What kind of answer did Jesus send to John?
 What happened while the messengers were there?
 Why would the miracles be proof to John?
 What was the nature of the diseases healed?
 How could they report the "dead raised up"?
 What proof was there in the gospel preached to the poor?
 Why did the Jewish leaders reject Jesus as Israel's king?
 From what did Jesus wish to protect John?

III

To what practice did Jesus refer?
 What picture was presented in the illustration?
 How did Jesus apply the illustration to John?
 How did he apply it to himself?
 Show the inconsistency of those who rejected both?
 Who were children of wisdom?
 What did those do who rejected John's baptism?

IV

What is true of all Jesus' prayers?
 What is true of wisdom and understanding?

To whom did Jesus refer by the word "wise"?

To whom was he probably referring directly?

Why is the truth hid from some?

Who were meant by "babes"?

What did he mean by "well-pleasing" in God's sight?

What is our best reason for doing things?

V

What does verse 27 show?

What question does it answer?

What power had been given Jesus at that time?

When did he receive all authority?

Why could only Christ reveal the Father?

Why did he have the right to invite men to himself?

What kind of rest was meant?

What was meant by "yoke"?

In what sense is it easy?

Practical Thoughts

What will divine wisdom always do for us?

Who now deserve a blessing?

Who are guilty of childish folly?

For what should we always be thankful?

What should attract us to Christ?

Lesson X—March 11, 1934

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

Matt. 13: 31-33, 44-52.

31 Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.

44 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls:

46 And having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

48 Which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away.

49 So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous,

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

51 Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea.

52 And he said unto them, Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end."* (Isa. 9: 7.)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—West coast of Lake Galilee.

PERSON.—Jesus, the twelve, and the multitudes.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 3: 13-24.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 5.	M.	Parables of the Kingdom (Matt. 13: 31-33, 44-52)
March 6.	T.	The Reason for Parables (Matt. 13: 10-17)
March 7.	W.	The Seed and the Soil (Matt. 13: 1-9)
March 8.	T.	The Parable Explained (Matt. 13: 18-23)
March 9.	F.	The Parable of the Tares (Matt. 13: 24-30)
March 10.	S.	The Final Harvest (Matt. 13: 34-43)
March 11.	S.	The Reward of Wisdom (Prov. 3: 13-24)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Kingdom of Heaven Like a Mustard Seed (Verses 31, 32).
- II. Kingdom of Heaven Like Leaven (Verse 33).
- III. Kingdom of Heaven Like a Hidden Treasure (Verse 44).
- IV. Kingdom of Heaven Like a Merchant (Verses 45, 46).
- V. Kingdom of Heaven Like a Fish Net (Verses 47-52).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Definition.—In the chapter containing our lesson text, Matthew introduces a group of parables, a method of teaching which Jesus frequently employed after that time. Some general description of parables will probably be a suitable introduction to this lesson. The Greek word for parable literally means one object placed beside another, the purpose being to compare them. A parable, then, is a kind of teaching in which something well known in common affairs is made the medium of conveying spiritual truth through the similarity that exists between the two things compared. The word is sometimes applied to proverbs—brief sayings with an implied comparison. (See Matt. 15: 14, 15; Luke 4: 23.) Ordinarily, however, it refers to a more extended comparison, when a situation is fully described.

Contrasts.—The main truths in parables are found in the likeness which the spiritual sustains to the natural, but there will also be found some contrasts. Parables show similarity, not identity; they show two distinct, though similar, things, but identity would show the two descriptions to apply to the same thing. The photograph resembles the face from which it was taken, but is not the face. One is only a picture, the other is a living, active thing. Material elements and animals, when included in parables, may be like man in certain particulars, but not in everything. They act under the irresistible power of nature and instinct; man acts as a moral free agent, responsible for his conduct. These distinctions must be observed, or the beauty of the parable will be marred and its teaching misrepresented. A full statement of the parable will sometimes give or sug-

gest things which can find no place in the application. Parables must not conflict with plain gospel facts.

A Safe Rule.—It is a recognized rule of interpretation that figurative language is to be explained by literal, and obscure passages by those that are clear. Parables being figurative language must be understood in the light of plain statements of the gospel, not given fanciful interpretations to evade simple truths plainly expressed. Nothing could be more reasonable and just than this rule.

Realities.—Parables are statements of real facts; they present things that have happened or may happen. The parable and its application deal with two realities: the parable, the natural thing; the application, the spiritual. The figure consists in the likeness that exists between the two realities.

LESSON NOTES

I. Kingdom of Heaven Like a Mustard Seed (Verses 31, 32)

The Occasion.—The first four parables of this group, including the first two of our lesson, were spoken from a boat on lake Galilee to a multitude standing on the shore. (Matt. 13: 1, 36; Mark 4: 1.) The parables of the sower, and the tares, naturally left the impression that only a small per cent of hearers would accept the truth and be saved. This alone might have been too discouraging to the disciples; hence, the one on the mustard seed to show that, in spite of all outward appearances, great results should be expected. At their request, Jesus explained to his disciples why he used the parabolic method of teaching. (Matt. 13: 10-17.) Such comparisons of the spiritual with the familiar and common would greatly aid the disciples, and others anxious to find truth, to understand the great things of the kingdom; they would just as certainly hide them from the hard-hearted who did not want the truth. This plan greatly added to the convenience and success of the Lord's work.

The Parable Stated.—The statement that the mustard seed is "less than all seeds" is to be taken as Jesus' hearers then understood it, not as it might be misunderstood by those skeptically inclined. It is probable that the plant referred to is very different from our common variety of mustard. Then, climate and soil have much to do in the size to which plants may grow. Verse 31 says "sowed in his field." The mustard seed may have been the smallest of the seeds then sown in the field. The words are doubtless literally true when applied as Jesus intended. Probably no plant grows more rapidly and larger in proportion to the size of the seed that produces it. Besides this, the mustard seed may have been a common proverbial expression to indicate anything very small.

The Application.—The evident lesson is the rapid and enormous development of the kingdom from a very small beginning. Great growth in proportion to the size of the seed is true of most all plants and trees, but the mustard plant adds the element of extremely quick growth. This was the amazing thing about the kingdom of Christ. The power that causes seed to expand and increase is hidden—lies mysteriously concealed in what we call the germ. The gospel likewise is what makes the kingdom of heaven grow. A babe in a manger, an obscure lad in a carpenter's shop, and a man without

wealth or prestige, apparently offered nothing toward the world's redemption. The twelve apostles, the hundred and twenty disciples, three thousand converts in one day, and every nation reached in the lifetime of his personal ambassadors (Col. 1: 23) is the stamp of approval which history places on the parable of the mustard seed.

II. Kingdom of Heaven Like Leaven (Verse 33)

False and True Teaching.—The natural use of leaven is too well understood to need explanation. Its quiet, silent, permeating effect from one particle to another till the whole mass is leavened is the fact upon which the Lord based this brief parable. In the New Testament the word is figuratively applied to teaching and conduct. In all the passages except this parable it refers to evil teaching or bad conduct. This has led some to conclude that it should be given the same meaning here, and made to refer to the evil that can permeate the churches. This conclusion is unnecessary, and doubtless wrong. The fact that it does often refer to evil teaching does not mean that it must always do it. Both good and bad teaching work quietly in the mind, spreading from one to another. The natural application here is to the permeating influence of the truth.

Point of difference.—The parable of the mustard seed, and this, both teach the expansion of the kingdom. That gives the *fact* of the growth; this the *manner* in which it is done. The kingdom, like the seed, has power in itself to expand, just as the gospel has power to convert those who give it a place in their hearts. The leaven shows that the kingdom spreads by its citizens, through association, passing its truths to other hearts. This parable teaches the same general lesson, but adds the element of *how* the work is done.

"Drapery."—Points in the parable that have no signification in the application are called the "drapery of the parable"; necessary to a full statement of the parable, but nothing more. As women did the baking it was natural to say so in the parable; three measures being the usual amount for a baking was a statement without spiritual signification. The leaven finally permeates every particle in the whole lump; the gospel does not reach every soul for the reason that people are free to act—accept or reject truth—a thing not true of bread. This contrast does not change the lesson on the permeating influence of truth—the point of the parable.

III. The Kingdom of Heaven Like a Hidden Treasure (Verse 44)

"Found and Hid."—This and the two following parables were probably spoken to the disciples alone, after returning to the house. (Matt. 13: 36.) This parable is distinguished from the following one in that the hidden treasure was found by accident or chance, not by a diligent search for it. When he saw it, he understood its value quite as well as if it had been a reward for a deliberate seeking. Recognizing its great worth, he determined to, at least, have a plausible legal right to it by buying the field that contained it. Without banks as places to keep treasures, the people of that age, no doubt, often hid them in the earth. The parable simply states what would likely have happened in that age; the explanation or application of the

parable is a different matter, and must not be confused with the parable itself.

The Explanation.—The evident purpose here is to show the rich gospel blessings that are received in the kingdom. They are easily found by the earnest, honest-hearted seeker after truth, but more easily overlooked by the careless, indifferent one seeking worldly pleasures. Sometimes a chance word, deed, or circumstance leads to their discovery. When such happens, the finder should at once joyfully make any sacrifice, or sustain any loss necessary, to obtain them. Unless he be willing to do this, he cannot be saved. (Matt. 10: 37-39; Phil. 3: 7, 8.)

A Contrast.—The finder hiding the treasure till he could buy the field, and get a plausible legal right to it, raises a question of morals. Can his act be justified, or was he plainly dishonest? If the owner had died without revealing the place of his hid treasure, its ownership would have been lost, and the finder could have been justified in claiming it as his own. But, in that case, there would have been no need to buy the field. But that is far-fetched reasoning, with nothing in the parable to sustain it. Jesus was not commending the finder in his questionable or dishonest conduct, but for his earnest zeal in securing the treasure. That is the point of similarity; using dishonest methods is a contrast, if that be what the finder did. Parables are not alike in every feature. Besides, no one can obtain spiritual treasures at another's loss. No difference how much one may receive, he does not lessen any one's share.

IV. The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like a Merchant (Verses 45, 46)

"Seeking Goodly Pearls."—Good merchants continually look for the best things in their line of business. To seek goodly pearls is just what would be expected of a pearl merchant. To be delighted at finding one of extremely great value would be the natural result. Parting with less valuable ones to secure it would create no surprise. This parable is strictly true to wise and well-known business principles; its lesson cannot be misunderstood or denied.

The Lesson.—The pearl of great price, like the hid treasure, means gospel blessings in the kingdom of heaven. One diligently seeking all good things provided for man will not ignore what has been prepared for his spiritual nature. No difference how many worth-while things the honest seeker may find, nothing will equal a knowledge of the kingdom of heaven and its provisions for the soul. The gospel denies us no good thing when it is rightly and wisely used, but even good things in their place may be wisely given up to gain greater good. A soul saved in the kingdom of heaven outweighs all temporal blessings.

V. The Kingdom of Heaven Like a Fish Net (Verses 47-52)

Facts of the Parable.—Those to whom this parable was spoken were perfectly familiar with the fishing in the Sea of Galilee, and readily understood the things said. The net dragging along the bottom of the lake would catch all kinds that were before it. The worthless and unclean would have to be rejected, but this could not be done while making the drag. When the shore was reached, where it was

easy to distinguish between the good and bad, the separation was made and the bad cast away. The fishing being over, the separation between the good and bad was the final results of the work.

The Explanation.—All parables illustrate some feature of gospel truth; none of them illustrate all features of that truth; in each there is something not exactly like the subject illustrated. This one evidently teaches that when the gospel dispensation is ended the fishing for men will be over, and the final separation will take place. The parable of the tares (Matt. 13: 37-39) shows the final separation between the "sons of the kingdom," and the "sons of the evil one"; this shows the final separation between the good and bad in the kingdom. A net catches various kinds of fish; the gospel also catches different kinds of people. Many, like the wood, hay, and stubble of another figure, will not stand the trials of their faith, and must be rejected finally. As the kinds of fish cannot be seen while the drag is being made, so the real character of many in the church cannot be known till the judgment reveals what sort of people they are. This, the real point of the parable, could not be better illustrated.

"Things New and Old."—Jesus asked his disciples if they understood "all these things." They replied that they did. He then gave them to understand they would be expected to properly use their knowledge. He illustrated by saying that every disciple of the kingdom of heaven was like a householder bringing out of his storehouse things both new and old—things had a long time, and those recently obtained. The apostles were to teach what they knew at that time, and whatever they might learn later. So, with all preachers of the gospel.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. A chance word, act, or event often plants a germ of truth in a human heart that grows till it brings a soul into the kingdom. "Despise not the day of small things."

2. The proper manner of life spreads its influence, like leaven, from one to another, even when the affected ones are all unconscious of its work. In this way each Christian should be the cause of a multitude being saved.

3. Zeal and effort are necessary to success in both bad and good works. Commending the evil worker's energetic efforts does not mean that his evil is endorsed.

4. Practical business judgment gives first place to things of greatest value. By this rule, entering the kingdom of heaven is the first duty of all.

5. The final separation at the judgment will be according to what men have done in the flesh; only those who endure to the end will be saved. (Matt. 24: 13.)

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What method of teaching is here introduced?
Define a parable.
How is the word applied?
What are parables intended to show?

Distinguish between man and animals in parables.
What safe rule must be observed in explaining parables?
In what does a parabolic figure consist?

I

Where were the first four parables of this group spoken?
Why was the parable of the mustard seed given?
What did the disciples ask Jesus?
What explanation did he give them?
Explain the words, "less than all seeds"?
What is the lesson of this parable?
How does the lesson apply to the kingdom of heaven?

II

How does leaven work?
How is the word used in the New Testament?
Why can it be appropriately applied to both good and bad?
What is the difference between this and the mustard seed parable?
What is the "drapery" of a parable?
What points in this parable fall in that class?

III

Where were the last three parables spoken?
How is this parable distinguished from the next?
Why represent the treasure as "hid"?
What was the purpose of this parable?
What is necessary if one is to be saved?

What question is raised by the finder hiding the treasure?
What did Jesus commend?

IV

What is true of good merchants?
With what does this parable harmonize?
What is the lesson of this parable?
What will people do who are seeking all good things?
What is the best knowledge one can obtain?

V

Why would the hearers so easily understand this parable?
When could the separation between bad and good be made?
What is true of all parables?
What is the lesson in this one?
What is the difference between this and the parable of the tares?
Why must this separation wait till the judgment?
What did Jesus ask his disciples?
What did they reply?
How did he illustrate their duty?

Practical Thoughts

Why should we not despise small things?
What will the proper manner of life do?
What is necessary to all kinds of success?
According to practical business what is man's first duty?
Who will be saved finally?

Lesson XI—March 18, 1934

JESUS RESPONDS TO FAITH

Matt. 15: 21-31.

21 And Jesus went out thence, and withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 And he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.

27 But she said, Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

29 And Jesus departed thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and he went up into the mountain, and sat there.

30 And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet; and he healed them:

31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Israel.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matt. 7: 7.)

TIME.—Probably spring of A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Region of Tyre and Sidon for sections 1-3; east of Lake Galilee for section 4.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the twelve, the mother and daughter, and multitudes.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 4.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 12.	M.	.....	The Woman of Canaan (Matt. 15: 21-31)
March 13.	T.	.....	Four Thousand Fed (Matt. 15: 32-39)
March 14.	W.	.....	Jesus Among Friends (Luke 10: 38-42)
March 15.	T.	.....	Jesus Among Foes (Matt. 13: 54-58)
March 16.	F.	.....	Friends of Jesus (John 15: 8-16)
March 17.	S.	.....	Friendship Tested (John 6: 60-71)
March 18.	S.	.....	The Friendship of Jehovah (Ps. 4: 1-8)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. A Canaanitish Woman Pleads for Mercy (Verses 21-23).
- II. The Woman Vindicates Her Appeal (Verses 24-27).
- III. Jesus Heals the Woman's Daughter (Verse 28).
- IV. The Faith of Many Rewarded (Verses 29-31).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Connecting Links.—Mark 4: 33-35 indicates that on the evening of the day the parables were spoken Jesus and his disciples crossed Lake Galilee, during which Jesus stilled the storm. While east of the lake, he healed two demoniacs. (Mark 5: 1-20.) Returning to Capernaum, he performed several cures, and sent the apostles on their first mission, already described in lesson eight. Some time before, Herod had put John the Baptist to death, and John's disciples had brought Jesus word of it. (Matt. 14: 12.) Jesus' continuous healings and teachings were increasing his fame every day. Herod hearing of his mighty works decided that John had risen from the dead. Mentioning this fact led Matthew to report the circumstances that caused Herod to have him killed. (Matt. 14: 1-12.) After hearing of John's death, Jesus and his disciples again departed to the east shore of the lake, where he fed the five thousand. (Matt. 14: 13-21.) As they returned Jesus walked upon the water, and reaching Capernaum he preached in their synagogue the sermon on the bread of life. (John 6: 58.)

An Important Visit.—During the interval just described, Jesus probably made his famous visit to Nazareth, "where he was brought up," and where his well-known friends rejected him. As his wisdom and power had so often been manifested at other places, there was no reason for those who had known him longest to reject him and desire his destruction. (Luke 4: 28-30.) His work had been vindicated among others long before he announced himself in his old home. His claims, they thought, were too exalted to be true of one they had

known from infancy, and whose family and work were unimportant and obscure. (Luke 4: 16-22.) With stinging rebuke he replied to their thoughts with the words: "No prophet is acceptable in his own country." There are exceptions to this general statement, but it is true as a rule. The principle is wrong, and the practice without justification. By this rule the Nazarenes rejected the world's Redeemer simply because they knew him as a man; by the same rule many of the Lord's most worthy servants are rejected by brethren who are supposed to know the truth. Jesus gave the expression to condemn it, not to endorse it.

An Important Lesson.—Matt. 15: 1-20 gives Jesus' lesson on ceremonial uncleanness, in which he condemns the scribes and Pharisees for their making void the commandment of God by their tradition. Modifying or rejecting God's commandments to give a place for the "precepts of men" has ever been the source of religious corruption and man's departure from God—a basic truth to be observed in all Bible study.

LESSON NOTES

I. A Canaanitish Woman Pleads for Mercy (Verses 21-23)

In Foreign Territory.—Matthew's statement that Jesus withdrew "into the parts" of Tyre and Sidon means his entrance into a Gentile country. Hitherto, he had remained, so far as the record informs us, within Jewish boundaries. His mission to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" accounts for this limitation in his field of labor. This first journey into foreign territory has the following apparent reasons to justify it. 1. Needed rest, resulting from the continuous strain incident to the multitudes flocking to him. We must not forget his human nature. 2. The possible danger from Herod who thought that he might be John the Baptist risen from the dead. 3. The intense and increasing hatred of the scribes and Pharisees because of his denunciations of their hypocrisy. 4. To escape for a time, at least, the misguided zeal of his friends who sought to make him king. (John 6: 15.) It was appropriate that even God's Son should not expose himself to unnecessary dangers. Tyre and Sidon were two Phoenician seaport towns on the Mediterranean coast, north of Galilee.

A Gentile Suppliant.—A Canaanitish woman, whose daughter had an unclean spirit, had in some way learned of Jesus' power to heal, and very earnestly besought him to heal her daughter. We are not told how she learned of his power, but from Mark 3: 8 we learn that his fame had reached Tyre and Sidon long before this, and some from these cities were part of the multitudes that followed him in Galilee. Mark tells us that this woman was "a Greek, a Syrophoenician by race." (Mark 7: 26.) She was a descendant of the Canaanites, who were original inhabitants of that section. (Josh. 5: 1; Judges 1: 30-33.) She was living under Greek government, and in the Syrophoenician country. Her calling Jesus the "Son of David" indicates she knew something of the Jewish expectation of a Messiah; her perfect reserve and respect, throughout the whole interview, showed she understood the Jewish feelings for her people.

Answered not a Word.—The suggestion of the disciples that Jesus send her away because "she crieth after us" strongly implies two things: 1. That they were then traveling on their way, and the wo-

man was following *after* them, earnestly repeating her cry for mercy; 2. that the disciples knew Jesus was seeking retirement and should dismiss her, lest her cries defeat his purpose by attracting more to him. Jesus' not deigning to answer a word was a severe test on her faith, but God has often tested the faith of those most worthy of blessings. His silence also taught his disciples that rewards generally await those who make persistent efforts.

II. The Woman Vindicates Her Appeal (Verses 24-27)

Jesus' First Answer.—Mark begins his record by saying that Jesus entered a house, "and would have no man know it; and he could not be hid." (Mark 7: 24.) It is probable that the woman followed them to the house, or later found the house Jesus had entered. If this be the correct order of the incidents, Mark omits the things mentioned in the preceding section. Regardless of the order in which every item of the interview occurred, Jesus finally recognized her persistence by speaking to her. He further tried her faith by saying that he was sent only to the Israelites. The woman, of course, saw the implied conclusion that helping her would be exceeding what his mission required.

The Woman's Response.—Ignoring the plausibility of the reasoning, and the social barrier between Jews and Gentiles, she fell down at his feet and worshipped him, repeating her plea for help. Whether this occurred in the house or after leaving it is not stated, neither is it material. The point is that she realized her need of help so deeply that she would not be denied, if possible to avoid it. Doubtless, she put into that fervent appeal the full measure of earnestness and sincerity possible to her grieving heart. Such deep and true respect for divine things do not go unrewarded.

Jesus' Second Answer.—The Jews were God's own peculiar people (Deut. 14: 2; Psalm 135: 4), though they often disgraced their holy position by their grievous sins. Glorifying in their relationship to God, they had developed a narrow exclusiveness that produced a self-righteous contempt for other nations, whom they compared to dogs. Referring to this well-known condition, Jesus tested her faith still further. As a Jew, he could, with much propriety, say that it was not proper to give the children's bread to the dogs. Instantly, the woman recognized his meaning—that is, it was not in keeping with his mission to the Israelites to favor Gentiles with blessings that were intended only for the Jews.

The Woman's Reply.—With a determination born of a sense of utter dependence, the woman vindicates her plea. Without questioning the justice of the Jewish sentiment, she admitted that Jesus had stated the true fact. She then based the defense of her appeal for help upon an inference drawn from that fact. Even dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table. From this true fact her implied reasoning was substantially this: If I, a Gentile, should receive the appellation of dog, still, as one, I am entitled to the one crumb of mercy, even though the full meal of thy loving-kindness should go to the Jews. Perhaps, no plea was ever made with purer motives or more touching sincerity.

III. Jesus Heals the Woman's Daughter (Verse 28)

"Great is thy Faith."—Jesus approved of the woman's persistence by saying to her: "great is thy faith." The centurion said that if Jesus would only say the word, his servant would be healed. Jesus marveled at his words and said: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." (Matt. 8: 10.) It is remarkable that these two upon whom Jesus bestowed his highest praise for faith were both Gentiles. Mark says that Jesus granted her request because of "this saying"—that is, that she was willing to receive but a crumb from the great store of the Lord's mercy. Her faith was great because she turned apparently insurmountable obstacles into reasons for urging her plea. Her case is a personal illustration of the lesson taught in a later parable that men "ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke 18: 1.) It is not necessary to suppose that her faith included more than her unquestioning belief that Jesus had power to heal her daughter. The kingdom not yet being established, she cannot be considered a case of conversion to the full gospel. Her case is an example of great faith to accomplish what is possible; so was that of Abraham. That is the only scriptural use we can make of either.

The Appeal Granted.—The centurion said that Jesus had to only say the word and the healing would take place. Jesus said the word, and the woman's daughter was made whole from that very hour. Mark relates that when the mother returned home she found that the demon had gone out. It should not be overlooked that Jesus' word healed as well when he was absent as when he was present. Everywhere, and in every way, the healings of Jesus stand in bold contrast with the miserable pretenses of all modern times. One remarkable thing about all his healings is that both diseases and evil spirits yielded promptly at his word; no delay, second effort, or continued trial was necessary when Jesus said, "Depart."

IV. The Faith of Many Rewarded (Verses 29-31)

Return to Lake Galilee.—Matthew simply states that Jesus left the place where he healed the woman's daughter and returned to the Sea of Galilee. Mark, however, describes briefly the journey and shows that he came to the east shore of the lake. (Mark 7: 31.) He traveled north through Sidon, thence he must have gone east to the headwaters of the Jordan, when he turned south to finish his journey. This is made certain by Mark's statement that he came "through the midst of the borders of Decapolis." In some mountainous place east of the lake he tarried some time.

General Healings.—How long Jesus remained in the regions of Decapolis is not known, but from the number of healings mentioned, and the feeding of the four thousand that occurred before leaving, it must have been several days, at least. Our text contains a very general statement of the many kinds of healings, and the way the multitudes were affected. Mark, with his peculiar custom of giving details, selects one special case which he describes in full. (Mark 7: 32-37.) In describing the one case, Mark does not deny in any manner that others were healed; he simply does not mention them, at all. A specific description of one sick person in a hospital is no implied denial that many other sick persons were there. Neither is

Matthew's general statement of the many healings in conflict with Mark's detailed reference to a special one.

The Diseases Mentioned.—The works of Jesus had already created such general interest that ordinary methods to avoid publicity did not succeed very long; even in desert places a multitude soon found him. The reports of his healings naturally caused the sick to seek him, and the well to bring their friends and relatives. The diseases, listed again, show us how real the cures must have been. The lame included all who, in some manner, were unable to walk; the maimed were those who had some member of the body lost or useless; the blind and dumb were without ability to see and hear. Besides these, Matthew says, "many others." Nothing but true miraculous power could heal the diseases mentioned. Both the incurable nature of the diseases and the promptness of the cures stamp the power as divine.

"They Glorified" God.—It is not surprising that so many cures amazed the people, or that the nature of them should have caused them to "glorify the God of Israel." If any of the Jewish leaders were present, it is not necessary to suppose that their opposition was giving way; but the multitudes who brought their sick to be healed and saw their efforts rewarded would have every reason for praising God. The healed certainly would have glorified God, and the disciples also had occasion for rejoicing at the general approval of their Master and his work.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. The Canaanitish woman, in making her plea for mercy, was humble, respectful, reasonable, fervent, and persistent. She well knew the difficulties that confronted her in obtaining the desire of her heart. With a character less noble, she might have failed; with such traits, success was assured. It will be the same with us.

2. The woman did not allow obstacles to stop her efforts when the health, happiness, and possibly the life of her daughter were at stake. Fighting her battle against the Lord's silence, and then against the idea of Gentile inferiority, she put her case completely in his hands. In this, she has given the world a noble example—we should commit our ways to the Lord.

3. The greatness of the woman's faith is manifest in her works—a splendid illustration of the words of James that "faith apart from works is dead." (James 2: 26.) It was also great, in that, even adverse circumstances were made to furnish reasons for her persistent efforts, till success was attained.

4. Those who gave the honest and careful consideration to the works of Jesus that any noble claim deserves believed that he came from God; rightly, they glorified God. Those who give the divine record the same consideration will reach the same conclusion and likewise glorify God.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What happened on the evening after Jesus spoke the parables?
What happened while they were east of the lake?

What happened after returning to Capernaum?
 Where did Jesus and the disciples go next?
 What happened as they returned?
 Describe an important visit Jesus made.
 What rebuke did Jesus give the Nazarenes?
 What lesson did Jesus give on Jewish traditions?

I

What journey did Jesus make?
 Why were his labors limited to Jewish territory, in the main?
 What reasons may be assigned for this journey?
 How did the Canaanitish woman learn of Jesus?
 Explain the different terms used to describe her.
 What is indicated by the words "Son of David"?
 What is implied in the suggestion to send her away?
 What was the disciples' reason for the suggestion?
 Of what was Jesus' silence a test?

II

How does Mark begin his record?
 What did Mark probably omit?
 What was the first answer Jesus gave the woman?
 What did the woman then do?
 What feeling existed with Jews regarding Gentiles?
 How did that feeling come about?
 What was Jesus' second answer?
 How did she reply to it?
 What was her course of reasoning?

III

What did Jesus then say to the woman?
 What had he already said of the centurion's faith?
 What is remarkable about these two cases?
 What reason does Mark give for the reply of Jesus?
 What parable is illustrated by her case?
 How much did her faith include?
 Of what is it an example?
 When did the healing occur?
 What is remarkable about all healings by Jesus?

IV

How is the return journey described by Matthew?
 How by Mark?
 How do we know he came to the east side of the lake?
 How long did he remain in that section?
 What remarkable difference is there between Matthew's and Mark's records?
 Why did the multitude find him so quickly?
 What diseases are mentioned?
 What stamped the power as divine?
 Why was the amazement of the people not surprising?
 Who had special reasons for praising God?

Practical Thoughts

What traits of character did the woman manifest?
 What noble example did she leave the world?
 In what ways was her faith great?
 To what conclusion will honest study of God's word lead?

Lesson XII—March 25, 1934

WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHINGS

Matt. 16: 1-12.

1 And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and trying him asked him to show them a sign from heaven.

2 But he answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather: for the heaven is red.*

3 And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to-day: for the heaven is red and lowering.* Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times.

4 An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah. And he left them, and departed.

5 And the disciples came to the other side and forgot to take bread.

6 And Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, We took no bread.

8 And Jesus perceiving it said, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread?

9 Do ye not yet perceive, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

11 How is it ye do not perceive that I spake not to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

12 Then understood they that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves." (Matt. 7: 15.)

TIME.—Probably summer of A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Near Magadan west of Lake Galilee for sections 1, 2; northwest of lake for sections 3, 4.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the twelve, Pharisees, and Sadducees.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 119: 33-40.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 19.	M.	False Witnesses (Ex. 23: 1-9)
March 20.	T.	False Ways (Ps. 119: 121-128)
March 21.	W.	False Gods (Jer. 18: 13-17)
March 22.	T.	False Christs (Mark 13: 14-23)
March 23.	F.	False Apostles (2 Cor. 11: 10-15)
March 24.	S.	False Brethren (Gal. 2: 1-10)
March 25.	S.	False Teachers (2 Pet. 2: 1-12)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Pharisees and Sadducees Ask for a Sign from Heaven (Verse 1).
 - II. Jesus Replies to the Request (Verses 2-4).
 - III. Teaching of Pharisees and Sadducees Condemned (Verses 5-8).
 - IV. Jesus Gives a Full Explanation (Verses 9-12).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Between the Lessons.—Our last lesson left Jesus and his disciples in the mountainous region east of the Sea of Galilee, where for some days he had been engaged in healing those brought to him. The multitudes had remained about him till their food had given out. This led to his miraculously feeding them as he had formerly fed the five thousand somewhere in this same territory. (Matt. 14: 13-21.) Healing one is no less an exercise of divine power than feeding thousands with a few loaves, but the magnitude of the latter prevents any chance to misunderstand the miraculous nature of the act. Matt. 15: 39; Mark 8: 10, compared with later movements, show that after feeding the multitude Jesus and the disciples crossed the lake to the west side where the events of this lesson began.

The False and the True.—There is no more striking contrast known than that between falsehood and truth—the dangers of the one, the value of the other. It runs the full length of the Bible story, with its first demonstration in the garden of Eden. It is presented both in theoretic teaching and concrete examples. The fatal nature of falsehood is first seen in its separating man from spiritual union with his Creator. As one falsehood destroyed this unity, it is certain that another will not re-establish it. From that fatal beginning till the present, false teaching has been one continual menace to mankind. Its very nature prevents its ever being anything else. Jesus

said: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8: 32.) To be saved one must have the truth, or these words of our Master are delusive.

It Makes a Difference.—False teaching finds its way into every realm of man's activity, but nowhere is it so detrimental and destructive as when it affects the soul. A popular teaching says that it makes no difference what one believes, just so he is honest. This, if true, means that one may be saved as well by believing a falsehood as the truth. This is repulsive to our common sense of justice, false in fact, and dangerous in the extreme. It disagrees with plain teaching on the power of truth; it is contrary to the equally plain teaching on the danger of falsehood (Prov. 14: 12; 2 Thess. 2: 9-12; Rev. 21: 8); it is shown to be in direct conflict with Bible examples of those who trusted in erroneous doctrines. (1 Kings 13: 11-25.) This popular notion that it makes no difference is also indirectly condemned by the stern rebukes which Jesus administered to the scribes and Pharisees when he so often called them hypocrites for their false teachings.

LESSON NOTES

I. Pharisees and Sadducees Ask for a Sign from Heaven (Verse 1)

Where This Event?—Matthew simply states that the Pharisees and Sadducees "came"—that is, to him in the "borders of Magadan." (Matt. 15: 39.) Mark adds the expression: "into the parts of Dalmanutha." (Mark 8: 10.) Verse 5 of our text shows that, after this interview with the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus and the disciples again crossed the lake, and verse 13 of this chapter indicates that they went from there direct to Cesarea Philippi. This shows that the interview occurred while they were on the west side of the lake. Scholars have suggested that Magadan may have been the same as Magdala; and Dalmanutha, another name for the same place, or a village near it.

Why Their Opposition?—After so many miracles unmistakably demonstrating his divine power, it seems strange that any should have remained in unbelief, or in active opposition to him. The explanation is probably found in the perverseness of human nature, in blindly fighting that which conflicts with personal desires. If Jesus had claimed to be a prophet only as those of old, his work might have been received without much disturbance; but the lofty position of the Son of God, the promised Messiah and Israel's king, was a different matter. Even that would not have been objectionable, if his kingdom had been what they were expecting. Disappointing all their anticipations along that line, their opposition was bitter and continuous.

Evident Hypocrisy.—Though opposed to each other, the Pharisees and Sadducees were both bitter enemies of Jesus. Pretending they wanted to see evidence of his claims, they really hoped to see him fail in attempting a miracle, thus furnishing them with something against him. They probably admitted his miracles, but did not consider that sufficient proof of his claims; hence, asked for a sign from heaven—something that only God could do. Their request may have been backed by references to such signs as had occurred in the past.

The manna from heaven (John 6: 31), the sun standing still (Josh. 10: 12), and three years drought (James 5: 17, 18) are examples.

II. Jesus Replies to the Request (Verses 2-4)

Weather Predictions.—In answering them, Jesus referred to the common custom of predicting weather changes by certain appearances in the sky. Those mentioned may have been fairly accurate indications there, of the changes specified; but Jesus was not vouching for the accuracy, he was only referring to their habit of making such predictions and relying on them as true. If they were able to read such weather indications with confidence, they ought to be able to read the clear indications that he was the Messiah. They were certain, from a red sky in the evening, that they would have fair weather next day; when the sky was "red and lowering" in the morning, they expected a storm that day. The word "lowering" means sombre, gloomy; in reference to clouds, it means threatening. The rising sun shining through them gave a red appearance.

"Signs of the Times."—Paul said the "Jews ask for signs." (1 Cor. 1: 22.) This shows that after the establishment of the kingdom the unbelieving Jews continued their demand for signs. Since the word was confirmed by signs (Mark 16: 20), they had a proper place in giving the plan of salvation. The trouble with the Pharisees and Sadducees, in this case, was not the simple desire to see Christ's claims vindicated by signs, but their hypocrisy, and the kind of signs demanded. They were not ignorant of the miracles he had been performing, which were ample proof that God was with him. This should have been accepted as proof that what he said was true; divine power is not given to sustain falsehoods. As leaders of the Jews, they should have been familiar with their own prophecies, and known that the events connected with John the Baptist and Christ were evidences that the kingdom was at hand. These, with Christ's miracles, should have been sufficient at that time.

"Sign of Jonah."—Christ's refusal to grant the kind of sign they asked for is evidence that it was not then necessary. But in denying their request, he assured them that one more of that nature, the "sign of Jonah," would be given. This referred to his three days in the tomb and his resurrection, which would be similar to the time Jonah was in the belly of the whale. (Matt. 12:40.) His resurrection, accomplished with a power from above, would be the final proof of his Messiahship. Like those wicked and untrue to the marriage relationship, the people of that generation were wicked in not receiving the evidence they then had before them to sustain Christ's divinity.

III. Teaching of Pharisees and Sadducees Condemned (Verses 5-8)

Change of Location.—Matthew says that after this reply Jesus left them. Mark says he entered a boat and "departed to the other side"—that is, back to the east shore of the lake. They probably landed on the northeast shore of the lake, since the journey to Cesarea Philippi came soon after this crossing. The statement that they had forgotten to take bread means they had neglected to provide a supply

sufficient for their journey after leaving the boat. Mark's statement shows they had one loaf, yet, in the boat. (Mark 8: 14.)

"Beware of the Leaven."—The word leaven has both a good and a bad sense. In its literal acceptation it refers to an element used in making bread; in this sense it is both good and useful. But it has a silent, permeating influence which, if left without proper use, leads to spoiling the mass; this power to penetrate particles with which it comes in contact also makes it a fit illustration of the spreading of the truth. Both truth and falsehood work in human hearts like leaven in the meal. With the corrupting power of leaven in view, it was prohibited in religious services (Exod. 12: 8; 34: 25; Deut. 16: 3); with the same thought in view, it refers to false doctrines that spread and corrupt the soul as literal leaven spoils the dough. The dangerous feature is its silent pervading influence. (1 Cor. 5: 6-8.)

Disciples Misunderstand.—This figurative use of the word leaven, in reference to teaching, instead of bread, was probably new to the disciples. They had likely told Jesus of their neglect to provide the necessary supply of bread. This caused them to think he meant literal leaven, but they were puzzled to know what his statement signified. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, mildly rebuked them for lack of faith. He had long before taught them not to be anxious about what they should eat, or with what they should be clothed. They should have known that he referred to something more important than providing a few loaves of bread for their journey.

IV. Jesus Gives a Full Explanation (Verses 9-12)

Remember and Understand.—Jesus' words indicate a degree of disappointment at their dullness of comprehension. When it is remembered that they had been with him more or less continuously for about three years, and had seen his great miracles, his rebuke for their slowness to understand is not surprising. They should have known that any deficiency in bread could easily have been supplied, if the need arose. To not so understand was, at least for the moment, a lack of confidence in the divine power which they had so often seen manifested. We should not forget, however, that man is prone to look at things from the standpoint of human possibilities. In the presence of real need, we forget the rich provisions made for great abundance. With the Lord's power present there was no need for worry about bread.

Instances Cited.—Passing over all other kinds of miracles, though they were just as good proof of divine power, Jesus reminds them of the two occasions when he had furnished bread for thousands. He asks them to recall the five thousand so fed, and the number of baskets of fragments left, all from five loaves. For emphasis, doubtless, he mentions the four thousand, the seven loaves, and what was left over. They should have understood that one who was able to feed so many thousands from such a small amount could easily provide for the needs of twelve from one loaf, or without any supply with which to begin. Whether he would have supplied their needs by miracle, or in some natural way, would have depended upon what divine wisdom decided the case required. The point is that they, from past observation, should have understood that he would have cared for any emergency that might arise. It was this lack of faith in his wisdom

and power that merited his rebuke. The oversight in preparing sufficient bread was not a matter of enough importance to justify his solemn warning.

They Understand.—With this explanation, he asked how they failed to understand that he had no reference to bread when he spoke of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then, they understood that he meant for them to beware of the doctrines of these Jewish sects. Of course, he did not mean for them to reject everything these parties taught; for, in spite of all their perversions and traditions, they taught the observance of the Mosaic law. Later, Jesus told the multitudes and his disciples that the scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' seat, and that whatever they required should be done. (Matt. 23: 1-3.) That means they were to obey these rulers when they said what the law said, but were not to observe their perversions, traditions, and evil practices. We know this is the proper application of his warning, for the remainder of this chapter contains his most severe rebuke of Pharisees and Sadducees for their vain and hypocritical practices. Mark, in his record, adds, "the leaven of Herod." (Mark 8: 15.) The leaven of Herod probably refers more to the hypocritical practices of those attached to Herod in some way. The Lord's warning includes all false teachings, and the consequent practices that might lead them from faithful service to him.

The Similarity.—False doctrines are similar to leaven in several particulars. It works in an unseen way, sending its power from particle to particle; false doctrines operate in the same fashion. Luke explains the leaven of the Pharisees to be hypocrisy. (Luke 12: 1.) There is no better explanation of the insidious and spreading influence of erroneous teaching. Both leaven and falsehood act gradually, but continuously. The leaven finally permeates the whole mass; false teachings finally affect all man's faculties, destroy right living, and blast all hope of salvation. As it comes from Satan it can have no other results. We need the Lord's warning against it, just as much as did the early disciples.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. In Paul's day, the unbelieving Jews asked for signs, the Greeks sought after wisdom; but now, those disposed to give evidence a fair hearing will receive "Christ crucified" as the "power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1: 22-24.)

2. If men would use the same common sense, fairness, and diligence in considering the proof of Christ's divinity that they do in trying to discover the true facts in temporal things, all would become believers.

3. The Savior kindly, plainly, and forcibly condemned all false doctrines and hypocritical practices. Paul said: "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." (2 Tim. 4: 2.) We have a divine example and an apostolic command for kindly and plainly condemning all erroneous doctrines and practices.

4. When temptation is about to make our faith waver, we should recall some of the marvelous events in the life of Jesus. It is a sure cure for weak faith.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Where did our last lesson leave Jesus and his disciples?
What great miracle occurred while there?
Where did they go after this miracle?
What great contrast runs through the entire Bible?
What important statement does Jesus make about truth?
What false teaching is very popular?
If true, what conclusion would follow?
What direct evidence is against it in the Bible?

I

Where did this event occur?
Account for the different names.
Where did they go after this event?
Explain the opposition to Jesus.
What would have made his opposers willing to accept him?
What was the purpose of their request?
What kind of sign did they ask to see?
What signs of this nature had occurred in the past?

II

How did Jesus reply to them?
Why did he refer to that custom?
What argument or conclusion did he intend?
What does the word "lowering" mean?
What remark did Paul make about the Jews?
What was wrong in their asking for a sign?
Why should the miracles have been satisfactory then?
What should they have known from their prophecies?
What sign did he promise would be given?
To what did that refer?

III

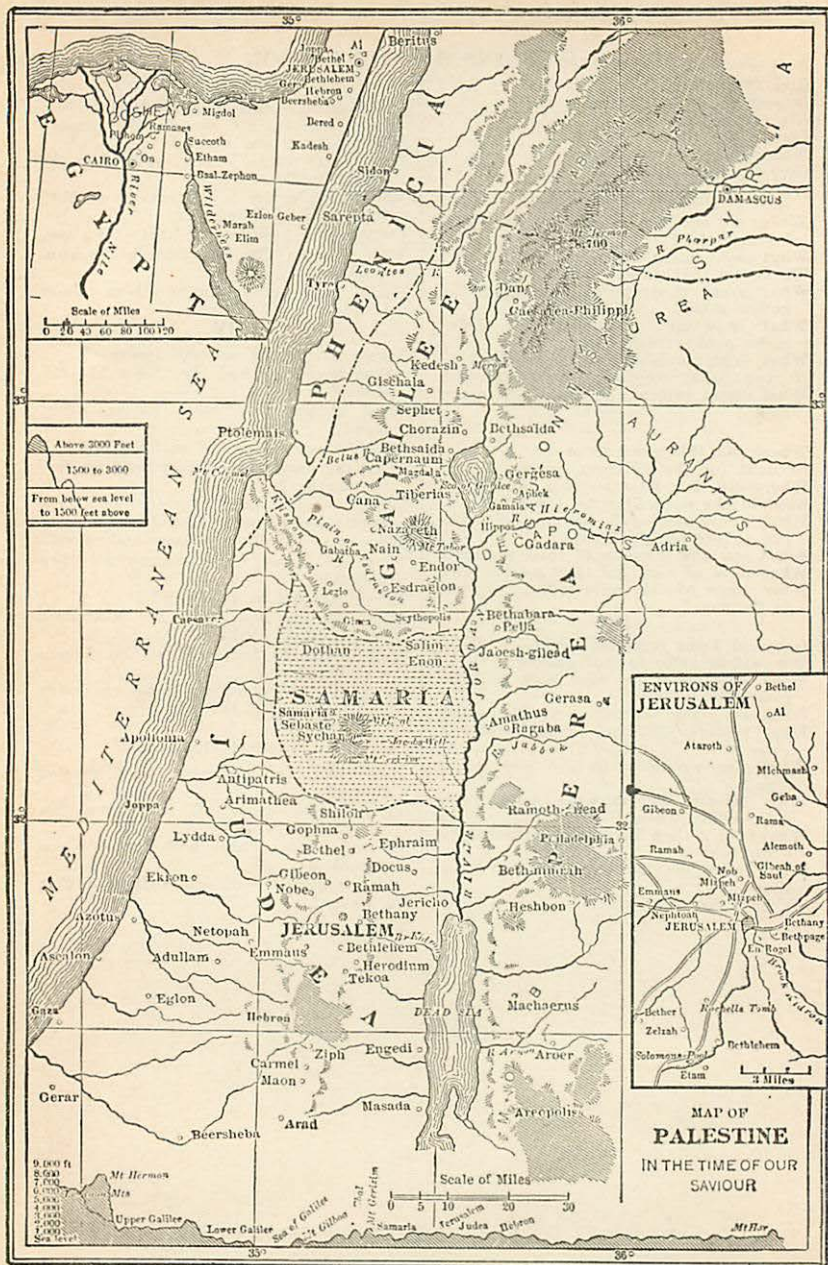
Describe their change of location.
What statement did the disciples make?
Did they have any bread?
How is the word "leaven" applied in the Scriptures?
Why is it a good illustration of both truth and falsehood?
Explain the prohibitions against its use.
Why did the disciples probably misunderstand?
What had Jesus taught them about leaven?

IV

What does Jesus' rebuke indicate?
About how long had they been his disciples?
What should they have known about bread?
In what way are we often like them?
What two instances of his providing does he mention?
What should their memory of these events have taught them?
What then should they have understood?
Why did Jesus not condemn all they taught?
What part did he condemn?
What lessons are found in Matthew's twenty-third chapter?
How much is included in the Lord's warnings?
In what particulars are false teachings and leaven similar?

Practical Thoughts

How will fair hearers now receive Christ?
What would cause all to become believers?
For what do we have both example and command?
What should we do when faith begins to waver?



SECOND QUARTER

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

STUDIES IN MATTHEW

(SECOND HALF OF A SIX MONTHS' COURSE)

Lesson I—April 1, 1934

CONFESSING AND FOLLOWING CHRIST

Matt. 16: 13-26.

13 Now when Jesus came into the parts of Cæsarea 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.

21 From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.

22 And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26 For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."* (Matt. 16: 16.)

TIME.—Probably summer of A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Near Cæsarea Philippi.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the twelve.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 53: 7-12.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 26.	M.	Confessing Christ (Matt. 16: 13-20)
March 27.	T.	Following Christ (Matt. 16: 21-28)
March 28.	W.	Confession and Salvation (Rom. 10: 1-5)
March 29.	T.	Preaching Christ (Acts 4: 5-12)
March 30.	F.	The Cost of Discipleship (Luke 14: 25-35)
March 31.	S.	The Goal of Discipleship (Phil. 3: 7-16)
April 1.	S.	The Captain of Our Salvation (Isa. 53: 7-12)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Jesus Confessed as the Christ (Verses 13-17).
 - II. Jesus' Promise to Build His Church (Verses 18, 19).
 - III. Jesus Announces His Death and Resurrection (Verses 20, 21).
 - IV. Peter's Rebuke and Jesus' Reply (Verses 22, 23).
 - V. The Cost of Discipleship (Verses 24-26).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

A Prediction.—The lessons of this quarter contain a new element in the Lord's teaching. Until the time of this lesson, nearly three years since his public ministry began, he had preached the kingdom of heaven as "at hand," instructed his disciples in the nature of that kingdom, and stressed the traits of character necessary in being true citizens. At the time of this lesson he makes his first distinct announcement of his approaching death. This, according to the records, was repeated three times, and maybe many other times not recorded. During the remaining time—about nine months—he said many things that directly or indirectly refer to the time when the kingdom would begin; when the "at hand" would end in the kingdom's starting as an independent institution.

When and Where?—Our last quarter ended with Jesus and the twelve having just returned to the east side of Lake Galilee. After landing, according to Mark 8: 22-26, they came to Bethsaida, a short distance northeast of the lake, and there he restored the sight of a blind man. The incidents of this lesson are recorded by Mark and Luke also. Matthew says they came into the "coasts" of Cesarea Philippi. Mark says, "on the way" (Mark 8: 27), and Luke says, "as he was praying apart" his disciples were with him. (Luke 9: 18.) All these when pieced together into one narrative mean that the instruction given in this lesson was near Cesarea Philippi, while they were still on their way, and only the disciples were present.

Cesarea Philippi.—There were two cities in Palestine called Cesarea. One was situated on the Mediterranean coast, west of the northern part of Samaria; the one of our lesson was about thirty miles north of Lake Galilee, east of the Jordan, and near Mount Hermon. It was originally called Paneas; but, after being enlarged by Philip the tetrarch, it was called Cesarea in honor of the emperor, Tiberius Caesar. To distinguish it from the one on the western coast, it was also called Philippi in honor of Philip.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jesus Confessed as the Christ (Verses 13-17)

The Lord's Question.—While alone with his disciples on the way Jesus gave this lesson on his Messiahship, a fundamental truth which they needed to thoroughly understand before he left them. He introduced the subject in a most fitting way to leave a lasting impression on their minds. Asking what opinion men generally had of himself was doubtless intended to lead to an expression of who the disciples

thought him to be. He did not ask the question for information. He knew the hearts of the rulers, the multitudes, and his own disciples, but it was time that the twelve, especially, should be put on record regarding this great vital truth.

Their First Answer.—The question brought out the exact issue to be settled. It was: Is this Jesus, whom we know as a son of man, also the Son of God? This latter expression the Jews understood to be equivalent to the Messiah. (Luke 22: 67-71.) Since the miracles and matchless teaching of Jesus had to be accounted for in some way, it is not surprising that the variety of opinions expressed implied divine power in some form. None of them, however, conceded him to be the Christ. Herod thought he was John the Baptist raised from the dead. (Matt. 14: 2.) Herod's supporters probably endorsed this view. (Mark 3: 6; 8: 15.) Rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, it was easy for some to conclude that he might be the Elijah who, they knew, must come first. (Mal. 4: 5; Matt. 11: 15; Mark 9: 11-13.) Still others accounted for his powers by saying he might be Jeremiah or some other of the old prophets raised from the dead. Such belief may be the result of mistakingly thinking that Mal. 4: 5 referred to the real Elijah, who had been dead for centuries.

Peter's Confession.—By putting the question directly to the apostles, Jesus brought out the bold contrast between the truth and the vague and conflicting views of the general public. The apostles enjoyed peculiar advantages in their personal association with him and should have been able to better understand the exact truth, though they were far from comprehending all that truth implied. Peter replied: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It is an unreasonable assumption to think that Peter alone of all the twelve believed that Jesus was the Christ. In harmony with his characteristic impulsiveness, he spoke first, but doubtless expressed the view held by all the apostles. His preaching the sermon on Pentecost did not mean that the others did not believe what he said or could not have preached the same sermon. Jesus was called the son of David (Matt. 1: 1) to show that he was the rightful heir to sit on David's throne (Luke 1: 31-33) when his tabernacle or house should be rebuilt in the establishment of the kingdom of heaven. (Acts 15: 15-18.) As kings were anointed, he is called Christ or Messiah in reference to that fact; Christ is a Greek word and Messiah is Hebrew—both meaning the *anointed one*. Peter's confession not only included the Messiahship of Jesus (his right to reign in the kingdom of heaven), but his divinity as well—the Son of the *living God*—the author of both life and power.

A Blessing Promised.—Jesus promised happiness and honor to Peter in the kingdom because his faith entitled him to God's approval. Men had not revealed that vital truth—they could not; neither had he learned it from Christ's standing among men as a fellow man. This conviction was reached then, as well as now, from the manifestations of miraculous power which were evident in Christ's ministry.

II. Jesus' Promise to Build His Church (Verses 18, 19)

The Name Peter.—This name, meaning the same as Cephas, was given to Simon by Jesus when he was called to be a disciple. (John 1: 42.) The Greek *Petros*, and its Aramaic equivalent, *Cephas*, means

a "piece of rock." It seems clearly in contrast with "this rock" upon which Jesus declared he would found his church. The latter in Greek is *petra* and means a mass or ledge of rock. This distinction, according to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, is generally observed. The distinction of the two words is further evident in the fact that *Petros* is masculine and *petra* feminine. The name was probably given to Simon to indicate his firmness which, with a few notable exceptions, was generally evident.

"*This Rock*."—Calling Simon a stone (*Petros*) to indicate his firmness probably suggested the idea of calling the foundation of the church *petra* to indicate its stability. Commentators have long disagreed regarding this verse. Catholic commentators, with some Protestants, have insisted he meant to build the church upon Peter as a foundation, because Jesus used the word "rock" in reference to each. Others contend that Jesus meant the confession Peter had just made. Probably the exact idea intended by the words "this rock" is the truth Peter had confessed. Upon the truth that he was the Christ and the Son of God, fully established, he would found his church. That truth, like a massive ledge of rock, would be the unmovable foundation upon which his church would rest. That this could not refer to Peter alone is clear from three facts: 1. In other figurative views of the church all the apostles are represented as being in the foundation without distinction. (Eph. 2: 19, 20; Rev. 21: 14.) 2. In no other part of the New Testament is Peter ever referred to as distinctively the foundation or head of the church, a position which is plainly given Christ himself. (Eph. 1: 22, 23; Col. 1: 18.) Such an important position for Peter would not have been overlooked by all the New Testament writers if it had been a fact. 3. In this figure he represents himself as the builder, Peter as the key-bearer, and the truth Peter confessed as the foundation of the church. None of the apostles are here represented as being in the foundation.

"*Will Build*."—This expression unmistakably put the building of the church in the future at that time. The kingdom was still "at hand," but not established. To build upon a foundation meant to establish it, not to enlarge it after it was established. Neither were the "gates of Hades" to prevail against it. This expression means either no power would destroy it after being established, or no power would prevent his building it as promised. Both ideas are true in fact, but both cannot be the meaning of this expression. As an institution with Christ as head and the word of God as its law, it cannot be destroyed. The apostasy of congregations does not change this fact. Hades means the unseen abode—the place of disembodied spirits—and was the place to which Jesus' spirit went when he died. (Acts 2: 26-32.) The latter view may be expressed thus: Though I will die and my spirit go to Hades, yet the gates of that unseen abode cannot keep my spirit there—they shall not prevent my return and the building of my church. (Compare Rev. 2: 18.) On the whole this appears the probable view of the text. It should be observed that Jesus said "my" church. This shows that it is in fact the church of Christ.

"*Keys of the Kingdom*."—Keys mean the authority to admit or debar entrance into houses or relationships. This authority primarily

belongs to Christ (Matt. 28: 18; Rev 3: 7); in a secondary sense it is here delegated to Peter. In recognition of his being the first to confess Christ he was granted the privilege of preaching the first sermon to both Jews and Gentiles. Nothing more is involved in the promise made him here, since the power to bind and loose was given to the others as well as to him. (Matt. 18: 18; John 20: 22.)

III. Jesus Announces His Death and Resurrection (Verses 20, 21)

A Strict Charge.—There remained some nine months before this prediction was to be fulfilled. It was announced to the apostles in private. Its public proclamation would probably have increased the opposition of his enemies; the apostles were not ready to defend it as is evident from the fact that Peter objected to it when it was stated.

"From That Time."—From that time till the end Jesus kept the apostles instructed as to these solemn events, by definitely predicting just how they would occur. This served to better prepare them for the trial to their faith, and to strengthen it afterwards by remembering all had been predicted by him so many times.

IV. Peter's Rebuke and Jesus' Reply (Verses 22, 23)

"Took Him."—Commentators are not agreed about the meaning of the expression, "Peter took him." Some think it indicates that Peter led Jesus to one side before objecting to his statement; others think he laid his hand upon him to interrupt him till he could offer his objection. Or it might mean only a simple interruption. In any event it was an imprudent interference. The fact that after Peter's rebuke Jesus turned and looked at the disciples before replying (Mark 8: 33) shows the disciples heard what Peter said, else they would not have understood Jesus' reply. With the conception of a worldly kingdom in mind Peter could not see how Christ could be killed and yet reign as king. With his usual impulsiveness, he takes the lead again and tells Jesus "this shall never be unto thee." He may have thought God in mercy would not allow such to happen, or Jesus' with his power need not let it happen.

"A Stumblingblock."—Peter's boldness led him to be the first in confessing Christ, for which the Lord pronounced a blessing upon him; the same boldness led him to be the first to presumptuously criticize the Lord's prediction, for which the Lord called him "Satan." He was like Satan in that he was saying just what Satan would have said under the same circumstances. Christ's death was necessary to the salvation of men. This, Satan would have denied—the very thing Peter was doing. The wishes of Peter, if carried out, would be a stumblingblock—hinder or prevent accomplishing the purposes of God. Peter was led to express himself thus because he viewed things from a material standpoint—expected an earthly kingdom.

V. The Cost of Discipleship (Verses 24-26)

Threefold Duty.—Mark says Jesus "called unto him the multitudes with his disciples." (Mark 8: 34.) This shows that the words of this section were spoken to others besides the disciples. The disci-

ples and Jesus had returned to the multitudes, or they had come near enough to be invited to hear. To "deny himself" means to forego any earthly pleasure or practice in conflict with the righteous principles of service in Christ's kingdom. Taking up the cross means to assume any and all duties resting upon citizens. To follow Christ means to continuously and persistently render the service required.

Loss and Gain.—Jesus illustrates by referring to temporal and eternal life. If all our efforts are centered on temporal things, we will lose eternal life. If we lose temporal life in our service of the Lord, we will be sure to obtain eternal life. If we gain all the world, it will be only for a brief time and followed by eternal loss; if we lose it all in following Christ, the loss will be equally brief and followed by eternal gain. Man cannot be profited in losing his soul to gain this world.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Our personal standing with the Lord does not depend on what others think of him, but what we think. The question to ask is: "What must I do to be saved?"

2. As Jesus promised he would build his church, it is a simple matter of faith to believe he did it, and the church is in fact his. This is true or the promise still remains unfulfilled.

3. Prudence and wisdom should dictate what phase of truth is appropriate to be presented on each occasion. A good cause is often damaged because its friends are not judicious in manner or words.

4. Zeal furnishes the motive power for great accomplishments; but, like an engine, it needs knowledge as a governor to keep it in bounds.

5. Some things are too valuable to miss at any cost; some too worthless and dangerous to have without cost. "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us-ward" in the final day. (Rom. 8: 18.)

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What had Jesus preached in the past of his ministry?
What new teaching is now introduced?
Where did our last quarter leave Jesus?
Describe his movements from then till our lesson.
Describe the city of Caesarea Philippi.

I

What fundamental truth is in this lesson?
Why did Jesus ask the question?
What was the exact issue involved?
What is implied in all the answers mentioned?
State and give reasons for the answers mentioned.

Why should the apostles have understood the exact truth?
Whose opinion did Peter express?
What is meant by the expression "Christ"?
What is meant by "Son of the living God"?
How did Peter learn this truth?

II

What names were given to Simon? What were their meanings?
What is meant by "this rock"?
What are some reasons for saying Peter was not the foundation?
What does the expression "will build" show?
What does build upon a foundation mean?
What two meanings might be assigned to "gates of Hades"?
Give the meaning of the word "Hades"?
What church did Jesus say he would build?
What was meant by "keys"?

How is it known that the other apostles had the same authority?

III

What charge did Jesus give the apostles?
Why was this charge necessary?
State the prediction Jesus made.

IV

What is meant by the words "took him"?
What is the proof that the others heard Peter's rebuke?
What did he mean by saying "shall never be"?
What did Peter's boldness lead him to do?
How was he like Satan?
Why was he a stumblingblock?

V

To whom were these words spoken?
What three duties are mentioned?
What is the meaning of each?
How did Jesus illustrate the value of the soul?

Practical Thoughts

Upon what does our standing with the Lord depend?
What should we do with this promise of Jesus?
How is a good cause often damaged?
Why does zeal need to be accompanied with knowledge?
How should we consider worldly sufferings?

Lesson II—April 8, 1934

THE CHILD AND THE KINGDOM

Matt. 18: 1-6, 12-14; 19: 13-15.

1 In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

2 And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them,

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me:

6 But whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.

12 How think ye? if any man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray?

13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and nine which have not gone astray.

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should lay his hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them.

14 But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven.

15 And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven."* (Matt. 19: 14.)

TIME.—Autumn A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Capernaum, for 18: 1-6, 12-14; Perea, for 19: 13-15.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the twelve, and little children.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 2: 8-16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 2. M.-----The Child and the Kingdom (Matt. 18: 1-6; 19: 13-15)

April 3. T.-----The Worth of a Child (Matt. 18: 7-14)

April 4. W.-----Safeguarding the Child (Ex. 2: 1-10)

April 5.	T.	Make the World Safe for Childhood (Zech. 8: 1-8)
April 6.	F.	A Child Serving (2 Kings 5: 1-7)
April 7.	S.	A Child in the Temple (1 Sam. 3: 1-9)
April 8.	S.	The Birth of Christ (Luke 2: 8-16)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Necessity of Humility Illustrated (Verses 1-3).
 - II. The Principle Further Applied (Verses 4-6).
 - III. God Wills that None Perish (Verses 12-14).
 - IV. Jesus Blesses Children (Matt. 19: 13-15).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Lesson Links.—Six days after the time of the last lesson (Luke is more indefinite and says "about eight days" (9:28), Jesus took three of the apostles and went into the mountain where he was transfigured before them. (Matt. 17: 1, 2.) The next day he came down from the mountain, and healed the demoniac boy. (Matt. 17: 14-20.) Returning to Capernaum, Jesus performed a miracle in order to pay the temple tax. (Matt. 17: 24-27.) This shows that he recognized the Mosaic law as still being in force. This is positive proof that the church—(new law)—had not yet been established; for, Paul declared, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." (Heb. 10: 9.) About that time there arose among the disciples a spirit of unholy ambition which furnished the reason for his teaching in the first three sections in our lesson.

Another Interval.—Our fourth section is found in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew. Between that incident and those in the first three sections there was a period of several months—evidently a time of strenuous and almost incessant labors. The things occurring in this interval are too many to mention here. They are recorded mainly by Luke and John. Mark and Luke join Matthew here in recording this lesson event. It happened on his last journey to Jerusalem, and a comparatively short time before his crucifixion.

Character Lesson.—This lesson deals strictly with character. It was a matter of much importance that the disciples know that the approaching kingdom was not far away; that the lowly Nazarene would become its honored King; that it would be established after many sad and disappointing things would transpire, including his own death; but it was equally necessary that they understand the high grade of citizenship required in such a spiritual institution. If the Lord had been intending to establish an earthly kingdom, with the usual display of worldly glory, rivalry, and ambition, his death and resurrection would not have been possible. The same would have been true, if he had purposed to reestablish the Jewish commonwealth, and rule it as a descendant of the house of David. In fact, the divine record, by direct statement or clear implication, often shows that the kingdom of heaven was to be a spiritual one. Trying to place Christ upon a temporal throne is missing the true import of his wonderful teaching. Paul struck the true key when he said that

the kingdom of God "is not eating and drinking"—not a temporal affair. (Rom. 14: 17.)

LESSON NOTES

I. The Necessity of Humility Illustrated (Verses 1-4)

"In That Hour."—Matthew says, "In that hour" the disciples came to Jesus with their question about the greatest in the kingdom. From Mark's record we learn they asked the question in a house after reaching Capernaum. Several days before they were in the region of Cesarea Philippi, where the transfiguration occurred, and the disciples failed to heal the epileptic boy. In Matthew's narrative this incident is placed immediately after the miracle that enabled the payment of the temple tax.

Reason for Question.—Again, we learn from Mark that they had been disputing one with another, on the way from Cesarea Philippi to Capernaum, about who would be the greatest in the kingdom. (Mark 9: 34.) Mark also tells us that after Jesus had repeated his prediction of his coming death, "they understood not the saying, and were afraid to ask him." (Mark 9: 31, 32.) Still sharing in the common expectation of a temporal kingdom, with places of honor for favorites, their dispute was not an unnatural one. The recent promise to give Peter the keys of the kingdom, and their knowledge that the expression carried the idea of special privileges, would make a strong impression on their minds. Peter, James, and John being alone permitted to witness the transfiguration would furnish another reason for contending that they were the chosen ones for special honors. The failure of the others to heal the demoniac, while Jesus and the three were in the mountain, would furnish another reason for the dispute. When Jesus revealed to them that he knew their reasoning in the way, they openly asked him to settle their dispute.

An Object Lesson.—However slow they may have been to understand the statement Jesus had just made—the first "shall be servant of all" (Mark 9: 35)—they did not misunderstand his simple object lesson. The humility of the little child was too well understood for them to miss the point. Jesus, however, applied his illustration in such way that they knew he was condemning their ambition for places of pre-eminence.

Necessity of Conversion.—The Revision puts "Except ye turn" in place of "Except ye be converted." This is strictly correct, for the Greek word is active voice, expressing a duty the disciples had to perform for themselves, not something to be done for them. The word literally means "turn," and may be applied to any kind of turning. In this sense it is applicable to Christians as well as sinners, because Christians often turn from one thing to another. Here Jesus applies the term directly to his own disciples. They must turn from their unholy ambition to the humility natural in the child. This would be a very genuine case of conversion; a case in which the disciples would convert (turn) themselves. Their entering the kingdom that Jesus proposed to establish depended upon their making this turn. Conversion is not a miraculous, mysterious change that happens once when a sinner is saved, but a turning from one thing to another, and may happen many times with both saints and sinners. In fact, the individual must turn when he is holding to error.

II. The Principle Further Applied (Verses 4-6)

"The Same Is the Greatest."—Things are small or great according to the standard by which they are judged. Wealth, achievements, and positions are accounted great with men; humility and service are so reckoned with God. The one who strives hardest for the glory of God, and least for his own honor, is the greatest in God's kingdom. Their personal ambition was wholly in conflict with true greatness. Though they were his chosen disciples, they must turn from it and imitate the native simplicity and humility of the little child.

Receiving Little Children.—Humility not only preserves a right spirit within, but it leads to right conduct towards others. The self-exalting spirit of the disciples, seeking places of honor, would not only have damaged them, but would have led to unfair treatment of others more worthy. As Jesus used the child to represent an acceptable disciple, so in a spiritual sense the little child represents the "little ones who believe" on him, and act with the humility seen in the little child. Of course, little children should receive the tenderest care and consideration, but the little children Jesus required his disciples to receive were those humble ones that believed on him. Just as the common sense of humanity demands kindness to little children, so Christian humility demands similar treatment of humble, unambitious disciples. This could not have been done, even by the apostles, while some of them were striving for place and honor in the kingdom Christ was to establish. Receiving humble disciples in Christ's name probably means to approve of them because they are such disciples of his.

Penalty for Offending.—A truly humble man will not unnecessarily offend any one, much less a faithful disciple of Christ. Those who cause such to fall by putting a stumblingblock in their way will receive the severest punishment. To hang a millstone about one's neck and drown him in the sea was a most terrible method of capital punishment. The thought is that such offenders against childlike Christians will receive a punishment more fearful.

III. God Wills that None Perish (Verses 12-14)

The Sheep Gone Astray.—Having shown the great crime in causing humble Christians to stumble, Jesus said that it was impossible to prevent such offenses, but pronounced a woe upon the one through whom they came. He then mentions that any needful sacrifice would be better than to be guilty of this crime. He urges his disciples not to despise such, declaring he came to save the lost. He then asks them to consider another illustration, and tells what a man who had a hundred sheep would do if one had gone astray. They knew the man would leave the ninety and nine, because safe in the flock, and go and seek the lost. The man's interest in the lost sheep would be increased because of its being exposed to wolves and thieves. If this was the shepherd's natural feeling for the lost sheep, then much more his feeling for lost sinners whom he came to save. This was another reason why they should not despise the little ones who believed in him. It was an indirect rebuke for their ambition, which, if gratified, must cause them to despise, in some measure, their humble brethren.

Cause of Rejoicing.—Finding the lost thing does not change its intrinsic value, but it does furnish the reason for genuine rejoicing. The idea of saving the lost is the feature that intensifies the pleasure. This adds yet another reason for not despising the lowly. If lost, they need to be saved; if in danger of being lost, they need protection. In either event, they should receive the kindest Christian consideration from those claiming to follow Christ. If Christ, the Good Shepherd, rejoiced to find any who had been led astray from truth and righteousness, his disciples should likewise rejoice. On another occasion Jesus said that there would be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repented than over ninety and nine that need no repentance. (Luke 15: 7.)

The Father's Will.—A final reason why they should not have an unholy ambition and despise the humble was that it was God's will that none of such childlike followers of his should be lost. They might be lost by their own straying from the fold of safety, but causing them to stray was a different matter; it was a thing in direct conflict with God's will. No Christlike disciple can afford to do that which may endanger the soul of another.

IV. Jesus Blesses Children (Matt. 19: 13-15)

Little Children Brought.—As mentioned in the introduction, an interval of some time elapsed between the incidents reported in these verses and the preceding part of this lesson. These occurred on his last journey to Jerusalem and a short time before his death. Being so similar to the other occasion is perhaps the reason for including it in this lesson. It is not strange that similar things should have occurred several times during the period of his ministry. On the former occasion, in the house at Capernaum, he "called to him a little child," while on this, they "were bringing unto him their children." So many had seen his mighty powers and heard his gracious words that it is no surprise that they brought their children to him. All parents are anxious for favors and blessings to rest upon their children. The text says that they brought them that "he should touch them," "lay his hands on them, and pray." There is no intimation whatever that they were to be baptized, or received into the church. The kingdom was not yet established, and the law of induction into it had not yet been given; hence, those who brought their children could not have had any such motive. They brought them to receive the Lord's personal blessing.

The Disciples Object.—The disciples observing this rebuked those bringing the children. They probably thought that the Master's work and teaching, in preparation for the kingdom which he said was at hand, were too important to be interrupted by those seeking personal favors, especially in the small matter of little children. Such an objection would not have been made if the kingdom had already been established, and they had been accustomed to see children consecrated to the Lord in baptism. This practice, wholly without scriptural example, originated long after the apostolic day.

"Of Such."—Jesus noting the presumptuous interference of the disciples was moved with indignation—was displeased. He at once said that they should not forbid them to come, thus indicating that even supposedly little things received his kindly consideration. There

was nothing improper, or in conflict with his great mission, in his turning aside to pronounce a blessing on the most lowly. The Revised Version says, "to such belongeth the kingdom," but in the margin it agrees with the Common Version and says, "of such." Either expression is satisfactory. He does not mean that the kingdom belongeth to, or is made up of, little children; but it is made up of such as are like little children in humility and lack of ambition. The child, uncorrupted by worldly things, is an appropriate emblem of what Jesus demands of those who compose his kingdom.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. The apostles made the mistake of thinking that the kingdom of heaven was a road to places of personal honor. From their experience we should learn the lesson that "supposing that godliness is a way of gain" (1 Tim. 6: 5) is both dangerous and displeasing to God.

2. It is true in fact, and fully sustained by the Scriptures, that those who render the most unselfish service are worthy to be accounted greatest. The apostles were ignorant of the true nature of the kingdom, and their ambition was therefore somewhat excusable; we can now plead no such ignorance.

3. If the Savior of men could seek the lost, minister to the needy, tenderly regard the afflicted, and die for his enemies, his disciples should certainly not despise the humble in the church, or out of it. The gospel makes a distinction in character, but none in race or condition.

4. It does not follow that a thing is of no consequence just because it appears little. It is improper to object to anything of which we have no information. It is dangerous, if not fatal, to object to what the Lord did, or requires us to do.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What occurred after the last lesson?
What did Jesus do on reaching Capernaum?
What dispute arose among the disciples?
Describe the interval between chapters 18 and 19.
With what does this lesson deal?
If Jesus had intended an earthly kingdom, what would have been unnecessary?
How does Paul show the kingdom is not temporal?

I

What question did the disciples ask?
Where were they at the time?
When did the dispute about rank take place?
What statement of Jesus did they not understand?

What promise may have suggested the question?
What other events might have had some similar tendency?
What statement had Jesus just made? (Mark 9: 35.)
How did Jesus apply the illustration?
What change does the Revision make in verse 3?
Explain the Bible use of the word "conversion."

II

How do we decide that things are small or great?
Who is greatest in God's kingdom?
What does humility do for us?
Who is represented by the little child?
What "little children" did Jesus mean should be received?
What punishment is for those who offend such?

III

What did Jesus say about offenses?
What did he say about those who cause them?
What command did he give his disciples?
What illustration is given?

How does this show that they should not despise little ones?
 Why is there more rejoicing over finding the lost?
 For what is this another reason?
 What did Jesus say on another occasion?
 What final reason did he give for not despising the humble?

IV

Where did the incidents of this section occur?
 About what time?
 Why are they included in this lesson?
 Show how the events differ.
 Why did they bring the children to Jesus?

Why does this text fail to prove infant church membership?
 What did the disciples do?
 How did this affect Jesus?
 What did he say to the disciples?
 What is meant by "to such," or "of such"?

Practical Thoughts

What should we learn here from the apostles?
 Who are accounted greatest in God's kingdom?
 In what does the gospel make a distinction?
 Why should we not object to what Jesus says?

Lesson III—April 15, 1934

JESUS TEACHES FORGIVENESS

Matt. 18: 21-35.

21 Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest.

29 So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due.

31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due.

35 So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."* (Matt. 6: 12.)

TIME.—Autumn A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Probably Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the twelve.

DEVOTIONAL READINGS.—1 Cor. 13: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READING.—

April 9.	M.	.....	The Duty of Forgiveness (Matt. 18: 15-20)
April 10.	T.	.....	The Measure of Forgiveness (Matt. 18: 21-35)
April 11.	W.	.....	A Prayer for Forgiveness (1 Kings 8: 27-34)
April 12.	T.	.....	Forgiveness and Restoration (Hosea 14: 1-9)
April 13.	F.	.....	Jesus Forgives a Sinner (Luke 7: 41-50)
April 14.	S.	.....	The Forgiving Spirit (Acts 7: 54-60)
April 15.	S.	.....	The Supremacy of Love (1 Cor. 13: 1-8)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Peter's Question on Forgiveness (Verses 21, 22).
 - II. A Servant's Plea for Forgiveness (Verses 23-27).
 - III. A Fellow-Servant Mistreated (Verses 28-30).
 - IV. The Unjust Servant Condemned (Verses 31-34).
 - V. Lesson Applied (Verse 35).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

A Sequel.—This lesson is a kind of sequel to the two preceding ones, that is, Peter's question on forgiveness was naturally suggested by the events considered in those lessons. Having been promised the power to bind and loose (Matt. 16: 19), he knew that if this were of general application, he would occasionally be confronted with the matter of forgiveness. In matters of so much importance he wanted to know just what to do. They had also been warned against offending the "little ones" that believed in Jesus, and told of the serious punishment for the offenders. This involved the question of forgiveness, if those guilty were to be saved. Then he added instruction about how to treat brethren who sin against you. Jesus had said plainly that offenses would come; if so, then forgiveness would be necessary and Peter's question was timely.

Their Needs Anticipated.—The kingdom or church had not been established at the time of this lesson. The first occurrence of the word church in the New Testament is when Jesus, about ten days before, said he would build it. (Matt. 16: 18.) It was in the future then. As no change had been made, it was still future at the time of our lesson. This was advance instruction that was to be applied when his kingdom became an established institution. In fact, all of Jesus' personal instruction regarding his kingdom had to be given in advance of the time when it could be entered. This is evident from the fact that Jesus ascended to heaven ten days before Pentecost, the time when the kingdom began. This is also true of much common, everyday instruction. Contractors are instructed in detail regarding every feature of a house, even before the laying of a single foundation stone.

The Word Church.—As the word church means an assembly, the apostles would have no difficulty in understanding how to apply the teaching. They knew that when the kingdom was established there would be some kind of assemblies, where the method would apply. This rule for dealing with offending brethren is both practical and successful. No organization of men, of whatsoever kind, could adopt a more efficient and workable method of dealing with sinful members.

Since the method is based on a common-sense principle, the apostles could then have applied it to any difficulties, if such there were, in their own little company. Jesus, however, was laying down the method to be followed by his disciples in his kingdom. This involved the question of forgiveness, which is the point of our lesson.

LESSON NOTES

I. Peter's Question on Forgiveness (Verses 21, 22)

A Personal Question.—The command to go to a brother, tell him his faults, and rebuke him (Matt. 18: 15; Luke 17: 3) implied his possible repentance, and the necessity of forgiving him. The probability of a repetition of sin suggested Peter's question. With his usual forwardness, he asked what he must do in such cases. If the binding and loosing (verse 18) were to be limited to the apostles in their work of giving the terms of admission and exclusion from God's kingdom, then this authority is here extended to all the apostles, as verses 19 and 20 show. In that case, Peter was again the spokesman for the twelve, but the answer was for all of them. If it extends to the whole church, involving the extending or withdrawing of fellowship from the congregation, the principle would be the same. In either case, it must be understood that all acts are to be done in harmony with God's will, if they are ratified in heaven. Miraculous guidance guaranteed this with the apostles; Christians must act in strict accord with God's word.

"Till Seven Times?"—It is said to be a rule among the Jews, according to rabbinical teaching, to forgive one three times and no more. Peter, probably desiring to be very liberal, extended the rule to seven, a number which, in Scripture, appears to indicate perfection. (Lev. 26: 18-27.) He doubtless thought this the limit to which the spirit of toleration should go. From a strictly human viewpoint his suggestion seemed charitable enough; it extends beyond what is usually carried out in practice.

"Seventy Times Seven."—Literally construed this would be four hundred and ninety times, a number, the use of which it is wholly improbable would ever be reached throughout one's whole lifetime. Clearly, Jesus was not intending to give an exact number, beyond which one should not go, as the rabbis taught; but to express a continuous duty, without limit as to time or number. Hence, the number is so high that forgiveness will always be a duty to every one. The mercy that requires forgiveness the first time requires it for all subsequent trespasses that are repented of. (Luke 17: 3, 4.)

II. A Servant's Plea for Forgiveness (Verses 23-27)

A Parable.—"Therefore," that they might better understand his teaching on forgiveness, Jesus spake this parable of the unmerciful servant. He meant that in his kingdom it would be like it was with a certain man who was a king. Whether the parable relates a real fact, or an imaginary one, is immaterial; all that is necessary in parables is that what is stated is possible—*has* happened or *may* happen. To reckon with his servants means that in the Lord's judgment the time had arrived for a settlement of accounts. That God will in strict justice reckon with us is a solemn scriptural truth. It should

be a compelling reason to make us deal justly and mercifully with fellow-servants.

"Ten Thousand Talents."—This amount, reckoning the silver talent at sixteen hundred dollars, would make the enormous sum of sixteen million dollars. If the gold talent was meant, the sum would be near three hundred million. These immense amounts, too great for ordinary servants to owe, indicate that this servant may have been a chief servant, or ruler of the king's revenues. However he came to owe such an amount, the text says he had not wherewith to pay. An amount which he was utterly unable to pay was used, no doubt, to indicate the enormous debt which sin makes us owe to God; like this servant's, it cannot be paid, but must be forgiven. The greatness of our sins, and their power to spread and increase in influence, cannot be fully estimated; only the judgment will reveal the full extent of their effects.

The Servant's Prayer.—The lord—the earthly king—commanded that the servant, his family, and his goods be sold and payment made. This phase of the parable is based upon the Jewish law which permitted debtors to be sold to pay debts. (Lev. 25: 39-48; 2 Kings 4: 1.) The wife and children were included because considered a part of the servant's property; that is true in the parable, but has no significance in the application. The servant fell down and worshipped his lord. This was considered a proper manner in which to honor royal personages, but was not understood as an act of religious devotion. He plead for patience and an extension of time, promising payment in full, though the large amount probably made that impossible. Whether he thought he could pay with longer time, or was dishonest, makes no difference. If he thought he could pay, the size of his debt shows he was likely deluded.

The Prayer Answered.—The lord, moved with compassion, turned the servant loose with the debt forgiven. This was the servant's only chance for freedom. In like manner, if a sinner is saved, his pardon must come from God through the merits of Christ's blood; human power cannot pay the price of man's redemption. He must obey to obtain pardon; it is paid for with Christ's blood.

III. A Fellow-servant Mistreated (Verses 28-30)

"A Hundred Shillings."—The coin here called a shilling (Common Version says pence) is equal to about seventeen cents in American money. The debt owed by the fellow-servant was, therefore, seventeen dollars, an amount not worthy to be compared with the sixteen millions owed to the lord by the other. The ratio of indebtedness of the servants was approximately a million to one. This enormous difference in debts was probably used to indicate how little man sins against his fellow man as compared with the sins he commits against God. It also points out the extreme injustice of the man who, having been forgiven the greater amount, is not willing to forgive his fellow man the smaller amount.

Fellow-servant's Plea.—The forgiven servant roughly laid hands on his fellow-servant, half choked him, and demanded payment of the hundred shillings. Not being able to pay, the fellow-servant fell at his feet and besought him to have patience, and he would pay it all. He made the same plea, in practically the same words, as the other

had made to his lord. The debt of neither is denied; that is not the point in the parable. But the servant who had just been mercifully relieved of the greater obligation should not have been unmerciful regarding the smaller obligation to himself. This ingratitude makes his act basely criminal. He refused to extend the mercy received.

IV. The Unjust Servant Condemned (Verses 31-34)

Sorrow to Others.—Other fellow-servants saw the ingratitude and unmerciful treatment and were sorry; they told the lord all that had been done. Humanity, though stained with grievous sins, is quick to sense man's injustice to man, and register some kind of rebuke. The unforgiving spirit, as well as other sins, among Christians brings sorrow to pious hearts, and does great damage to the church. Faithful servants of Christ express their sorrow for sin in prayer to God. Knowing the power of Satan's temptations, and the frailty of human nature, men feel deep sorrow when their fellow-servants in Christ's kingdom fall victims to any kind of sin. It is really an indirect effort of Satan to destroy the Lord's work. For those forgiven through the blood of Christ to be the agents through whom Satan works is inexpressibly sad.

The Servant Rebuked.—The lord called the unmerciful servant to him for a just rebuke and condemnation. In like manner, "we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5: 10.) Man may in many ways suffer the evil consequences of his sins while he lives, but there is nothing more certainly taught than a final and just settlement for our deeds both good and bad. The lord called him a "wicked servant" because he refused to show mercy to his fellow-servant. He was not thus condemned while he was owing a debt which he could not pay, nor was he condemned because he had made that obligation. Many have unwisely made debts they could not pay, though they thought they could when they made them. He was condemned for the specific reason that he was not willing to show the same mercy to a fellow-servant that his lord showed to him, the forgiving of his own greater debt being a stronger reason why he should. The lord forgave him because he asked it; he heartlessly turned away from a like appeal.

The Punishment.—The record says: "His lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due." The lord had before treated him as a debtor and forgiven his debt; now, he deals with him as a criminal and orders him to prison to be tormented till he paid all that was due. This was done in harmony with a later statement by James: "For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment." (James 2: 13.)

Contrasts.—Every item necessary to make a parable a consistent story is not necessary in its proper application. Tormenting one in prison to force collection of debts might have been the practice then, in temporal matters; but tormenting a man in life, or after the judgment, to make him serve God is not taught. Misfortunes may make one sensible of his weakness, and lead to his consideration of better things, but our service to God must come from a loving heart. The

point here is the certainty of punishment for those who show no mercy. Forcing one to pay a debt already forgiven is an apparent conflict when considered religiously, because of the statement: "Their sins will I remember no more." (Heb. 8: 12.) The seeming difficulty will appear of little consequence when we remember that one who, after having been forgiven, falls back into sin, falls into a state of condemnation equally as deadly as if he had never been forgiven, unless he repents. Practically, this would be equivalent to resting under all his old sins—leading to condemnation.

V. Lesson Applied (Verse 35)

"So Shall."—Jesus stated the logical conclusion to which the parable leads. The unmerciful servant received the just punishment which his deeds merited, and so will those who act in the same manner in reference to their brethren in Christ. There is less excuse for them than the servant in the parable. His lord forgave his debt, an enormous amount; but God forgives our sins, which is far more important. That we will continually need forgiveness is certain; this we cannot receive unless we forgive those who sin against us.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. There is no danger of Christians rendering too much service to God, or being too merciful to fellow-servants. When we do all that is commanded, we may well consider ourselves as "unprofitable servants." (Luke 17: 10.)

2. Nothing is more likely to lead to right conduct than a full realization of the enormity of our sins and our need for pardon. We do not have to plead for it; we are urged to receive it on the most generous terms.

3. The Golden Rule is not only the best one to regulate conduct, but it is one of the easiest violated. It strikes at the root of one of man's worst faults—selfishness.

4. Man's injustice to man, as well as his sins against God, must be passed upon by the heavenly Father who will judge the world in righteousness at the final day.

5. Imprisonment by an earthly judge is nothing in comparison with banishment from the presence of God and the redeemed.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Why did the apostles know how to apply this instruction?
Where does this principle fit?

I

What command implied the possibility of forgiveness?
What shows this instruction to be applicable to all twelve?
To what else might the rule apply?
What must be understood in its use?
How often did the Jews think it necessary to forgive?
Why did Peter extend it to seven times?
Why did Jesus say seventy times seven?

Introductory Study

What suggested Peter's question?
How did the warning against offenses suggest it?
What was the state of the church at that time?
How could a church that did not exist be instructed?

II

What is the force of the word "Therefore"?
 What did Jesus mean by the word "likened"?
 What was meant by reckoning with servants?
 How much is the amount of ten thousand talents?
 What does the amount indicate regarding the servant?
 Why was so large an amount used in the parable?
 Why command his wife and children to be sold?
 What was meant by "worshipped" him?
 What lesson was there in the lord forgiving his debt?

III

How much did the fellow-servant owe?
 How does it compare with ten thousand talents?
 What was probably indicated by this great difference?
 What plea did the fellow-servant make?
 What was the exact point of wrong taught?

IV

How did the servant's unmerciful treatment affect others?
 What application may be made of this?
 Who is the real author of such conduct?
 What rebuke did the lord administer?
 Give Paul's teaching respecting the judgment.
 Why did the lord call him a "wicked servant"?
 For what reason was he condemned?
 What scriptural principle is illustrated in his punishment?
 What contrasts appear in this parable?

V

Show the justice in the conclusion drawn.

Practical Thoughts

Of what is there no danger of Christians doing?
 What is most likely to lead to right conduct?
 At what does the Golden Rule strike directly?
 What must be passed upon by the heavenly Father?
 What is man's worst punishment?

Lesson IV—April 22, 1934

OUR ALL FOR THE KINGDOM

Matt. 19: 16-30.

16 And behold, one came to him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17 And he said unto him, Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments.

18 He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19 Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet?

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me.

22 But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions.

23 And Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25 And when the disciples heard it, they were astonished exceedingly, saying, Who then can be saved?

26 And Jesus looking upon them said to them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have?

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29 And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life.

30 But many shall be last that are first; and first that are last.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"It is more blessed to give than to receive."* (Acts 20: 35.)

TIME.—Spring of A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Perea east of the Jordan.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the twelve, and a rich young ruler.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 50: 7-15.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 16.	M.	-----	The Rich Young Ruler (Matt. 19: 16-30)
April 17.	T.	-----	Treasures in Heaven (Matt. 6: 19-24)
April 18.	W.	-----	Treasures on Earth (1 Tim. 6: 9-19)
April 19.	T.	-----	Poor though Rich (Luke 12: 13-21)
April 20.	F.	-----	Rich though Poor (2 Cor. 6: 1-10)
April 21.	S.	-----	How to Follow Christ (Matt. 16: 24-28)
April 22.	S.	-----	Our Father's World (Ps. 50: 7-15)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Ruler's Question Answered (Verses 16, 17).
 - II. The Ruler's Second Question Answered (Verses 18-22).
 - III. Lesson on Trusting in Riches (Verses 23-26).
 - IV. Rewards for Apostolic Labors (Verses 27, 28).
 - V. All the Faithful to be Rewarded (Verses 29, 30).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

The Journey.—Matt. 19: 15 and Mark 10: 17 show that the events of this lesson occurred just after Jesus blessed the little children, which was covered by section IV in lesson II. He was in Perea east of the Jordan on his last journey to Jerusalem. Our last lesson was probably at Capernaum in Galilee. After that he made a journey through Samaria to Jerusalem to attend the feast of tabernacles. This was in October preceding the passover of the crucifixion. (John 7: 2-11.) He apparently remained in Judea or near Jerusalem till the feast of dedication in December. (John 10: 22.) Because of the great opposition to his teaching he retired to Perea and continued his teaching till his journey to Bethany to raise Lazarus. Then because of increasing opposition he retired for a brief season to Ephraim. From there he went through the borders of Galilee to Perea again, which furnishes the time and place of our present lesson. (Matt. 19: 1.) Being his last journey to Jerusalem before his crucifixion, it was also his last time in Galilee till the meeting with his disciples there after his resurrection. (Mark 16: 7.)

Lesson Interval.—The time elapsing between this and the last lesson, perhaps about five months, was a period of strenuous activity for Jesus. It was filled with miracles, discourses, healings, parables, answers to direct questions, and protection of himself against bodily harm. The recorded events in this interval are found in Luke, chapters 9-18; John, chapters 7-11. Luke gives the parables of the good Samaritan, the lost sheep, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the unrighteous steward, the Pharisee and publican, and the story of the rich man

and Lazarus. John tells of Jesus attending the feast of tabernacles, healing the blind man, the discourse on the good shepherd, the visit to the home of Mary and Martha, and a later journey to Bethany to raise Lazarus. From verse 2 of our lesson chapter we learn that great multitudes still followed him and he continued to heal. The Pharisees were still trying to put him in conflict with their law by asking questions intended to trap him. People were seeking personal favors at his hands, and individuals were asking his help to solve their own problems. No one was ever confronted with more exacting responsibilities, and no one but he ever met them all without fault or mistake. The young man of our lesson was one of the many who came. He sought the answer to life's most important question.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Ruler's Question Answered (Verses 16, 17)

"Good Teacher."—This deeply interesting and vitally important story is also found in Mark 10: 17-31, and Luke 18: 18-30. Matthew simply states that "one came to him," and in verse 20 explains that he was a "young man." Luke calls him "a certain ruler," and says he was "very rich." Of what he was a "ruler" is not stated, but the fact indicates that he was of some prominence, even though young. The tone of the story shows that he possessed some admirable traits of character. Mark says that as Jesus was going forth in the way this young man ran to him. This indicated his anxiety to have his question answered before Jesus was gone. He kneeled before Jesus and addressed him as "Good Teacher." Using the customary method of respect for superiors, he was exhibiting reverence for Jesus as a great religious teacher. The word "Teacher," not "Master," is the correct translation here. It was that feature of Christ's work that caused the young man to ask his question.

"Good Thing."—That this young ruler had many commendable things to his credit the further development of the case fully shows. That he had made it a habit to observe the letter of the law is his own assertion, which needs no disputing. His question means he thought there was some one thing, specially meritorious, upon which his eternal salvation would depend. To have done this, he imagined, would guarantee his final safety. In this mistake he was no worse than many now who imagine that if they do some command which they deem specially important, they can ignore others as non-essential. Many think that to be a good moral person will be entirely sufficient, and those who are may refuse baptism, and stay out of the church. The Jewish ruler was wrong, though he had been at least formally keeping their law; the self-righteous moralist is also wrong, for he refuses to keep God's law. In fact, the young ruler's attitude is more commendable than the moralist's.

One Who Is Good.—Probably the ruler used the word "good" as a title of respect, meaning that he considered Jesus as an eminent or excellent teacher. In his reply Jesus used the word in its moral sense of absolute perfection, and affirmed that "none is good save one, even God." (Mark 10: 18.) This play upon the meaning of the word "good" was to furnish the basis for an important lesson. It was equal to saying: Good in its strict sense belongs only to Divinity;

why do you apply a title to me that is applicable only to God? If the word meant moral perfection, when strictly used, then the ruler would have to admit he misapplied it, if Jesus were only an excellent teacher. On the other hand, if the word correctly represented Jesus, then he was divine. In this, Jesus showed him that he had unknowingly conceded his divinity in using the title good.

The Answer.—The answer Jesus gave the ruler was brief, comprehensive and decisive. "Keep the commandments," he was told; this covered the ground. Real, conscientious obedience to the commands of the law under which he lived was all that he was required to do. It is all that is required of any one.

II. The Ruler's Second Question Answered (Verses 18-22)

"Which?"—The ruler still thinking some special command necessary to gain eternal life asked which it was. Jesus replied: "Thou knowest the commandments" (Luke 18: 20), then quoted some to show to what he referred. Jesus' words might be expanded thus: The Mosaic law is still in force, you are subject to it and are required to keep all its commands. Then he mentioned the last six of the ten. They are moral in character, affecting man's conduct with man, and deal with the very things wherein the ruler was at fault. Obedience to the first four of the ten, religious in character and referring directly to God, was implied in the statement that only God is good. "Do not defraud" (Mark 10: 19) is probably a general statement referring to the command against covetousness—a thing likely to produce defrauding. The Lord's reply suggests two important truths: 1. All commands in any binding law are equally important for the purpose in view; none can safely be rejected. 2. Jesus telling him to keep these commands is positive proof that the Mosaic law was still in force. This being true, the kingdom of Christ had not then been established. (See Heb. 10: 9.)

The Ruler's Confidence.—He, with apparent confidence, assured Jesus that he had kept all these commandments from his youth. That he kept them formally, and thought he was doing so fully, need not be doubted; he does not appear as a Pharisaical hypocrite. That he was relying upon his self-righteousness, and had failed to "love his neighbor as himself," seems certain from the effect the Lord's command had on him. The gospel law in Christ's kingdom has commands on the six duties here mentioned, but expressed in as much better form as the gospel is better than the law. As the ruler had kept these requirements from his youth up, he had observed them as a part of the Jewish law system.

Sell All—Give All.—Mark tells us that Jesus "looking upon him loved him," being touched probably by his zeal, sincerity, and frankness, and the possible service such an one is capable of rendering. But Jesus, knowing the thing he lacked, told him that if he would be perfect—have a complete and finished obedience—he should sell what he had, give to the poor, and follow him. Matthew's words imply that he was to sell all; Luke states it in that form. (Luke 18: 22.) This law is not universally applicable to those who would be saved, but one which divine wisdom saw necessary to correct the ruler's individual fault. Giving all he had and personally following Jesus was all he could do at that time. The case is a standing con-

demnation of both selfishness and covetousness. That is its value to us.

"Went Away Sorrowful."—That Jesus gave the right answer is evident from its effect on the ruler; instead of doing the one thing he needed, he went away disappointed and sad, loving his riches more than eternal life. The disciples, still thinking of a temporal kingdom in which riches would have a prominent place, were amazed and asked who then could be saved. The young man was mistaken; he had not fully kept all the commandments.

III. Lesson on Trusting in Riches (Verses 23-26)

Difficulty Explained.—When the ruler went away Jesus said to his disciples: "It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." Seeing their amazement at his words, he explained that it was hard for those who *trust* in riches to enter that kingdom. (Mark 10: 24.) Riches in themselves are not sinful. Paul charges those rich in this world not to set their hope on "the uncertainty of riches," but on God, and by good works to lay up a good foundation against the day to come. He further declares the "love of money" to be "a root of all kinds of evil." (1 Tim. 6: 9-19.) There are two reasons why it is difficult for a rich man to be saved: 1. It is difficult not to trust in great wealth if one has it. 2. It is equally difficult to abandon that trust if we already have it.

An Illustration.—Jesus illustrated the difficulty involved in riches by a proverbial expression, saying that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Both, in fact, are impossible and correctly represent the case when we remember that the rich man is one who *trusts* in his riches. The temptation to trust them is always before one; to do so means one cannot be saved. (Luke 12: 20, 21.)

Who Can Be Saved?—The disciples "were astonished exceedingly." Knowing the power of riches and the human tendency to trust in them, they wondered if any could be saved with such odds against him. They asked the Lord for light. In view of human frailty, men would say salvation is impossible. Jesus said that with God all things are possible. In spite of such difficulties, the gospel of Christ reaches some rich people and leads them to trust in God, instead of their riches. Only in this way is their salvation possible.

IV. Rewards for Apostolic Labors (Verses 27, 28)

What Shall We Have?—Once more Peter assumes the role of leader and spokesman for the twelve, saying that they had left all to follow him. He asked: "What then shall we have?" Seeing the rich young ruler go away sorrowful when Jesus required him to give his all to the poor and follow him, doubtless, suggested to Peter to ask what the apostolic reward might be, as they had left all and were following him. Their sincerity had been shown in forsaking fish-nets, boats, business, family, and friends; they had followed him faithfully. As they had honestly done what he required, they wanted to know what reward they might expect.

Shall Judge the Twelve Tribes.—Mentioning twelve thrones upon which they should sit to judge shows that the answer of Jesus ap-

plies to the apostles alone. It may be paraphrased thus: You (the apostles) have followed me as you say. During the regeneration period when I am seated on the throne of my glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones. You shall judge the entire church during that period. The twelve tribes were the whole of God's people nationally; spiritually the expression means the true Israel of God—spiritual Israel, the church. Christ is now seated upon the throne of his glory at God's right hand. The time of his kingdom here on earth is the period of regeneration, when the apostles through their inspired teaching rule or direct the affairs of the kingdom. For their sacrifices and following him they were granted this honor of being the secondary rulers of his church. It endangers one's chances of final salvation to reject the authority which Christ, as King, has given the apostles as rulers under him. (John 20: 22, 23.)

V. All the Faithful to be Rewarded (Verses 29, 30)

"Every One."—Having just mentioned the great honor to be accorded the apostles in his kingdom for their following him, Jesus broadens his promise to include "every one" following him. He declares that any sacrifices in doing so will be properly rewarded. It might require leaving houses, lands, parents, or children; but, if so, the promise is that such sacrifices will be compensated for a hundred-fold, to which eternal life will be added. The meaning is that for each earthly relative forsaken a hundred spiritual relatives will be made.

Last First; First Last.—Even with such great and certain rewards, many with the greater opportunities would be last; those with fewer opportunities would be first. He was perhaps indicating that many with superior privileges would be lost, while those having to bear the greatest losses would be saved. Whatever the thought of this expression may be, only the faithful followers of Jesus have promise of eternal life.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Wealth, honor, political power, and religious enthusiasm all combined are not sufficient to gain eternal life. We must put our trust implicitly in God, and obey Jesus whole-heartedly; we must not be lacking, or we will be lost.

2. Rich and poor alike must meet the conditions upon which entrance into God's kingdom is made to depend. Accepting some of God's terms of salvation, and rejecting others is a dangerous kind of infidelity.

3. Riches are deceitful, dangerous, and uncertain. Unless rightly used they are ruinous to those who have them. With difficulty those who have them *may* be saved; those who trust in them *will* be lost.

4. Apostolic honors depended upon apostolic labors. To be an ambassador for the king does not remove the necessity of suffering for his sake. Rich rewards are won by abundant labors.

5. Having abundant opportunities does not guarantee great rewards. The kingdom of heaven is entered only by those who gladly accept the law of induction; its rewards go to faithful citizens.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What journey did Jesus make after the last lesson?
How long did he remain in Judea?
What other journeys were made before this lesson?
How was Jesus occupied during the interval since the last lesson?
Who records the events in this interval?
What parables does Luke give?
What are reported by John?

I

Where is our lesson story found?
How do the records describe the one who came to Jesus?
What was indicated by the word "ran"?
Describe the way the ruler approached Jesus?
What did he mean by "Good Teacher"?
What was indicated by his question?
How does he compare with the self-righteous moralist?
In what sense did Jesus use the word "good"?
What would be proved if the word "good" were strictly applied to Jesus?

II

What question was next asked by the ruler?
How did Jesus reply to it?
Why did Jesus refer to the last six of the ten commandments?
What command is referred to in "Do not defraud"?

What two important truths were suggested in the Lord's reply?
Of what was the ruler confident?
In what particulars had he failed?
How are these duties expressed in the gospel law?
How did Jesus feel toward the young man?
What command did he give him?
Why was this required of him, and not of all?
How did the command affect the ruler?

III

What did Jesus say to his disciples?
What does the Bible teach on riches?
Why is it difficult for the rich to be saved?
Explain the Savior's illustration.
What question was asked by the disciples?
What is taught in verse 26?

IV

What question did Peter ask? why?
To whom was Jesus' reply limited?
What was meant by "twelve tribes"?
What was meant by the "regeneration"?
How can they judge, if Christ is head of the church?

V

Who is included in this section?
How will they receive a "hundredfold"?

Practical Thoughts

What must we do or be lost?
What must both rich and poor do to enter the kingdom?
How may a rich man be saved?
How are rewards won?
To whom do rewards go in God's kingdom?

Lesson V—April 29, 1934

CHRIST'S STANDARD OF GREATNESS

Matt. 20: 17-28.

17 And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples apart, and on the way he said unto them,

18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn him to death,

19 And shall deliver him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day he shall be raised up.

20 Then came to him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, worshipping him, and asking a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What wouldest thou? She saith unto him, Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom.

22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They say unto him, We are able.

23 He saith unto them, My cup indeed ye shall drink: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father.

24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation concerning the two brethren.

25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

26 Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister;

27 And whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."* (Matt. 20: 28.)

TIME.—Spring of A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Probably Perea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the twelve, and the mother of James and John.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Phil. 2: 1-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 23.	M.	.....	Christ's Standard of Greatness (Matt. 20: 17-26)
April 24.	T.	.....	The Greatest in the Kingdom (Mark 9: 33-37)
April 25.	W.	.....	The Greatest Gift (Mark 12: 41-44)
April 26.	T.	.....	The Greatest Service (Luke 10: 25-37)
April 27.	F.	.....	The Greatest Value (1 Cor. 13: 9-13)
April 28.	S.	.....	The Greatest Ambition (Phil. 4: 4-9)
April 29.	S.	.....	The Mind of Christ (Phil. 2: 1-11)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. Jesus Declares His Death and Resurrection (Verses 17-19).

II. Ambitious Request of James and John (Verses 20, 21).

III. Jesus Replies to the Disciples' Request (Verses 22, 23).

IV. The Truly Great in Christ's Kingdom (Verses 24-28).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Rewards.—In the closing verses of last lesson Jesus mentioned the special privilege of judging that was to be granted the apostles for their following him, and also the general rewards for all faithful followers. From this some might have been unduly elated at the greatness of the reward, and failed to fully consider the work required to obtain it, or thought only about his hint at sacrifices and been discouraged. Both notions are shown to be erroneous in the parable that follows. (Matt. 20: 1-16.) In it he declares that the pay for labor (rewards) in the kingdom of heaven will be like a householder paying those who work in his vineyard. This householder being honest and just will fulfill all his contracts and see that each laborer is properly rewarded for his service, regardless of when he enters the vineyard. That he will pay only consistent and honest workers is certainly implied, if the parable is sincerely considered.

"Into His Vineyard."—These three words express the important facts of the parable, and furnish the ground for its three great lessons. This parable on service is an appropriate introduction to our lesson text, which deals with the standard of true greatness. Each

word of the three should be stressed. The householder hired laborers into *his* vineyard. The householder evidently represents Christ who invites servants into *his* church or kingdom. The Scriptures invite no one to enter any other church than the one Christ established—the one he called “my church.” (Matt. 16: 18.) Those standing idle were asked to come *into* his vineyard to labor. Sinners are told to enter into the kingdom; we are not hired to work for the Lord outside of his church—in fact, we do not become his servants till we come where the work may be done. We cannot work for the Lord, at all, outside of his church. He hired them to *labor* in his vineyard. They were idle before entering; laborers after entering. Those who are not willing to work—render honest service—in the kingdom of God no more deserve pay than those who do not labor in man’s vineyard or field.

The Eleventh-Hour Laborer.—The parable represents some as coming into the vineyard at the eleventh hour—5 P.M.—and working but one hour, yet receiving as much in quantity as those who worked all day. From this some have falsely concluded that they could deliberately wait till the eleventh hour of life, then enter the church and be as well off as any. Those who foolishly so reason may never reach the time that they suppose will be the eleventh hour, and be lost because of no labor rendered. Besides, the eleventh-hour class came the first time they had a chance. Unless one accepts the gospel call the first time he ever hears it, he cannot plead this class as his example. Those who continue to reject the Lord’s invitation are to be numbered as willingly disobedient.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jesus Declares His Death and Resurrection (Verses 17-19)

On the Way.—In the words of this section we have the third prediction which Jesus made to his disciples regarding his approaching sufferings, death, and resurrection. From the combined records we find that Jesus and the apostles were on their way to Jerusalem when the events of this lesson occurred. They had been on the way for some time, having already passed through the borders of Samaria and Galilee. (Luke 17: 11.) It is not certain whether at this particular time they were still in Perea east of the Jordan, or had crossed and were on the way toward Jericho. Knowing which would not in any way change the story, and is not material to its understanding. The Passover was near at hand, and doubtless many Jews were then on their way to that feast. These together with the disciples, and others who had been drawn to Jesus by his miracles and teachings, made a great multitude of which the Lord was the central figure. This is evident from the report of his passing through Jericho, which came directly after our lesson.

Announced to the Disciples.—Mark tells us that Jesus was going before them, and they following were amazed and afraid. They knew of the bitter opposition to him at Jerusalem and were amazed to see him going that way. Only a short time before when Jesus proposed to return to Judea because of Lazarus’ death, the disciples tried to dissuade him, saying the Jews sought to kill him. (John 11: 7-16.) Seeing this disappointment among the twelve, he took them away

from the crowd and repeated his former declaration that he must suffer death. His language implies that this prediction was to be fulfilled when he was in Jerusalem, on that very occasion.

The Details.—This third prediction gives full details regarding those awful scenes, involving the destiny of the human race. Their accurate portrayal, though only a few days off, furnishes one of the unmistakable evidences of Jesus' power as a prophet. 1. He mentions his betrayal by being delivered to the chief priests and scribes. This was the work of Judas, though he was not mentioned by name at that time. 2. These Jewish leaders were to condemn him and deliver him to the Gentiles. Not having the power to inflict the death penalty (John 18: 31), they delivered him to the Romans. 3. He was to be mocked. Luke says, "shamefully treated, and spit upon." (Luke 18: 32.) 4. He was to be scourged. 5. His death was to be by crucifixion. 6. He was to be raised on the third day. Nothing short of divine power could foresee that all these things would happen, in the order named, and at the time stated.

II. Ambitious Request of James and John (Verses 20, 21)

Why the Request?—Luke's narrative states that the twelve "understood none of these things." (Luke 18: 34.) Their idea that the promised kingdom was to be a temporal one was so fixed that they were incapable of fully understanding the plain import of Jesus' words. This statement of their dullness to understand plain words shows the blinding effect of false teaching. The idea of a temporal kingdom still blinds the minds of good people. Several months before, Jesus promised Peter the keys of the kingdom, and a few days later a dispute arose among the twelve as to who should be greatest in the kingdom. (Mark 9: 34.) Jesus rebuked them and told them they must turn and become as a little child to even enter the kingdom. Just preceding this lesson he had promised the twelve the right to sit upon twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes—the church. This seems to have revived the old ambitious spirit of seeking places of honor; they were still thinking of the glory that would accompany the reestablishment of Israel's kingdom.

How the Request Was Made.—Matthew states that the request was made by "the mother of the sons of Zebedee." The mother is thought to be Salome, and probably the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. If this supposition be true, James and John were cousins of the Lord. Mark says James and John were the two who made the request. One represents the mother as making the appeal; the other says the two sons did it. Both statements are true in fact, and easily harmonized. What one does through another, he is said to do himself. Perhaps recalling the Lord's former rebuke for such ambitions, they had their mother make the request for them, thinking that Jesus might be more inclined to consider her appeal. After saluting him in the usual manner and indicating she desired a favor, Jesus asked what she desired. Then, she asked for the positions of highest honor in earthly kingdoms for her two sons—namely, that they be seated on either side of the king.

III. Jesus Replies to the Disciples' Request (Verses 22, 23)

Jesus' Question.—Jesus said: "Ye know not what ye ask." That was true of both mother and sons. They supposed it would be to share in the chief honors that went with such a kingdom as they expected; Jesus knew that the nearer they imitated him the more certain it was that their days would be filled with trials, sufferings, persecutions, and probably martyrdom. In his question Jesus used the words "cup" and "baptism" in a figurative sense, to indicate the dreadful sufferings that would be their lot, instead of the glory which they imagined. (See also Mark 10: 38.) As drinking a bitter and poisonous potion would result in physical pain and death so the sufferings incident to faithful discipleship was called drinking the cup. This is the usual meaning of the word when used figuratively in the Scriptures. (Ps. 75: 8; Isa. 51: 17; Jer. 25: 15, 16; Matt. 26: 39; John 18: 11; Rev. 14: 10.) The word baptize must be given a similar application, for what Jesus here says about it must apply to those who have already been baptized according to the literal use of the term. As baptism literally means a burial (Rom. 6: 4), the object baptized is overwhelmed with the element. The use of the word "cup" fixes the passage as referring to most extreme sufferings. He meant, then, that such a wave of sufferings would overwhelm him and them that, like one drowned by being covered by water, they would suffer death. This figurative use of the word baptize fixes its literal meaning as immersion. Neither sprinkling nor pouring could be made to harmonize with this figurative language.

Their Future Declared.—Little knowing how much was involved, or how sorely their faith would be tried, they answered that they were able to share his sufferings. Jesus replied that his prediction of meeting intense sufferings in following him would surely come to pass. James was the first of the apostles to suffer martyrdom for the gospel. (Acts 12: 2.) This occurred some twelve years after the establishment of the church. John lived to about the close of the first century, and was banished to the Isle of Patmos because of his testimony to Jesus. (Rev. 1: 9.)

"Not Mine to Give."—It was probably a great disappointment for Jesus to assure them that they would be called upon to endure the extreme of sufferings and possible martyrdom, but it was not his to give the right to sit on his right and left hand—the very thing they desired. This statement, however, should not be understood to mean that he had nothing to do in dispensing rewards and punishments. That would conflict with plain teaching otherwise. (Matt. 25: 34; Rev. 2: 10.) The idea evidently is that he could not give rewards to any except those properly prepared for them, and in harmony with God's purposes. Leaving out the italicized words "*it is for them*," for which there is nothing in the Greek, the true thought of the words will be quite apparent.

IV. The Truly Great in Christ's Kingdom (Verses 24-28)

The Others Indignant.—The text says that when the ten heard it they were moved with indignation. They were indignant, not at what Jesus said, but at the request made by James and John. Their disputing among themselves on this very matter some months previous

shows that they were all equally ambitious, and indicates that the ten resented the personal appeal that the two made to Jesus. The few times that they, with Peter, had been special witnesses with Jesus probably increased the jealousy of the ten.

Gentile Authority.—To rebuke their contention and show the distinction between earthly kingdoms and the one he proposed to establish, Jesus called their attention to the manner of Gentile rule. He pointed out that in temporal kingdoms, the kind they were expecting, those accounted worthy to rule and exercise authority "lord it over" those under them. Kings extend honor to favorites, and exalt friends to positions of rank and power. Those raised to such places of power in earthly kingdoms are often tyrannical and arbitrary in the exercise of their authority. This truth the apostles had every means of knowing, and they could fully appreciate the contrast which Jesus drew between such kingdoms and his own.

"Your Minister."—After picturing the ordinary world kingdoms and their corrupt and unrighteous rule, Jesus said: "Not so shall it be among you." Apparently Jesus thought it extremely important to constantly keep before the minds of his disciples the contrast between temporal kingdoms, and the one called the kingdom of heaven. His kingdom was not to be established to gratify worldly ambition; it was to be conducted on the principles of humility, brotherly love, and righteousness. Ordinary political schemes were not to be tolerated among its members. It was to be governed by God's revealed law, not the vote of the popular majority. The spirit of service was to be the dominant principle to regulate the conduct of its entire citizenship. Hence, we have Jesus' words that whosoever would become great "shall be your minister." True greatness in God's kingdom is declared to reside with those rendering great service.

Our Greatest Example.—Jesus refers to his own life as an example to be imitated. With all the riches of heaven at his hand, he voluntarily came to earth to become a servant, to minister to the needy in both mind and body, and to give his life a ransom for many. He did not demand service as his inalienable right because he was a royal personage; he spent his ministry in helping others, and at last in dying for all. (1 Tim. 2: 6.) If men are not saved it will be because they do not accept the redemption he purchased.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Our own preconceived notions often prevent our understanding the truth, though it be expressed ever so plainly. Prejudice closes many hearts against the very truth upon which their eternal destiny depends. The apostles' conception of the coming kingdom prevented their thinking Jesus' death possible. Prejudice, like a veil, blinded the mind of the Jews after the kingdom was established. (2 Cor. 3: 14, 15.)

2. An earnest desire to obtain that which is really best for us is laudable, on the part of both parents and children; but an ambition to obtain places of trust just for personal glory is wholly irreconcilable with the nature of Christ's kingdom. If even Christian parents were more anxious to have their children be of service to the world than to rule over it, it would be a blessing to all.

3. Often the thing which we least desire is that which is best for

us. The hottest fires separate the dross from the pure metal. Sufferings and persecutions test the strength of our faith, but leave it shining more brightly if we endure the test.

4. If we are constantly busy trying to imitate the Lord in his ministry of service to humanity, we will not have time to be indignant at those who may be able to accomplish more than we do. We will keep our eye on the perfect example and continually realize our own faults—a road to humility instead of unholy ambition.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Why did Jesus give the parable of the laborers?
What is the likeness presented?
What would the honest householder do?
What words express the important facts of the parable?
What are the lessons in the words *his* and *into*?
What lesson is obtained from the word *labor*?
At what different hours did the workers enter the vineyard?
What was the eleventh hour?
What false conclusion has been drawn from this case?
Why is it false?

I

Which prediction is this of his death?
Give the circumstances under which this lesson was given.
Where were they at this time?
What feast was near?
How many were in the crowd with Jesus?
What item does Mark give here?
Why were they amazed at his going to Jerusalem?
To whom was this prediction made?
What is implied in his words?
Mention and explain the details of this prediction.

II

What does Luke say about the twelve?
Why did they not understand?
What promise had Jesus just previously made?
What effect did this have on them?
Who made the request?
Harmonize with Mark's record.
Why did the mother make the request?
Who was their mother, and how related to Jesus?

III

What answer did Jesus make?
Why did they not know what they asked?
How did Jesus use the words "cup" and "baptism"?
Give some other instances of the use of the word "cup"?
What proves that the word "baptize" is used figuratively?
What is the act of baptism?
How does this passage prove it?
What did Jesus declare regarding their future?
What is meant by, "not mine to give"?

IV

Why were the ten indignant?
What illustration did Jesus use?
Who did he declare was greatest?
What example is given?

Practical Thoughts

What often prevents understanding truth?
What is contrary to the nature of Christ's kingdom?
What will sufferings do for faith?
Why is it best to keep our eye on Jesus?

Lesson VI—May 6, 1934

JESUS ACCLAIMED AS KING

Matt. 21: 1-14.

1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and came unto Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village that is over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.

3 And if any one say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

4 Now this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying,

- 5 Tell ye the daughter of Zion,
Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,
Meek, and riding upon an ass,
And upon a colt the foal of an ass.
- 6 And the disciples went, and did even as Jesus appointed them,
- 7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their garments; and he sat thereon.
- 8 And the most part of the multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the trees, and spread them in the way.
- 9 And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.
- 10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, Who is this?
- 11 And the multitudes said, This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.
- 12 And Jesus entered into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves;
- 13 And he saith unto them, It is written My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers.
- 14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name."* (Phil. 2: 9.)

TIME.—Sunday of Passover week, A. D. 30.

PLACE.—On the way from Bethany to Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the disciples, and the multitudes.

DEVOTIONAL READINGS.—Heb. 1: 8-12.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 30	M.	Jesus Acclaimed as King (Matt. 21: 1-14)
May 1	T.	The King's Coming Foretold (Zech. 9: 9-17)
May 2	W.	The King Acclaimed and Rejected (Luke 19: 36-48)
May 3	T.	The Reign of the King (Ps. 2: 1-12)
May 4	F.	"Not of This World" (John 18: 33-40)
May 5	S.	The Heavenly Triumph (Rev. 5: 6-14)
May 6	S.	Christ's Everlasting Dominion (Heb. 1: 8-12)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. A Prophecy Fulfilled (Verses 1-5).

II. The Disciples Did as Commanded (Verses 6, 7).

III. Jesus Triumphantly Enters Jerusalem (Verses 8-11).

IV. Merchants and Money Changers Cast Out (Verses 12, 13).

V. Jesus Heals the Blind and Lame (Verse 14).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Enters Jericho.—If the events of the last lesson occurred in Perea east of the Jordan, Jesus and those with him had crossed it in the meantime and entered Jericho, about seven miles west and on the road to Jerusalem. From Mark and Luke we learn that a blind man, named Bartimaeus, addressed Jesus as son of David, and begged for mercy. Matthew mentions two blind beggars. There is no conflict in the records, for the other writers do not say *only one*; they just describe the one that did all or most of the talking, and say nothing about the other beggar. Matthew only adds what they chose not to

mention. Matthew's narrative represents the healing as occurring as Jesus passed out of the city, not as he entered. The whole story is perfectly consistent, if we suppose that while Jesus was stopping in the city to dine with Zacchaeus, they moved to the gate where he would pass out. There they could the better make their plea by knowing in advance that he would pass that way; hence, they could be ready as he approached.

Dines with Zacchaeus.—Knowing the friendly feeling of Zacchaeus, a chief publican, Jesus said to him: "I must abide at thy house." This knowledge of Zacchaeus' character and of his worthiness to be saved was doubtless the reason Jesus invited himself to dine with him. The sequel shows that the visit to his home was prompted by divine wisdom. Luke (19: 11) shows that Jesus spoke the parable of the pounds while in Zacchaeus' house. The reason assigned for giving this parable was, "Because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they supposed the kingdom of God was immediately to appear." Jericho was about seventeen miles east of Jerusalem. Still thinking of a temporal kingdom, the crowd supposed he was going to Jerusalem to be proclaimed king.

The Lesson.—The nobleman of the parable going into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom can mean nothing else than that Jesus had to go to heaven before receiving his kingdom. This was to show that they were wrong in supposing he would begin his reign as soon as he reached Jerusalem. If this is not the lesson, then there is no point in the reason assigned for speaking the parable. Verse 15 says, "when he was come back again, having received the kingdom." This means that Jesus did receive the kingdom in heaven. When he returns it will be the time to settle with his servants—evidently the judgment. Hence, Jesus is now reigning, or he will never reign, and the Scriptures regarding that point are untrue. This, of course, is an intolerable conclusion. This parable proves two things: 1. The kingdom of heaven did not begin till after Jesus ascended to heaven. 2. Christ's reign will end when he returns to earth. (1 Cor. 15: 24.)

LESSON NOTES

I. A Prophecy Fulfilled (Verses 1-5)

"Drew Nigh."—Leaving Jericho after opening the eyes of the two blind men, Jesus and his company came to the Mount of Olives, between which and Jerusalem was the brook Kidron. All four evangelists record this lesson. John says Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover where they made him a supper in the house of Simon the leper. (John 12: 1-11.) Verse 12 shows that the entry into Jerusalem occurred the day after that supper. Matthew records this supper in another connection (Matt. 26: 6-13), and here mentions what happened on the way after leaving Bethany for Jerusalem. Mark and Luke mention both Bethany and Bethphage. (Mark 11: 1; Luke 19: 29.) The probable order is this: Next morning after the supper, Jesus left Bethany and came near Bethphage to which he sent the disciples for the colt. The location of Bethphage is now unknown.

Two Disciples Sent.—The detailed description which Jesus gave

the two disciples of what they would find and what would occur shows his divine foreknowledge. In a country using the ass as a beast of burden, finding one tied up would not have been an unusual circumstance. But telling them a colt never having been ridden would be with the mother, and that their owner would let them come by being told the "Lord hath need of them," makes a different case. Other details of the prophecy combine to put this outside the realm of mere chance.

Why It Happened.—Matthew says this came to pass that a prophecy might be fulfilled. It refers to Zech. 9: 9. The "daughter of Zion" is a figurative expression for Jerusalem, Zion being one of the hills upon which the city was built. As the law was to go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2: 2), it was fitting that Jesus should there be acclaimed as worthy to rule as king. The ass was used as a beast of burden, the horse for war. Jesus entering Jerusalem on the ass proclaimed his meekness—showed his kingdom to be one of peace, instead of war. It betokened no dishonor or disrespect, for kings and princes rode such animals freely. (Judges 10: 4; 12: 14.) David, whose son the Messiah had to be, rode a mule. (1 Kings 1: 33.) The plain garments used were in striking contrast with the rich and gaudy trappings that would have decked the animal for an earthly king; another evidence that his kingdom was one of peace. The entire procedure was appropriate to the "Prince of Peace," and a spiritual kingdom.

II. The Disciples Did as Commanded (Verses 6, 7)

"Hath Need of Them."—These words which Jesus told the disciples to use, if any one questioned them, shows he intended for them to bring both the colt and its dam. Mark and Luke both mention the loosing of the colt. This shows they understood they were to bring both. Matthew says they did bring both. John says, "These things understood not his disciples at the first," but after his glorification they remembered what had been said and done. (John 12: 16.) Not realizing that they were fulfilling part of a prophecy, they brought both animals because Jesus required it. As he required them to bring both, they did not know which he would use. This explains why they placed garments on both that Jesus might use the one he chose.

"He Sat Thereon."—While this expression seems to imply that Jesus sat upon both animals, yet the other three evangelists definitely say he sat upon the colt. Only Matthew mentions the bringing of the dam, and he quotes a prophecy that shows Jesus was to ride the colt. Two reasons may be assigned for the apparent difference here between Matthew and the other writers: 1. His narrative, according to his usual custom, is general which allows for more indefinite expressions. Such expressions are to be interpreted in harmony with more definite ones. 2. Literally translated, the Greek says, "He sat upon them." The pronoun *them*, however, may refer to the garments which had been placed upon the colt. That he was to ride upon the colt is the clear import of the prophet's words; that he did ride the colt is the plain and common-sense teaching of the records.

III. Jesus Triumphantly Enters Jerusalem (Verses 8-11)

March to the City.—The Passover, one of the three annual feasts requiring male Jews to be present, drew immense numbers to Jerusalem. (John says that a great multitude, already there to attend the feast, hearing that Jesus was coming, went forth to meet him, bearing palm branches and crying "Hosanna." He also says that those who witnessed the raising of Lazarus from the dead had borne witness which caused the multitudes to come to meet him. (John 12: 12-18.) These added to those with him made so great a demonstration that the Pharisees said, "the world is gone after him." (John 12: 19.) "The most part of the multitude" showed the sincerity of their respect by spreading their garments, and branches cut from trees, in the way before him. Preparing a pleasant way was a customary method of showing respect for distinguished persons.

"Hosanna in the Highest."—Hosanna is a Hebrew word meaning, "save now." Hosanna in the highest may mean salvation in the highest degree, or salvation from Jehovah in the highest heavens. Hosanna to the son of David meant salvation through the Messiah, who was to be David's son. The sum of all these expressions probably means they were giving to Jesus the highest praise, and invoking Jehovah to give them the highest and greatest salvation through him. As they reached the foot of the Mount of Olives the whole multitude began in this burst of praise. The different sets of words given by the evangelists show that the multitude was using different forms of expression. This was the natural thing when many were speaking at the same time. The prophet had said: "Behold thy King cometh unto thee." Matthew called him the son of David, and said that he came "in the name of the Lord." Luke and John both refer to him as King. Mark says, "Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David." (Mark 11: 10.) If these expressions of the multitude were wrong, no inspired writer ever corrected it later. Their words mean that Jesus was then coming as one worthy to reign; hence, the kingdom was not then established. This agrees perfectly with what he said two or three days before in the parable of the pounds—he must go to a far country to receive a kingdom. (Luke 19: 11.)

"Who Is This?"—Entering the city surrounded by a multitude that was shouting his praise excited the whole city. The natural question was: Who is this that is creating such a disturbance? The multitudes—those praising him—said: "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee," meaning that this Galilean is "that prophet" whom Moses said God would raise up. (Deut. 18: 15.)

IV. Merchants and Money Changers Cast Out (Verses 12, 13)

Entered the Temple.—Matthew here follows the statement that Jesus entered the temple with a description of his driving out the money changers and those selling animals for sacrificial purposes. With his record only, the natural conclusion would be that this event occurred on the day of the triumphal entry, but Mark (11: 11-15) indicates that he only entered the temple, looked around and returned to Bethany to spend the night, the cleansing of the temple occurring next day. There will be no apparent conflict, if we allow

that Matthew did not mention his entering briefly and returning to Bethany, and that verse twelve of our text refers to his entering the temple when he came back next day. The opposition to him in Jerusalem doubtless made it unsafe for him to remain at night.

Occasion for His Action.—The Jewish law required many sacrifices, and the annual feasts, because of the great numbers present, made necessary an enormous amount of sacrificial work. The inconvenience of the worshippers bringing the animals from long distances led to the business of furnishing them locally. Naturally this grew to an immense business. The law required Jews to put into the treasury the half shekel, a Jewish coin, as atonement money. (Ex. 30: 11-16.) This law forced them to exchange all foreign money for the legal kind to make the offerings. This led to the business of money exchanging. Both laws gave the unscrupulous a fine opportunity to take advantage of necessity and "make merchandise" of sacred things. It was this abuse of a legitimate business that Jesus condemned.

The Place.—This is said to have occurred "in the temple," but this expression here only means within the sacred inclosure. In the temple proper no such thing was possible. None save the priests were allowed in either the holy or most holy apartment of that building. Even Jesus himself, (not being of the tribe of Levi) could not have entered that structure. In Christ's time the temple building was surrounded by a court in which the sacrificial work was carried on. A much larger court surrounded this which was called "the court of the Gentiles." It was in this great outer court, with porticos around its walls, that the ungodly merchants conducted their business. Jesus likened them to a den of robbers, ready at each feast to force worshippers to give up money without an honest return. This they did with exorbitant rates of exchange, and extortionate prices for animals. Jesus calls it God's house, a place of prayer, because connected directly with God's worship, quoting from Isa. 56: 7.

V. Jesus Heals the Blind and Lame (Verse 14)

Finishes the Day's Work.—It is amazing that the Jewish rulers, or unprincipled merchants, did not openly resent the rebukes Jesus gave. The chief priests and scribes were sorely displeased and sought how they might destroy him, but found no opportunity because of the people that gladly heard him. (Luke 19: 47, 48.) (They were probably awed by the calm and divine majesty that he displayed.) The merchants knowing their guilt may have remained silent because of a condemning conscience. When the day was concluded, he returned to Bethany for the night. (Luke 21: 37.)

An Object Lesson.—Having condemned the ungodly traffic within the temple inclosure, he gave them an object lesson on how to honor God's house by acts of mercy and kindness. This he did by healing the blind and lame. Such service he always rendered mercifully to the needy, not as a means of extorting unjust gains from them.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Those to be earthly kings are arrayed in royal robes, and come to the capital city with pride, pomp, and splendor to be crowned amidst the shouts and praise of the multitude; Jesus, as the world's Messiah,

came to the Jewish capital in meekness to give his life a ransom for many.

2. To do as Jesus commands us means that we trust him to take care of what we cannot do. This is a mark of unfaltering faith. Proper results will follow when we unhesitatingly obey his commands, whether or not we can understand how it can be.

3. The disciples and friends showed proper respect for Jesus by placing their garments in the way before him, a preparation to make his journey pleasing. We who are his disciples and friends now should give of our means and time to make his church successful; this will be pleasing to him.

4. God now dwells in the human heart, and church. (Eph. 2: 22; 3: 17.) The heart should be kept free from impurity, hypocrisy, and rebellion against God; the church should never be disgraced by men perverting the work and worship with political schemes, or by using religion as cloaks to cover business dishonesty.

5. Christians should always show the frightful wickedness of sin by making their lives examples of strict integrity and spiritual purity.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Locate Jericho.
What miracle was performed there?
How can all the narratives on this miracle be harmonized?
Relate the story about Zacchaeus.
What parable was spoken in his house?
What reasons were assigned for it?
What lesson does it teach?
When will Christ's reign end?

I

When did Jesus reach Bethany?
What occurred there?
When did the entry into Jerusalem occur?
What command did Jesus give two disciples?
How were they to answer any objection?
Why did this event happen?
Show that it was no dishonor to ride the ass.
What was indicated in placing their garments on the colt?

II

What shows that Jesus intended for them to bring both animals?
What did the disciples not understand?
Why did they place garments on both animals?
Which one did Jesus ride?
Explain statement "sat thereon."

III

Why were so many people in Jerusalem then?
What does John say of those there to attend the feast?
What event caused them to be so much interested?
What does the word "Hosanna" mean?
What is the meaning of the expression "Hosanna in the highest"?
What is the general meaning of all their expressions?
Account for the different expressions.
What expressions are used in reference to Jesus?
What is proved by these expressions?
What was the effect upon those in the city?

IV

When did the cleansing of the temple occur?
Explain how Matthew's record is in harmony with this.
What occasioned this traffic in the temple?
What is meant by "in the temple"?
Why could Christ not enter the temple building itself?
What part of the temple inclosure were the merchants using?
How did Jesus describe them? Why?

V

How did Jesus' action affect the scribes and chief priests?
Why did they not resent his rebukes?
What object lesson did Jesus give?

Practical Thoughts

What is the contrast between Jesus and earthly kings?

What does it mean to do as Jesus commands?

How should we show our respect for Jesus?

How should we keep our hearts and the church?

What kind of examples should our lives be?

Lesson VII—May 13, 1934

CHRISTIANITY AND PATRIOTISM

(TEMPERANCE AND GOOD CITIZENSHIP)

Matt. 22: 15-22, 34-40.

15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might ensnare him in his talk.

16 And they send to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men.

17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites?

19 Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a denarius.

20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

22 And when they heard it, they marvelled, and left him, and went away.

34 But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together.

35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him:

36 Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?

37 And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the great and first commandment.

39 And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

40 On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."* (Matt. 22: 37-39.)

TIME.—Tuesday of Passover week, A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Temple court.

PERSONS.—Jesus, disciples, Pharisees, and Herodians.

DEVOTIONAL READINGS.—Rom. 13: 8-14.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 7.	M.	Christianity and Patriotism (Matt. 22: 15-22)
May 8.	T.	The Great Commandment (Matt. 22: 34-40)
May 9.	W.	The Royal Law (James 2: 5-13)
May 10.	T.	The Responsibility of Rulers (Job 34: 10-20)
May 11.	F.	Respect for Authority (Acts 19: 35-41)
May 12.	S.	Good Citizenship (Rom. 13: 1-7)
May 13.	S.	Fulfilling the Law (Rom. 13: 8-14)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Pharisees Try to Ensnare Jesus (Verses 15-17).
 - II. The Lawfulness of Tribute Money (Verse 17).
 - III. Jesus Answers the Question on Paying Tribute (Verses 18-22).
 - IV. A Pharisaic Lawyer's Question (Verses 34-36).
 - V. Jesus Replies to the Lawyer (Verse 37-40).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Connecting Links.—According to the chronology suggested in section IV of last lesson, the cleansing of the temple occurred Monday of crucifixion week. Jesus cursed the fig tree as he and the disciples came from Bethany to Jerusalem Monday morning. On Tuesday morning, the day of this lesson, as they returned to Jerusalem they found the tree withered. This miracle astonished the apostles, and gave the reason for the Savior's lesson that the exercise of miraculous power required unwavering faith. (Matt. 21: 20-22; Mark 11: 22-24.)

Jesus' Authority Questioned.—On reaching the city Jesus again entered the temple court, taught and preached the gospel. (Luke 20: 1.) The chief priests, elders, and scribes asked by what authority he interfered with their temple arrangements. (Matt. 21: 23-25; Mark 11: 27, 28.) Not being a priest, they considered he was meddling with affairs that belonged strictly to themselves. Instead of replying directly to their question, he propounded one to them, asking whence John received his authority to baptize. Knowing they could not answer either way without involving themselves in a difficulty, they said they could not tell. They clearly misrepresented the fact; they could have, but would not.

Some Parables.—Following their refusal to answer his question, Jesus spake some parables. That of the two sons showed that the common people—even publicans and harlots were in advance of the leaders, scribes and Pharisees—in honoring God. (Matt. 21: 28-32.) The parable of the wicked husbandman showed that the Jews, incited by their wicked leaders, would reject him and in turn be rejected as God's people. (Matt. 21: 33-46.) The parable of the wedding feast showed that the gospel call was for all, including the Jews, but that most of them would refuse to hear it, and would personally be cast out. (Matt. 22: 1-14.)

The Leaders Condemned.—After the incidents of this lesson Matthew reports the discourse in which Jesus directly denounced the scribes and Pharisees as notorious hypocrites. (Matt. 23: 1-39.) He introduced the discourse with a clear distinction between what these teachers quoted from Moses, which he endorsed, and their own hypocritical practices. (See verses 1-5.) He closed with a prediction that their house would be left desolate—destroyed. (Verse 39.) The temple was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Pharisees Try to Ensnare Jesus (Verses 15-17)

Feigned Righteousness.—The enemies of Jesus had found that they, like those who encountered his endowed preachers later, were "not able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." (Acts 6: 10.) Like all dishonorable contestants, they attempted to accomplish by craftiness what they could not do openly. The Pharisees with their claims to strict law observance and their hatred for their enforced submission to Roman authority, had no real friendship for the Herodians. In some way they were aligned with Herod, who was ruling Judea in behalf of the Emperor. Though antagonistic to each other, they united their opposition to Jesus, whom they considered a common enemy. They sent their disciples—probably a student element—thinking they might the more easily deceive when they pretended to be seeking information. The wickedness of the whole scheme is expressed by Luke who says they were sent as "spies."

"In His Talk."—The scheme they devised was to ask subtle and perplexing questions, and strongly assert they were searching for truth. They hoped to inveigle Jesus into saying something in an unguarded moment that might be used as an accusation against him. On the surface their plan carried the appearance of sincerity and righteousness, but divine power at once recognized their artful hypocrisy.

Truth Perverted.—As this interview occurred in the temple court where crowds were found continually, it is probable that many were about Jesus at the time to see how he would answer their questions. They began by saying, "we know that thou art true." This compliment was true in fact, but they did not believe it and were, therefore, consummate hypocrites. That Jesus was true to his Father, true to himself, and true to mankind is an unmistakable fact; that he taught the way of God in truth is equally certain; and that he did so without respect of persons, fear, or favor, is attested by his whole ministry. Their last two statements they knew were true; the first two they did not believe, though they were also true. All were made as a pretended compliment, but were malicious efforts prompted by hypocritical hearts.

II. The Lawfulness of Tribute Money (Verse 17)

A Perplexing Question.—As long as the Jews were subject to the Roman government they, of course, had to pay the tax levied upon them. Caesar was the Roman emperor; hence, to pay tribute to Caesar meant to pay the tax required by his government. The Jews looking upon their subjection as an unjust bondage and in conflict with their rights as God's special people, resented the idea of paying tribute to any foreign power. They expected the Messiah to bring relief to them, and anything pointing in that direction was a welcome idea. This, his unscrupulous enemies well understood. The Pharisees wanted freedom from Rome, but the Savior's unsparing condemnation of their hypocrisy so enraged them that they refused to consider him as the one to bring that freedom. Their question was built upon this deep-seated Jewish feeling against Roman authority.

The Dilemma Presented.—The spies were but unscrupulous dupes to carry out the diabolical scheme of their shrewd and unprincipled instructors. They considered the tribute subject one of the most dangerous for Jesus to discuss; their question presented a dilemma from which they felt sure he could not extricate himself. If he answered it was lawful to pay it, they knew they could charge he was no friend to the Jews, and his claims to be their king were false. This would have turned the people against him—a thing the Pharisees very much desired. If he said the tribute should not be paid, the Herodians would have reported it to Herod with a charge of rebellion against the Roman government. This probably would have resulted in his immediate arrest. This would also have pleased the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders. Only divine wisdom could meet such deep and cunning malice.

III. Jesus Answers the Question on Paying Tribute (Verses 18-22)

Declared Hypocrites.—Jesus understood perfectly their evil designs. Matthew says he perceived "their wickedness"; Luke says he perceived "their craftiness"; and Mark says, "knowing their hypocrisy." This knowledge enabled him to administer to them a stinging rebuke before he offered any direct answer to their question. He plainly declared them hypocrites and asked: "Why make ye trial of me?"

Jesus' Question.—Jesus called for a piece of tribute money. Mark and Luke say he asked for a denarius. The yearly temple tax was paid with the Jewish half shekel because it related to the Jewish religion; the tax in question was paid to the Roman government; hence, Jesus called for a denarius which was a Roman coin. Only Roman money would have served his purpose in the reply he designed to make. He asked whose image and superscription it bore. He was not asking for information. As all knew exactly whose image and superscription were on the coin, there was but one answer to give, so they said, "Caesar's." This forced confession, when fully understood, would defeat them in their evil purposes, and sustain Jesus' charge that they were hypocrites.

Their Question Answered.—It is basically true, and conceded by all, that what belongs to one should be rendered to him; doing so is both lawful and right. Money bearing the image and superscription of a ruler belongs to that ruler's government. Paying tax of it is, therefore, right in fact and scripturally legal. All the cunning and shrewdness of Jesus' enemies did not enable them to offer any reply to this fact. This answer, of course, satisfied any who favored the Roman government. To this admitted truth Jesus added another, equally true, and more vitally necessary; one the Pharisees did not ask for. That man bears the image of God is the clear statement in the Mosaic account of creation. (Gen. 1: 26.) From this truth, also accepted by the Jews, Jesus drew the irresistible conclusion that man should render obedience to God, since man really belongs to God. From this there was absolutely no escape. This satisfied the great number who were his friends, because of his miracles and teaching; it showed that paying the tax to the civil government was consistent with fidelity to God. The spies came to ensnare Jesus into making

some untrue statement; Jesus "ensnared" them into confessing a truth which was their own undoing. Naturally they were amazed at this answer, and left without attempt at reply.

IV. A Pharisaic Lawyer's Question (Verses 34-36)

Sadducees Defeated.—The Sadducees were a Jewish sect bitterly opposed to the Pharisees in several particulars. One of their tenets was the denial of the resurrection. (Acts 23: 8.) When the Pharisees and Herodians failed to entrap Jesus, the Sadducees came with a test question on the resurrection. This he answered so completely that they, too, were put to silence. (Matt. 22: 23-33.) Among the constantly moving crowds in the temple court, their defeat was soon known. The Pharisees were, doubtless, delighted to learn that their enemies had been silenced on their denial of a resurrection. Thus encouraged they returned to make another effort to discredit the wisdom of Jesus.

Another Question Propounded.—The text seems to imply that the Pharisees gathered about Jesus had put the lawyer forward as their spokesman. Mark says he was "one of the scribes." The scribes were considered skilled teachers of the law; not lawyers in our modern sense of that term. The dispute about which was the greatest command of the law had probably been going for a long time with no signs of ending. A question that had not yet been satisfactorily answered after so much discussion was presented, doubtless, as their best effort to make trial of Jesus' wisdom. The lawyer may have asked the question sincerely; at least, Jesus does not denounce him as a hypocrite as he did the spies who tried to ensnare him just a little while before. Another difference between the two cases is that in this there was no harm to Jesus any way he may have answered.

V. Jesus Replies to the Lawyer (Verses 37-40)

"The Lord Is One."—Mark tells us that Jesus began his reply by saying, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one," a quotation from Deut. 6: 4, where it is introductory to the first commandment quoted by Matthew in our text. Jesus probably used this statement of the oneness of God to show that no distinction should be made regarding the merits of his commands; each equally important for the purpose in view. God's oneness would not allow his commands to conflict with each other, though one might take precedence of another in the sense of being something that should receive first consideration.

Man's First Duty.—To say a command is great and first means that it presents man's first duty. This phase of man's responsibility Jesus presented in the Sermon on the Mount when he said: "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness." (Matt. 6: 33.) Man's relationship to God, and his dependence upon God's mercy for life and salvation, naturally give this duty first place. This command to love God may be considered greater in the sense of being more extensive; it is really the foundation upon which all other commands rest. It logically, therefore, should be accounted as having first place in the list of all commands. Matthew reports Jesus as saying this command should be obeyed with all the heart, soul, and mind. Mark adds the word strength. This means that in our love to God we

should bring into service all the mental, moral, and spiritual powers with which God has endowed us.

The Second Command.—Putting love to God in first place suggests love to man as the second duty. This command like the other is broad and fundamental. It is the underlying principle of the Golden Rule (Matt. 7: 12); it is the foundation upon which rests every duty that man owes to his fellow man. It means to treat your neighbor under all circumstances as you would have him treat you under like circumstances. This is absolutely just and right. This command Jesus quoted from Lev. 19: 18. It is worthy of note that neither of these commands is taken from the decalogue. Jesus said that all the law hangeth upon these two commandments. Then they supersede the Ten Commandments—in fact, the ten rest upon them.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Sometimes pretended friendship is for the purpose of entangling us in the meshes of evil. Truth perverted with the design of leading one into sin is more dangerous than real falsehood. Praising others in order to accomplish their ruin is the worst kind of hypocrisy.

2. God endorses the principle of civil government as necessary for the control of evil men (1 Tim. 1: 9); civil officers exist with God's approval. Their personal wrongs are condemned, but their office has divine sanction. (Rom. 13: 1-4.) Rejecting civil law when not in conflict with God's law is a sin against God as well as against men.

3. Ownership involves the ideas of dependence and service; these in turn require responsibility and protection. Citizenship makes one dependent upon the state, and the state responsible for the protection of his life and property. This all concede. This principle makes man's service to God indispensable; it proves that God's promises to man will unfailingly come true.

4. Jesus said that the ones who kept his commandments were the ones that loved him. Obedience then is the evidence of love. While giving God the first place in our hearts, we should earnestly strive to obey all the commands he gives us.

5. All religious duties rest upon love to God; all moral ones upon man's love for man. In principle these two are the sum of man's responsibilities.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What events occurred Monday of crucifixion week?
What lesson did Jesus give Tuesday morning?
What happened when Jesus reached Jerusalem?
How did Jesus reply to the chief priests and scribes?
What parables were uttered that day?
What was the leading lesson of each?

What discourse did Jesus preach that day?
What clear distinction did Jesus make?

I

What had the enemies of Jesus learned?
What did they try to do?
Why did the Pharisees and Herodians unite in sending spies?
Why send their disciples?
What scheme did they devise?
What did they say about Jesus?
What statements did the spies believe?

II

Why were the Jews required to pay tribute to Caesar?

Why did they resent this collection of taxes?
 Why were the Pharisees so enraged at Jesus?
 How did they state the question?
 What would have been the result if he had said yes?
 What, if he had said no?

III

How did the evangelists describe what Jesus knew?
 What did he do before answering the question?
 Why did he ask for a denarius?
 Why would only Roman money do for an illustration?
 What question did Jesus ask, and why?
 What truth is conceded by all?
 Who would be satisfied with this truth?
 What shows the second statement true?
 Who were satisfied by this truth?
 How were the spies affected?

IV

What occurred before the incident in this section?

Why were the Pharisees likely pleased at the Sadducees' defeat?
 Who became their spokesman?
 What is meant by "lawyer"?
 Why ask this question?
 How did Jesus treat him?

V

How did Jesus begin his reply?
 Why did he probably use these words?
 In what sense may this command be first and greatest?
 How must it be obeyed?
 Of what is the second the underlying principle?
 Where did Jesus get these commands?

Practical Thoughts

What is the worst kind of hypocrisy?
 What does God endorse in civil governments?
 What ideas involved in ownership?
 What is evidence of love?
 What contains the sum of man's responsibilities?

Lesson VIII—May 20, 1934

THE FUTURE OF THE KINGDOM

Matt. 25: 1-13.

- 1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.
- 2 And five of them were foolish, and five were wise.
- 3 For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them:
- 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.
- 5 Now while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.
- 6 But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him.
- 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.
- 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out.
- 9 But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.
- 10 And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut.
- 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.
- 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.
- 13 Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever."
 (Rev. 11: 15.)

TIME.—Late Tuesday, after leaving Jerusalem.

PLACE.—Probably the Mount of Olives.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the twelve.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 21: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

- May 14. M.-----The Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25: 1-13)
 May 15. T.-----Watch! (Matt. 24: 42-51)
 May 16. W.-----Be Ye Ready! (Luke 12: 35-40)

May 17.	T.	Who May Enter? (Luke 13: 22-30)
May 18.	F.	The Entrance Supplied (2 Pet. 1: 1-11)
May 19.	S.	A Better World Coming (2 Pet. 3: 8-14)
May 20.	S.	Our Heavenly Inheritance (Rev. 21: 1-7)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Kingdom Likened to Ten Virgins (Verse 1).
- II. Wisdom and Folly Illustrated (Verses 2-5).
- III. The Call to Meet the Bridegroom (Verses 6-9).
- IV. Only Those Prepared Allowed at the Feast (Verse 10).
- V. Those Unprepared Rejected (Verses 11-13).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

General Scope.—Our lesson subject includes the Lord's entire discourse recorded in chapters twenty-four and twenty-five. The parable in the lesson text presents one important division of that discourse. Before leaving the temple court, after the incidents of last lesson, Jesus gave another lesson based on the widow's mites. (Luke 21: 1-4.) John mentions in the same connection that many rulers believed on him, but would not confess it, "lest they should be put out of the synagogue." (John 12: 42, 43.)

The Apostles Make Inquiry.—After telling the Jews their house would be left to them desolate (Matt. 23: 38), he left the temple for the last time, and with his apostles went to the Mount of Olives. (Matt. 24: 1-3.) His prediction of desolation for the temple prompted the disciples to call his attention to the greatness and magnificence of the building, as they passed to the mount. He replied that not one stone would be left upon another—it would be utterly destroyed. They supposed that the huge stones and solid structure would stand till the end of the world, and were at a loss to understand how the prediction could be true. Mark tells us that Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately to tell them when it would occur, and what would be the sign of it. As they felt it could not happen till the end of the world, they also asked what would be the sign of his coming, and the end of the world. His discourse was delivered to answer these questions. It is more or less difficult to understand because it deals with events so very different, and yet in some ways very similar.

Exact Time Unrevealed.—The precise time of these events Jesus left unrevealed. His final coming and the end of the world—two events that will happen at the same time—he plainly declared that only the Father knew. (Matt. 24: 36-38.) The destruction of Jerusalem being an event near as compared with his final coming could be answered more definitely, but even that is not revealed precisely as to day or hour. The sign he mentioned as indicating its speedy coming (Matt. 24: 15; Luke 21: 19), would show to Christians that they should flee from the city. They were told, however, not to be disturbed by wars, tumults, earthquakes, famines, or false teachers; for the day would not come immediately. The gospel had to be preached to the whole world before that calamity would come to end

the Jewish nationality. (Matt. 24: 14.) About A.D. 63, Paul said the gospel had been preached to every nation then existing. (Col. 1: 23.) Seven years later, A.D. 70, the Lord's prediction was fulfilled, Jerusalem was taken and the temple was destroyed.

LESSON NOTES

I. Kingdom Likened to Ten Virgins (Verse 1)

"Watch Therefore."—Jesus had already told his disciples that his coming was like the coming of a thief—the day and hour unknown. (Compare 1 Thess. 5: 1, 2.) He gave the command to watch, lest he should come and find us sleeping. (Mark 13: 33-37.) Luke says the Lord required that we should watch "at every season," praying that we may escape the evil when we stand before the Son of man. (Luke 21: 36.) Preparation is necessary, if we meet the Lord's approval when he comes; watchfulness is our only way to be properly prepared. Jesus uses the parable of our lesson text to illustrate this very point; it is a main point of likeness between the parable and the kingdom of heaven.

Ten Virgins.—While proper preparation is the great lesson of this parable, other good points may be deduced from the language used. Trying to find too many similarities in parables may easily lead to absurdities. The number ten probably has no special significance. The parable required a division and ten, which is supposed to be the usual number on such occasions, was suitable for that purpose. For a like reason "virgins" were mentioned because they were the persons commonly used for the kind of duty here designated. Lamps, though a natural part of the imagery, are significant because their proper care had to do with the lesson on faithfulness, the very thing that made the distinction between wise and foolish.

"Went Forth."—This parable was built upon the Oriental customs of marriages, and must be understood in the light of such customs. The ceremony probably occurred at the home of the bride's parents. After some festivities and an indefinite stay, the bridegroom took the bride to his own home, where virgins were waiting to receive them. At the cry that the bridegroom was coming, with lamps brightly burning, they went out to meet the party and conduct them into the house. The uncertainty of the exact time the bridegroom would arrive is the reason for the lesson in this parable.

II. Wisdom and Folly Illustrated (Verses 2-5)

Wise and Foolish.—This description illustrates the striking difference between prudent foresight and thoughtless neglect. That the division was equal does not signify that an equal number will be received and rejected when the Lord comes. It is necessary to know that a division will have to be made, but not necessary to know the exact per cent of each. It is especially important to know in what the wisdom and folly consisted; this the parable makes clear.

"Took No Oil."—The text plainly states that all the virgins had lamps. They were at the proper place from which to go forth to meet the bridegroom. Their lamps were burning, for verse eight says, "our lamps are going out." Lamps cannot go out that are not burning. The King James says "gone out." This shows their lamps

had been burning, else they could not have gone out. That the foolish really intended to meet the bridegroom, and be permitted to enjoy the feast, cannot be doubted in any fair way; their sincerity does not admit of question. These outstanding facts show that all the virgins represent church members—Christians. That some Christians are foolish in the sense of thoughtless neglect is plainly revealed by the general teaching of the New Testament. If this be not true, then Christians never sin, and backslidings are only delusions; this we know is not the case. The difference is this: The wise took an extra supply of oil in vessels to use if delay in the bridegroom's coming made it necessary. The foolish presumed their lamps held enough to last and did not make any provision for an emergency.

"Slumbered and Slept."—This means they "nodded" and slept, a very natural condition of those who sit up through late hours at night. There is nothing discreditable in the fact that they succumbed to this law of nature, for the text plainly says "they all slumbered and slept"—the wise as well as the foolish. Their folly then was not in the fact that they slept, but in the fact that they did not make provision for this very possibility. So in the kingdom of heaven those citizens who do not make provision for emergencies that may naturally arise may be correctly called *foolish* Christians. The sad thought is that possibly more than fifty per cent fall in this class.

III. The Call to Meet the Bridegroom (Verses 6-9)

"At Midnight."—In the parable the bridegroom's coming and the call to meet him is put at the midnight hour. This time was probably used because it was an unexpectedly late hour for such parties to arrive, and a time when watchers were more likely to be asleep. Suddenly awakened with no time to make any preparation was just the situation to portray the lesson Jesus intended. It shows, as he had taught, that his coming will be sudden and when not expected, leaving no chance to make ready what should have been provided earlier. The call to meet him must be obeyed instantly. A solemn thought, indeed. The time of one's death will amount to the same thing for those who are called to go before his return.

"Trimmed Their Lamps."—Their lamps were some kind of vessels filled with oil into which a wick was placed. This burned, torch-fashion, without any chimney. The trimming meant to remove the charred part of the wick, and refill with oil if necessary. The Greek word here means *to arrange, or put in order*. This they could have done, if the means had been at hand, but they did not have time to procure them in the ordinary way. When the Lord appears, we may meet him with joy, if we have already made sufficient preparation; but we will not have time to get more oil, if our lamps are going out.

Aid Sought.—Realizing at the last minute what a mistake their neglect had been, and the disgraceful results to follow, the foolish virgins asked the wise for help. The Scriptures teach that we should bear one another's burden; doing so is fulfilling the law of Christ. (Gal. 6: 2.) But some things cannot be divided with any one, however willing we may be to do so. Personal service is an individual matter, which each one must render for himself. If we do all things commanded, we may still consider ourselves unprofitable servants—we have only done what we should. (Luke 17: 10.) The wise did

not refuse because they did not want to help those in distress, but solely on the ground that there might not be enough for all. Doubtless all truly righteous souls would gladly divide their preparation with dear ones at the judgment, if it were possible, but this cannot be. Each must give account of himself to God, and each receive his own reward. (Rom. 14: 12; 2 Cor. 5: 10.)

IV. Only Those Prepared Allowed at the Feast (Verse 10)

A Vain Effort.—Efforts, however sincerely attempted, may fail for two reasons: First, they may not accomplish the direct and immediate results for which the efforts were made. Second, they may produce the direct results, and yet not accomplish the general purpose in view. Seeking oil to make a lamp burn is of no value when the lamp itself is no longer needed. Preparing to accept an opportunity is vain after the opportunity has disappeared. True the foolish virgins tried to overcome their fatal mistake by doing the only thing possible—they went to obtain the oil in the ordinary way. The necessity for this was their undoing; the bridegroom entered while they were gone. Their success in getting the oil, therefore, was of no value in gaining the honors desired; their preparation came too late. Such will be the sad condition of many who fail to make sufficient preparation until death closes the door of opportunity.

Those Ready.—The contrast between the wise and foolish is apparent throughout the parable. It is vividly shown in the words, "they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast." That was the object in view during the long wait, while their neglect allowed their supply of oil to be exhausted. As the feast followed immediately after the coming of the bridegroom, it must represent the joyous time that will begin after our Lord returns. Since his coming and the judgment will occur at the same time, the marriage feast represents the great pleasures to be ours in heaven. It does not mean that a spiritual marriage ceremony will then take place between Christ and the church, but that the joys of heaven will be similar to the pleasures at a marriage feast. According to eastern customs at that time, the ceremony had already occurred before the bridegroom came to his own home. It should be noted that in the structure of this parable there is no mention of the bride—in fact, nothing to represent the bride. The purpose of the parable is not to represent the relationship that the church sustains to Christ, but the preparation we have to make to receive his final approval. This Jesus did by using one feature of marriage occasions—namely, by letting virgins waiting for the bridegroom's coming represent members of the church. Marriage is used to represent the relationship of the church to Christ in Rom. 7: 4; Eph. 5: 23-32, but the lesson of the parable is readiness to meet him when he comes.

V. Those Unprepared Rejected (Verses 11-13)

"The Door Was Shut."—When the bridal party entered the house the door was shut. This accomplished two purposes: It protected those inside against any disturbance that would affect pleasures of the feast. Those who receive the Lord's permission to enter heaven can be assured that nothing will ever again disturb their felicity. The door that shut the prepared inside shut the unprepared outside.

Nothing save an erroneous doctrine can obscure the truth here taught that some Christians can and will be lost. As sure as lamps can be lit and burned, just that sure they can go out; as sure as Christians can prepare for meeting Christ in peace, just that sure they can fail to prepare and be rejected. This parable is given to make this point evident; failing to see it is to miss what the Lord taught.

"I Know You Not."—The rejection of those not ready is definitely stated in the text. In answer to their frantic cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us," Jesus said, "I know you not." He meant he did not know them in the sense of approval. Evidently he had approved some of what they did; for, up to the point where their neglect caused their oil to be exhausted, they were just like the wise. Of some Jesus will say at the judgment "*I never knew you*" (Matt. 7: 23), but of those represented by the foolish virgins, he will say, "*I know you not*"—that is, he will not approve them then, though he once did.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Each of the many parables given by Jesus illustrates some feature of his kingdom. Skill in handling parables consists in finding the exact lesson presented. This parable pictures the end of Christ's reign (1 Cor. 15: 24)—the judgment—and gives the reason why some citizens will be rejected.

2. Even legitimate things, or those proper in themselves, must not be allowed to prevent making sufficient preparation for coming events. To meet emergencies, preparation must be ample and constant.

3. The foolish were not so because they slept, but because they did not have oil to refill their lamps, when they awoke. They supposed they had enough to last, but were mistaken. So many Christians will think that just being members of the church will be sufficient, and will be unconscious of their lack of readiness till the Lord comes; it will then be too late.

4. Those ready for benefits are those who have entered the proper relationship, and added the necessary qualifications for enjoyment. Those who enter the church, and add the Christian graces, will enter in when the marriage feast begins.

5. The disappointment, anguish, sorrow, and loss incident to losing blessings will never be fully known till foolish Christians hear Jesus say, "*I know you not.*"

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What does this lesson include?
What else occurred before Jesus left the temple?

What prompted the disciples' remarks about the temple?
What prediction did Jesus make?
To whom was it spoken?
What question did they ask, and why?
What is taught on the exact time of these events?
What other statements are made on the subject?

I

What command did Jesus give, and why?
What does Luke's record say on this point?

What point is illustrated by the parable?
Why say "ten" virgins?
Why say "virgins," and mention lamps?
How must this parable be understood?
Give a probable description of the Oriental marriages.

II

What difference is illustrated by wise and foolish?
Why was the division made equally?
What was meant by "took no oil"?
What difference between King James and Revised here?
Who is represented by the virgins?
What is the exact difference between wise and foolish?
How is it known that their sleeping was not discreditable?

III

Why place the call at midnight?
What does it show regarding Christ's coming?
What kind of lamps did they have?
What is meant by "trimmed"?

What request did the foolish make?
What is the scriptural teaching on this point?
What must each do at the judgment?

IV

Why may efforts fail?
What did the foolish virgins try to do?
What happened while they were gone?
What will close the door of opportunity for all?
Who went in to the feast?
What is the lesson for us?
What does the marriage feast represent?
What phase of marriage occasions does this parable present?
How does it differ from Rom. 7: 4; Eph. 5: 23-32?

V

What was accomplished in shutting the door?
What is the meaning of "I know you not"?

Practical Thoughts

What does this parable picture?
What is necessary to meet emergencies?
What fatal mistake will many Christians make?
Who will be ready for heaven?
When will folly be fully known?

Lesson IX—May 27, 1934

THE LAST JUDGMENT

Matt. 25: 31-46.

31 But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats;

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in;

36 Naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink?

38 And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39 And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink;

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me.

46 And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ.” (2 Cor. 5: 10.)

TIME.—Late Tuesday, after leaving Jerusalem.

PLACE.—Probably the Mount of Olives.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the twelve.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 86: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 21.	M.	.....	The Last Judgment (Matt. 25: 31-46)
May 22.	T.	.....	Faith and Works (James 2: 14-20)
May 23.	W.	.....	Helping with Heart and Hand (Deut. 15: 7-11)
May 24.	T.	.....	The Test of Obedience (Matt. 21: 28-32)
May 25.	F.	.....	The Measure of Responsibility (Luke 12: 41-48)
May 26.	S.	.....	Personal Accountability (Rom. 14: 7-13)
May 27.	S.	.....	God Is Merciful (Ps. 86: 1-7)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Lord's Judgment Declared (Verses 31-33).
 - II. The Kingdom Promised to the Righteous (Verses 34-36).
 - III. Reasons Explained (Verses 37-40).
 - IV. Rejection of the Disobedient Announced (Verses 41-45).
 - V. Final Separation of the Wicked and Righteous (Verse 46).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Discourse Concluded.—The discourse of Jesus regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, and his return at the judgment, began after he and his apostles left the temple enclosure Tuesday. It was occasioned by the disciples' asking when these things would occur. The things recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter refer to the Lord's coming, and matters connected with that momentous event. Our lesson is the concluding section of the discourse, and graphically presents the final separation between the good and bad—the saved and lost.

According to Ability.—Our last lesson on the ten virgins is also a part of this discourse. In that parable Jesus showed that only those with sufficient preparation will receive his approval when he comes. Between that and the present lesson, Matthew records the parable of the talents. This shows that the final reward in each individual's case will be according to the ability possessed. That God does not require more than we are capable of doing, but does demand that much, is the plain teaching of this parable. Being “no respecter of persons,” as is asserted more than once in the New Testament, his justice would admit of no other rule. It should be noted, however, that ability, like material possessions, may be increased by diligent efforts. Certainly God will hold us responsible for the ability we have, but it is right that he should hold us responsible for the additional ability we may acquire. Indifference respecting moral and spiritual growth in God's service is without excuse.

The Lord's Goods.—In the parable the man is represented as delivering to his servants his goods. As an incentive for diligent efforts

in preparing for the Lord's coming, it will be well to remember that he furnishes the means for accomplishing the desired ends—the goods we have really belong to him. This provision for our needs should teach us two lessons: First, our dependence upon him for help, without which we would surely fail. We stand related to the Lord in this matter much like a debtor to the man who furnishes him capital with which to operate his business. Gratitude for this kindness should make us want to hear the Lord pronounce a blessing upon our labors. Second, as we must use the capital furnished by the Lord, we are under strict obligations to render an accounting to him. In this settlement of accounts he will be absolutely just and righteous. We should be deeply anxious to conduct our part of the Lord's business in a way pleasing to him. There will be no way to juggle figures, falsify accounts, or deceive divine wisdom.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Lord's Judgment Declared (Verses 31-33)

"In His Glory."—Though the time of his return is unknown save to the Father, Jesus here declares it will occur, and gives some account of what will then transpire. When he ascended two heavenly beings announced to the apostles that he would come "in like manner" as they saw him depart. (Acts 1: 11.) Our text says he "shall come in glory, and all the angels with him." The majestic glory that will be about him as he comes to the judgment will, of course, be too grand for us to understand now. We can be assured that he will be clothed with a glorious body, and attended by a heavenly host, a scene befitting the dignity of his royal position as both King and Judge.

"Sit on the Throne."—This expression is not to be taken literally of Christ sitting on a real throne. By a common figure of speech it means to exercise royal or kingly power. That is clearly its import in this text. But kingly power is exercised both in reigning and in judging. Here it unquestionably refers to the latter; the entire lesson text is full proof of that fact. This is further sustained by two scripture facts: 1. His return, the judgment, and the end of the world are all represented as coming at the same time—that is, the judgment will take place immediately after he comes, and this ends the world. (2 Pet. 3: 10-13; Rev. 20: 11-15.) 2. Christ must sit at God's right hand *till* he hath put all enemies under his feet. (Acts 2: 30-35.) Paul declares that he must *reign till* all enemies are put under his feet. (1 Cor. 15: 25.) Since he must remain in heaven till this is done, his reign will end when he returns to earth. The throne of our text must, therefore, refer to his exercise of kingly authority in judging, not in reigning.

All Nations Gathered.—The gathering before him of all nations is another positive proof that Jesus is here describing the final judgment. At no other time can this be true. This is still another proof that throne here involves judging, instead of reigning. The final proof in these verses is in the statement that Jesus will divide those gathered as a shepherd divides the sheep and goats—the former upon the right hand, the latter upon the left. Sheep denote the righteous, goats the wicked; right hand means place of favor, the left hand that

of dishonor and rejection. Only the last judgment will bring so complete a separation between the good and bad as the text here describes.

II. The Kingdom Promised to the Righteous (Verses 34-36)

The King.—In this description of the judgment Jesus explicitly calls himself King, but this is perfectly appropriate, because one prerogative of a king is to judge. This feature of royal authority must be exercised in the distribution of rewards for service rendered, or punishment for disobedience. The privilege of living under his reign must end before the judgment begins.

"Inherit the Kingdom."—In New Testament usage the kingdom refers both to the church on earth and to heaven or the final state. The text or context in each case must determine which is meant. In the following passages the church is certainly meant: Matt. 16: 19; Mark 9: 1; Luke 12: 32; Col. 1: 13; Rev. 1: 6, 9. It is equally clear that the following refer to heaven: Acts 14: 22; 1 Cor. 15: 50; 2 Pet. 1: 11. The word translated kingdom sometimes means royal authority or kingly rule. That is the thought in 1 Cor. 15: 24, where it is said that Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, when he has subdued all his enemies. This, as we have already found, must be done before he leaves heaven. Those prepared will inherit the final kingdom when Christ returns; the unprepared will be rejected.

"From the Foundation."—The statement "from the foundation of the world" is a general expression to indicate the beginning. Its exact application has to be determined by the general teaching on the subject in hand. The word world means any orderly arrangement, and is in the Scriptures applied to a variety of things. Here Jesus means that a final kingdom of bliss for the redeemed was purposed by the heavenly Father soon after the arrangement of our material universe. Adam's sin broke the tie of man's relationship to God, and he was driven from his first home. But his salvation and ultimate happiness was in the purpose of God from that time. Since then, and until Jesus returns, that purpose has been in the process of being prepared. Those who inherit are "blessed of the Father"—they will have used the means he has provided in making themselves ready.

Reason Assigned.—Jesus represents those upon the right hand as having ministered to his physical wants in various ways. He does not mean that such benevolent acts are sufficient to save one—a mistake too commonly made. Pardon of individual sins must be secured upon the terms specified. (Luke 13: 3; Mark 16: 16.) These words are to be addressed to those who follow Christ. People cannot follow him without entering his church. His language here means that even those in his kingdom cannot be saved without these kindly deeds.

III. Reasons Explained (Verses 37-40)

Honor Goes to Service.—Jesus had previously told the disciples that the greatest in his kingdom would be those who served. (Matt. 20: 25-28.) In this lesson he declared that admission into heaven would depend upon it. This righteous principle is recognized in the bestowment of worldly honors. Those who have accomplished some-

thing for the betterment of human conditions, or rendered distinguished service beneficial to all, go down in history as the world's greatest people. With undeniable justice Jesus, as King, declares that heaven's blessings will come to citizens who render good service in the kingdom.

Specific Mention.—The King mentioned the specific ways his subjects had ministered to him. They replied by asking when they had done such things. It is unnecessary to suppose such a conversation will occur at the judgment. The words, appropriate in giving vividness to the scene, indicate the feeling that will exist between Christ and the saved; or what would be appropriate to say on that occasion, if words were necessary. The righteous in Christ's presence at the judgment will be so unconscious of any merit in their acts of mercy to earth's poor and needy that they will wonder how they could be considered as ministering to him. We may not realize it, yet our kindness to others is mainly, if not entirely, prompted by Christ's teaching and example.

"Did It Unto Me."—The king declared that what they had done unto "one of these my brethren" they had done unto him, meaning that Jesus recognizes what we do in mercy to others as though done to him. The relationship that exists between Christ and those faithful servants in his kingdom is so tender and true that he considers any kindness even to the humblest as if done to him personally. No one can understand the meaning of want and suffering better than he; no one will know as well how to give proper credit to those ministering to the needy.

IV. Rejection of the Disobedient Announced (Verses 41-45)

"Depart from Me."—To the righteous the king said, "Come"; to those upon the left hand—the wicked—he said, "Depart." Of the former he said, "ye blessed of my Father"; of the latter he said, "ye cursed." The righteous were invited to enter the heavenly kingdom; the wicked were told to depart into the eternal fire. Surely no more striking contrast between a life of righteousness and one of sin could be found than is presented in these brief and vivid expressions. One a perpetual existence with God in a state of happiness; the other a similar existence with the devil and his angels. Such a terrifying possibility should make all people enter the kingdom of Christ without delay.

The Reason Stated.—As in the case of the righteous, Jesus repeated the ways in which he could have been ministered to, but reminded them they had failed to do any of these things. He did not mean that their failure to do these things was all the disobedience of which they were guilty. But a lack of these duties would have condemned them, even if that had been all their faults. Failing to believe, refusing to repent, neglecting to confess, or rejecting his command to be baptized, would have been disobedience leading to condemnation. (Mark 16: 16; 8: 38; John 3: 5.) It is presumable that, if they had faithfully imitated his acts of mercy and kindness, they would have also entered his kingdom. If they refused to enter his kingdom, then they did not do the kind deeds to honor him; hence, the lack of the deeds mentioned was evidence that they should have been placed on the left hand and told to depart. Mistreating

Christians, or persecuting the church he purchased with his blood, is just the same as if the acts were directed against Jesus personally. Paul himself furnishes one of the best examples of this fact. (Acts 9: 4.)

V. Final Separation of the Wicked and Righteous (Verse 46)

"Eternal Punishment."—Throughout life on earth the good and bad mingle in the various human relationships. In Hades—the state between death and the resurrection—an impassable gulf separates them. (Luke 16: 26.) At the judgment they meet again, after which the separation becomes final. To be forever deprived of the association of the good is an awe-inspiring punishment in itself. But the text calls the final punishment "eternal fire," such as has been prepared for the devil and his angels. It is unnecessary to say this is literal fire. As unseen states must be portrayed through the medium of something seen, the final state of the lost must be presented by terrifying objects or scenes. If fire be a fit emblem of punishment of the wicked, the state must be horribly bad. It is eternal whatever it may be, and it is punishment, for the text so states.

"Eternal Life."—The righteous have spiritual life now. If faithfully preserved, it will bring us into possession of the heavenly kingdom, for which reason it may also be called eternal life. But after the judgment the righteous will enter into eternal life in the sense that it cannot be terminated by sin as our spiritual life may be here. The word eternal as applied to punishment and life in this verse is exactly the same in both expressions. The punishment, then, is just as long as the life. This proves the wicked are not annihilated at death.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Men may ignore the Lord's pleadings for a righteous life, disobey his commands for entering the church, and laugh at his threats of punishment, but all that will not prevent their being at the judgment. The sensible thing is to provide for what is inevitably certain to come.

2. Bestowing favors on those worthy is no injustice to those not worthy. Jesus died for all and his offer of salvation is for all; those who reject have only themselves to blame for their loss.

3. Each one is under obligations to God, and also to his fellow man. Those who are not willing to mercifully discharge their obligations to others do not have the spirit of Christ, and will be unworthy of his approval at the judgment.

4. Civil governments do not send men to prison because of any pleasure in depriving them of liberty, but because it is necessary to protect society. God does not want any one to be lost, but cannot save those who will not obey his Son.

5. The exact nature of eternal punishment is unknown, but the figures used to describe it show that it will be indescribably bad. It is important to remember that it will be endless. In this particular it is like eternal life; otherwise just the reverse.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.

Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What is contained in the twenty-fifth chapter?
 What general thought is in our lesson text?
 What other parable is in this chapter?
 What is the lesson in this parable?
 For what will God hold us responsible?
 To whom did the man deliver his goods?
 What two lessons are in the fact that God provides means for us?
 How will all accounts be settled?

I

What is declared in these verses?
 In what manner will Jesus return?
 How are we to understand the expression, "Sit on the throne"?
 How is kingly power exercised?
 What two facts show this to be the judgment throne?
 What is shown by all nations being gathered?
 What additional proof is there of this fact?

II

How does Jesus here describe himself?
 To what does the word kingdom refer in the New Testament?
 Give passages for each use.
 What does it mean in 1 Cor. 15: 24?
 What is meant by "from the foundation of the world"?
 What was in God's purpose from the beginning?
 What reasons does Jesus assign for receiving them?
 What other things must be done, if one is saved?

III

What had Jesus previously told the disciples?
 Upon what principle are worldly honors bestowed?
 Why is this conversation given?
 What is the meaning of Jesus' reply to their questions?

IV

Show the different points of contrast.
 How may the two states be described?
 What reasons are assigned for their rejection?
 For what other reasons would they have been rejected?
 What noted example have we of what is here said?

V

Where do the good and bad mingle together?
 Where will they first be separated?
 Where will the final separation occur?
 How is the final punishment described?
 How can unseen states be described?
 What two facts regarding the wicked are given in this verse?
 In what sense will the righteous have "eternal life" then?
 How long will the punishment continue?

Practical Thoughts

What is the sensible thing for all to do?
 Why is banishment no injustice to the wicked?
 What is the fault of those who fail in kindness to others?
 Why is it necessary for the wicked to be lost?
 What should we remember about final punishment?

Lesson X—June 3, 1934**JESUS IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS**

Matt. 26: 31-46.

31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended in me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.
 32 But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.

33 But Peter answered and said unto him, If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended.

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter saith unto him, Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray.

37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and sore troubled.

38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me.

39 And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

42 Again a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43 And he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them again, and went away, and prayed a third time, saying again the same words.

45 Then cometh he to the disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26: 39.)

TIME.—Late Thursday night.

PLACES.—Passover room in Jerusalem, and the Garden of Gethsemane.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the eleven.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 42: 1-5.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 28.	M.	.....	Jesus in Gethsemane (Matt. 26: 31-46)
May 29.	T.	.....	The Last Supper (Luke 22: 14-23)
May 30.	W.	.....	The Transfiguration (Luke 9: 28-36)
May 31.	T.	.....	In Remembrance (1 Cor. 11: 23-34)
June 1.	F.	.....	Perfect through Suffering (Heb. 2: 5-10)
June 2.	S.	.....	The Father's Will (Heb. 10: 7-18)
June 3.	S.	.....	Longing for God (Ps. 42: 1-5)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection (Verses 31, 32).

II. Jesus Foretells Peter's Denial (Verses 33-35).

III. Jesus in Gethsemane (Verses 36-39).

IV. Exhortation to Watchfulness (Verses 40-44).

V. Jesus Announces the "Hour at Hand" (Verses 45, 46).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

The Passover.—In chapter 26: 1-30 Matthew records incidents that very naturally lead up to the facts in our lesson. He mentions that "after two days the passover cometh" when Jesus would be delivered up to be crucified. These words must have been spoken after his return to Bethany from Jerusalem Tuesday—his last day of teaching in the temple court. The Passover was an annual festival in the Jewish month Abib or Nisan to commemorate their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. (Exod. 12: 1-20.) The blood of the pass-over lamb had to be put on the side posts and lintel of the door. When the destroying angel passed through Egypt that night and saw the blood, he passed over the house and the firstborn was saved. That feature caused the name *passover* to be applied to the lamb,

the supper, and the entire feast which lasted seven days. No leaven bread being allowed caused it to be called the "feast of unleavened bread." (Lev. 23: 6.) In Egypt it was eaten while standing with loins girt, ready for immediate departure; in Canaan, in the years following, they sat or reclined while eating it. (Matt. 26: 20.) It was appropriate that Christ, our passover, should be slain at the same season as the lambs, which had been types for some fifteen hundred years.

Jesus Anointed.—Mary anointed Jesus at the supper in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper. John 12: 1 shows it occurred six days before the Passover. It is recorded here (Matt. 26: 6-13) out of its regular order, probably to show that the indignation of Judas, manifested at that time, led to his determination to deliver Jesus to the chief priests, scribes, and elders. Indignation is charged against all the disciples, though it is likely Judas started it by raising the complaint. The Jewish leaders had met to devise some plan for taking Jesus, but decided that to do so openly during the feast would create an uproar. This decision allowed time for any plotting necessary between them and Judas.

Passover Eaten.—A simple reading of the records will, it seems, put beyond dispute the fact that Jesus and the disciples ate the regular Passover supper at the usual time. He sent Peter and John to make preparation for the supper on the day "the passover must be sacrificed." (Luke 22: 7.) When "even was come," he sat down with his disciples and they ate. Their eating the regular Passover is positive proof that the Jewish law was still in force at that time. As the first was taken away that the second might be established (Heb. 10: 9), then the kingdom of Christ had not been established, and Paul was correct when he later said that Jesus took the law away at the cross. (Eph. 2: 14-16; Col. 2: 16.) Of necessity Christ's kingdom began later.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection (Verses 31, 32)

Order of Events.—It is probably impossible to arrange the incidents of this last meeting in their exact order; neither is it necessary. Jesus and his apostles met to eat the Passover supper. Before leaving the room, that supper was eaten, Jesus washed the disciples' feet, announced his betrayal, instituted his own supper, delivered his last discourse, and prayed. The discourse and prayer are given in John (chapters 14-17). Matthew and Mark both say they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. This singing of a hymn was probably the customary way of concluding the Passover supper, and had no reference to the Lord's Supper. It is not possible to fix the exact time the hymn was sung. The discourse and prayer may have come between the singing of the hymn and leaving the room, or between the institution of the Lord's Supper and the singing. John 18: 1 seems to indicate that they left the room immediately after the discourse and prayer were finished.

Shepherd and Sheep.—Three times before, Jesus had solemnly announced his approaching death and resurrection; he here makes his last formal prediction on the subject. In referring to Zech. 13: 7 as being fulfilled in his death, he represents the relationship existing

between himself and his disciples as similar to that between shepherd and sheep. The smiting of the shepherd would cause the sheep to be scattered. Their failures to fully understand his words when he formerly made similar declarations was proof they would misunderstand again; hence, Jesus said that they would all be offended that night. His arrest and condemnation would be a stumblingblock to them; they would be disappointed at his failure to use such defense as they expected of their Messiah. The extent to which this feeling filled their hearts is seen in the disappointment expressed on the day of his resurrection by two who were on the way to Emmaus. (Luke 24: 21.) They trusted he would have redeemed Israel.

Encouragement Offered.—Knowing the depressing effect his death would have, Jesus sought to encourage them by a promise that after his resurrection he would meet them in Galilee. This was a promise that, though they would be scattered like sheep, he would gather them together again. Like some other things he said, this was not fully understood till they saw its fulfillment. (Matt. 28: 16.)

II. Jesus Foretells Peter's Denial (Verses 33-35)

Self-confidence.—Sufficient confidence to inspire courageous efforts is desirable, but undue confidence indicates a weakness that may lead to disastrous failures. So far, this characteristic in Peter's nature has been seen on all favorable occasions. Jesus had just said that all of them would be offended that night, and would become scattered as sheep. Promptly Peter assured Jesus that, no difference what the others did, his own loyalty could be counted on as unquestionable. Though mistaken about his power, he doubtless was perfectly sincere in thinking he would do what he said; but, like all of us, he little knew how weak he was till the real trial came.

"Deny Me Thrice."—According to John's record, Peter had probably already asserted his willingness to go to prison or die for Jesus. (John 13: 36-38.) This led Jesus to tell him Satan desired to sift him as wheat. (Luke 22: 31, 32.) This probably led Peter to make the statement in our text, to which Jesus replied by saying: "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Matthew, Luke, and John all refer simply to the cock-crowing, by which they doubtless mean the time before day when the general crowing occurred. (Mark 13: 35.) Mark is more precise and mentions two crowings. In Mark 14: 68-72 he relates that after Peter's first denial, the first crowing occurred. After his third denial, the second crowing was heard. The second crowing being the usual cock-crowing time, his three denials already having been made, the statements of Matthew, Luke, and John are strictly correct; the first crowing occurring some time before, fulfills the special detail mentioned by Mark. Nothing but divine wisdom could be thus accurate in minor matters.

Peter Reasserts Loyalty.—Jesus' definite prediction that Peter's confidence would change to fear, and lead to denial in a few hours, caused him to speak "exceeding vehemently," and say: "Even if I must die with thee, I will not deny thee." The text says that all the rest spake in like manner, though it is probable they were not as confident as Peter. The record shows that what Jesus foretold came true; for "all the disciples left him and fled." (Matt. 26: 56.)

III. Jesus in Gethsemane (Verse 36-39)

"Then Cometh."—After the discourse and prayer (John 18: 1), Jesus "came out, and went, as his custom was, to the Mount of Olives." (Luke 22: 39.) The particular place to which he and the disciples came was called Gethsemane, a word meaning *oil press*; so called, perhaps, because a place where the oil was pressed from the olives. John says it was a garden on the east side of the brook Kidron. It was not a garden in our modern sense of that word, but a place where trees grew—a suitable place for retirement and rest. Being on the western side of the Mount of Olives, it was but a short distance from Jerusalem. The character of the place and its nearness to Jerusalem, doubtless accounts for the custom of Jesus' going there often when in Jerusalem. Judas knew this custom (John 18: 2), and it probably enabled him to arrange for the arrest there, at a time when it would create the least disturbance—a thing already decided upon by the plotters.

Purpose in Coming.—The records indicate that Jesus entered the garden for his last season of private prayer before his arrest. He realized that he was about to play the leading part in the world's greatest tragedy, involving the eternal destiny of the human race, and he evidently wanted to fortify himself for that ordeal by an appeal for the Father's favor. Taking with him Peter, James, and John, he left the others about a stone's cast behind (Luke 22: 41); then, telling them to abide there and watch, he went forward a little further to pray. He had favored these three disciples on two occasions before: once when they witnessed his restoring the ruler's daughter to life (Luke 8: 51-56), and at the transfiguration (Matt. 17: 1). Just why he selected them to be nearer him than the rest is not stated, but it may be assumed that what they had witnessed enabled them to more fully sympathize with his sufferings.

"Exceeding Sorrowful."—The prophet had foretold that he would be "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." (Isa. 53: 3.) He was about to receive the full measure of that prediction. He said his soul was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Bound by the limitations of the flesh, he was reaching an extremity of anguish that could be increased but little without producing death. That he might have strength to endure his sorrow, in spite of human weakness, he wanted and needed the comfort of his disciples and the favor of the Father.

The Prayer.—The unity of divinity and humanity in the person of our Lord will always remain a mysterious problem unsolvable to men in the flesh. We know how human beings would feel in facing the problem of execution by any means; but how divinity would face the problem is another matter. The story of his death touches the human heart, because we are capable only of realizing that he faced it as a man. He asked for the cup to pass, provided God's purpose could be accomplished; otherwise, he would drink it. If necessary to drink it, then his prayer, doubtless, included an appeal for strength to endure the cross and despise the shame. (Heb. 12: 2.) In this he was heard; for an angel came and ministered to him. (Luke 22: 43.)

IV. Exhortation to Watchfulness (Verses 40-44)

Found Them Sleeping.—When Jesus returned to the disciples he found them sleeping. He mildly rebuked Peter by asking if he could not watch one hour. He then exhorted them to watch and pray that they enter not into temptation, saying, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." These words may be understood about as follows: In mind you are indeed disposed to abide with me through all my trials, and feel that nothing will prevent it; but your fleshly nature will, through temptation and danger, become weak and you will desert me. Their sleep did not mean that they were indifferent to his interests, however much they may have failed to understand his great danger, but the Lord made it the occasion for a splendid exhortation on watchfulness. It is just as important to be watchful as prayerful.

A Second and Third Time.—He went away a second time and prayed in the same manner. When he returned he found them sleeping again. The record says their eyes were heavy. They were ashamed to be found asleep a second time, but knew not what to say. (Mark 14: 40.) He left them a third time and prayed, saying the same words. Luke shows the Lord's deep agony as he prayed by saying, "his sweat became as it were great drops of blood." (Luke 22: 44.) The text does not say that he did sweat blood, but that his sweat became, "as it were," great drops of blood, as large as drops of blood.

V. Jesus Announces the "Hour at Hand" (Verses 45, 46)

"Sleep on Now."—Whatever be the exact meaning Jesus intended for these words to have this much can be safely said: As the hour for his arrest had about arrived, enough had already been said to warn them against temptation; asking them to watch further was unnecessary, either as a comfort to him, or a protection to themselves. For the remaining time till his arrest, they might sleep on and take their rest. Staying awake would not prevent his being taken, and they would have enough cause for sorrow when the hour had fully come.

"Let Us Be Going."—This expression appears to be in conflict with the preceding paragraph, but is not so in fact. "At hand" means near, but not present. A short period of time may have elapsed between the statements in these two verses. When the last was spoken, Judas and his band were probably in sight. His words meant that they should meet them without resistance; that he must do so was indicated in prophecy. (Isa. 53: 7.)

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Jesus knew that his intimate disciples would be offended at his arrest and condemnation because their hopes would be disappointed. They soon learned their mistake, and gave their lives to propagation of his teaching. We should as promptly correct our mistakes.

2. Peter's mistaken self-confidence and his consequent fall into sin should constantly remind us to depend on God, instead of our own strength. Even apostles could not sin without rebuke; neither can we.

3. Many victories are won because the contenders know that sympathetic friends are watching and praying for success. Even our

Lord wanted the comfort that comes from faithful disciples being near. May we lend encouragement to those who fight the Lord's battles by giving them our genuine sympathy.

4. Watch and pray are twin duties, equally necessary in protecting one against the various temptations that may be met. Prayer shows we recognize our dependence upon God to sustain and comfort us; watchfulness shows we understand that we must use all our powers of mind and body for our own defense. Plainly stated, we are workers together with God.

5. The hour must finally arrive when the record of each one must be closed. We must arise and be going, whether prepared or not.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What announcement did Jesus make?
Describe the Passover.
Why is it called the Passover?
Why was it appropriate that Christ's death occur then?
Describe the supper in Bethany.
What was proven by their eating the Passover supper?

I

Describe the events when they met to eat the Passover.
Where are the discourse and prayer recorded?
Why did they sing a hymn?
At what time was it sung?
How many times had Jesus announced his death to them?
What prophecy did he quote?
What application did he make of it?
What statement shows the general disappointment?
What encouraging statement did Jesus make?

II

What trait in Peter's character appears here?
What did Peter say to the Lord?
What reply did Jesus make?
What remark did Jesus make about Satan?
What difference in the ways Christ's words are recorded?
Explain the difference.
What additional statement did Peter make?

III

Where was Jesus accustomed to go?
What particular place did he go?
What does "Gethsemane" mean, and why was the name given?
What distance and direction is it from Jerusalem?
Why did Jesus seek a place for private prayer at that time?
Why did he take the three disciples with him further?
What had the prophet foretold regarding him?
Repeat his prayer.
What else did his prayer likely include?

IV

What exhortation did he give them?
What is meant by spirit willing, but flesh weak?
How many times did he leave them and pray?
What is shown by Luke 22: 44?

V

What announcement did Jesus make after returning thrice?
Why say, "sleep on now"?
What statement is made in verse 46?
How can this be harmonized with the command to sleep on?
Why was the last statement made?

Practical Thoughts

What should stimulate us to correct our mistakes?
What lesson should we learn from Peter's fall?
Why are many victories won?
How will watchfulness and prayer affect us?
What event is inevitable?

Lesson XI—June 10, 1934

JESUS ON THE CROSS

Matt. 27: 33-50.

33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull.

34 They gave him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not drink.

35 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots;

36 And they sat and watched him there.

37 And they set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 Then are there crucified with him two robbers, one on the right hand and one on the left.

39 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads,

40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41 In like manner also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

42 He saved others: himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him.

43 He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44 And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47 And some of them that stood there, when they heard it, said, This man calleth Elijah.

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save him.

50 And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* (Heb. 12: 2.)

TIME.—Friday of Passover week.

PLACE.—Golgotha, near Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the Roman soldiers, and the people.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 22: 1-5, 14-19, 27, 31.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 4.	M.	Jesus on the Cross (Matt. 27: 33-50)
June 5.	T.	Scripture Fulfilled (John 19: 17-24)
June 6.	W.	The Penitent Thief (Luke 23: 39-49)
June 7.	T.	The Uplifted Christ (John 3: 14-21)
June 8.	F.	Christ Died for Us (Rom. 5: 1-11)
June 9.	S.	Reconciled through Christ (2 Cor. 5: 14-21)
June 10.	S.	Suffering and Triumph (Ps. 22: 14-31)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. Jesus Put on the Cross (Verses 33-36).

II. Jesus Placed Between Two Robbers (Verses 37-40).

III. Mocked by the Chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders (Verses 41-44).

IV. The Last Words of Jesus (Verses 45-49).

V. Jesus Dies on the Cross (Verse 50).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Jesus Arrested.—Our last lesson left Jesus facing immediate arrest, Judas and the soldiers approaching for that purpose. The iniquity in Judas' heart is best seen in the fact that he agreed to point out Jesus by a kiss—the token of friendship. Before he could do this, Jesus twice declared he was the one they sought. (John 18: 4-8.) This was open evidence that he was not resisting arrest, and that their swords and staves were unnecessary. He also revealed the true purpose of Judas by asking in advance: "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22: 48.) Peter made his final effort to manifest his loyalty to Jesus by cutting off a servant's ear. (John 18: 10.) Jesus rejected his effort, healed the servant's ear, and demanded that the sword be returned to the sheath, thus indicating that his kingdom was not to be defended by the carnal sword. Before Pilate a little later, Jesus expressly declared his kingdom is not of this world, nor were his disciples to defend it by fighting. (John 18: 36.) This is final on the nature of the kingdom he proposed to establish.

His Trial.—When Jesus indicated by his words that he intended to make no effort to defend himself, his disciples left him and fled. (Matt. 26: 56.) Though he offered no resistance, yet they bound him as if a dangerous criminal. Some time before daylight they led him before the high priest. (John 18: 12-24; Matt. 26: 57.) He was falsely charged with blasphemy because he admitted he was the Son of God. (Matt. 26: 63-66.) Blasphemy, according to Jewish law, was punishable by stoning. (Lev. 24: 16.) His enemies would gladly have executed him, but being subject to the Roman Empire they could not do it. (John 18: 31.) This made it necessary to secure the Roman governor's consent. Blasphemy not being a crime under Roman law, the charge would have been ignored by Pilate; hence, it was necessary to make another charge.

Pilate's Decision.—Before Pilate they charged him with perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay tribute to Caesar. (Luke 23: 2.) Pilate evidently knew from Jesus' general demeanor, and his explanation that his kingdom was not of this world, that the charges were false. After several unsuccessful attempts to pacify the angry Jews, he reluctantly and against his better judgment, yielded to their clamor and delivered him to the soldiers for crucifixion. That ignoble deed has for centuries branded Pilate with shame and disgrace.

Other Events.—Peter's three denials, the cruel mockings and scourgings, and false charges came in to make that night one of the darkest in the history of the world. Unjustly condemned, he bore our sins in his body on the tree.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jesus Put on the Cross (Verses 33-36)

"Bearing the Cross."—John tells us that Jesus went out, "bearing the cross for himself." (John 19: 17.) After he was sentenced to death, the soldiers in derision of his claims as king arrayed him in a scarlet robe, placed a crown of thorns upon his head, and mockingly saluted him as "King of the Jews." Ending this sham worship, they replaced his own garments, and led him forth to the place of crucifixion. Luke says they laid the cross on Simon of Cyrene "to bear it after Jesus." (Luke 23: 26.) He was probably staggering under the weight, and they compelled Simon to follow behind him carrying one end of the cross. They led him to *Golgotha*, a Hebrew word meaning "the place of a skull." Why it was so called is not known. That it was a small hill resembling a skull, in some measure, is as probable as anything else that might be suggested. The King James Version of Luke 23: 33 uses the word *Calvary*, a Latin word meaning the same as *Golgotha*. The place was outside of Jerusalem, but near. (Compare Heb. 13: 11, 12.)

Wine and Gall.—Mark says "wine mingled with myrrh." (Mark 15: 23.) This was probably sour wine or vinegar mixed with some bitter ingredients that would stupefy the senses, and thus deaden to some extent the pain and lessen the torture in crucifixion. Jesus knew when he tasted it the purpose in offering it to him and refused to drink it. He was not willing to try to evade the full effect of drinking the cup by the use of any kind of drugs, however humane may have been the motive that offered him such meager comfort. He would not allow anything to prevent his paying the full price for man's redemption.

"Sat and Watched."—Crucifixion was a slow, torturing method of execution. After putting the victim on the cross, the executioners had to wait till exhausted nature finished the horrible process. Ordinarily the executioners would have to remain till death came, to prevent friends removing the body and saving the victim. Apparently, custom allowed those doing the work the right to take the garments of the dead. While waiting the soldiers divided Jesus' garments into four parts and cast lots for them. (John 19: 23, 24.) This fulfilled a prophecy, and added to the sum of divine testimony that he was the Son of God, though the soldiers were perfectly unconscious of the significance of the deed. (Ps. 22: 18.) This done they "sat and watched" through the most tense period known to man.

II. Jesus Placed Between Two Robbers (Verses 37-40)

The Accusation.—Pilate wrote the accusation upon which Jesus was condemned, though he confessed it had not been sustained by any valid evidence, and caused it to be placed on the cross. (John 19: 19-22.) It is supposed to be a Roman custom to thus signify the accusation against those condemned to death. John says it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, and was read by many Jews because the place of crucifixion was near the city. The writers do not quote this superscription in the same words, though they give substantially the same thought. Their verbal variations may be accounted for in part by the fact that it was written in three lan-

guages; or, as was often done in quoting prophecies, they gave the thought in words of their own choice.

The Robbers.—The governors of Judea resided at Cesarea (Acts 23: 23, 24), but probably made it a rule to visit Jerusalem at the great feasts to preserve order and judge important cases. This, doubtless, accounts for Pilate's presence at Jerusalem at the Pass-over, and made it necessary for him to hear the charges against Jesus at that time. The immediate crucifixion of Jesus may be the reason why the robbers were executed then. If their crucifixion had been decided, all may have been crucified at once as a matter of convenience. Whatever the cause of their crucifixion then, placing Jesus between them indicates their bitter contempt for his claim as God's Son.

"Railed on Him."—To their criminal ignorance in numbering Jesus with transgressors (Isa. 53: 12; Luke 22: 37), those passing by added the insult of railing on him as he was suffering the pains of death. They scornfully wagged their heads and taunted him with saying that he would destroy and rebuild the temple in three days. They meant that one making such claims should be able to save himself from the cross. Of course, their mockery was based upon a misrepresentation of what Jesus had said. Their demand for him to manifest his power by coming down from the cross was entirely unjust; their scorn was inexcusable, even if Jesus had been a false teacher.

III. Mocked by the Chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders (Verses 41-44)

"In Like Manner."—The priests, scribes, and elders, with their supposed knowledge of the law and the prophets, should have been the first to acknowledge Jesus as the true Messiah and Son of God. But they were leaders in his persecution, plotters for his death, and by their prominence stirred up the common element into a perfect frenzy that clamored for his immediate crucifixion. In saying that they "in like manner" mocked him, Matthew shows that these leaders joined in with those mocking him as they passed by. They probably took pains to see that this railery should continue.

"He Saved Others."—They hardly meant that he really saved any one, but that he pretended that he could do so. With their perverted conception of the kingdom, and of the character of the Messiah, it is not difficult to see how they would consider the matter. They took the words about destroying and rebuilding the temple literally, and could not see how that could be a work of God; the Messiah dying was out of the question, if he were to establish an earthly kingdom as they expected; the Son of God not being able to save himself from torture and death, from a human viewpoint, was the limit of absurdity. But raising his body in three days—the temple Jesus referred to—after dying for the sins of the world was a matter of infinite wisdom. For that reason, though God "desired" Jesus in the highest sense, he was not delivered from death; he was paying the price of salvation exacted by man's sin. He could have come down from the cross, but the will of the Father would not have been accomplished. Their reasoning was false, and their biting irony the work of cruel and sinful hearts.

"The Robbers Also."—Luke tells us the soldiers joined in the

mockery. (Luke 23: 36.) Thus the heartless Roman sinners fulfilled the Savior's prophecy. (Matt. 20: 19.) Our text says the robbers "cast upon him the same reproach," while Luke says that one of the robbers railed on him, but was rebuked by the other one who asked the Lord to remember him when he came into his kingdom. (Luke 23: 39-43.) Both statements are true. As they were on the cross several hours before death came, it is doubtless a fact that both did rail on him at the beginning. They may have concluded that Jesus was in some way responsible for their crucifixion at that time. Later, when death was near at hand, one of them repented, rebuked his fellow criminal, and begged the Lord for mercy. The amazing part of the story is that the other robber did not do the same.

IV. The Last Words of Jesus (Verses 45-49)

"The Ninth Hour."—The Jews divided the day into twelve hours, beginning in the morning; the sixth hour with them being noon with us, and the ninth hour three o'clock in the afternoon. The records of Matthew, Mark, and Luke all definitely say the period of darkness lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour—noon till 3 P.M.—which fixes the time of Jesus' death at about mid-afternoon. Mark clearly puts the time the crucifixion began as the third hour—9 A.M.—while John (19: 14-16) represents Pilate as delivering him to be crucified at the sixth hour. If he used the Roman method of counting, he meant six in the morning, and is in harmony with Mark's statement, as that gave ample time for the crucifixion to begin at 9 A.M. If he used the Jewish method—six o'clock meaning noon—there is a conflict that must be accounted for. This is easily done by supposing some copyist later wrote the six instead of three, confusing the hour when the darkness came with the time the crucifixion began.

The Cry of Anguish.—Matthew says Jesus uttered a cry of anguish with a loud voice. He quotes the words used, and says they were a solemn appeal to know why the Father had forsaken him. We shall never be able to understand the feeling in the mind of Christ that led to this cry of distress, or what the Father did that might be called forsaking him. Whatever the words may mean, we are certain that the Father's love for the Son was not the least diminished, and that he did nothing not required to carry out the divine purpose. It also seems certain that the sufferings of Jesus had reached their extreme limit—that he was drinking the cup to its very dregs. For some reason some misunderstood his words, and thought he called for Elijah. John says that Jesus knowing all things were finished, that a scripture might be fulfilled (Ps. 69: 21), said, "I thirst" (John 19: 28, 29). As the end had about come, he could drink without implying that he was seeking relief from suffering. The design, however, was to fulfill the scripture.

"Let Be."—Others said, "let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." They did not mean to stop the one offering him the vinegar; their words had reference to his cry, which they misunderstood. If he were calling for Elijah to save him, they proposed to give time enough to see if his cry would be answered. If Elijah did not come, they would conclude that to be another evidence that his claims were not true.

V. Jesus Dies on the Cross (Verse 50)

The Solemn Moment.—The time had arrived, the end had come, and the Lord's work was done. With a loud voice he again spoke and said, "It is finished." (John 19: 30.) According to Luke, he also said: "Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit." (Luke 23: 46.) After these words he bowed his head and "yielded up his spirit." These expressions would be meaningless, if man's spirit cannot exist separate from the body.

Nature's Response.—Christ's death made a way to heaven possible. Nature responded with approval. The veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, the earth quaked, rocks were rent, and tombs were opened. Seeing these the centurion declared that Jesus was truly the Son of God. (Matt. 27: 51-54.) Millions have since admitted the same. Blessed is the one who believes without seeing the miracles.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Ridiculing divine truths, or mocking those who declare them, does not change the facts, or excuse those thus ignorant and disobedient. If so, Jesus was wrong and his persecutors were right. Ridiculing what Jesus said is nothing less than mocking him.

2. Being scornfully numbered with transgressors did not prove Jesus a false teacher, or justify those who secured his death. Misrepresenting those who preach the gospel is the same as misrepresenting Christ himself. Like Christ his truth may be temporarily killed, but it will arise and meet us at the judgment.

3. Christ silently ignored the taunts of his tormentors, but tenderly heard the cry of a penitent robber. Casting "pearls before swine" is a useless waste of time, when honest-hearted people that may be reached need and want the comfort of the gospel.

4. In the world's greatest extremity, a Redeemer cried to a divine Father for comfort. Such is the practice of humanity. Those who expect the Father's favor in the hour of departure must seek his approval while they live. Preparation for heaven cannot begin when life's work is finished.

5. The righteous in passing can safely commit their spirits into God's keeping. This alone is enough to justify a righteous life.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What best shows Judas' iniquity?
How did Jesus reveal Judas' purpose?
What mistake did Peter make?
What lesson did Jesus make it teach?
Before whom did they first bring him?
What charge? Why present a different one to Pilate?
What decision did Pilate render and why?
What other events occurred during the night?

I

Describe the mockings.
Explain what Simon of Cyrene did.
Give the meaning of "Golgotha."
Why did they give him wine and gall to drink?
Why did Jesus refuse to drink it?
What did they do with his garments?
Why did they sit there and watch?

II

What accusation was placed on the cross?
Why was it written in three languages?
Account for verbal variations in the records.
Account for Pilate's presence in Jerusalem.

What was indicated by placing him between robbers?
Describe the way they railed on him.

III

Who "in like manner" mocked him?
Why should these have known better?
What place did they occupy among the mockers?
What did they mean by, "He saved others"?
How did they take his words regarding the temple?
What was their probable course of reasoning?
Why did God not deliver Jesus from death?
What variation is in the records regarding the robbers?
Explain it.

IV

At what hour did Jesus die?
When did the crucifixion begin?

Explain John 19: 14.
What words were in the cry of Jesus?
What do they mean?
Why did Jesus say, "I thirst"?
What did they mean by, "Let be"?

V

What words did Jesus last utter?
What do they show about the spirit?
What miracles in nature occurred at that time?
What was the centurion's conclusion?

Practical Thoughts

What does it mean to ridicule Jesus' words?
When must all meet Jesus' words?
When do we waste efforts?
When should preparation for heaven begin?
Who can safely commit their spirits to God?

Lesson XII—June 17, 1934

THE RISEN LORD AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

Matt. 28: 1-10, 16-20.

1 Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it.

3 His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified.

6 He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8 And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word.

9 And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

16 But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28: 19, 20.)

TIME.—For the resurrection, the first day of the week; for the commission, a few weeks later.

PLACE.—Garden, near Jerusalem; mountain in Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus, angels, the women, and the eleven.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 116: 1-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 11.	M.	.....	The Risen Lord (Matt. 28: 1-10)
June 12.	T.	.....	The Great Commission (Matt. 28: 11-20)
June 13.	W.	.....	Witnessing for Christ (Acts 1: 1-8)
June 14.	T.	.....	Christ's Resurrection and Ours (1 Cor. 15: 20-28)
June 15.	F.	.....	Risen with Christ (Rom. 6: 1-11)
June 16.	S.	.....	Power over Death (John 10: 11-18)
June 17.	S.	.....	Deliverance from Death (Ps. 116: 1-9)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. An Angel Opens the Tomb (Verses 1-4).
 - II. The Angel's Address to the Women (Verses 5-8).
 - III. Jesus Meets the Women (Verses 9, 10).
 - IV. The Meeting in Galilee (Verses 16-18).
 - V. A Law for All Nations (Verses 19, 20).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

A Vital Fact.—Paul states with positive assurance that Christ died for our sins, "according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15: 3.) While man's redemption could not have been secured without his death, yet that would have failed of its purpose if he had not been raised from the dead. He had plainly said he would rise; failing to do so would have proven him a false prophet, and invalidated his claim as being the Son of God. Paul also makes our salvation depend upon his resurrection. (1 Cor. 15: 13-19.) This vital nature of his resurrection has been conceded by both friends and foes of Christianity. If he did not rise, the promise of salvation is a delusion; if he did rise, infidelity is a fraud of the first magnitude.

Certainty of His Death.—Divine wisdom so directed affairs that nothing was omitted by friends or foes to make every link in the chain of evidence perfectly certain. His crucifixion openly by Gentile sinners, in the presence of his enemies, disciples, and relatives, is full assurance that he actually was killed; they made no mistake in the one crucified. Before allowing the body removed from the cross they made sure that he was dead. The soldiers came to him to break his legs and hasten death, and found him already dead. But to insure no mistake being made, a soldier pierced his side with a spear. (John 19: 32-34.) Learning he was dead from the centurion, Pilate granted the request of Joseph to bury the body. (Mark 15: 44, 45.) The soldiers in assuring themselves that he was dead fulfilled two prophecies. (Ps. 22: 18; Zech. 12: 10.)

His Burial.—Life could have been restored without a burial. (Luke 7: 12-15.) But in the case of Christ the usual custom had to be carried out; he had so predicted. (Mark 14: 8.) Moreover, it put it

beyond the possibility of doubt that the centurion was correct that Jesus was dead. His burial becomes a vital link in the chain of evidence because of the unusual circumstances connected with it. Joseph and Nicodemus (John 19: 39-42)—friends—were granted the privilege of burying the body. This prevented the enemies from disposing of the body in any way to cast doubt upon its identity. The body was placed in a tomb near by, and doubtless under the watching of the chief priests or their agents. The tomb was sealed so that any tampering with it could easily be detected. The enemies were allowed the right to place a guard to watch till the third day, the time Jesus promised to rise. At no point was there doubt or uncertainty left. Thus enemies in their zeal to insure against possible fraud, unconsciously furnished positive evidence that he really was raised from the dead.

LESSON NOTES

I. An Angel Opens the Tomb (Verses 1-4)

Women at the Tomb.—The text names Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as coming to see the sepulchre "late on the Sabbath day." As the Jewish day began at sunset, this expression alone would indicate that they came before sunset Saturday, the time the Sabbath day ended. We know, however, that this conclusion would be wrong for two reasons: 1. Matthew's own explanation that it was "as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week." The expression literally means as light began to grow. This cannot mean anything except about daylight Sunday morning. So the "late" on the Sabbath day must be understood as "after" the Sabbath. 2. In describing the same thing, Mark says plainly "when the Sabbath was past." It is certain that Jesus was buried late Friday afternoon, just before the Sabbath began. (Luke 23: 53-56.) As the Sabbath commandment to rest prevented their preparing spices and having time to return to the tomb to anoint the body, then we know they would not have come before sunset Saturday. Hence, early Sunday morning was their first opportunity of coming for the anointing.

The Number.—Matthew mentions only the two Marys. John mentions only Mary Magdalene, and describes the incidents in which she was a main figure. Luke names three, and adds the words, "the other women." (Luke 24: 10.) How many were included in that expression is not known, but it shows that at least five women visited the tomb early that morning. They evidently left their homes before daylight (John 20: 1), and arrived at the tomb after sunrise (Mark 16: 2).

The Stone Removed.—The text shows the stone was removed by divine power. The enemy guards were there to prevent any persons from tampering with it. An angel from heaven is said to have rolled it away. Its removal caused an earthquake, or an earthquake was the power used to remove it. The stone was taken away before the women arrived, for they were able to enter in and see the body was not there. (Luke 24: 2, 3.) The angel sat upon the stone probably to prevent the guards trying to put it back in place. His appearance and raiment were so brilliant and dazzling that the guards quaked with fear and became as dead men. The exact moment Jesus left the tomb is not stated, but it transpired before the women reached

the tomb, and may have been about break of day. The noise, the brightness of the angel's appearance and suddenness so terrified them that they did not see Jesus when he departed.

II. The Angel's Address to the Women (Verses 5-8)

"Fear Not Ye."—In the preceding section, Matthew describes the effect the angel's presence had on the guards; in this he tells of his words to the women. It is probably impossible to fix in its proper place every detail in word or act that transpired in this remarkable meeting. It is enough to know the facts; their exact order of occurrence is not material. From the records of Mark and Luke we learn that the women were perplexed, amazed, and affrighted. This effect upon them is quite as natural as the terror produced in the minds of the guards. The angel's words "Fear not ye," were intended to calm their fears. It may have also meant that they were not to be disturbed by the body being gone—an implied promise that they would see Jesus again. Luke says, "two men stood by them" (Luke 24: 4); Mark says they saw "a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe." (Mark 16: 5.) Mark mentions the one that did the talking, but does not say "only" one; Luke mentions two which was a true statement of fact. Luke's words represent both as speaking; but, since it is not likely both talked at once, the one who did the actual talking represented the other. They may have been sitting when the women entered the tomb and then stood. Hence, with such reasonable suppositions to account for all the expressions, we know there is no conflict in the records.

"He Is Risen."—Jesus had on several occasions told the disciples he would be raised from the dead; the angel here declares he had been raised. They were invited to see the place where his body lay, and be assured that he was not there. This message of comfort they were to deliver to the sorrowing disciples as quickly as possible. Mark says the angel named Peter in referring to the disciples. This was probably to assuage, in some measure, the remorse and grief that would come from his recent denials of the Lord. Though the sin was great, this shows the Lord's mercy was greater. The women left the tomb hurriedly—solemnly fearful, yet filled with holy joy—and ran to bring the disciples word. It appears likely from all the facts stated that Mary Magdalene had left before this time, and had already told Peter and John that the body had been taken from the tomb.

III. Jesus Meets the Women (Verses 9, 10)

When?—Mark says plainly that Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene. (Mark 16: 9.) The other women left before Peter and John reached the tomb, after Mary told them what had occurred. After they left for their home, the Lord appeared to her as John relates. (John 20: 10-17.) Jesus told Mary to tell the brethren that he would ascend to heaven. This, of course, meant he had been raised. Sometime after this Jesus appeared to the women as mentioned in the text of this section.

"Tell My Brethren."—Jesus saluted the women. When they realized who he was, they were doubtless greatly agitated by fear of their unworthiness of being in his presence. He spoke comforting

words by assuring them they had no reason to be afraid. He told them, as he did Mary, to take the glad news to the brethren, adding that they would see him in Galilee as he had promised them. Both Mary and the other women reported his resurrection, yet the disciples disbelieved their words. (Mark 16: 10, 11; Luke 24: 10, 11.) Their distrust of the women's report is clear proof that they were honest and unwilling to accept any statement as true without proof. This increases the value of their testimony when they were convinced later.

IV. The Meeting in Galilee (Verses 16-18)

Time and Place.—The exact time and place of the meeting in Galilee are not given. John mentions two meetings with the apostles: one on the night after the resurrection, and one a week later. (John 20: 19-29.) Some time after that, there was a meeting with seven at the Sea of Tiberias—Lake Galilee. (John 21: 1, 2.) The meeting of our text probably occurred after that; how long, we have no means of knowing. As only forty days elapsed between the resurrection and the ascension (Acts 1: 3), this meeting in Galilee may have occurred but a short time before his ascension. When Jesus appointed the meeting (Matt. 26: 32), he may have designated the exact place; if so, none of the writers recorded it.

"Some Doubted."—Matthew says that when they saw him some doubted. Those doubting can hardly refer to the eleven; for, in the two instances of his appearing to them in Judea described by John all doubts evidently were removed. Even Thomas, the most persistent doubter, was convinced. This meeting in Galilee may have been the one where he appeared to more than five hundred brethren. (1 Cor. 15: 3.) If not the same, then there must have been other disciples besides the eleven at the meeting. Some of these very naturally could have doubted at first, just as did Thomas, but also have been convinced in that meeting as he was a week after the resurrection.

"All Authority."—In consideration of his death to redeem and save sinners, the Father exalted him and gave him a name above all other names (Phil. 2: 8, 9), bestowing upon him *all* authority, giving the right to establish a kingdom, lay down the terms of admission into it, and specify the conditions upon which rewards would be granted. His resurrection was the divine guarantee that his claim of authority was a true statement of fact. This being true, all responsible persons *must* submit to his law to be saved.

V. A Law for All Nations (Verses 19, 20)

"Make Disciples."—The two words translated "teach" in the King James Version of these verses are entirely distinct Greek words. The one in verse 20 is the common word for teach, and applies to any and all kinds of teaching. The word in verse 19 carries the specific idea of making one a disciple of another; hence, the Revised translates "make disciples." This commission authorized the apostles to make people learners or disciples of Christ in any and all nations. The teaching meant, therefore, is that primary instruction that would make the hearers believers in Christ, and induce them to obey him. The apostles because of their miraculous endowment

were the first to carry out this commission. But the authority to repeat what they taught was passed to others. (2 Tim. 2: 2.)

"All Nations."—This law is as universal as the human family is responsible. The old law was limited to the Israelites; the first commission to the twelve forbade their preaching to others. (Matt. 10: 5.) This says "all nations," and Mark and Luke accord with Matthew in stressing this point. (Mark 16: 15; Luke 24: 47.) This also agrees with the prophet. (Isa. 2: 2, 3.)

"Baptizing Them."—Our text declares that they should baptize those they made believers or disciples of Christ "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Baptized "into the name" is the same as baptized into the person. (Acts 19: 5; Gal. 3: 27.) Believing on Christ and believing on his name are the same. (John 2: 23; 3: 18.) The text means, then, that our baptism brings us into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Since one cannot be saved out of Christ, then baptism is necessary to salvation. Mark fully sustains this truth by placing salvation after both faith and baptism. (Mark 16: 16.)

"All Things Whatsoever."—The teaching in this verse refers to duties in the kingdom—things required of citizens. Not just those things that suit us, or we may elect to do, but *all* whatsoever that Jesus told the apostles to teach on that point. This shows that ultimate salvation for Christians depends upon their doing what Christ requires of them, just as remission of sins for sinners depends upon believing and being baptized.

"Always."—Jesus declared he would be with them "always, even to the end of the world." Since the apostles did not live till the end of the world, he meant that what they by his authority taught would be binding upon all nations till the end of the world. Jesus has never repealed this law, the world still stands, and the law must be obeyed if men are to be saved.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Obedience to right laws never prevents acts of mercy and kindness to the humble, or respect for the dead. Although having made some preparation to anoint the body of Jesus, the women rested when the Sabbath law required it, but were ready and at the tomb the first hour possible. Using opportunities is what makes us successful.

2. The women quickly and joyfully hastened to report the glad message to the sorrowing disciples. In like manner, those who learn the gospel truth should make every possible effort to tell lost sinners how they may be free from their sins.

3. As the women anxiously ran to bring the disciples the angel's words they were permitted to meet Jesus themselves. How often in our efforts to relieve the distress of others some great comfort comes to our own hearts! Unexpected joys come with earnest service.

4. Jesus keeps all his appointments with his disciples. His promise to be with two or more in their meetings should prevent our failing to be present, unless utterly impossible.

5. All admit that Jesus has authority to save; it should also be admitted, because true, that he has the right to say *how* men are to be saved. Those of true faith accept his law without question.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

How does Paul reason on the resurrection?
Who admits his arguments?
Why is Jesus' death an unquestioned certainty?
Why was his side pierced?
What prophecies did the soldiers fulfill?
Why was his burial a necessity?
How do we know the right body was buried?

I

What time did the women reach the tomb, according to Matthew?
What does Mark say about it?
What does Luke 23: 53-56 show about this point?
How many women visited the tomb?
Harmonize John 20: 1 and Mark 16: 2.
How was the stone removed?
Why did the angel sit upon the stone?

II

How did the angels' presence affect the women?
What was intended by the words, "Fear not ye"?
Harmonize the records of Mark and Luke regarding the angels.
What command did the angel give the women?
Why was Peter named personally?

III

Locate the time Jesus appeared to Mary.
What did he tell her to do?

When did he appear to the other women?
What command did he give them?
How did the disciples receive their report?
Of what was their doubt proof?

IV

What is known of the time and place of this meeting?
What appearances to the apostles does John record?
Describe his appearance to them at Lake Galilee.
Why do you think the apostles did not doubt at the Galilee meeting?
Who else may have attended this meeting?
What did Jesus say of himself?
What was assurance that his words were true?

V

What is the meaning of each of the words "teach" here?
What teaching is referred to in verse 19?
What contrast is here between the old and new laws?
What prophecy is fulfilled?
What is meant by "into the name"?
What does this prove regarding the necessity of baptism?
What is meant by "all things" in verse 20?
What is meant by "always"?

Practical Thoughts

What makes us successful servants of Christ?
What should all do who learn the truth?
When do we often receive unexpected joys?
What can we depend on Jesus doing?
What will those with true faith do?

Lesson XIII—June 24, 1934

THE RETURN OF OUR LORD

Matt. 24: 36-42; 1 Thess. 4: 13 to 5: 3.

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.

37 And as *were* the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man.

38 For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,

39 and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man.

40 Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken and one is left:

41 two women *shall* be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left.

42 Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh.

13 But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive,

that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep.

16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first;

17 then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

3 When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven."* (Acts 1: 11.)

TIME.—For Matthew, Tuesday of Passover week; for 1 Thess., A.D. 52 or 53.

PLACE.—For Matthew, the temple court; for 1 Thess., Corinth.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the twelve; Paul and the church at Thessalonica.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 1: 6-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 18.	M.	Jesus Promised to Return (Mark 13: 24-27)
June 19.	T.	Angels Promised His Return (Acts 1: 6-11)
June 20.	W.	Something Must First Occur (2 Thess. 2: 1-12)
June 21.	T.	Watch for His Return (Mark 13: 33-37)
June 22.	F.	His Delay Discourages Some (2 Pet. 3: 1-7)
June 23.	S.	The Coming Will Not Be Expected by Some (2 Pet. 3: 8-13)
June 24.	S.	Ready For His Return (2 Thess. 1: 3-12)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. Exact Time of Return Unknown (Verses 36-39).

II. The Final Separation (Verses 40-42).

III. Christ's Resurrection Assures Ours (1 Thess. 4: 13, 14).

IV. "Dead in Christ Shall Rise First" (Verses 15-18).

V. Knowing the Time of the Lord's Return Unnecessary (1 Thess. 5: 1-3).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

The Return Predicted.—As Jesus was leaving the temple enclosure for the last time, he told the Jews their house would be left unto them desolate. (Matt. 23: 37, 38.) That meant it was to be forsaken as a place of worship, and that the Jews were to be rejected as God's special people. This prompted some of the disciples to call his attention to the great stones and grandeur of the building, which led Jesus to declare that all would be thrown down. Some stones, according to Josephus, were of prodigious size and the building was massive. Such a complete destruction as Jesus said would take place, they thought could not occur before the end of the world.

In connection with his prediction of desolation for their house, Jesus also said: "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23: 39.) This probably suggested to them that the destruction of the temple, his return and the end of the world would all come at the same time. At any rate they asked him when these things should be, and what was the sign of his coming, and the end of the world.

Different Comings.—The "coming" of the Lord is an expression that may be applied to various things, the particular application to be found by considering the language and context, or the general teaching on the subject. He first came in the flesh when born of an earthly mother. This, of course, was past when the language of the lesson texts was spoken. He came in a spiritual sense when his church or kingdom began, as indicated by parallel passages on that subject. (Mark 9: 1; Matt. 16: 28.) When the kingdom came with power on Pentecost, Christ the king came as the spiritual ruler—that is, his reign began at that time. As that event was to happen during the lifetime of some then living, it could not refer to his personal coming. Incidentally this fixes the fact that his kingdom was to begin then, not some time yet future. It is also certain that he came in judgment upon the wicked Jews when he permitted their city and temple to be destroyed. But this occurred A.D. 70, and cannot therefore be in the future.

Personal Coming.—The coming meant in our text is the personal return of the Lord at the general judgment when, as we have already seen, will be gathered before him all the nations of the earth, and when the final separation between the wicked and righteous will take place. The important thing, whenever that momentous time arrives, is to be ready to enter in with our Lord to the joys he has provided.

LESSON NOTES

I. Exact Time of Return Unknown (Verses 36-39)

The Certainty.—Jesus had already predicted his death and resurrection. By the fulfillment of that prediction they would know his words were certainly true. One was a divine guarantee of the other. If their city and temple were destroyed, as he said they would be, they would be assured that his promise to return would also be fulfilled. Many of his disciples saw the fulfillment of his predictions regarding his resurrection and the destruction of the city. Both events happened centuries ago. We have the same assurance that his personal return is certain. Jesus said that heaven and earth, things more substantial than their city and temple, would pass away, but his words would not fail. (Verse 35.)

"Day and Hour."—As the fig tree putting out leaves indicated that summer was near, so certain signs would prove the destruction of their city was near, and other signs would show that his return was approaching. But with unmistakable clearness Jesus assured them (and us as well) that none save the Father knew the "day and hour"—the exact time he would return. We have no satisfactory explanation why Jesus with his divine power did not know this, but we must accept his words as true, and believe that the time of his return was a secret securely held in the mind of the Father. Try-

ing to figure from prophecy, or any other course of reasoning, the exact time of his coming is plain evidence of skepticism. Reserving this event to be known only by its coming was a wise restriction of knowledge, no doubt. It left all generations to consider it a possibility, and to be admonished that constant preparation is necessary.

An Illustration.—Jesus said the state of the world at his return would be similar to that which existed in Noah's day. One difference, however, is that the people then were told the number of years God's mercy would be extended to them. (Gen. 6: 3.) But even then the day and hour were not given. They were wicked in spite of this advance warning. They disbelieved Noah's words, or were indifferent to a disaster that they thought they might escape when it came. In the same fashion, the world goes its way and will meet the judgment.

"Knew Not."—The construction of the ark and Noah's preaching had no apparent effect—they were given wholly to the affairs of this life, changing social relationship, and following the various callings and occupations. The things mentioned were not wrong in themselves, just ordinary human affairs; but, like the thorny ground hearers in the parable, they allowed them to close their hearts to Noah's warnings of their impending disaster. They knew not the time till Noah entered the ark, and the door was shut; then, it was too late to prepare. So it will be when he returns, Jesus says. The antediluvians being lost, and the foolish virgins being rejected, each finding the door of safety closed, should be sufficient warning against not being ready constantly for the Lord's return.

II. The Final Separation (Verses 40-42)

One Taken, One Left.—In Matt. 25: 31-46 Jesus represents all nations as being gathered before him and divided into two great classes. Here the division is made between individuals associated in the callings and labors of life. This is a further proof that world affairs will be following their usual channels when the Lord comes. Like the lightning flashing from the east to the west (verse 27), the Lord's appearing will be so sudden that none will have time to make changes in place and relationship. Two will be in a field; one will be accepted, the other rejected. Grinding was then done on hand mills, and generally by women. Two women will be at this duty; one received, the other refused. Two men will be in one bed, separated in the same way. (Luke 17: 34, 35.) This last example is placed in the night. But both day and night exist on the earth continually; so, to some his coming will be in the night, to others it will be in the day.

Exhortation to Watch.—The certainty of the Lord's coming, the uncertainty of the precise time, and the danger of not being ready make the Lord's admonition to watch, instruction of the most vital nature. An illustration used by Jesus is this: If a householder knew just when the thief would come, he would watch to prevent his house being broken through. (Verse 43.) Not knowing the hour, he must prepare to prevent it at any time. Watching for the Lord's coming all the time is our only safety. If we watch till death, our salvation will be assured, regardless of when his personal coming takes place.

III. Christ's Resurrection Assures Ours (1 Thess. 4: 13, 14)

Knowledge Necessary.—Probably most of the congregation at Thessalonica had been converted from heathenism. (1 Thess. 1: 9.) The confused and indefinite heathen idea of the future state caused them to express excessive and unreasonable sorrow at the death of relatives. Some of them, no doubt, had been converted after Paul left. This may account in part for their ignorance of the state of the dead and future glory. Agitation of the subject may have been causing disturbance in the congregation. Such ignorance of the future as made them like heathen without hope was inconsistent with the real happiness of the saved, and Paul wanted to dispel such lack of knowledge that they might enjoy the comforts of hope.

Grounds of Hope.—In the absence of desire and expectation—both constituent elements—there can be no hope. The desire was present as excessive grief indicated; the expectation, Paul sought to create or strengthen by showing that the Christian had substantial grounds for his hope. Two facts sustain that hope: First, the state of the dead, implied in their promised resurrection; second, the resurrection of Christ which is a logical guarantee that the dead will be raised. Upon these established facts rests the certainty of eternal life. Paul does not condemn righteous sorrow for our dead (John 11: 35; Acts 8: 2), for that would be asking us to go contrary to the nature God gave us; but he shows that the Christian's hope rests on the redeemed dead being in Paradise now, and in heaven finally. "If we believe" does not express doubt; it rather asserts a fact and is equivalent to saying, since we believe God raised Christ from the dead, we should also believe he will raise us.

IV. "Dead in Christ Shall Rise First" (Verses 15-18)

A Divine Revelation.—That the apostles were under direct Spirit guidance is the plain New Testament teaching. The thing Paul is here about to say, he declares is by the word of the Lord; probably meaning he had a special revelation to write on that point. Apparently that was no unusual thing. (1 Cor. 11: 23; Gal. 2: 2.) Rejecting what Paul says here is not just denying his words, but also the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

"No Wise Precede Them."—It is commonly understood that the Revised Version here has correctly used the word "precede," in place of "prevent" in the King James. "Them that are fallen asleep," a figurative expression, mean the dead. Those "that are left" mean those still alive when the Lord returns. By the word "we" Paul classifies himself with the church as an institution, not meaning that he personally expected to be alive when Jesus returned. In his use of the word "us" (2 Cor. 4: 14), he identifies himself with those to be raised at the Lord's coming. He simply means that the part of the church alive when the Lord returns will not precede the redeemed dead in reaching Christ.

Coming Described.—Here Paul declares the Lord will descend from heaven; in 2 Thess. 1: 7, he says, "with the angels of his power." The shout will announce that the time determined by the Father has come, the archangel will call the gathering of the nations, and the trumpet of God will arouse those asleep. (1 Cor. 15: 52.) That

awe-inspiring moment will be too grand for human description; it can be understood only when it comes.

Who Raised?—The contrast here is not between all the dead and all the living at the time of Christ's return; the language allows no such construction. Paul definitely mentions that the "dead in Christ" will rise first. Then—after that—the living in Christ will be changed, and with the raised saints meet the Lord in the air. The unmistakable proof that both classes in this text refer to Christians is the statement that both shall "ever be with the Lord." The resurrection of the wicked—not even referred to in this text—will occur at the same time, as Jesus clearly indicates in Matt. 25: 31-46. The comfort in Paul's words is in the thought of ever being with the Lord.

V. Knowing the Time of the Lord's Return Unnecessary (1 Thess. 5: 1-3)

"Have No Need."—The return of the Lord is one of the plain New Testament promises. Of course Paul, when he was with them, had taught the Thessalonian brethren the certainty that this promise would be fulfilled. It seems probable that he had also taught them that the time was unknown. He would hardly have overlooked that fact, which Jesus had made so clear and positive. But there had been time enough for disturbances over this question to trouble them after Paul had left. If they had not forgotten his teaching, there would be no need to write on that phase of the subject. Any new converts made after Paul's departure could easily be taught by those who understood the subject, or could see the truth from the simple illustrations he mentioned. No further instruction was necessary on that point.

An Unexpected Time.—That he would return at an unexpected time had been the teaching of Jesus and, of course, had to be repeated by the apostles. Jesus had said it would be like the coming of a thief at night. Both Paul and Peter use the same illustration. Paul's words are found in the lesson text; Peter's are found in 2 Pet. 3: 10. Those unprepared to prevent the thief's entering the house must necessarily lose what the thief takes off; those unprepared for the Lord's return (death substantially amounting to the same) must themselves be lost. The Lord's coming cannot be prevented; our meeting him is an inevitable event that we cannot escape. To those ready it will be a time of greatest joy; to the unprepared a time of sorrow, gloom, and despair.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. A most practical Bible lesson is this: "The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." (Deut. 29: 29.) The principle is just as applicable to gospel law as it was to the Mosaic law at the time spoken.

2. The class to which each will be assigned at the judgment will depend upon individual character. Business, social, and other worldly relationships will be of no avail when the final separation takes place.

3. Ignorance on vital matters when reliable and true information may be had will be inexcusable at the judgment. It is pitiful for

the unsaved to spend their time trying to learn everything else, except what they must do to enter Christ's kingdom. More so, if possible, for Christians to make little or no effort to understand the rich provisions God has made for their joy.

4. Nothing, it seems, would be more calculated to give us assurance and comfort than that our righteous dead will with us meet the Lord and remain with him forever.

5. When the Lord promises us a blessing for doing certain things, we should accept his word as absolutely true. It is a lack of faith if we do not. Likewise when he says something is unknown, we should be content and wait for God's time to reveal it. The failure to do this is also a lack of faith.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What prediction was made about the temple? What is its meaning?
What other prediction did Jesus then make?
What did these predictions suggest to the disciples?
To what may the "coming of the Lord" be first applied?
How may it be applied in a spiritual sense?
In what other sense may it be applied?
How is it applied in our lesson text?

I

What would they know from Jesus' resurrection?
What additional proof were they to have later?
How did he illustrate the certainty of his words?
What lesson is in the fig tree illustration?
What did Jesus say about the exact time of his return?
Why was it best that the exact time be not known?
What did Jesus say about the days of Noah?
What knowledge did the people have about the flood?
Were the things they were doing wrong?
Why, then, were they lost?

II

What is the difference in the lesson here and the one in Matt. 25: 31-46?
What is meant by one taken, the other left?
What examples did Jesus give?
How some in the day and others at night?

What makes the Lord's admonition so vital?
What is absolutely necessary to our final safety?

III

Of whom was the congregation at Thessalonica probably composed?
Why did the heathen sorrow so at the death of relatives?
What was Paul's purpose in discussing this subject?
What element of hope was lacking in their case?
Name two grounds for hope.
Why is sorrow for our dead not wrong?
What is meant by the expression, "If we believe"?

IV

What does Paul say about his instruction to them?
What does "by the word of the Lord" mean?
What difference is in the versions here?
What is meant by those "fallen asleep," and those "left"?
How did Paul use the word "we"?
How does he use the word "us" in 2 Cor. 4: 14?
Describe the Lord's coming.
What two classes does this text refer to?
What did Jesus teach in Matt. 25: 31-46?

V

What teaching had Paul likely given that congregation?
What illustrations did the apostle use?

Practical Thoughts

What practical lesson is in Deut. 29: 29?
What will not avail at the judgment?
What will be inexcusable at the judgment?
What should give us great joy?
Why should we accept what God says without question?

THIRD QUARTER

PROPHETS AND KINGS OF ISRAEL

(FROM AHIJAH TO ISAIAH)

AIM: *To discover, through a study of these ancient leaders under divine guidance, the principles of true leadership and to learn how to put these principles into practice in everyday life.*

Lesson I—July 1, 1934

AHIJAH AND THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

1 Kings 11: 29-39.

29 And it came to pass at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; now Ahijah had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field.

30 And Ahijah laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces.

31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces; for thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee.

32 (But he shall have one tribe, for my servant David's sake and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel);

33 Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon; and they have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and mine ordinances, as did David his father.

34 Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand; but I will make him prince all the days of his life, for David my servant's sake whom I chose, who kept my commandments and my statutes;

35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes.

36 And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a lamp always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.

37 And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.

38 And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken 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.

39 And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Pride goeth before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall."* (Prov. 16: 18.)

TIME.—980 B.C.

PLACE.—Near Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Ahijah and Jeroboam.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 1: 20-26.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 25.	M.	..... Ahijah's Prophecy (1 Kings 11: 29-39)
June 26.	T.	..... Rehoboam's Folly (1 Kings 12: 1-15)
June 27.	W.	..... Israel's Revolt (1 Kings 12: 16-24)
June 28.	T.	..... Jeroboam's Idolatry (1 Kings 12: 25-33)
June 29.	F.	..... Jeroboam's Deceit (1 Kings 14: 1-6)
June 30.	S.	..... Rehoboam's Reign (1 Kings 14: 21-31)
July 1.	S.	..... Wisdom's Warning (Prov. 1: 20-26)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Ahijah Promises Jeroboam Ten Tribes (Verses 29-32).
 - II. Reasons for Division of Kingdom Assigned (Verse 33).
 - III. One Tribe Promised to Rehoboam (Verses 34-36).
 - IV. Jeroboam Required to Walk in God's Ways (Verses 37-39).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

A Bit of History.—The division of the Israelites into two kingdoms after Solomon's death is no surprise when we know their previous history. The sowing of evil seed must of necessity produce an evil harvest. The spirit of rebellion that caused them, in the first place, to demand a king over the protest of God through his prophet (1 Sam. 8: 1-9) would easily lead them to divide that kingdom, if occasion stirred up their spirit of resentment. Founding their demand for a king upon the wickedness of Samuel's sons in their judge-ships (verses 1, 2) was no justification whatever. They offered a similar excuse for dividing the kingdom—the unreasonably heavy burdens laid on them by their king. Rejecting God's arrangements because of human weakness and wickedness has been a common practice throughout the centuries, but it has never had one element of reason or common sense.

The Undivided Kingdom.—Saul, David, and Solomon each reigned forty years over the undivided kingdom. David was a great general and had accomplished much for Israel through his military operations. His ability and accomplishments entitle him to be recognized as the greatest temporal king of all time; as a king he was typical of Christ, a spiritual king. Solomon came to the throne when the Israelites were at peace with all the nations about them. His reign was the most prosperous of any of their kings. He was permitted to build the temple because of the peaceful nature of his reign. His great wisdom in managing the kingdom, his financial ability, and his general teaching made him famous and his kingdom glorious. The queen of Sheba came to see Solomon's great possessions and test his wisdom. (1 Kings 10: 1-10.) Probably others did the same.

Planting the Seed.—Material prosperity marked Solomon's reign throughout, but his matrimonial alliances with women of heathen nations were the seed planting that produced a bad harvest, preparing the way for the rebellion that came in the days of his son Rehoboam. Plural marriages then were allowed, but marriage with the heathen was a plain violation of God's law. (Exod. 34: 10-16; Deut. 7: 1-5.) It resulted just as Moses indicated it would—led to the introduction of idolatry. Such violation of God's law on the part of Solomon himself as their king could not fail to encourage a general spirit of lawlessness. It is no surprise that the ripened harvest of such sowing brought about the disastrous division that soon followed.

LESSON NOTES

I. Ahijah Promises Jeroboam Ten Tribes (Verses 29-32)

A Trusted Servant.—Though peace existed between the Israelites and the nations around them, yet the Lord raised up some individual adversaries against Solomon. (Verses 14, 23.) This came about because of his sins, especially his increasing toleration of idolatry. This he allowed in the very shadow of the temple. Jeroboam, who at one time was a trusted servant of Solomon, was the one who finally brought about the division of the kingdom. (Verses 26-28.) Solomon had been warned, probably by Ahijah the prophet, that the kingdom was to be rent after his son came to the throne and taken from his family. (Verses 11-13.) He may have learned in some way that ten tribes had been promised to Jeroboam, for the record says he sought to kill him (verse 40), but Jeroboam fled to Egypt where he remained till the death of Solomon.

Ahijah Meets Jeroboam.—Ahijah was a prophet and one of the number that wrote the history of Solomon's reign. (2 Chron. 9: 29.) He is said to have met Jeroboam when he went out of the city. Why he was going out of Jerusalem is not stated, though he might have been fleeing from Solomon and on his way to Egypt. The text says they were alone in the field. This was probably to encourage Jeroboam, and let him know that he would receive the ten tribes, despite the fact that for the time being he had to escape for his life.

Division Symbolized.—A common custom of the old covenant was to portray important future events by some kind of type or symbol. This added both impressiveness and assurance that the event was certain to transpire. Ahijah rent his new garment in twelve pieces, giving ten to Jeroboam with the assurance that God would in like manner give him ten of the twelve tribes. He was told, however, that one tribe was to remain with Solomon's son for David's sake and for Jerusalem's sake. This would remind Jeroboam that he was dependent on Jehovah and could have only what was allowed him. Ahijah further told him (verse 37) that he should "reign according to all thy soul desireth." This at least means that he was to have complete authority as king over ten tribes; a real rule, not a pretense. This promise was literally fulfilled.

II. Reasons for Division of Kingdom Assigned (Verse 33)

"Forsaken Me."—Being infinitely supreme in wisdom and power, the rightful Ruler of the universe, God would not have to give reasons for his acts. That he does so must be for man's encouragement in the right and warning against the wrong. To withdraw his favor and allow his own people to divide and bring the kingdom to disaster indicated that a serious and sinful condition was in existence. Such a condition meant that they had forsaken God. They were failing to recognize their obligation to him for the national liberty he had given them, and his signal protection of them for centuries. How terrible that men can thus forget God and his benefits.

Idolaters.—Jehovah had plainly told them at Mount Sinai that they should have no other gods beside him, and that he was "a jealous God" and would visit iniquity upon them for such sins. In

the practice of idolatry they violated the first two of the ten commands. (Exod. 20: 3, 4.) In this particular they were ready for the drastic punishment promised. They worshipped Ashtoreth, a Phoenician goddess, whose licentious worship was prevalent in southern Canaan; Chemosh, the god of the Moabites, who dwelled southeast of the Dead Sea; Milcom, the god of the Ammonites, who resided northeast of the Dead Sea. The Moabites and Ammonites were both descendants of Lot, and bitter enemies of the Israelites. These with the Edomites and Hittites (verse 1) are mentioned because being near they were the ones that most affected the Israelites. This idolatry prevented their keeping God's commands and doing what was right in his eyes. This defection was charged to the leadership of Solomon, who had not kept God's commands as did David his father. Though guilty of sin, David was no idolater. In spite of falling into sin under weakness and temptation, there was always a deep respect in his heart for God's commands, for which reason he was said to be a man after God's own heart.

III. One Tribe Promised to Rehoboam (Verses 34-36)

"For David's Sake."—Ahijah repeats what he had said in verse 32 that Solomon's son was to have one tribe for David's sake. Probably he wanted to emphasize this matter, so that Jeroboam would distinctly understand just how far his authority was to extend. He again says this was done for David's sake. This means more than personal honors for David. When he wanted to build God a house, his desire was not granted, but he was promised that the royal line should remain permanently in his family. His house and kingdom were to be made sure forever. (2 Sam. 7: 12-17.) The temporal feature of this promise was realized in Solomon sitting upon David's throne and perpetuated through his descendants. This explains Ahijah's words that Solomon's son was to have one tribe. Disobedience was to be chastised, but God's loving-kindness was not to depart from David's house entirely. The promise of chastening "with the rod of men" found its fulfillment in the division of the kingdom, and the last four centuries of Jewish nationality when they had no earthly king on the throne.

A Spiritual Feature.—Nathan's promise to David probably implies a spiritual fulfillment also. With this application it may signify Christ, a descendant of David, who was to rebuild the tabernacle of David (Acts 15: 16, 17)—that is, he would in the establishment of his church restore the rule or reign to David's family. (See Isa. 9: 6, 7; Luke 1: 32, 33.) This restoration of the kingship to David's family, after four centuries without a king, shows that God's loving-kindness was not taken from his family completely, though sin had brought many and grievous chastisements.

"May Have a Lamp."—This means that David's family was never to become extinct. It was clearly the divine purpose that David should be the progenitor of the Messiah; the kingly lineage was to come through him. For God's promise not to fail, it was necessary that the ruling power should remain in David's family. This required that he have at least a part of the kingdom to be subject to his descendants. The promise made to Abraham centuries before must also be fulfilled. If the line came through the family of David,

then the tribe of Judah must remain with Rehoboam when the division came. It is a fact that the tribe of Benjamin remained with Rehoboam (1 Kings 12: 21), and he really had two tribes. This is also evident from the fact that Jeroboam was promised only ten of the twelve. But it was only necessary for Rehoboam to have one—the tribe of Judah—to preserve the royal family of David. That is evidently what Ahijah meant by saying one tribe. He would have the one left that was necessary to fulfill God's promise to David.

IV. Jeroboam Required to Walk in God's Ways (Verses 37-39)

"If Thou Wilt Hearken."—Though God gave Jeroboam the right to rule ten tribes as an affliction to the seed of David, yet his success in the enterprise was to depend upon his hearkening to all God said. He was not to gloat over his success in drawing away the most of the nation from Solomon's son, nor to wantonly walk in the ways of evil. The high honor allowed him was the greater reason why he would not be tolerated in sinful practices. He would be held to a strict accounting for his deeds. Even when God allowed wicked enemies to punish his people for their sins, he saw to it that such enemies were duly punished for their own sins. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is an outstanding example of this truth. (2 Kings 25: 1-7; Dan. 4: 19-33.) The obedience required of Jeroboam was to walk in God's ways, not his own; to do that which was right in God's sight, not that which was right in the sight of men; to keep God's commands as did David.

Build Thee a House.—The obedience required was no small task. Demanding it gave Jeroboam to understand that God required the same strict obedience from him that he did of Solomon's son. It implied that a failure on his part would cause him to be rejected just like disobedience to God had caused him to be placed as king over the ten tribes. He was promised that for such obedience God would build him a "sure house." That meant that the ten tribes would be given to him permanently, and his family would remain their ruling house. He was not to allow his sudden exaltation to make him forget God who gave him this honor.

Jeroboam's Failure.—In due time the ten tribes revolted and made Jeroboam their king, as Ahijah had promised him. The prophet carefully explained the necessity of his not forgetting God's commands. Though fully forewarned of the consequences of rejecting them, Jeroboam failed miserably to meet his grave responsibilities. He soon introduced a general perversion of the revealed system of worship—in fact, a kind of counterfeit religion. He built two altars—one at Bethel, the other at Dan—and made two golden calves to be worshipped. He changed the time for the feast of tabernacles, and appointed as priests men of any tribe, which was a plain violation of the Levitical law. For all this he was severely rebuked by a young prophet from Jerusalem. All of this did little good, for he did not forsake his evil way. Finally Ahijah sent him word that his house would be cut off—his family rejected as the ruling house in Israel. (1 Kings 12: 25 to 14: 17.) Jeroboam was such an outrageous sinner that "to walk in all the ways of Jeroboam" became a proverb.

bial expression to describe the wickedness of his successors. (1 Kings 16: 26.)

"But Not Forever."—Ahijah closed his words to Jeroboam by saying that the affliction of the seed of David would not last forever. Since many afflictions were visited upon the kingdom of Judah later, and they were deprived of any king at all for the last four centuries, this part of the prophecy probably is best understood as applying to Christ who would, by ruling in his kingdom, restore the reign to the family of David. It meant that in spite of all disasters that might come, God would protect the family of David till the promise to Abraham could be fulfilled. This required the preservation of a "remnant" which must be found in the tribe of Judah and the family of David.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. One of the saddest spectacles of this world is seen when great power has been prostituted to base purposes. The wisdom of Solomon has been conceded by men of all ages. His ability and marvelous achievements are beyond question. His success in material things was unparalleled at that time. He occupied the highest place in worldly honor—the king of God's people—yet he lost by disobedience and left his son a divided kingdom.

2. Paul declares that "Evil companionships corrupt good morals." (1 Cor. 15: 33.) Solomon is perhaps our most striking example of that truth. No political considerations were sufficient to justify his making "affinity" with foreign rulers, and forming matrimonial alliances with foreign women contrary to God's command. No one has wisdom enough, nor self-control enough, to make that course a success.

3. We may be certain that God is not dependent upon us to make his purposes a success. His promises will be fulfilled, regardless of our sinfulness. If we are not willing to do his will, he can raise up others to accomplish his purposes. The church will not cease to exist because we are unfaithful to it, but we will be lost for such disobedience.

4. Being given great honor is no proof that we cannot fail. We are personally responsible for our conduct, and sins will bring us to ruin.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

When did the division of the kingdom occur?
What bearing does 1 Sam. 8: 1-9 have on the subject?
What reasons assigned for a king and the division?
Who reigned, and how long, over the undivided kingdom?
How did David accomplish so much?
Describe Solomon's reign.

What grave mistakes did he finally make?
What prediction had Moses made?

I

What individual adversaries were raised up against Solomon?
What position did Jeroboam occupy?
What warning had been given Solomon?
Why did Solomon seek to kill Jeroboam?
How was it prevented?
What is known of Ahijah?
Where did he meet Jeroboam?
How was the division symbolized?
Why was he told that one tribe was to remain with Solomon's son?
What was meant by "according to all thy soul desireth"?

II

Why does God sometimes give reasons for his acts?
 Why did he allow the division to occur?
 What had Jehovah told them about idolatry?
 What commands did they violate?
 What idols are mentioned?
 To whom was this defection charged, and why?

III

Why did Ahijah repeat, "for David's sake"?
 What promise had been made to David, and when?
 How was the temporal feature fulfilled?
 What is meant by chasten "with the rod of men"?
 What spiritual application may be given Nathan's promise?
 What passages indicate this?
 What is meant by "have a lamp"?
 What was necessary to prevent the failure of God's promise?

What other tribe remained with Rehoboam?
 What was meant by saying "one tribe"?

IV

Upon what did Jeroboam's success depend?
 What was he not to do?
 How did God treat enemies of his people?
 What remarkable example do we have?
 What was meant by "build thee a sure house"?
 Describe Jeroboam's perversion of God's worship.
 What final word did Ahijah send him?
 What expression became proverbial?
 What was meant by "not for ever"?

Practical Thoughts

In what was Solomon a sad example?
 What result follows "evil companionships"?
 How will our unfaithfulness affect the church and ourselves?
 For what are we responsible?

Lesson II—July 8, 1934

ASA RELIES ON GOD

2 Chron. 15: 1-12.

- 1 And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded:
- 2 And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Jehovah is with you, while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.
- 3 Now for a long season Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law:
- 4 But when in their distress they turned unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.
- 5 And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the lands.
- 6 And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city; for God did vex them with all adversity.
- 7 But be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack; for your work shall be rewarded.
- 8 And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominations out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from the hill-country of Ephraim; and he renewed the altar of Jehovah, that was before the porch of Jehovah.
- 9 And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and them that sojourned with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that Jehovah his God was with him.
- 10 So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.
- 11 And they sacrificed unto Jehovah in that day, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep.
- 12 And they entered into the covenant to seek Jehovah, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?"* (Heb. 13: 6.)

TIME.—About 941 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Azariah, Asa, and the people.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 27: 1-5.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 2.	M.	Asa Abandons Idolatry (2 Chron. 14: 1-5)
July 3.	T.	Asa Relies on God (2 Chron. 15: 1-12)
July 4.	W.	Job Relies on God (Job 13: 1-16)
July 5.	T.	Hezekiah Relies on God (2 Kings 18: 1-8)
July 6.	F.	Stephen Relies on God (Acts 7: 54-60)
July 7.	S.	Paul Relies on God (2 Tim. 4: 1-8)
July 8.	S.	David Relies on God (Ps. 27: 1-5)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Judah and Benjamin Promised God's Favor (Verses 1, 2).
 - II. Their Former State Described (Verses 3-6).
 - III. Asa Determines to Complete the Reformation (Verses 7, 8).
 - IV. A Great Assembly at Jerusalem (Verses 9-11).
 - V. The People Enter into a Solemn Covenant (Verse 12).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Between Lessons.—Our last lesson—an interview between Ahijah and Jeroboam—occurred in the latter part of Solomon's reign. When Rehoboam became king, the ten tribes rebelled. Rehoboam reigned over Judah and Benjamin seventeen years and was succeeded by his son, Abijah, who reigned three years. (2 Chron. 12: 13; 13: 1, 2.) He was succeeded by Asa, our lesson subject, who reigned forty-one years. (2 Chron. 14: 1; 16: 13.) Jeroboam reigned over Israel twenty-two years, and was followed by his son, Nadab, with a reign of two years. (1 Kings 14: 20; 15: 25.) He was slain by Baasha, who ruled in his stead. (1 Kings 15: 27, 28.) Thus the reign was taken from the house of Jeroboam as predicted by the prophet Ahijah. Baasha, Elah, Zimri, and Omri, kings of Israel, were all contemporary with Asa's reign over Judah.

Wickedness in Judah.—Preceding Asa's reign, wickedness in Judah was not far behind that in Israel. After three years (2 Chron. 11: 17), Rehoboam became well established in the kingdom. (He then forsook the law of Jehovah, and the people followed his lead in that apostasy.) (2 Chron. 12: 11.) Knowing Solomon's toleration and approval of idolatry, and the fact that Rehoboam's mother was one of his heathen wives—an Ammonite—this turning away from God's law is not surprising. The parental examples were poor encouragement to sustain a son, who was doubtless naturally weak. Though not the equal of his father in making alliances, he had eighteen wives and sixty concubines—wives of secondary rank. (2 Chron. 11: 21.) Because of Judah's transgressions Jehovah allowed the king of Egypt to wage against them a disastrous war. A timely repentance on Rehoboam's part, however, saved Judah from further disaster at that time. (See 2 Chron., chap. 12.)

Abijah's Reign.—Our lesson story is found in both Kings and Chronicles. The records in both places should be compared. Abijah, Rehoboam's son, was the second king to rule Judah. He is also called Abijam. (1 Kings 14: 31.) A different form of spelling, or changes for other reasons, was common in personal names. He imi-

tated the sins of his father, yet was preserved as king because of the promise made to David. (1 Kings 15: 3, 4.) He engaged in a huge war against Jeroboam, and was successful because he "relied upon the Lord." (See 2 Chron., chap. 13.) He pursued Jeroboam into his own territory and took from him some of his towns. The defeat was so complete that Jeroboam never recovered from it during the days of Abijah. He was struck with some disease probably and died, but not till Abijah had been succeeded by Asa. (1 Kings 14: 9.)

LESSON NOTES

I. Judah and Benjamin Promised God's Favor (Verses 1, 2)

Previous History.—In chapter fourteen we learn several complimentary things regarding Asa's reign, previous to our lesson event. For ten years the "land was quiet," which means that there was no wars during that period. (Verse 6.) In those years of peace Judah builded cities, and protected them with walls, gates, and bars. This added to their security and material prosperity. The historian also says that Asa did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. He rejected all idolatrous worship and destroyed their images, altars, and other things used to worship idols. After the ten years of peace Zerah, an Ethiopian, with an enormous army came against Judah. Asa put his trust in Jehovah, cried to him for help, and gained a signal victory.

Met by a Prophet.—The record says, "the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded," and that he went to meet Asa. Nothing is known of this prophet except what is said here. He was simply a divinely qualified agent sent to deliver a very important message to Asa and his kingdom. That was the usual method of delivering divine messages. (Heb. 1: 1.) As related in our last lesson, God's message was sent to Jeroboam through the prophet Ahijah. In this case Azariah called upon Asa, all Judah, and Benjamin to hear him. By this he meant that they should give attention to what he said, and render obedience to the things required.

The Message.—That Jehovah had already been with Asa and his kingdom is clear from the great victory that he gained over Zerah's army. The prophet must have, therefore, meant that Jehovah would continue to be with him, if he complied with the necessary condition—that is, he will be with you "while ye are with him." If Asa would continue to recognize his dependence on God and seek his favor, his requests would be granted. If anything caused him to turn away from God, divine help would not be given. This is a general and fundamental truth that finds its verification in all God's covenants with man. It shows the possibility of God's servants being rejected because of their sins. The impossibility of apostasy was not a true doctrine then, neither is it true now.

II. Their Former State Described (Verses 3-6)

"A Long Season."—After the division of the kingdom the word Israel was usually applied to the ten tribes; but, being a general term to describe God's people as having descended from the patriarch Israel, it is here applied also to Judah. Perhaps the prophet here intended his description to apply to both kingdoms, as it fits

both of them. Probably the time referred to was the reigns of Rehoboam and Abijah—about twenty years. They were “without the true God”—that is, having turned from the true worship to serve idols, they were without his favor and protection. They were “without a teaching priest,” because their great apostasy had so affected the priests that they had become ignorant of the law they were supposed to teach. They were “without law,” because they had turned away from it, and could not claim God’s promises made in it. For all this they had themselves to blame, for God was still ready to bless the obedient, and his law was in their hands.

“Found of Them.”—The prophet reminded them that when they were in great distress and sought the Lord, he was found of them. A remarkable instance of that was when they faced the huge army of Zerah and called upon Jehovah for help. They well knew that the prophet’s words were true. They remembered how quickly matters changed in their favor when righteous Asa took the reins of government. When they banished idolatry and turned to God, he enabled them to live in peace, or defeat enemies that came against them.

“There Was No Peace.”—The prophet further contrasts their happy individual and national state under Asa with the distressing condition under his predecessors. He says they were broken in pieces, nation fighting nation, and city against city. They were beset with the usual loss of life and property incident to continuous war. Those going about were in constant dread of some misfortune. Great vexations fell upon them thick and fast. The prophet finally assures them that all these adversities were from God—meaning, of course, that he allowed such to befall them because of their sins.

III. Asa Determines to Complete the Reformation (Verses 7, 8)

The Prophet’s Exhortation.—Azariah closed his message with an earnest appeal for Asa and the people to persistently continue in the work of reform. Using their past successes when they obeyed God as an incentive, he urged them to maintain their good work, and lose none of their zeal till complete success brought them into full harmony with God’s law. To this he added what is the strongest motive known to influence men to action. He said: “For your work shall be rewarded.” Rewards vary greatly; but, whatever their nature, their effectiveness is in the joy and satisfaction which they bring.

“He Took Courage.”—The prophet’s words encouraged Asa to “put away the abominations out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin.” This determination was not to begin the work of reform, for much had already been done along that line. It was a decision to continue the work with perseverance till all the territory of Judah and Benjamin should be brought under divine authority. It was not a beginning, but an extension of the work; an effort to destroy from the whole land the corrupting influence of idolatrous worship. The thoroughness of the work is indicated by the fact that it was carried into the cities which they had captured from Ephraimite territory. The record also says he “renewed the altar” in the temple court. Asa’s previous zeal in such reform work shows this cannot mean that he

began the altar service at that time. He probably enlarged it so more sacrifices could be made, or increased the number that were being offered. In all departments of the kingdom, Asa strove to bring all to harmonize with divine teaching.

IV. A Great Assembly at Jerusalem (Verses 9-11)

Those That Came.—That Asa should gather together for that great occasion "all Judah and Benjamin" was the natural thing; they were the tribes that remained when the rebellion divided the kingdom. The text states that others in great abundance were there from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon. The first two were located north of Benjamin, and Simeon was just south of Judah. All were near enough to be easily influenced by Judah's wonderful success. Many in these tribes rightly decided that Asa's great victory was due to God's help, which implied that Asa's conduct pleased him. This, of course, forced them to understand that the idolatrous worship introduced by Jeroboam was wrong. This led them to revolt, to come to Jerusalem and put themselves under Asa's authority and protection. It may have also been a part of their earnest desire to take up again the ancient worship as revealed by Moses. It is probable that on other occasions some in the kingdom of Israel left their tribal relationship and were absorbed in the kingdom of Judah.

Time of Assembling.—This assembly, which occurred in the fifteenth year of Asa's reign, was in the third month. As Pentecost, one of the three annual feasts the law required all males to attend, came in the third month, it is likely this assembling was at that time. (See Exod. 23: 14-17.) It must have been not very long after the victory over Zerah's army, for they made many sacrifices from the spoils taken.

Purpose of Assembly.—They would come to Pentecost because the law required it, but the reason for Asa's special gathering is not given in the text. Enough is said, however, to indicate its purpose. It must have been designed as a thanksgiving to God for the victory which he had given them. It is clearly distinct from the regular Pentecost feast. At that the law required the offering of thirteen animals (Lev. 23: 15-19); in the meeting Asa called they offered seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. This great number was said to have been offered from the spoils of the war. This harmonizes with the record regarding the great amount of spoils taken. (2 Chron. 14: 14, 15.)

V. The People Enter into a Solemn Covenant (Verse 12)

"To Seek Jehovah."—Apparently in consideration of God's exceeding great mercies to them, they entered into an agreement "to seek Jehovah, the God of their fathers." This meant they wanted it known that they purposed to honor the God who delivered their fathers from Egypt and blessed them through the centuries past. Their agreement, of course, included a solemn promise to carry out its conditions. To seek Jehovah meant they intended to faithfully strive to obey his commandments, thus seeking his continuous approval. They further promised that this effort should not be a kind of half-hearted affair; they would seek him with "all their heart and with all their soul." This was to show they intended to use all

their powers, both physical and spiritual, in doing the will of God. This statement was not only a practical, common-sense view of their duty to God, but was in strict accord with what Moses had said should be done. (Deut. 6: 4, 5.) Jesus quoted the words of Moses with approval. (Matt. 22: 37.) This shows that the duty here stated is of universal application, receiving divine approval in both covenants.

To Oppose Evil.—Their zeal for God was so intense that they were ready to vigorously oppose any who were not thus honoring him. The extent to which Asa's zeal for righteousness led him is seen in the fact that he refused to let his mother remain as queen because she had made an abominable image. Asa cut it down and burned it with fire. (2 Chron. 15: 16, 17.) Verse 17 of this reference indicates that some of the places where idol worship had been practiced were not destroyed in Asa's day, yet notwithstanding that fact the record says his heart was "perfect all his days." This does not mean that Asa never made any mistakes, but rather that the earnest intent of his heart was to serve God. The sixteenth chapter shows that he did make a serious mistake when he sought a league with Ben-hadad, king of Syria, to get his assistance against Baasha, king of Israel. God had given him victory in other things; he should have still relied upon God solely. But all in all Asa was a most remarkable king—remarkable especially because of reliance upon God.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. When God selects, qualifies, and sends a messenger to reveal his will, all men should give careful heed to what he says. To reject the words of the messenger is to reject the one who sent him. God now speaks to us through his Son. Rejecting Christ's commands is rejecting both God and Christ.

2. The long period when Israel was without a priest competent to teach, and without law, shows what fearful results follow from continued disobedience to God. The centuries of apostasy from the faith, with its consequent results—denominationalism—should show us the havoc that has been brought to the church through disobedience. We should be afraid to let our zeal for the church grow less.

3. Hearing of misfortunes and being warned against them will be worthless unless we strive to avert them. Hearing of heaven and being told how to go cannot do us any good unless we walk in the way pointed out. Complete success cannot come till the task is finished.

4. Fidelity to God was more important than maintaining tribal relationships. When tribes failed to honor Jehovah and substituted idolatry for the true worship, those desiring to be righteous were justified in changing kingdoms. In fact, truth and honor would allow no other course.

5. Nothing is more important than learning to serve God with all the power we possess; allow nothing to prevent an honest effort.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.

Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Who were the first two kings over Judah?
 How long did each reign?
 How long did Asa reign?
 What kings reigned over Israel during the same period?
 Describe the reign of Rehoboam.
 How many wives did he have?
 Account for the names Abijah and Abijam.
 Describe his war with Jeroboam.

I

Describe Asa's reign previous to our lesson.
 What great victory did he gain?
 Who was sent to him with a message?
 What similar case was in the last lesson?
 Give the message.
 What did the message mean?
 What bearing on the question of apostasy did it have?

II

What period is referred to by a "long season"?
 In what sense were they without God and without law?
 What is meant by "found of them"?
 What noted example did they have?
 How is their condition further described?

III

How did the prophet close his message?

What reason did he assign for their obedience?
 How did it affect Asa?
 What decision did Asa make?
 What is meant by "renewed the altar"?

IV

Who attended the assembly in Jerusalem?
 From what other tribes did some come, and why?
 Where were these tribes located?
 What time did the assembly take place?
 What was the reason for this special meeting?
 What shows it was distinct from the regular Pentecost feast?
 What is said of the spoils taken in the war?

V

What covenant did they enter?
 What was included in their covenant?
 What further promise did they make?
 What shows this duty is universal?
 What decision did they make regarding evil?
 What shows the intense zeal of Asa?

Practical Thoughts

What should be our attitude concerning God's messages?
 What is the lesson in Israel's long period without God?
 When are messages beneficial?
 What does truth and honor require?
 What is the most important lesson?

Lesson III—July 15, 1934**GOD CARES FOR ELIJAH**

1 Kings 17: 1-7; 19: 1-8.

1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the sojourners of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

2 And the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan.

4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

5 So he went and did according unto the word of Jehovah; for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.

3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough; now, O Jehovah, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

5 And he lay down and slept under a juniper-tree; and, behold, an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

6 And he looked, and, behold, there was at his head a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7 And the angel of Jehovah came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee.

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” (Matt. 6: 32.)

TIME.—910 B.C. for sections 1 and 2; 906 for sections 3-5.

PLACES.—Probably Samaria, near the brook Cherith, Beer-sheba, and the wilderness.

PERSONS.—Elijah, Ahab, Jezebel, and an angel of the Lord.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 23.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 9.	M.	.....	Elijah at Cherith (1 Kings 17: 1-7)
July 10.	T.	.....	Elijah at Zarephath (1 Kings 17: 8-16)
July 11.	W.	.....	Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18: 30-40)
July 12.	T.	.....	Elijah in the Wilderness (1 Kings 19: 1-8)
July 13.	F.	.....	Moses on Mount Sinai (Ex. 34: 27-35)
July 14.	S.	.....	Jesus in the Wilderness (Luke 4: 1-13)
July 15.	S.	.....	Jehovah our Shepherd (Ps. 23: 1-6)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Elijah Predicts a Drouth (Verses 1-4).
- II. God's Promise to Elijah Fulfilled (Verses 5-7).
- III. Jezebel Threatens Elijah's Life (19: 1, 2).
- IV. Elijah Flees from Jezebel (Verses 3, 4).
- V. Elijah Fed by an Angel (Verses 5-8).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Israel's Capital.—Jeroboam, the first to rule the kingdom of Israel, built Shechem and dwelt there. (1 Kings 12: 25.) Later he, his son, Nadab, and Baasha made Tirzah their royal city. (1 Kings 14: 17; 15: 33.) Before Asa closed his reign over Judah, Omri, the king of Israel, reigned six years in Tirzah and then built Samaria. (1 Kings 16: 23, 24.) It continued to be Israel's capital city till they were taken captive by the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser, after a three years' siege. (2 Kings 17: 1-5.) Samaria was located about midway between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, from a point about midway between the Dead Sea and Lake Galilee.

Ahab's Reign.—Jeroboam was succeeded by his son Nadab. He was murdered by Baasha, who seized the throne and thus fulfilled the prophet's words that Jeroboam's house was to be rejected. Elah who succeeded his father, Baasha, reigned two years and was assassinated by Zimri, a servant. (1 Kings 16: 8-10.) He overthrew the house of Baasha, but was allowed to reign only seven days. Rather than be taken he committed suicide. (Same chapter, verses 15-18.) He was succeeded by Omri, who built Samaria as already noted. His career was said to be more wicked than those who pre-

ceded him. (Verse 25.) Following him came the reign of Ahab, who even surpassed his father in wickedness. For twenty-two years the kingdom of Israel was cursed by that execrable tyrant and abandoned wretch. Twice in less than forty years the ruling house of Israel had been overthrown, and twice a ruler had been assassinated. Little could be expected in such a state of affairs, with another ruler more wicked still coming to the throne.

Jezebel's Part.—The record says that Ahab did evil "above all that were before him," and "did yet more to provoke Jehovah, the God of Israel, to anger than all of the kings of Israel that were before him." (1 Kings 16: 31-33.) In addition to his general sinfulness, he took for a wife Jezebel, the daughter of a Zidonian king, and worshipped her god. In her position as queen she was able to introduce and maintain idolatry on a scale grander than ever seen in Israel before. She was equally as abominable as Ahab. In fact, she probably was responsible personally for many of the iniquitous things practiced. No nation of this world, perhaps, has ever been cursed with a royal house that brought more disgrace to their kingdom than these two despicable rulers. Jezebel's wickedness was so terrible that she has been made the type of a false teacher that seduced members of the church to sin. (Rev. 2: 20.)

LESSON NOTES

I. Elijah Predicts a Drouth (Verses 1-4)

Who Was Elijah?—The name means *Jehovah is God*, and his career as a prophet presents a number of remarkable events in Old Testament history. The writer introduces him in an abrupt manner with little to indicate who he was. Neither tribal nor family relationship is mentioned. Just why he was called a Tishbite is not known, but he is represented as being among the "sojourners of Gilead," a territory east of the Jordan. The part he played in the events related have made him one of the most famous of all prophets. As a tree is known by its fruits, so Elijah is known by his works.

Why the Prediction?—There can be no doubt that the widespread wickedness in Israel led to the drouth as a just punishment. Moses had expressly warned them against drifting into idolatry, lest a drouth come, spoil their fruits and harvests, and cause them to perish. (Deut. 11: 16, 17.) There had never been a time in Israel's history when these words could have been more fittingly fulfilled than the time of this lesson. The special circumstances that caused Elijah to announce the drouth is not stated. He may have been calling Ahab's attention to Moses' words and reminding him that the time was fully ripe for their fulfillment. If so, Ahab might have suggested that they were not true, since Baal had been worshipped for years with rain in abundance. This would have furnished an appropriate situation for Elijah's prediction.

"These Years."—Elijah said the drouth would be "these years, according to my word." This probably meant that it would begin then, and continue till he announced it would end. This Ahab would understand to be a painfully long time. 1 King says that Elijah was commanded to show himself to Ahab in the third year. Jesus and James both tell us the drouth lasted three years and six months.

(Luke 4: 25; James 5: 17.) James also tells us it ended when Elijah prayed for the rain. Thus it was "according" to Elijah's word.

Commanded to Hide.—This prediction very naturally enraged the wicked Ahab. It was necessary that Elijah quickly hide himself to prevent being murdered. God told him to hide near the brook Cherith, "that is before Jordan." He had to travel eastward from Samaria to reach the Jordan. Whether the brook was east or west of the river is not known. It would supply water till it dried up, and God said he had commanded the ravens to feed him. Scholars disagree as to what is meant here by "ravens"; it is sufficient, however, to know that in some miraculous manner he was to be fed.

II. God's Promise to Elijah Fulfilled (Verses 5-7)

"According Unto the Word."—No Bible truth is more fully taught than that God's blessings rest upon those who do according to his word—render strict obedience. The statement that Elijah did this is just the conclusion our minds would come to naturally from his general history. His prompt obedience brings out another vital Bible truth—God's commands must be obeyed, regardless of how they seem unto us. From a human viewpoint he might plausibly have inquired just *how* the ravens would feed him, and what *assurance* he could have that it would be done. But believing that God could cause the rain to cease or come at his word, he had no trouble in believing he would be fed as promised. He exhibited no lack of confidence but promptly went as directed.

Morning and Evening.—The same divine power that caused him to be fed saw to it that his hiding place remained concealed from Ahab. This was a necessity as Ahab's determination to kill him would become stronger as the drouth became more severe. Whatever the means or agency used to feed him, its being supplied twice daily made it more difficult for him to remain hid. Nothing less than divine wisdom and power would have been able to take care of this demand.

"The Brook Dried Up."—Such a protracted drouth would dry up all smaller streams. How long before that happened in this case is not known. By continuous miracles, of course, he could have remained there the full time; but, for some divine reason not stated, he was directed to go to Zarephath, a town between Tyre and Sidon, near the Mediterranean Sea. This change of location furnished the occasion for another exhibition of divine power, and another proof that Elijah was a true prophet of God. The incidents occurring at Zarephath are found in verses 8-24 of this chapter.

III. Jezebel Threatens Elijah's Life (19: 1, 2)

The Occasion.—The first verse is a brief reference to what is fully described in the preceding chapter. The facts are as follows: After three years Elijah showed himself to Ahab, as the Lord directed, and asked him to gather all Israel to Mount Carmel where, by an open contest, it might be shown who was the true God—Jehovah or Baal. Four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and four hundred of the Asherah were on the side of Baal; only Elijah contended for Jehovah. In the test suggested by Elijah, he was successful,

for God sent down fire to consume his offering. This led the people to cry out, "Jehovah, he is God." (Verses 37-40.) Then Elijah gave command to slay the idolatrous prophets, which was promptly done. He then advised Ahab to get down from the mountain quickly lest he be stopped by the rain that would come. Ahab's report of all this to Jezebel stirred her wicked soul to intense anger, and she determined to have Elijah slain.

Message to Elijah.—Jezebel immediately sent a messenger to Elijah to tell him she purposed to have him slain before the next day had passed; that his life would be taken violently, just as had been done to the prophets of Baal. Her words, "So let the gods do to me, and more also," meant she was willing for the gods to slay her if she failed to have him killed. This was the strongest form in which she could assure him that she was determined to carry out her threat.

IV. Elijah Flees from Jezebel (Verses 3, 4).

"Went for His Life."—Realizing that he was risking his life if he remained where Jezebel could find him, he immediately left and came to Beer-sheba. His flight shows that God expects even those under his divine protection to use any ordinary means to take care of themselves. Beer-sheba was in the southwest extremity of the land of Canaan, some fifty miles southwest of Jerusalem. Being under the jurisdiction of Judah, and on the opposite of that territory, made him comparatively safe from the murderous designs of Jezebel.

Elijah's Request.—Reaching Beer-sheba Elijah left his servant there and went a day's journey into the wilderness. Just why he went to this place of solitude is not stated; it may have been a further effort to make himself secure, not knowing to what extent Jezebel would go in search of him. Sitting under a tree in that solitary place, he was evidently seized with a fit of discouragement and asked God to remove him from the earth. This shows that even the best servants of God, because human, pass through such periods of gloom. His thoughts were the same that have passed through the minds of others in times of great distress. He said, "It is enough," by which he probably meant that it was useless for him to live longer, as there appeared to be nothing more he could do. He knew that the idolaters had thrown down God's altars, and he thought they had killed all God's prophets but himself. As he seemed to be fighting single-handed, he thought the door to success had been closed. (Verse 10.) He felt that he was no better than other prophets they had slain, and might as well end the unequal struggle by passing to the rest provided. In this conclusion he was mistaken, for he was later told that there were seven thousand others who had not bowed the knee to Baal. (Verse 18.)

V. Elijah Fed by an Angel (Verses 5-8)

"An Angel Touched Him."—It is unnecessary to think his sleep was anything more than natural rest. After a day's journey and the mental strain incident to great discouragement, sleep was nature's way of giving relief. It may have been the usual time for rest. It is not stated when the angel waked him; it may have been about the ordinary time to awake. The point that indicates God's care is the fact that the angel was there at the time needed. His waking

Elijah was assurance that the prophet was not mistaken in the fact that he was there. He spoke, saying, "Arise and eat." The word "angel" simply means messenger. There is no need to speculate as to what kind of messenger it was. If an angel in the ordinary meaning of that term, it was a miraculous circumstance; if some earthly being, supernaturally directed, it was still a miracle. Knowing just where he was, and supplying his wants at just the time needed, shows that he was being cared for by a divine providence.

Things Provided.—When he looked he saw a "cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water," just such things as the physical body would need. Again we need not speculate about what kind of miracle was performed in giving him an ordinary cake baked in the usual way. The miraculous features of the case are so evident that no room is left for doubt that something more than human was in it all. He arose and ate and then laid down again. A second time the angel touched him and commanded him to eat, saying the journey would be too great for him without ample sustenance. He obeyed this command and ate a second time.

"Forty Days."—After eating the second time, he arose and went in the strength that food supplied "forty days and forty nights." Here again the providential care of God over Elijah appears. No amount of food eaten at one time would furnish strength for forty days' activity. God's power furnished the strength without food. The food eaten would not have sustained him to reach Mount Horeb (Mount Sinai), which was about one hundred and fifty miles south of Beer-sheba. Moses was in this same mountain forty days and nights without food or drink. (Exod. 34: 18.) Jesus also fasted the same length of time just preceding his temptation by Satan. (Matt. 4: 2.) Elijah's experience in the three eventful years covered by the drouth which came in answer to his prayer, was unmistakable evidence that he was under God's protecting care, that God's favor does really rest upon those who keep his commands.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. While God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, he is not slack concerning his promises. (2 Pet. 3: 9.) His promises will all be fulfilled just when his divine wisdom decides is best. That God hears appropriate prayers of his saints is the undoubted teaching of his word; the how and when, like the fulfillment of promises, must be left to his wisdom.

2. God's blessings and man's obedience are inseparably connected; the former depends upon the latter, the latter secures the former. Elijah could go to the place designated and hide himself—this he was required to do; God could send the ravens to feed him—this he did. If we do our part, we need not be disturbed about God's failing to do his.

3. It is impossible to estimate just how much evil can be done by one wicked person. The more exalted position that is occupied, the greater the evil that can be accomplished. Substituting idolatrous worship for that revealed in God's word will bring to ruin any individual, family, or nation that tries it.

4. No difference how discouraging the situation, we should not

forget that those on God's side are right, and destined to be victorious. Those with God need not fear the final outcome.

5. Those who live upon the spiritual food which God provides will have strength to complete the task he has assigned; those who do not will fail ultimately, regardless of any and all material wealth.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What different places were capital cities of Israel?
Who built Samaria?
When and by whom was it taken?
What prediction was fulfilled in making Baasha king?
What is said of Omri's career?
What important events occurred within forty years?
How is Ahab described?
What was his great mistake?

I

What is known of Elijah?
What made him famous?
What led to God's sending the drought?
What warning had Moses given?
What may have led Elijah to make the prediction?
What does Elijah say about its length?
Who tell us definitely how long it lasted?
What command was given Elijah?
How was he fed?

II

What vital truth is brought out by Elijah's obedience?
Why was it necessary that he remain hid?

What other command was given him?
Where was Zarephath located?
What was furnished by the change of location?

III

What is referred to in verse one?
Briefly relate these events.
What caused Jezebel to decide to have Elijah slain?
What message did she send to him?
What did her words mean?

IV

Why did Elijah leave immediately?
What does his flight show?
Where was Beer-sheba located?
Why would it be a reasonably safe place?
Where did Elijah go next?
What request did he make?
What were the reasons he assigned?

V

What occurred at that place?
What did the angel say to him?
What was provided for him?
Where is Mount Horeb?
Who else fasted forty days?

Practical Thoughts

What lessons are found in 2 Pet. 3: 9?
How do blessings and obedience stand related?
What will bring certain ruin?
Who are sure to be finally victorious?
What will give us strength for all our tasks?

Lesson IV—July 22, 1934

ELIJAH HEARS GOD'S VOICE

1 Kings 19: 9-18.

9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of Jehovah came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

10 And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before Jehovah. And, behold, Jehovah passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah; but Jehovah was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but Jehovah was not in the earthquake.

12 And after the earthquake a fire; but Jehovah was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

15 And Jehovah said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king over Syria;

16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

18 Yet will I leave me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Speak, Jehovah, for thy servant heareth." (1 Sam. 3: 9.)

TIME.—906 B.C.

PLACE.—Mount Horeb.

PERSONS.—Elijah and the Lord.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 57: 1-5.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 16.	M.	.....Elijah Hears God's Voice (1 Kings 19: 9-18)
July 17.	T.	.....Noah Hears God's Voice (Gen. 6: 13-22)
July 18.	W.	.....Abram Hears God's Voice (Gen. 12: 1-9)
July 19.	T.	.....Samuel Hears God's Voice (1 Sam. 3: 1-14)
July 20.	F.	.....Saul Hears God's Voice (Acts 9: 1-9)
July 21.	S.	.....John Hears God's Voice (Rev. 1: 10-20)
July 22.	S.	.....Confidence in God (Ps. 57: 1-11)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Elijah Declares His Despondency (Verses 9, 10).
- II. The Divine Majesty Manifested (Verses 11, 12).
- III. Jehovah's Question, Elijah's Answer (Verses 13, 14).
- IV. Jehovah's Commands to Elijah (Verses 15-17).
- V. Jehovah Encourages Elijah (Verse 18).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Elijah's Zeal.—The record shows that Elijah was a bold and persistent defender of righteousness, jealous for the honor and devotion that is due the true God. His determined fight against Israel's sins, particularly those of the king and queen, was a heroic thing to do; it was fraught with terrible dangers. He not only denounced their wickedness, but gave an open demonstration that Jehovah is the true God. While burning with zeal against corruption, he was humbly submissive to God's commands. He was ready either to face a multitude single-handed, or remain in concealment for months to escape the vengeance of infuriated enemies. His entire career is a remarkable example of fidelity to justice and right.

Translated.—Elijah's departure from the earth is one of the strange and unusual events. After appointing Elisha as a successor, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire and he was carried up to heaven by a whirlwind. (2 Kings 2: 11, 12.) Enoch, who also was translated without seeing death, is classed by Paul among those

who accomplished great things by faith. (Heb. 11: 5.) Elijah's case may also be considered an example of faithfulness; before his translation he "had been well-pleasing unto God." Whatever may have been the reasons for this exhibition of divine power, we know that it would not have been accorded to one who was unfaithful to God's commands. A further evidence of Elijah's fidelity to God is seen in the miracles which he was enabled to perform. For an indefinite period the oil and meal were not allowed to fail while Elijah was fed by the widow at Zarephath; he raised her son to life. (1 Kings 17: 8-24.) His prayers were heard and answered in bringing and ending the long drouth. He divided the waters of the Jordan and passed over on dry land. (2 Kings 2: 8.)

He Was a Type.—The crowning feature of Elijah's career appears in its typical nature. Though dead for centuries he, with Moses, was permitted to return and be present at the transfiguration of Christ. Though not so stated, it seems evident that Elijah was there to represent the prophets as was Moses to represent the law. Their presence lent forcefulness to God's statement to hear his Son—implying that his gospel would supplant the law and the prophets, because a fulfillment of their predictions. Personally he was typical of John the Baptist. (Malachi 4: 5.) Jesus so explains the matter. (Matt. 11: 12-14; Luke 1: 17.) Elijah was a bold and fearless prophet; so was John. Elijah denounced sin; John did the same in requiring repentance.

LESSON NOTES

I. Elijah Declares His Despondency (Verses 9, 10)

In a Cave.—In the closing verse of last lesson we learned that after the angel fed Elijah, he arose and went to Mount Horeb. Here he dwelled in a cave till Jehovah appeared to him. In this mountain centuries before Jehovah placed Moses in a cleft of a rock while showing him the divine Majesty. (Exod. 33: 17-23.) This may have been the same cave in which Elijah dwelled; but, if not, still the circumstances are quite similar. It was the occasion when each was in a forty days' fast. (Exod. 34: 28.) The word of the Lord came, asking, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" The reason for this question is not clear. To say it was a criticism for his efforts to escape the wrath of Jezebel hardly seems plausible, since God directed him to hide himself from Ahab. It may have been just to provoke his reply.

"Very Jealous."—Elijah replied that he had been "very jealous for Jehovah"—that is, he had resented and boldly condemned the idolatry which the children of Israel had practiced. In this he was truly justified, for Jehovah had declared himself to be a jealous God, refusing to allow his people to have any gods besides himself. (Exod. 20: 2.) He made three specific charges against Israel: 1. They have "forsaken thy covenant." This was evident in their introduction of idolatry, and marrying heathen women. 2. They have "thrown down thy altars." This they did to give place to idolatrous worship. 3. They have "slain thy prophets." They did not want any left to condemn their iniquities and heathen worship. All this stirred his righteous soul to fight sin with all his power.

His Gloom.—Though successful in many efforts, yet the necessity

of fleeing to save his life had a natural tendency to bring periods of gloom. His forty days' fast and time of solitude in the cave would furnish just the occasion for such despondency as his cry indicated. Thinking that he was alone in the unequal struggle, with a heart burdened with grief because of Israel's sins, would naturally produce just the feeling expressed by his words.

II. The Divine Majesty Manifested (Verses 11, 12)

Called Before the Lord.—The call came to Elijah to "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord." It is evident that this incident was to display the majesty of the Lord before him—perhaps to comfort and encourage him by the fact that, though seemingly alone, the power of God was with him. A similar manifestation of divine power and glory was revealed to Moses at the giving of the law. (Ex. 19: 17-25.) Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mountain. He then manifested his presence in a thick cloud, in fire, and in smoke as that of a great furnace. A trumpet sounded loud and long. Out of these great material disturbances God's voice was heard—the Ten Commandments were spoken.

The Lord Passed By.—That Elijah did not see God in his full and resplendent glory is evident from a similar appearance to Moses on this same mountain. (Ex. 33: 22, 23.) Verse 20 shows that man in the flesh could not endure to see the full display of God's majesty. But Moses was allowed to see a genuine manifestation of God's glory; the same privilege was granted to Elijah in this instance. There was a great wind sufficiently strong to rend the mountains, and break in pieces the rocks, but God was not revealed in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, then a fire, but God did not reveal himself in either of these. Doubtless they in some way prepared the mind of Elijah for the revelation to be made later. Then the record says that Elijah heard "a still small voice." Divine acts, of course, are always according to divine wisdom; a failure to understand why certain things are done only shows the weakness of humanity. We may never discover why God revealed himself to Elijah in this particular manner; but one thing is evident, his power is just as truly present in the quiet spoken word as the majestic commotions of nature. Miraculous movements in the material world prove the exercise of divine power, but truth is revealed by the spoken or written word. This has been the case in all covenants God has made with men.

III. Jehovah's Question, Elijah's Answer (Verses 13, 14)

"Wrapped His Face."—When Elijah heard the voice, he wrapped his face in his mantle, went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. A similar circumstance occurred when Moses was called to deliver the people from Egypt. (Ex. 3: 6.) It is there stated that the reason why Moses hid his face was that he was "afraid to look upon God." This may have been the reason for Elijah hiding his face. Or he may have naturally felt that as a human being he was unworthy to appear in the divine presence without some token of respect. His knowledge of Moses' life may have reminded him that man could not view the Supreme Being unprotected. While in the cave the word of the Lord came to him, and said: "What doest thou here,

Elijah?" In just what manner this question came to him through the word of Jehovah is not revealed. It may have been suggested to his mind by his meditation of that word. But at the entrance of the cave a voice spake to him and repeated the same question. This could not have failed to impress him with the fact that it was Jehovah speaking.

The Answer.—Since the question was in precisely the same form as it was in the cave, Elijah replies in exactly the same words. He may have thought he should reply in the same words, or he may have wanted to emphasize his reasons for being there; to explain why he had fled from the wrath of Jezebel. He doubtless felt that his reasons were ample justification for his presence in the cave.

IV. Jehovah's Commands to Elijah (Verses 15-17)

Sent to Damascus.—Damascus was the capital of Syria, and located something more than a hundred miles northeast of the city of Samaria. This was outside of the territory where he might be in danger of Jezebel. He was told to return "on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus," but the margin gives it a different turn. It says, "by the wilderness to Damascus." The latter means he was to take a wilderness route rather than a highway in going to Damascus. This probably is the idea intended. It meant that he was to go through the uninhabited or sparsely settled sections. This was a natural precaution that would render him less liable to be recognized and taken by Jezebel or other enemies.

Anointings Required.—He was told to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, Jehu to be king over Israel, and Elisha to be a prophet in his own room. These commands were a clear indication that he was to make provisions for carrying out God's purposes as he had plainly expressed them. His predicting dire calamity to Israel for their wickedness was not enough; those predictions had to be fulfilled after his departure. This summary punishment had to come through individuals who had God's approval for their work. Those anointed had much to do in executing God's wrath against Israel's outrageous sinners.

Purpose Stated.—What was clearly implied in giving these commands is plainly stated in verse 17. Those anointed ones were to be a kind of chain for accomplishing God's purpose. Those that should escape Hazael would encounter Jehu; likewise, those escaping both would have to encounter Elisha. The location of Syria, though an enemy country, was such that its king could be used for inflicting judgments upon Israel. Elijah had foretold the destruction of Ahab's house, and the miserable death that would come to Jezebel. (1 Kings 21: 22-29.) Ahab was killed in battle. (1 Kings 22: 37-39.) Jezebel and Ahab's son, Joram (also called Jehoram, 2 Kings 3: 1) were slain by Jehu. (2 Kings 9: 24; 30-37.) Thus the predictions regarding Ahab and Jezebel literally came true. As we have no record of Elisha using the sword, his opposition to Israel's sins probably consisted in his strong denunciations. As these helped to have God's commands carried out, he was indirectly responsible; hence, it was said that he would execute the punishment.

V. Jehovah Encourages Elijah (Verse 18)

"Will I Leave."—The King James says, "I have left." Either expression is satisfactory, for the meaning is that a great number were then true in heart to Jehovah, and would be found so when the real test came. They had been, and would be; many were on the side of righteousness. Th purpose was to dispel the prophet's gloom by assuring him that he was not alone as he had imagined. To have the voice of Jehovah himself utter these words of encouragement was the strongest form of assurance.

"Seven Thousand."—This was a goodly number, if the expression was to be given its literal meaning. As compared with the whole kingdom it was a small number; as compared with Elijah alone—the purpose for which mentioned—it was a huge number. As indefinite amounts are often expressed by large definite numbers, it is possible that it is the case here. If so, there were possibly many more than just seven thousand. The word seven is used to indicate a perfect number, and seven thousand would be a very likely expression to indicate some large indefinite number. Many may have appeared indifferent, fearing to antagonize the ruling house, but were really ready to stand for righteousness when they saw any chance to be successful. Notwithstanding the brazen wickedness that prevailed in the royal court, it seems hardly credible to think that only seven thousand righteous were left in the whole nation.

"Not Bowed to Baal."—To bow before another was a general custom to indicate respect, reverence, or worship. Naturally, if images of Baal had been erected, the worshippers would have bowed before them. Kissing the image in some form was a token of adoration—meaning love for the god and fidelity to his worship. Such tokens of respect for the heathen god meant that the worshippers had forsaken the worship of Jehovah. Elijah was assured that this great number had not thus forgotten God or abandoned his worship.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. When pious souls are alone, communing with their own thoughts and meditating on the words of God, questions will come to them that are similar to those that came to Elijah in the solitude of that cave. With the realization of the terrible sins prevalent in the world, the question will come: What are you doing here? What efforts are you making to bring the truth to lost souls that are within your reach? Can you be excused for neglect simply because the sins are many and great?

2. Elijah was called from his concealment in the cave to witness a great display of divine power, and leave for another place where the Lord had a work to be done. The Lord in his word calls us from our indifference, carelessness, and idleness, out into the field where there are unlimited opportunities to accomplish something in his service. The salvation of our own souls depends upon this service.

3. We, like Elijah, would probably feel it necessary to cover our faces if called upon to look at Jehovah, while in the flesh. No such veiling, however, is necessary when we look into his written word to learn our duty. It, like a mirror, will reflect perfectly just what a

Christian should be, and plainly show us just how much we lack of coming up to the model.

4. We have every assurance that whatever promises or threats God has made in his word, he will make sufficient preparations to fulfill. This should prove a solemn warning to the wicked, in the church and out, but a great comfort and encouragement to the faithful.

5. The great, dark cloud of sin that has spread over the world is enough to fill true hearts with gloom and drive us from the field of action were it not true that righteousness still lives in many hearts, and will ultimately prevail. We may not know how many, but God knows "them that are his." (2 Tim. 2: 19.)

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

How do the records present Elijah?
What other striking characteristic besides zeal did he have?
Describe his departure from the earth.
Who else was translated?
What did these translations show?
What miracles did Elijah perform?
Describe his return to earth.
Of whom was he typical?

I

To whom did God appear on Mount Horeb?
Point out the similarity of the two occurrences.
What question was asked?
How did Elijah answer it?
What three charges were made against Israel?
Why was the situation likely to make him gloomy?

II

What call came to Elijah?
What was the purpose of this call?
Describe the Lord's appearance to Moses on Mount Horeb.
Describe his appearance to Elijah.
Point out the difference.
What is revealed by the spoken or written word?

III

Why did Elijah wrap his face in his mantle?
Why did Moses hide his face?
How did the question first come to Elijah?
How did he answer the question the second time?
Why did he use the same words?

IV

Where was Elijah sent?
Where is the place located?
What is the marginal reading here?
What is the probable sense?
What persons was he to anoint?
Why were these commands given?
What purpose for their anointing is stated?
What prediction had Elijah made concerning Ahab's house?
When and how was it fulfilled?

V

What is meant by "Will leave"?
How many had not accepted Baal?
What is meant by "not bowed to Baal"?

Practical Thoughts

What questions often come to pious Christians?
What call does God's word give Christians?
What will God's word show us?
What should warn the wicked and encourage the righteous?
Why should the faithful not be discouraged?

Lesson V—July 29, 1934

MICAHIAH SPEAKS THE TRUTH

1 Kings 22: 1-14.

- 1 And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel.
- 2 And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.
- 3 And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth-gilead is ours, and we are still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?
- 4 And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-

gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.

5 And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire first, I pray thee, for the word of Jehovah.

6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king.

7 But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of Jehovah besides, that we may inquire of him?

8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of Jehovah, Micaiah the son of Imlah: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

9 Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imlah.

10 Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting each on his throne, arrayed in their robes, in an open place at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them.

11 And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron, and said, Thus saith Jehovah, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until they be consumed.

12 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper; for Jehovah will deliver it into the hand of the king.

13 And the messenger that went to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak thou good.

14 And Micaiah said, As Jehovah liveth, what Jehovah saith unto me, that will I speak.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*What Jehovah saith unto me, that will I speak.*”
(1 Kings 22: 14.)

TIME.—897 B.C.

PLACE.—Samaria.

PERSONS.—Ahab, Jehoshaphat, Micaiah and false prophets.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 119: 9-16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 23.	M.	.....	Micaiah Speaks the Truth (1 Kings 22: 1-14)
July 24.	T.	.....	Truthfulness Neglected (Jer. 9: 1-9)
July 25.	W.	.....	Truthfulness Desired (Ps. 15: 1-5)
July 26.	T.	.....	Truthfulness Valuable (Eph. 4: 14-25)
July 27.	F.	.....	Truthfulness Commanded (Ex. 23: 1-9)
July 28.	S.	.....	Truthfulness Rewarded (Zech. 8: 9-17)
July 29.	S.	.....	The Way of Truth (Ps. 119: 9-16)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Ahab and Jehoshaphat Form a League (Verses 1-4).
 - II. Ahab Inquires of False Prophets (Verses 5, 6).
 - III. Jehoshaphat Insists on Hearing Micaiah (Verses 7, 8).
 - IV. Zedekiah's False Prophecy (Verses 9-12).
 - V. Micaiah's Promise to Speak the Truth (Verses 13, 14).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Elijah's Mantle.—Our last lesson left Elijah at Mount Horeb with a command to anoint two kings and one prophet. Apparently he left immediately and found first Elisha who was to become prophet in his room. Elisha must have had considerable property, for Elijah found him plowing twelve yoke of oxen—using twelve yoke in his

farm operations, and following one yoke himself. Elijah cast his mantle upon him as he passed by. This signified his call to be a prophet, or to follow Elijah as a servant. The later events showed Elisha it meant the former. This incident occurred some ten years before Elijah was translated. It is not stated when Hazael was anointed to be king of Syria, but Elisha, as the successor of Elijah, anointed Jehu. (2 Kings 9: 1-14.) This anointing was done indirectly by Elijah, because done by one he had appointed in his stead.

Lesson Interval.—In the period between this and the last lesson, Ben-hadad, king of Syria, with a confederacy of thirty-two petty kings, demanded that Ahab surrender to him all his silver and gold. Through God's protection and aid, Ahab gained a victory over the Syrian army, but their king escaped. The next year he renewed his attack, and through God's intervention was again defeated. After this he asked Ahab for peace, and promised to return to Israel all the cities his father had taken from them. (1 Kings 20: 34.) It was during this lesson interval that Ahab committed his most atrocious crime—when his insane desire for Naboth's vineyard caused him to accept what his murderous wife had secured by having Naboth slain. It seems strange that such a man should have been granted any favors from God. But we should not forget that God sometimes allowed one wicked man to punish another more wicked. Then, Ahab, with all his wickedness, was king of some of God's people, seven thousand of whom had not yet bowed the knee to Baal. God's favors may have been more for them than for Ahab personally.

Ahab Rebuked.—A certain prophet rebuked him for his covenant with Ben-hadad, saying that he had allowed an enemy of Israel to escape whom God had devoted to destruction. This mistake was the more censurable because it was through God's help that he had gained the victories over the Syrian king. For his personal sin in the case of Naboth, Elijah told him that his own death would be a violent one as had been that of Naboth. (1 Kings 21: 19.) Though he was to be killed, he was promised that the rule would not be taken from his house till his son reigned in his stead. (1 Kings 21: 29.) The prediction of Ahab's death came true as the sequel to this lesson shows.

LESSON NOTES

I. Ahab and Jehoshaphat Form a League (Verses 1-4)

"Three Years."—Verse 1 says there had not been any war between the kingdoms of Syria and Israel for three years. That means that three years had elapsed since the covenant of peace was made between Ahab and Ben-hadad, mentioned in 1 Kings 20: 34. Verse 2 says it was in the "third year" that Ahab and Jehoshaphat made their league to capture Ramoth-gilead. This shows, according to the Hebrew method of reckoning time, that "three years" and the "third year" meant the same thing. With us three years without qualification means three full years. With them an event occurring any time within the third year would be called three years, any part of a year being counted as if the full year had been used. This is a divine comment on the different expressions used to describe the time Christ was in the tomb.

Occasion for Visit.—Considering the antagonism that would na-

turally come about through the division of the kingdom, this social and friendly visit of the king of Judah would appear a little strange, except for some facts found in the record. For some unexplained reason Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, had married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab. (2 Kings 8: 18.) That she inherited much of the wickedness of Ahab and Jezebel is seen in the fact that she usurped the throne through wholesale murders, and was herself murdered. (2 Kings 11: 1-3, 12-16.) This matrimonial alliance of the two ruling houses accounts for the friendly visit of Jehoshaphat. Although his reign was in the main good and pleasing to Jehovah, such unholy alliances brought trouble to his kingdom.

Ahab's Proposition.—Ahab remarked to his servants "that Ramoth-gilead is ours," adding that they were making no effort to take it from the king of Syria. This was a tactful way of preparing to ask Jehoshaphat if he would assist in taking it. There was a plausibility in the remark, for in the settlement of the twelve tribes it belonged to them, being one of the cities of refuge. (Deut. 4: 43.) In some way, before this, it had fallen into the hands of the king of Syria. It might have been one of the cities that Ben-hadad, in his covenant with Ahab, had agreed to return. (1 Kings 20: 34.) If he had failed to keep his promise, this would have furnished a plausible excuse for Ahab declaring war on him. Jehoshaphat said, "I am as thou art," by which he meant he would help in the war with all his resources, if necessary. For this league with Ahab, he was strongly rebuked by a man of God. (2 Chron. 19: 1-3.)

II. Ahab Inquires of False Prophets (Verses 5, 6)

"Word of Jehovah."—Jehoshaphat could not have been ignorant of the open idolatry in Ahab's court, nor of the outrageous crimes of Ahab and Jezebel. He was not an abandoned wretch that had given up all respect for the true God. He may have considered the enterprise only a matter of national policy to cement more strongly a friendship already formed. But he also felt that the undertaking was too serious to begin without some assurance that it was pleasing to Jehovah. Naturally such information would be sought from the prophets.

Ahab Consents.—Ahab evidently agreed, for he promptly gathered together about four hundred who claimed to be prophets. It is not stated just where he found these four hundred. The four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal had been slain by Elijah's command, after they were shown to be false at the contest at Mount Carmel. There were four hundred prophets of the Asherah supported by Jezebel. (1 Kings 18: 19.) These Elijah had asked Ahab to have at Mount Carmel, but verse 22 indicates they were not there. They were probably the ones Ahab gathered at this time. If not, they were pretended prophets of Jehovah, but were false.

Their Advice.—They were anxious to deliver a prophecy that would please Ahab, knowing that words of approval are generally much more acceptable than those of condemnation. This has always been true of wicked people especially. (Isa. 30: 10-12; Jer. 23: 30-32.) Without any apparent hesitation, they said, "Go up; for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king." Their statement was a bit equivocal, for in whatever way the battle went, they could have said

it was delivered into the hand of a king, though they meant for Ahab to understand it would be delivered to him. Since Ahab wanted to go, their advice was perfectly satisfactory to him.

III. Jehoshaphat Insists on Hearing Micaiah (Verses 7, 8)

Jehoshaphat Dissatisfied.—Though four hundred with one voice declared the campaign would be a success, Jehoshaphat was not satisfied. Possibly something about their manner in delivering the prediction may have made him suspicious, or learning just who they were may have caused him to doubt their words. Knowing the usual manner of God's prophets, working alone, the great number would not have had any convincing feature. He may have remembered the contest between Elijah and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel. At any rate he remained unconvinced, and asked for another prophet to be heard.

"I Hate Him."—Ahab admitted that Micaiah, son of Imlah, was a prophet, but said he hated him. After hearing Micaiah, it would not be difficult to discover why he hated him, even if he had not himself told us why. He said that Micaiah never spake anything but evil concerning him. This, of course, he had to do, if he said anything about him at all. Ahab did not want the truth; it did not harmonize with his sinful desires. Naturally he would hate a prophet that told him the exact truth. It is possible that Micaiah was the "certain man" that condemned Ahab for allowing the king of Syria to escape. (1 Kings 20: 35, 42, 43.) Jehoshaphat insisted that Ahab should not speak thus of the prophet—condemn him before hearing his words. He was evidently so anxious to have Jehoshaphat's help that he agreed to hear Micaiah.

IV. Zedekiah's False Prophecy (Verses 9-12)

"Fetch Quickly Micaiah."—Perhaps Ahab did not want to appear unwilling to accede to Jehoshaphat's request, so he called an officer and commanded that Micaiah be brought quickly. While waiting for him both kings arrayed themselves in their royal robes and sat in an open place at the gate. All the four hundred appeared before them and continued to prophesy. All they said is not given, but presumably they were attempting to give stronger assurance to their prediction by repetition, and all other means that might add force. Such great displays and vehement efforts often have a very convincing effect. The false prophets here were doubtless using every known means to satisfy both kings.

"Horns of Iron."—One Zedekiah, more zealous than the rest it seems, attempted to show by significant acts how easily and successfully they would defeat the Syrians. He declared that with such simple instruments as the horns they would be able to "push" the Syrians until they be consumed. He was also probably trying to impress the kings with the idea that the victory would be won with little or no loss of their own soldiers, which is a very important matter in counting the cost of warfare. His extravagant words and promises were endorsed by the four hundred prophets, who made them the occasion to again assure the kings that the battle should be begun. The true facts, as detailed in the history later, show all these extreme prophecies to have been false.

V. Micaiah's Promise to Speak the Truth (Verses 13, 14)

The Messenger's Appeal.—Of course the officer that was sent to call Micaiah revealed to him all that had transpired already. This enabled Micaiah to understand exactly what the situation was, and what would be required. He said that all the prophets with one mouth had declared good unto the king; they had all agreed that he should go up against Ramoth-gilead, and would be successful in defeating the Syrian army. Upon their united testimony promising success, the messenger based his appeal for Micaiah to let his words agree with theirs, and to speak good for the king. Humanly speaking there were some strong reasons for yielding to the request. Ordinarily it is easier as well as more pleasant to agree with the majority; there is a popular approval that strongly appeals to our nature. Drifting with the current requires little exertion; going against it is a different matter. The desire to be popular is a temptation hard to resist. Added to all this, endorsing the predictions of the four hundred would have pleased Ahab exceedingly, and likely led to rewards of various kinds. To condemn his project meant possible imprisonment. From the standpoint of personal gain, following the messenger's suggestion was the wise thing; only strong fidelity to the right could withstand such appeals.

Micaiah's Reply.—Micaiah assured the messenger that what he said would as certainly be true as that Jehovah lives; that he would say only what Jehovah said to him. It meant that he would only repeat to them God's message, which had to be true because really spoken by Jehovah. It was equivalent to saying that he would tell the king the truth without fear of his disapproval, and without regard for what the false prophets had said. This was the only reply a true man of God could have given under the circumstances. It was in strict accord with the Bible teaching on honesty and the value of truth.

The Sequel.—The remainder of the lesson chapter gives the sequel to our lesson. It supplies the direct evidence that Micaiah actually did speak the truth as well as promise to do so, which is the point in the last verse of the lesson text. He charged Ahab's prophets with being actuated by a lying spirit, predicted a defeat for the Israelites, and the death of Ahab himself. The facts as they occurred sustain perfectly Micaiah's words as being truth. Why Jehoshaphat went with Ahab after hearing Micaiah's prediction is not revealed. It may have been another case where the words of men are more readily received than the words of God. Or, he may have been among the number who do not always resist personal influence, even with the support of God's promises.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Those who form any kind of alliance—social, financial, or political—that is likely to hinder their service to God will soon find themselves confronting propositions to lead them from God entirely. "Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15: 33) is a truth that we cannot evade.

2. False teachers are willing to give what is wanted in return for personal gain. Those who will not "endure the sound doctrine"

"will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside to fables."

3. A popular fallacy is to conclude that a statement of practice is true because many people believe it or accept it. Propositions depend upon adequate proof—real facts—not upon the number who say they are true. In the final test it will be found that God's words are true, even if every man must be proved false.

4. A common practice of those who occupy false positions is to deal in extravagant and vehement assertions. With the multitude of thoughtless and indifferent such assertions succeed as well or better than true facts sustained by solid evidence.

5. Speaking to please man will win earthly honor and temporal rewards but will be valueless when each case passes in review before the Lord. According to Paul such teachers cannot please the Lord. (See Gal. 1: 10.) Speaking as the Bible speaks is our only safe course, since that is the standard by which our eternal destiny is to be determined.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Describe Elijah's meeting with Elisha.
What was signified by casting his mantle on him?
How long was this before Elijah's translation?
What demand was made by the Syrian king?
What atrocious crime did Ahab commit?
Account for God's showing any favors to Ahab.
What rebuke did a prophet administer?
What final promise was made to him?

I

What period was covered by the three years of peace?
What two expressions mean the same thing?
Upon what event is this a comment?
Account for Jehoshaphat's visit to Samaria.
How is Athaliah represented?
What did Ahab say about Ramoth-gilead?
What is known of this city?
Why was it in the hands of the Syrians?
What rebuke was given to Jehoshaphat?

II

What demand did Jehoshaphat make?
How did Ahab comply with the demand?

What is known of the prophets Ahab called together?
What advice did they give?

III

What further request did Jehoshaphat make?
Why was he not convinced by the great number?
What did Ahab say about Micaiah?
Who may have been the "certain man" of 1 Kings 20: 35, 42?
How did Jehoshaphat rebuke Ahab?

IV

What did Ahab command?
What occurred while waiting?
Why did the four hundred prophesy again?
What was done by Zedekiah?
What was he trying to do?
Who endorsed his words?
What shows his prophecy was false?

V

What did the messenger tell Micaiah?
What did he ask Micaiah to do?
What reasons would suggest accepting his idea?
What reply did Micaiah make?
What did his reply mean?
What does the sequel show?

Practical Thoughts

What important truth can we not evade?
What will false teachers and false hearers do?
What is a popular fallacy?
What is a common practice?
Whom should we strive to please?

Lesson VI—August 5, 1934

ELISHA HELPS THE NEEDY

2 Kings 4: 1-7, 42-44.

1 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear Jehovah: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two children to be bondmen.

2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me; what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thy handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil.

3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.

4 And thou shalt go in, and shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and pour out into all those vessels; and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons; they brought the vessels to her, and she poured out.

6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy sons of the rest.

42 And there came a man from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of God bread of the first-fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And he said, Give unto the people that they may eat.

43 And his servant said, What, should I set this before a hundred men? But he said, Give the people, that they may eat; for thus saith Jehovah, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.

44 So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of Jehovah.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."* (Matt. 25: 40.)

TIME.—895 B.C. for sections 1-3; 890 for section 4.

PLACE.—Gilgal.

PERSONS.—Elisha, the widow, and the people.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 41: 1-4.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 30.	M.	.....Elisha Helps the Needy (2 Kings 4: 1-7)
July 31.	T.	.....Oppressing the Needy (Ps. 10: 1-14)
August 1.	W.	.....A Father to the Needy (Job 29: 1-17)
August 2.	T.	.....A Promise to the Needy (Phil. 4: 15-23)
August 3.	F.	.....Contributions for the Needy (1 Cor. 16: 1-9)
August 4.	S.	.....Sacrificing for the Needy (2 Cor. 8: 1-9)
August 5.	S.	.....Helping the Needy (Ps. 41: 1-4)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. A Certain Woman Appeals for Help (Verses 1, 2).
 - II. Preparation Made for the Miracle (Verses 3, 4).
 - III. Obedience and Its Results (Verses 5-7).
 - IV. Elisha Miraculously Feeds the People (Verses 42-44).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Elijah's Successor.—In our last lesson we learned of the covenant of peace between Jehoshaphat and Ahab, kings of Judah and Israel. (1 Kings 22: 44; 2 Chron. 19: 2.) Ahab's immediate successor was his son, Ahaziah, who reigned two years. He was followed by Jehoram, also a son of Ahab. (1 Kings 22: 51; 2 Kings 3: 1.) The Moabites who had been old and inveterate enemies of the Israelites had been subjugated by David nearly a century and a half before. (2 Sam. 8: 2.) They had been paying tribute to Ahab, but after his death rebelled against his son. (2 Kings 3: 4, 5.) The covenant of peace between Israel and Judah enabled Ahab to secure Jehoshaphat's help against the Syrians when he went to retake Ramoth-gilead. The same friendly relations enabled Jehoram, Ahab's son, to obtain Jehoshaphat's aid against the Moabites. (2 Kings 3: 6-8.) In getting ready for the attack, an emergency arose which made it necessary to consult a prophet of the Lord. As Elijah had been translated at this time, they called Elisha who had been appointed in his stead. The advice of Micaiah was rejected by Ahab and Jehoshaphat, and disaster followed their attack on Ramoth-gilead. The advice of Elisha was followed by Jehoram and Jehoshaphat and a victory gained.

Elisha's Career.—As was true of Elijah, nothing is known of Elisha till he was anointed to become prophet. Some time later he was conducted into his prophetic office by Elijah, who had also anointed him. A detailed account of this ceremony is given in 1 Kings 2: 1-12. Though not occupying as prominent a place in the divine record as Elijah, yet his labors extended over a long period, and his work covered a wide field. His many and varied miracles furnished a continuous evidence that his call to be a prophet was truly genuine. The length of time during which Elijah continued his prophetic labors, if all of it has been recorded, was about fourteen years; that of Elisha was much longer—probably about sixty years.

A Comparison.—Both prophets appear to have been citizens of the kingdom of Israel, and were outstanding examples of that number who had not bowed the knee to Baal. They were both bold and uncompromising defenders of righteousness. In the character of their work they were very much alike. In the typical features of Elijah's career, he seems to surpass Elisha, but in the length of service rendered Elisha was the greater. Each exercised a salutary influence both in word and deed.

LESSON NOTES

I. A Certain Woman Appeals for Help (Verses 1, 2)

A Widow.—This certain woman is more particularly described as being one of the number who were wives of "the sons of the prophets." This expression probably meant disciples of the prophets, or those who accepted and followed the prophets' instruction, as "sons of the kingdom" (Matt. 13: 38) means disciples of Christ. The exact time and location of this incident are not given, though the record indicates it was soon after the Moabite war mentioned in the introduction. The words, "thy servant," seem to be just a form of address, rather than indicating that the dead husband had been Elisha's serv-

ant. The woman's saying that Elisha knew her husband "did fear Jehovah" shows that some friendly relation had existed between them. The woman could have been the widow of Obadiah (1 Kings 18: 3), who had hid and cared for a hundred men when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord. Any other pious servant of the Lord, however, would fit the story just as well.

Grounds of Appeal.—The woman had two strong reasons for making her appeal: her great and pressing need, and her knowledge of the prophet's power. After the death of her husband, she was unable to meet a financial obligation, and was in danger of having her two children taken into slavery to satisfy the creditor. Such a distressing condition was enough to make any normal mother cry for help. In cases of extreme poverty, the law of Moses allowed parents to sell their children or themselves. (Ex. 21: 7-12; Lev. 25: 39.) Thieves also, who could not make restitution, could be sold to repay the loss. (Ex. 22: 3.) Such laws could easily be extended to the practice of taking children to pay past due obligations. In this case the father may have agreed to sell his children. The same practice is referred to by Jesus in Matt. 18: 25, where he represents a certain king commanding a servant, his wife, and children to be sold to pay what the servant owed. Such laws are not strange at all in nations where slavery was tolerated.

Elisha's Inquiry.—The woman's words were an indirect appeal for help. Elisha's question, "What shall I do for thee?" shows he so understood them. Her main concern, of course, was to pay the creditor, and save her children from bondage. Any way Elisha could help her do that would be satisfactory. Elisha asked what she had in the house. His question would show her the necessity of doing all she could, and her answer would enable him to decide on the proper action in the case. The miracle would begin just where her resources ended. She answered that she had nothing, "save a pot of oil." This prepared for Elisha's instruction.

II. Preparation Made for the Miracle (Verses 3, 4)

Vessels Borrowed.—Oil was used as an element of food as well as for anointing. This miracle is quite similar to that performed by Elijah in the home of the widow of Zarephath. (1 Kings 17: 8-16.) There the oil was evidently used for food. Both miracles consisted in an increase of the oil, but with differences in the manner of the operation. In the former case the oil increased from day to day in the same cruse, so that the supply was always ample for present need. In this case the oil increased as poured into the different vessels, so that the widow might have the full quantity to sell and pay the debt. To accomplish this, Elisha advised the widow to borrow empty vessels from neighbors. His instruction to borrow "not a few" shows that the oil increased to a large quantity. According to his instruction, she was to pour till each vessel was full, and then set it aside. When miraculous power is really present, obstacles do not hinder and minor details are of no special consequence.

In Secret.—The prophet told the woman to shut the door upon herself and children while she poured the oil. Whatever special reason he had for this instruction, it at least showed the woman it was a genuine miracle. Under the circumstances there was no possible

chance for the oil to have filled all the borrowed vessels except by supernatural power. The vessels remaining full was proof that it was not a delusion of a temporary nature. Nothing short of full confidence in the prophet's words would cause one, even in great distress, to undertake a thing so utterly impossible, without divine power. Promptly acting on such instruction, without question, exhibited the highest type of faith.

III. Obedience and Its Results (Verses 5-7)

Oil Poured Out.—This case furnishes a vivid example of the necessity of strict obedience, promptly rendered. The miracle and its consequent result—enabling the woman to save her children from bondage—depended upon her doing exactly what the prophet commanded. According to the record, she neither questioned his authority, nor hesitated to comply. This prompt and unquestioned obedience is ample proof that she was worthy of the favor granted. The commands probably seemed as strange to her as they do to us, but she did not ask *why*, nor suggest some other more convenient plan. She borrowed the vessels as told, and poured the oil; the Lord saw that all were filled. The woman could do the former; the Lord only could do the latter. Like all people who claim to be believers should do, she attended to the human side—obeyed the prophet—and left the divine side to the Lord. Much useless and foolish effort could be saved if all would learn this true and practical lesson.

"The Oil Stayed."—The same power which caused the oil to continue flowing till all empty vessels were filled, caused it to stop when the last was filled. This suggests a fine lesson: Continue faithfully till the work is finished, then as faithfully stop. To be saved we must obey all the commands upon which salvation is made to depend. Remission of sins is made to depend on faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. To leave off one of these, add another, or change either in any way is plain disobedience to divine commands. (Rev. 22: 18, 19.)

Sell and Pay.—When the woman had finished the task assigned, she immediately reported to the prophet who gave further instructions. In this we have another fine lesson. When we have finished any task assigned by God's word, we should consult it again without delay for instruction for another task. Her report was equivalent to saying, "I have done as directed; what is my next duty?" Those with such inquiries upon their hearts will find plenty to do in God's service. Elisha told her to sell the extra supply of oil, pay her debt, and use the remainder for herself and children. The miracle was not performed to increase her wealth, or gratify her curiosity, but to meet a pressing need which she could not take care of. Such is the rule of divine economy in spiritual matters. The exercise of supernatural power is granted when circumstances show a real need that ordinary means will not meet. Evidently the many miracles of our Lord, even where persons received individual benefit, were to confirm his words and claims as the Son of God. For proof of this fact, see the Lord's words in Mark 2: 8-12.

IV. Elisha Miraculously Feeds the People (Verses 42-44)

When and Where.—The record regarding the Shunammite woman's son (2 Kings 4: 8-37) indicates that the incident of this section occurred some five years after what is mentioned in the preceding sections. As the child was large enough to go to the field, he was probably not less than four years old. His death and restoration to life by Elisha was after that. If feeding the hundred men came after the child's death, which appears to be the fact, then the interval mentioned must be about the time as stated. Shunem was in the tribe of Issachar near Mount Gilboa, but Gilgal was near Jericho northeast of Jerusalem. Verses 38-41 record a miracle performed by Elisha after coming to Gilgal, and the incident of this section seems to have occurred just after that and at the same place.

A Token of Respect.—The text says a man brought Elisha "bread of the first-fruits," and "fresh ears of grain in his sack." Several things may make up the circumstances that led the man to bring this gift. As Elisha is called "the man of God," a thing the man doubtless knew, he might have presented such a gift as a token of respect for Elisha's position and work. But as a dearth was prevailing at the time, making supplies scarce and difficult to obtain, he may have wanted to add something to the prophet's comfort, knowing that the work of a prophet in going from place to place would prevent his having any supply laid up himself. The first ripe fruits were the assurance they had of the coming harvest. In token of this promised good, the law required that they offer of the first-fruits to Jehovah to express their thankfulness. (Deut. 27: 1-10; Lev. 23: 10-16.) The statement that they were "fresh ears" shows it must have been about the time of offering the first-fruits to the Lord. It is not strange that the man should want to bring to the prophet an offering of the same thing that was being presented to the Lord.

The Prophet's Command.—The prophet said: "Give unto the people that they may eat." Knowing the impossibility of feeding so many with so small a quantity of food, he was amazed at the command, and showed his amazement by asking why such an amount should be set before a hundred men. The prophet repeated his command, assuring the man that Jehovah had said, "They shall eat and leave thereof." With Jehovah's approval and promise any work may be undertaken with confidence.

The Miracle.—With the prophet's assurance that Jehovah had promised that there would be sufficient for all, the man set the food before them, they ate and some was left, according to that promise. By this miracle the need of a hundred men was supplied for the time. The man brought the food to Elisha, but through his kindness and God's power it was made to benefit a hundred more. This was very similar to the two miracles performed by Christ when he fed several thousand with a few loaves and fishes, having more left over than they had before the miracle. Of course, Jesus fed a much larger number on both occasions than did Elisha here, but there were enough fed here to show that this was a genuine miracle. In this case as well as in those where the Lord fed, the miracle was so open and straightforward that there can be no sort of suspicion that fraud was practiced. Real miracles stand the test of inspection.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. It is natural for people in distress to cry for help; the deeper the distress, the stronger will be their cry. A failure to make adequate preparation for a coming event often leaves one completely stranded at the critical time. Regardless of our opinion of them, the laws that are in force when and where we live must be obeyed, or else we must suffer the consequences.

2. Our resources may be small, but they should be used faithfully. The woman had a pot of oil, and that was used to produce more. Those with one talent have no excuse for not trying to do what they can. The one talent, persistently used, may be like the oil and soon so increase that there may be two or five. What she lacked in vessels she borrowed from her neighbors. Our service in the Lord's work may often be improved by close association with more efficient workers.

3. From a human viewpoint the command seemed foolish. If the pot she had held the oil, why get more vessels? It was not the part of faith to question the prophet's words, or ask why he did not command something else, or how there could be any help for her in complying with such words. The spirit of obedience is, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth."

4. The oil stopped when all the vessels were filled. When our hearts are held open to the reception of God's word, spiritual truths continue to pour in; when closed against it, none can be received.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What kings of Israel and Judah maintained peaceable relations?
What caused Jehoram to send for Elisha?
Compare the advice of Micaiah and Elisha.
Relate the story of Elisha's becoming a prophet.
How does his work compare with Elijah's?
How long did each prophesy?
To what element in Israel did both prophets belong?

I

How is the "certain woman" described?
What does "sons of the prophets" mean?
What shows Elisha knew the family?
What is known of Obadiah?
What reasons did the woman have for her appeal?
What did the law of Moses allow in cases of poverty?
What reference is made to this by Jesus?
What was the woman's main concern?
Why ask what she had in the house?
What was her answer?

II

For what was oil used?
What similar miracle did Elijah perform?
In what were they alike?
In what were they different?
What did Elisha tell the woman to do?
Why tell her to shut the door while she poured the oil?
What shows she had strong faith?

III

Of what is this case a vivid example?
What was dependent upon her exact obedience?
Point out the divine and human elements here.
What caused the oil to stop pouring?
What fine lesson is taught here?
What must we do if saved?
What did the woman do when the vessels were filled?
What lesson can we get here?
Why and when was supernatural power exercised?

IV

What shows the time of this incident?
Where was Shunem located?
Where did this miracle occur?
What miracle was performed just before this?
Why did the man bring the food to Elisha?
What command did Elisha give?

How does this miracle compare with those of Jesus?

Practical Thoughts

Why should we make adequate preparation?

What should be done with small resources?

What will the spirit of obedience say?

What will happen when our hearts are open to God's word?

Lesson VII—August 12, 1934

AMOS PLEADS FOR JUSTICE

Amos 5: 1, 10-15, 21-24.

1 Hear ye this word which I take up for a lamentation over you, O house of Israel.

10 They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.

11 Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof.

12 For I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins—ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate from their right.

13 Therefore he that is prudent shall keep silence in such a time; for it is an evil time.

14 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say.

15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate: it may be that Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

21 I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

22 Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.

23 Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

24 But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." (Rom. 13: 10.)

TIME.—About 787 B.C.

PLACE.—Uncertain; perhaps Bethel.

PERSONS.—Amos, the house of Israel.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 21: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 6.	M.	Amos Pleads for Justice (Amos 5: 10-15)
August 7.	T.	Hypocrisy Abhorred (Amos 5: 21-27)
August 8.	W.	The Way of the Just (Prov. 4: 14-27)
August 9.	T.	The Memory of the Just (Prov. 10: 1-7)
August 10.	F.	The Demands of Justice (Rom. 3: 21-31)
August 11.	S.	The Just Judged (Jer. 23: 1-8)
August 12.	S.	The Value of Justice (Prov. 21: 1-7)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. Amos' Lamentation for the House of Israel (Verses 1, 10).

II. Amos Describes Israel's Sins (Verses 11-13).

III. Amos Pleads for Reform (Verses 14, 15).

IV. Amos Declares God's Indignation at Sin (Verses 21-24).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

"The Words of Amos."—This expression introduces the prophetic utterances of Amos whose book is placed third in the list of Old Testament minor prophets. Tekoa, mentioned as his place of residence, was in the tribe of Judah south of Jerusalem. In his introductory statement he says he "was among the herdsmen of Tekoa." To Amaziah, the priest at Bethel, he said: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore-trees." (Amos 7: 14.) By this he probably meant that he cared for the flocks of others, and lived in part at least from the wild fruits gathered while caring for the sheep. This statement he doubtless made to show that he was called to the prophetic office from those engaged in the humblest labors. It indicates that God is not dependent upon the worldly-wise or great for servants to carry out his purposes; any one with divine power can do the work of God.

Change of Location.—The seventh chapter appears to contain the first of his prophesying. Verses 7-13 are a direct prediction against the kingdom of Israel and her king, and it was likely delivered at Bethel. In it he expressly said that Israel would be taken captive and led into another land, and Jeroboam the king would die by the sword. This provoked Amaziah the priest to report to the king that Amos had conspired against him. Amaziah, though charging Amos with treason against the government, urged him to flee to the land of Judah, and there he could peaceably prophesy. Such a suggestion was absurd, if Amos were guilty of the charge. Like many others Amaziah felt the force of Amos' prophecy, and wanted to get rid of his influence. Bethel was the place where the first Jeroboam builded the altar for his counterfeit worship. Amos was only pointing out the natural consequences that were to follow the introduction of idolatry among God's people. Amos also predicted dire calamities against Amaziah for his efforts in trying to prevent the truth being foretold regarding Israel. It is supposed that after this time, Amos made his residence in Tekoa.

When?—Amos is said to have prophesied in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and Jeroboam, king of Israel. This was Jeroboam II, the thirteenth king of Israel, whose reign began about one hundred and fifty years after the division of the kingdom. A period of about one hundred years has elapsed since the time of our last lesson. His prophecies were mainly aimed against Israel, but he also spoke against Syrians, Philistines, Tyrians, Edomites, Moabites, and the kingdom of Judah.

LESSON NOTES

I. Amos' Lamentation for the House of Israel (Verses 1, 10)

The Occasion.—Effects follow causes as night follows day. Without the cause there can be no effect. When individuals and nations reach the state of degradation charged against Israel and her kings, their captivity and extinction create no surprise. Crime takes an awful toll and her demands are inexorable. During the one hundred and fifty years the ten tribes had existed as a separate kingdom, their history had been little more than the record of a series of crimes and apostasies. That they finally had to pay a terrific price for all this rebelling against God was but the natural results, fol-

lowing adequate causes. This fundamental truth should not be forgotten by individuals and congregations when tempted to depart from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ.

A Source of Grief.—In all apostasies, great or small, there is usually a pious element whose souls are deeply grieved over what is certain to be disastrous results. Such an element is in the minority, else the whole body would not be swept into the current of destruction, or hopelessly divided. In former years Elijah and the "seven thousand" stood against the wicked element; but, in spite of their efforts, the kingdom continued to maintain its idolatry. This flagrant disregard of God's words greatly disturbed the pious soul of Amos, led to his sorrowful reminder of the high state from which they had fallen, and the devastating results to follow.

Reproof Hateful.—It was no pleasant task for Amos to remind them of their high crimes against Jehovah, and the consequent and utter ruin that would come to the nation. But duty to God and love for them required that it be done, however painful it might be to him, or dangerous to his personal safety. Jehovah told them to seek him and they should live (verse 4), but not to seek the idols at Bethel, Gilgal, or Beer-sheba. This meant, of course, that all idolatry was forbidden. In the same solemn manner Moses had warned their fathers that forgetting God's commandments and worshipping idols would bring their ruin. (Deut. 30: 15-20.) He then set before them life and death; through Amos they have the same proposition. Amos declared that Israel was cast down, with none to raise her up; her captivity was a foregone conclusion, because they were utterly impenitent. Such reproof the sinful people hated; they despised the messenger of God who delivered it. This Amos well knew, for he had had ample proof when virtually forced to leave the kingdom by one who posed as a priest. The rejection of Amos and his message should furnish much comfort to those who are despised and rejected because they preach the truth Jesus taught.

II. Amos Describes Israel's Sins (Verses 11-13)

Unmerciful.—In verse twelve Amos refers to their sins in a general way, saying, "I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins." In their sinful practices they went the limit in both kind and number. The prophet specifies some of their sins, but evidently by no means all. In the list he mentions their lack of mercy in oppressing the poor. This flagrant sin can be condemned on two counts: It is contrary to the common principle of justice; it is also a violation of the second greatest commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself." Amos represents them as trampling upon the poor by exacting exorbitant amounts of grain, and otherwise oppressing the unfortunate. Such conduct wholly ignores man's dependence upon God, and how helpless he would be without divine blessings. In nothing is the spirit of injustice more evident than in the unmerciful treatment of the poor.

Dishonest Gains Insecure.—Sooner or later ill-gotten gains will bring grief. The prophet reminds them that those rich with material wealth unjustly taken from the poor had with that wealth built houses of hewn stone, but would not be allowed to continue to dwell in them.

When taken into captivity their fine houses would pass to the possession of others. They had planted vineyards, but they would not be able to drink the wine from them. Plainly he meant that their well-laid plans would come to naught, and their illegal and unjust gains would be lost. Jeremiah expresses the same truth in different words when he says that one who obtains riches not by right shall leave them in the midst of his days, and in the end shall be a fool. (Jer. 17: 11.)

Bribe-Takers.—Another charge against them was that they afflicted the just, taking bribes and turning aside the poor from the gate. Those who came to the gate for judgment, but without money to gain favors, were turned away; those with money to bribe judges received favorable decision, regardless of merit. Taking and giving bribes to pervert justice is in the highest degree mean and contemptible. It is no better in our day than it was in ancient nations. The prophet further said that the time was so evil that prudent men kept silence. They knew what has always been true that a righteous cause has no chance in the hands of wicked men. To protest would only bring other injustices, so they patiently endured and prudently kept silent. Often this is the only course left to righteous men. No nation can long prosper when under such domination.

III. Amos Pleads for Reform (Verses 14, 15)

"Seek Good."—It seems strange that any one should seek evil, knowing the bad results that must inevitably follow sometime, yet every age of the world has countless examples of it. Not only so, but no amount of warnings will stop those determined to follow after sin. No people had better or more earnest pleadings to walk in God's ways, and warnings against sin, than Israel, yet their persistence in wickedness brought them into captivity and ended their national existence. Seeking good instead of evil would have prevented these misfortunes, for, according to the text, the "God of hosts" would have been with them; would have been with them in reality as they claimed he was, though the claim was false. God's approval does not rest upon evil people; their saying it does only show they are deluded.

"Hate the Evil."—It is not enough to have no personal part in evil—to consider it in a spirit of indifference. It must be hated; our opposition to it must be actively manifested in all ways that comport with Christian dignity. We must not only avoid what ruins us, but we must try to prevent it ruining others. The prophet called their attention to the fact that if they did this, they would establish justice in the gate where people came to have their cases judged. This would banish both taking and giving bribes. Such a general reform in moral conduct might bring the gracious favor of God, even though their crimes had been many and grievous. It was certain that without such reform God would not bless them. The "remnant of Joseph" evidently meant the ten tribes—the kingdom of Israel. The Psalmist beautifully expresses the same thought that the prophet does here. He said: "I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. . . . And I hate every false way." (Ps. 119: 127, 128.)

IV. Amos Declares God's Indignation at Sin (Verses 21-24)

"Feast Days."—In the verses immediately preceding this section, the prophet told them God had spoken of their coming calamity when there would be great and universal lamentation, wailing, and mourning. Those who desired the "day of the Lord," thinking it would bring them relief, would be disappointed—it would be to them a time of darkness rather than light, sorrow rather than rejoicing. The reason they would not receive God's favor and protection in that day would be because they had perverted, or entirely forsaken, the true worship of God. True, they had feast days, solemn assemblies, and offered sacrifices, but God would not regard their assemblies, nor accept their sacrifices. These were either idolatrous feasts, or such a perversion of the true feasts that they were no better. Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, had introduced a counterfeit system of worship, which had probably become more and more a perversion of what the law required. It is not unlikely that they had mingled idolatrous practices with their perversions.

Noise and Melody.—Praising God in song has ever been pleasing to him. But singing, when the heart is not in strict accord with the sentiment of the words used, is considered nothing more than noise, and is entirely unacceptable to God. He rejects all such formality in the realm of worship now as he did then. Of course, no singing can please God when the words are untrue any more than using such words in sermons or prayers. It has been well said: "Falsehood is none the better by being set to music." The prophet's condemnation here, however, is against their insincere or hypocritical worship. As their feasts and sacrifices had to be offered in harmony with the law, and with strict honesty, so their songs, to be acceptable, had to be sung. For the same reason the melody of their viols would not be heard, for the entire service was only a pretense, and came from insincere hearts. No such service has been or can be acceptable to God whose pure nature demands righteousness.

Justice and Righteousness.—With the fearful results due to come from their dishonesty, crimes, and perverted worship as a reason to move them, Amos pleads for justice and righteousness. These great principles accepted as the rule of conduct would have made them true to God and man. He did not plead for a trifling effort—a mere pretense at reform—but for an abundant practice of them. He said that justice should "roll down as waters," and righteousness "as a mighty stream." They should spread over the nation as a mighty stream spreads over the land, bringing fertility and life to the soil. In that case the nation would be renewed in their hearts, and would return to the right ways of the Lord. Only such a course would have restored them to God's favor and prevented the impending calamity. Unfortunately for their welfare, they refused to practice justice, or become righteous, and met the fate which the prophet of God declared would come. Their captivity and extinction as a nation is an irrefutable proof that God's promises will be fulfilled. It should remind us that disrespect for God's words, and disobedience to his commands, will prove disastrous to men today as well as in ancient times. Their history is a sad, but true, commentary upon the sinfulness of mankind.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. There are three good reasons why we should avoid sin: (1) It is a plain violation of God's command. Grieving our heavenly Father is surely without excuse. (2) By sin we harm ourselves and damage others. This we have no moral or legal right to do. (3) By sin we disappoint and grieve our best friends, those who really care most for our good. This is deep ingratitude.

2. No greater mistake can be made than to think that we can enjoy our ill-gotten gains indefinitely. All accounts must sometime be closed. In God's righteous economy, none can be marked balanced till full payment is made. In the complex and uncertain affairs in human life gains are often suddenly swept away, or we as suddenly leave them. No account can be finally squared till we reach the judgment.

3. There can be no compromise made between sin and righteousness. Those who are not positively with the Lord are against him. Finding a thing is useless, if we refuse to accept it; accepting it is vain, if we are not true to it.

4. The record shows that God's indignation was equally as strong against his own people who perverted the worship he gave them as against the idolaters who created their own worship, and the gods they worshipped. Changing God's worship is a serious crime. (Lev. 10: 1-7; Col. 2: 20-23.)

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

To what class of prophets did Amos belong?
Where was his residence?
How does he describe himself?
What is contained in the seventh chapter?
What caused him to change his residence?
Why did Amaziah ask him to leave?
When did Amos prophesy?
How long since the last lesson?
Against what peoples did he prophesy?

I

Why was Israel's captivity not surprising?
What is shown by their history?
What lesson should we get from their history?
What caused Amos such grief?
What prophet before him shared a similar feeling?
Why do sinners hate reproof?
What did he tell them to do?
What had Moses said in the same matter?
Who especially should get comfort from this story?

II

What reference is made in verse 12?
What specific sin does he first mention?
On what counts can this sin be condemned?
How did he represent them as being unmerciful?
What must happen to ill-gotten gains?
How were they using such gains?
What does Jeremiah say of such gains?
How did they afflict the just?
What did the prophet say prudent men had to do?

III

What effect did advice and warning have upon Israel?
What would have been accomplished by seeking good?
What attitude must we have toward evil?
What result did the prophet say would follow hating evil?
What is meant by "the remnant of Joseph"?
What did the psalmist say on this subject?

IV

What did Amos tell them in the preceding verses?
What did he say about the "day of the Lord"?
Why would they not receive his favor in that day?
Why would God not accept their sacrifices?

What was wrong with their singing?
 What reason did the prophet urge in
 favor of justice?
 How did he describe justice and right-
 eousness?

Practical Thoughts
 Give reasons for avoiding sin.
 When will all accounts be balanced fi-
 nally?
 Where can no compromise be made?
 Against whom is God indignant?

Lesson VIII—August 19, 1934

AMOS DENOUNCES SELF-INDULGENCE

(Temperance Lesson)

Amos 6: 1-7, 11-14.

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.

7 Therefore shall they now go captive with the first that go captive; and the revelry of them that stretched themselves shall pass away.

11 For, behold, Jehovah commandeth, and the great house shall be smitten with breaches, and the little house with clefts.

12 Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow *there* with oxen? that ye have turned justice into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood;

13 Ye that rejoice in a thing of nought, that say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?

14 For, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith Jehovah, the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entrance of Hamath unto the brook of the Arabah.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live.*” (Amos 5: 14.)

TIME.—About 787 B.C.

PLACE.—Uncertain; possibly Samaria.

PERSONS.—Amos and the people.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 55: 6-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 13.	M.	Amos Denounces Self-Indulgence (Amos 6: 1-6)
August 14.	T.	The Penalty of Self-Indulgence (Amos 6: 7, 11-14)
August 15.	W.	Daniel's Daring (Dan. 1: 8-21)
August 16.	T.	The Drunkard's Doom (Isa. 28: 1-8)
August 17.	F.	Obedience to the Law (1 Tim. 1: 3-11)
August 18.	S.	Honoring Rulers (Rom. 13: 1-7)
August 19.	S.	A Call to Repentance (Isa. 55: 6-11)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. Israel Compared with Other Nations (Verses 1, 2).

II. Israel's Indulgences Described (Verses 3-6).

III. Israel's Punishment Foretold (Verses 7, 11).

IV. Israel Had Labored in Vain (Verses 12-14).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

"Self-Indulgence."—Indulgence may refer to something one allows in others—as, for example, parents indulging their children in everything they want. It may also refer to one's allowing himself to participate in things evil, or in the perversion of things right under proper restraint. The latter we call self-indulgence—the theme of our present lesson. The ordinary Greek word for temperance is translated "self-control" in the Revised Version. This is just the reverse of self-indulgence, for which reason our lesson is called a temperance lesson. It requires strict self-control to reject things inherently wrong, and at the proper time and in the proper manner to do the things that are right. Our lesson text furnishes an outstanding example of God's denunciation against general intemperance.

Self-Control in the Right.—A thing wrong in itself does not properly come in the realm of temperance. It would be a palpable absurdity to talk about being temperate in the use or practice of things naturally wrong. No one has the moral or legal right to have part in wrong. This fact cannot be denied successfully, and usually will not be denied, except by the criminal element. In fact, they reject the principle of constituted government, regardless of what particular thing they elect to be intemperate about, or what law they decide to break. The criminal element cares neither for the laws of God nor of man. There are various limitations on the permissible things. This requires rigid self-control that our conduct may harmonize with the nature of the act, or the nature of our relationship and profession. Some things engaged in may have a more deadly effect than others, which may be an additional reason for refraining from them, but the principle of absolute prohibition should be applied to all evil, regardless of the degree of bad results that may follow.

"Walk Worthily."—That a righteous life is better than a sinful one is clear to any one who will allow himself to consider the awful consequences that follow sin. That all should walk in accord with the position occupied is too evident to need formal proof. Christians are related to Christ by the most sacred ties—members of his spiritual body, church, or kingdom—and their moral and spiritual conduct should be such as "becometh saints." To be true to our calling is of the greatest importance and worthy of the highest honor. To so walk requires fervent zeal to act, and vigilant self-control to act properly, and at the opportune time. Such only is true temperance.

LESSON NOTES

I. Israel Compared with Other Nations (Verses 1, 2)

"At Ease in Zion."—We may not know the precise point the prophet had in mind when he pronounced a woe upon them who were "at ease in Zion." They might have been depending upon their inherited

relationship to Zion as being sufficient to prevent any serious calamity; or they may have been at ease in the sense that they were wholly indifferent to the threatened disaster, because they rejected what Moses and later prophets had said about such danger. They might have so given themselves over to sin that they did not trouble themselves to learn what the prophets had said.

Secure in Samaria.—Whatever may have been their feelings toward Zion, if the two clauses refer to the same people, they were depending upon "the mountain of Samaria" for their security. As the term "mountain" probably means government, they were placing their confidence in the government at Samaria. As that was perverted by idolatry and fearfully wicked, they were deceived and destined to suffer as the woe indicated. Having departed from the law of Jehovah and substituted a counterfeit system of worship in place of that established at Zion, nothing less than disaster could follow. They had formed confederacies and matrimonial alliances with the nations around them; they had come to the chief men of the nations for assistance against enemies, but were to learn by sad experiences that such aid could not avert the promised calamity to the nation.

"Are They Better?"—The prophet invites Israel to visit Calneh, Hamath, and Gath and see what happened to them. The history of these places was doubtless well known to the Israelites. Amos inquires: "Are they better than these Kingdoms? or is their border greater than your border?" Surely none of these were to be classed as better or greater than Israel and Judah. Israel would have replied decidedly in the negative to both questions, if they had replied at all. The prophet's reasoning amounts to this: They, though inferior to you, were properly punished for their sins; this being so, you must admit that your sins deserve punishment and will be properly punished. The prophet's woe but sounds the alarm; the fulfillment of the promise will come when God pleases to allow it.

II. Israel's Indulgences Described (Verses 3-6)

"The Evil Day."—The word "woe" is evidently to be understood at the beginning of verses 3-6. The evil day that they were putting far away meant the day of vengeance when the predicted punishment would be received. They could not put it off in fact, but they could do so in their minds by refusing to consider it possible or near. The greater their iniquities, the more inclined they would be to consider any punishment a long way off.

"Beds of Ivory."—The fact that this verse refers to feasting, probably indicates that the beds or couches refer to those upon which they reclined at feasts, such being the oriental manner of partaking of meals. There was nothing wrong in reclining at meals, or in eating proper food in proper amounts. The thing against which the woe was pronounced was the rich and elaborate food and gorgeous furniture that were out of harmony with the piety that should characterize God's people. Their feasts were an extreme perversion of the legitimate social meal—in fact, probably little better than a drunken carousal. Animal desires were being unreasonably satisfied with no regard to their spiritual nature.

"Instruments of Music."—There is nothing wrong or objectionable to instrumental music when kept in its proper place and properly

used, just as there is nothing wrong with a social meal taken in moderation. But when it is used to fire animal passions over the wine cup, or in the dance hall, its legitimate use is being perverted. It is worthy of note that all immoral and sensual public matters are strong for instrumental music. It fires animal passions and blunts the point of conscience; helps to destroy the sense of sin and shame. Its improper use is one of Satan's best means to destroy righteousness. The woe here is against those who "invent for themselves instruments of music, like David." David did not create the practice of using musical instruments; he invented them in the sense that he introduced them into the worship. Those who introduced such music into their feasts to their perversion were like David in introducing them into the worship. Moses in giving the law and the tabernacle system made no provision for mechanical music; he introduced none. True, after David introduced them, they were regulated and tolerated, just as was the king which the people demanded and God allowed, though contrary to his will. (1 Sam. 8: 1-22.) The fact that God tolerated such music from David's day till the law ended does not prove that David introduced it by divine command. If he had a direct command for it from Jehovah, that does not prove it should be used in church worship. We are not under the law, and the New Testament gives no authority for such music in worship either by command or example. That should be enough for us, unless, like the people Amos rebuked, we are willing to pervert scriptural truth with human inventions.

"*Wine in Bowls.*"—This probably means the vessels were costly which was in keeping with their luxurious feasts. They also anointed themselves with the rarest and most expensive oils. They could and did spend time, energy, and money to gratify fleshly desires, but were "not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." No wonder their nation was destroyed.

III. Israel's Punishment Foretold (Verses 7, 11)

To Be First Captives.—Amos declared that Israel would be the first to go into captivity—that is, they would be taken before Judah. Later Isaiah predicted the captivity of Judah, which occurred about one hundred and thirty years after Israel's overthrow. He reminded them that when this happened their "revelry" would pass away—their luxurious feastings would end. That they might depend on what he told them, he assured them that Jehovah had sworn by himself that his promise would not fail; for he abhorred the "excellency of Jacob," and hated his "palaces." Therefore—for the reason that they were guilty of such an apostasy from their former excellence—was this dire calamity to befall them. Their capital was to be taken by the enemy, and their people removed from the homeland.

The Captors.—The simple statement of Amos is that Jehovah would raise up a nation against them. (Verse 14.) from the history (2 Kings 17: 1-6) we learn that the Assyrians were the ones used to punish Israel, and their king, Shalmaneser, was the one who directed the work. Their captivity occurred in the reign of Hoshea who was the nineteenth and last king. As a separate kingdom, Israel continued about two hundred and fifty years. That Samaria was well fortified to resist attacks is evident from the fact that the Assyrian

army besieged it three years before it fell into their hands. It was doubtless during this period that the Assyrians afflicted them "from the entrance of Hamath unto the brook of the Arabah." Hamath was at the extreme northern end of Canaan, and the Arabah at the extreme southern part. The prophet meant that they would be a continual menace along the entire course of the Jordan River. The Assyrian army would enter at Hamath, spreading desolation throughout their whole course.

Thoroughness of Work.—The Lord's prediction implied that a thorough and finished work would be done in the fulfillment. The words of our text imply the same. In other texts the completeness of the matter is more definitely described. Its devastation would be so thorough that the number in a given place would make no difference. Burial of the dead would have to be cared for without the customary formalities. The strain and fear would be so tense that men would not dare to speak in the name of Jehovah. Such disasters can be appreciated only by those who are so unfortunate as to be forced to witness them.

IV. Israel Had Labored in Vain (Verses 12-14)

The Prophet's Questions.—Labor is vain when it fails to produce the results demanded. Those who have not accomplished anything worthwhile for the church and the world have lived in vain. In order to show Jehovah's condemnation of their vain efforts, Amos illustrates with two questions. "Shall horses run upon the rocks?" Horses were likely never shod then. Without shoes they could not run upon rocks, without damage to themselves and loss to their owners. To attempt it would be vain efforts, foolishly made. The attempt to plow there with oxen would be equally foolish.

Lesson Applied.—The points in the questions were, of course, understood and were not denied. The prophet wanted them to know that in like manner their own efforts were also vain and foolish. They could not in such a course of life be prepared to protect themselves in the hour of vengeance. In fact, they had really turned judgment into gall, and righteousness into wormwood, bringing damage to themselves. They could not pursue the course in which they had been going and avoid the punishment pronounced against them.

Vain Boasting.—The prophet charged them with being vain and boastful. The things in which they rejoiced and felt secure would certainly come to naught; they would find, when too late, that they had placed their confidence in the wrong things. They had boasted that by their own strength they had prepared themselves "horns" of defense. Horns stand for power, and they fancied that with their own strength they had gained sufficient power to protect them when any evil threatened. Such a proud and boastful spirit drove them on in their sinful ways, utterly unconscious of the danger ahead. In the light of the teaching of the Scriptures, their captivity later on is no surprise. Regarding pride, Solomon said: "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Prov. 16: 18.) Also: "A man's pride shall bring him low." (Prov. 29: 23.) Again: "Jehovah will root up the house of the proud." (Prov. 15: 25.) David gives testimony equally decisive. He said: "Jehovah preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth him that dealth

proudly." (Ps. 29: 23.) Pride has a specially deadening effect; it blinds one's mind to his own sinful ways, and makes him forget his dependence on God. Both are strong powers in leading one to condemnation.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Advice and aid are helpful only when correct and right. Imitating the idolatrous nations near them led Israel from God and brought their captivity. Similar danger confronts the people of God now. Trying to be like others in our religious life, following the doctrines of men instead of Christ and his apostles, will bring the church to ruin. If others are wrong in their doctrine and practice, why should we want to be like them?

2. A false sense of security does not make people right; it more certainly exposes them to danger. An account grows no less by deferring the day of settlement. Interest increases while we wait. Refusing to consider the necessity of making settlement does not cancel the obligation. Preparation to the limit of ability for that which is inevitable is the only sensible thing to do.

3. One who points out our mistakes, and warns against an impending misfortune gives the best evidence of real friendship. Being angry or resentful about it shows we lack proper gratitude. Warnings, however, will not be of any value unless we receive them kindly, and prepare to escape the misfortune. Drowning fear in sensual pleasures will not help in the critical hour. Refusing to consider facts will not change their nature.

4. Spending time without beneficial results in things really good makes life vain. Trees that bear bad fruit, or bear none, are worthless and should be cut down. Fruitless lives no more please God than fruitless trees please the orchardist.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What is meant by self-indulgence?
What is the ordinary meaning of temperance?
What does our lesson text furnish?
In what things is self-control or temperance applicable?
What attitude does the criminal element take?
What must be prohibited?
What is too evident to need formal proof?
What is necessary in Christians' conduct?

I

What is meant by "at ease in Zion"?
What is meant by "the mountain of Samaria"?
What was the condition of the government of Samaria?

What had been their conduct with the nations about them?
What did Amos ask them to do?
What questions did he ask?
What was the prophet's reasoning?

II

What is understood in verses 3-6?
What is meant by the "evil day"?
How could they put it off?
What kind of beds are meant here?
What was wrong with their feasts?
When is there no objection to instrumental music?
When is it sinful?
Against whom was this woe pronounced?
What is meant by David inventing instruments of music?
How were they treated after David introduced them?
Does their toleration then prove them right in the church?
Give reasons for your answer.
What else is said about their feasts?

III

What did Amos say of their captivity?
How long before Judah's captivity did theirs occur?

What did he say would end at that time?

How did God feel toward them?

What nation took them captive?

What king did it? What king reigned over Israel?

How is their affliction described?

What shows the completeness of their disaster?

IV

How did Amos illustrate their vain works?

How was the lesson applied?

What charge did he bring against them?

Give some scriptural teaching on pride.

Practical Thoughts

When is advice and aid helpful?

What effect does a sense of false security have?

What is the best evidence of true friendship?

What makes one's life vain?

Lesson IX—August 26, 1934

HOSEA PREACHES GOD'S LOVE

Hosea 11: 1-4, 8, 9; 14: 4-9.

1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

2 The more *the prophets* called them, the more they went from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.

3 Yet I taught Ephraim to walk; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them.

4 I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that lift up the yoke on their jaws; and I laid food before them.

8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? *how* shall I set thee as Zeboiim? my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together.

9 I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not come in wrath.

4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him.

5 I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the grain, and blossom as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

8 Ephraim *shall say*, What have I to do any more with idols? I have answered, and will regard him: I am like a green fir-tree; from me is thy fruit found.

9 Who is wise, that he may understand these things? prudent, that he may know them? for the ways of Jehovah are right, and the just shall walk in them; but transgressors shall fall therein.

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.—About 740 B.C. for sections 1 and 2; about 725 for sections 3-5.

PLACE.—Uncertain.

PERSONS.—Hosea and the people of Israel.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 36: 5-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 20. M.-----God Yearns for Israel (Hosea 11: 1-11)

August 21. T.-----God Promises to Bless Israel (Hosea 14: 1-9)

August 22. W.-----God Cares for His People (Ps. 91: 1-16)

August 23. T.-----God Directs His People (Ps. 107: 23-32)

August 24.	F.....	God Loves His People (Rom. 8: 35-39)
August 25.	S.....	God's Greatest Gift (John 3: 14-21)
August 26.	S.....	The Fountain of Life (Ps. 36: 5-10)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. God's Tender Care Over Israel (Verses 1-4).
 - II. God's Desire to Bless Israel (Verses 8, 9).
 - III. Hosea Again Declares God's Love for Israel (14: 4-7).
 - IV. The Joy of Reformation (Verse 8).
 - V. Wise and Prudent Understanding (Verse 9).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Hosea's Prophetic Period.—In the list of minor prophets, Hosea is given first place in the Bible record. He was among the first in point of time, though Jonah and Amos began a little earlier, it is thought. He was contemporary with Isaiah, who heads the list of the four major prophets. The statement that the word of the Lord came to him "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" (1: 1) shows clearly that his work extended over a long period. Apparently there is no way to definitely fix the exact length of time his prophetic labors continued, but at the very least it must have been well on toward seventy-five years. The text also says that his work was during the time Jeroboam II ruled the kingdom of Israel.

Nature and Extent of Work.—Even a casual reading will show that the main part of Hosea's predictions, warnings, and pleadings was directed to the kingdom of Israel, though he included Judah sometimes as the following passages will show: Chapters 1: 11; 4: 15; 5: 10; 6: 4. In expressive figures of speech, he laid bare Israel's many sins. In sharp and cutting comparisons he denounced their corruption with terrific force. Their various moral crimes he condemned unsparingly, and their practice of idolatry he represented as unfaithfulness to God, comparable to the wife's unfaithfulness to her husband. With many repetitions and a variety of figures he drives home his condemnation of their forsaking Jehovah, and following after the idolatry of those about them. He seems to spare no effort to make them realize how deeply they had grieved their Creator and Benefactor by their persistence in evil.

Touching Appeal.—His terrific denunciations against their general corruption, strong reproofs for their practice of idolatry, and earnest warnings against certain ruin, he tempered with a pathetic appeal for them to consider God's mercies and tender regard for them as his people. He was evidently trying to make them feel their base ingratitude, if they failed to return to Jehovah with all their hearts. Only hearts hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and lives filled with active wickedness could fail to be responsive to such appeals. This was a genuine case where God gave his good Spirit in his prophet to instruct them, and to testify against them. (Neh. 9: 20, 30.) Regardless of all God's mercies, Ephraim remained "joined to his idols." (Hosea 4: 17.) "Israel hath behaved himself stubbornly, like a stub-

born heifer" (verse 16). Such people could not escape national calamity.

LESSON NOTES

I. God's Tender Care Over Israel (Verses 1-4)

When a Child.—This expression refers to the time when Israel became in a special manner the people of God—their political infancy. The Hebrew people had been in Egypt more than two centuries the latter half of which they had been bondservants. This had fastened a yoke upon them so securely that they were as helpless as babes to gain freedom by their own efforts. Paul declares that while the Jews were cast off because they rejected the gospel of Christ, yet "as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake." (Rom. 11: 28.) Long before they went to Egypt, God had promised their ancestor, Abraham, that his descendants would become a great nation, and through his seed all nations would be blessed. (Gen. 12: 1-3.) Because they were selected as the people through whom this great promise was to be fulfilled, God's love was over them throughout their career. So when they were without national strength, God miraculously led them to their own promised land, and made them his people.

Israel's Ingratitude.—One of the most amazing things in Hebrew history is the way they forgot the signal blessings received from God. This would seem impossible, if we did not see around us all the time equally striking examples of ingratitude; not just one nation, but most of the world insensible of their obligations to God for the blessings he supplies every day. Paul did not want his brethren to be ignorant of the fact that most of those who crossed the Red Sea failed to reach Canaan because of disobedience. (1 Cor. 10: 1-13.) From Hosea in this text we learn that their disobedience continued after they reached their own land. Like wild or straying animals, the more the prophets called them, the farther they went from them. Forgetting the true source of blessings, they turned to idols. They sacrificed to Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. Baalim is the plural of Baal, and probably means that Baal images were erected in different places. All this was in conflict with the first two commands of the decalogue.

"Bands of Love."—In verse 3, as in other places, the word "Ephraim" means the entire kingdom of Israel. The prophet here shows how tenderly God cared for them when, as a people, they were but as a child. A mother teaches her child to walk by holding out her hands to catch it if it falls, and to give it confidence to make an effort. When it fails she bears it in her arms. In like manner did God treat Israel, in teaching them how to use their own strength in their liberty; with parental love far greater than human, God led them to freedom. After the fashion of men in placing a cord in the child's hands to give it confidence, lead, and draw it, so God led them. As one lifts the yoke to give the animal rest, so he had broken their bondage and had given them rest. All these evidences of God's love the prophet lays before them in a most skillful and touching manner.

II. God's Desire to Bless Israel (Verses 8, 9)

Cause for Divine Grief.—According to the Hebrew method of expressing the same idea in two different sets of words, the names Ephraim and Israel both refer to the whole kingdom. These expressions indicate the divine sorrow in having to abandon Israel because of their continual sins. Hosea (chap. 6: 1-3) exhorts them to consider past punishments as just, and return to the Lord, assured that in a few days he would again exalt them as certainly as the early and latter rains would refresh and make the earth fruitful. In verses 5-7 of our lesson chapter, he threatened them with captivity in Assyria, declaring the sword would abide in their cities till that time. He meant that continuous turmoil and insurrections would destroy their peace and prevent prosperity. This literally came true. From Jeroboam II to Hoshea their last king, four kings were slain.

Jehovah's Lament.—Because of God's promise to the fathers, and his tender care over them for centuries, Israel was as dear to him as a first-born son is to his father. This was expressed in the sorrowful questions: "How shall I give thee up?" "How shall I deliver thee?" His giving them up meant his allowing their national extinction, as the cities of Admah and Zeboiim were completely destroyed. (Deut. 29: 23.) God's compassions were kindled, his heart was moved. Justice said give them up—their sins demand the punishment; mercy said preserve them—they are dear to me.

Fierceness of Anger.—The execution of the full fierceness of just anger would have given them up immediately. This, man, acting from human passions, would have done. But we are told that God is not man—is not moved by human caprices. They are urged to repent, seek God's mercy, and his favor would be extended. Such token of divine mercy should reach the hardest hearts, and would, if they were duly considered, yet we know the reverse is often true. Their final overthrow on account of sins is ample proof of man's ingratitude for God's mercies.

III. Hosea Again Declares God's Love for Israel (14: 4-7)

"Love Them Freely."—In the preceding chapter, Hosea pronounces terrible vengeance upon Israel because of their sins, and tells them their only hope is in God, probably even hinting at final salvation through a Redeemer. (See verse 14.) In the first three verses of this chapter, he urges them to return to the Lord, suggesting a form of prayer they might use in confessing their sins. The language clearly implies that, with these conditions of repentance and confession met, the Lord would heal their backslidings—forgive their sins—and love them freely. Such reformation on their part, and the Lord's anger would be turned away; he would repent—change his mind—regarding the punishment he purposed to allow them to receive. This sentiment agrees exactly with what Jeremiah said on the same subject. (Jer. 18: 7-11.) The same truth is plainly taught in the New Testament.

Blessings Described.—When they returned to the Lord, divine favor would rest upon them like dew upon thirsty ground; their kingdom would grow in beauty and power as the lily; they would become firmly established as Mount Lebanon; like a tree spreading its

branches and blooms emitting fragrance, their benign influences would be extended to others, and those under their influence would be made to rejoice as shade and perfume give pleasure to the weary. Such were the glorious promises to those returning to the Lord. How wonderfully sublime are the images presented! How entrancing are the promises made! This description, though extremely beautiful, is not overdrawn. Such words fittingly portray not only blessings upon ancient Israel, but, in their loftier acceptance, picture the blessings for the redeemed through Christ.

IV. The Joy of Reformation (Verse 8)

Idols Destroyed.—It does not seem quite certain just what application should be made of all the clauses in this verse. One thing, though, is very evident; the prophet is describing a happy state that would exist in the event they should reform as he urged them to do. It is equally certain that the same principle would apply in the case of any one returning to the Lord. If Ephraim (Israel) would return to the Lord, they would be compelled to put away the idols they had worshipped. Then, according to the prophet, they could ask: "What have I to do any more with idols?" Having sacrificed to idols for years, and found they were never able to deliver them when in distress, they could denounce idols as false and themselves as deluded. Appropriately they could then declare that they would have nothing more to do with idols. This is just the decision to be reached by every one who returns to the Lord—that is, he will not return to the sins he has left. Otherwise the reformation is worthless.

Fruit from God.—If the expressions, "I have answered, and will regard him," refer to Israel reformed, then it means they had become obedient to God's words and would still regard them, for which reason they were like a green fir-tree. But we should not overlook the possible fact that this is all prophetic, and refers to what they would be able to say, if they really did reform. It would have been true with them, because a general fact true in all genuine reformations. The general teaching of the verse would not be changed, if some other application were made of these clauses. The essential thing they should remember, if they did reform, was that their prosperous state like a green fir-tree, and the fruit they would be able to bear, should be attributed to God's grace and mercy; for only by and through these could such happy results come.

V. Wise and Prudent Understanding (Verse 9)

"These Things."—In the form of questions, the prophet strongly asserts that the wise and prudent can understand "these things." What things? it may be asked. The punishment that God allowed to fall upon his people for their sins; the favors he showed them when they reformed. Their long experience in idolatrous practices, and their outrageous violation of the common principles of right, forged a continuous chain of evidence to prove that sins must some time be properly rewarded; a demonstration that "the wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6: 23.)

Ways Are Right.—The reason wise and prudent men can understand these things is that God's ways are right. When all the evidence is considered this is the conclusion to which all reasonable men

must come. Those who denounce God's ways as not right are either too ignorant to justly weigh facts, or too dishonest to do it. The prophet was right when he said that "the just shall walk in them"—God's ways. Men may be striving to be just with men, and not walk in all God's ways, but those just with God as well as man will acknowledge all God's ways to be right.

Transgressors Fall.—The prophet said that "transgressors shall fall therein"—that is, transgressors will fall when walking in God's just ways. When they fall, of course, they leave God's way, but that is precisely what Israel did, and the reason for the prophet's strong denunciations of their sins and predictions of their destruction. When Ephraim (Israel) spake with trembling, he exalted himself in Israel, "but when he offended in Baal, he died." (Hosea 13: 1.) Israel's experience is unmistakable proof that final salvation depends upon faithfulness till death.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. God's care for humanity is evidenced by the rich material provisions he has made for temporal wants, and the far richer provisions made for spiritual needs. Through the merits of Christ's blood, we can obtain pardon and peace; through faithfulness in his church we may have eternal life.

2. God so loved a sinful world that he gave his Son that they might be saved. He is not willing that any should perish, but desires to bless all. Only our own stubborn refusal to repent of our sins can prevent our receiving his blessings.

3. Two things, especially, should lead us to gladly obey the Lord: First, the fact that he loved us well enough to offer us salvation, when by reason of sins man was so unworthy of such love. Second, the inheritance reserved in heaven for us is so great that we cannot afford to miss it.

4. If we would realize that all our accomplishments come through means that God has provided, we would know we were under obligations to give him our service.

5. People wise and prudent enough to see the truth should be grateful and honest enough to accept and practice it.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Who prophesied earlier than Hosea?
How long was his prophetic period?
Who was king of Israel part of the time?
To what people did he prophesy?
Describe the character of his writing.
How did he temper his denunciations?
What effect did his warnings and pleadings have?

I

What is meant by the expression, "When Israel was a child"?
What did Paul say of the Jews?
What is especially amazing in Hebrew history?
What do we learn here from Hosea?
What does "Baalim" mean?
What commands did they violate?
What illustration is used to show God's care?
What is the point in reference to the "yoke"?

II

What figure of speech is used in verse 8?
What exhortation does Hosea give them?

What threat is in verses 5-7?
 Show how his prediction about the sword came true.
 How did God express his grief for their sins?
 What did he say about his anger?

III

What lesson is in the previous chapter?
 What is implied in verses 1-3 of this chapter?
 What lesson does Jeremiah give on this subject?
 How did the prophet describe their blessings?
 What loftier meaning may be given them?

IV

What state does the prophet here describe?
 How else may the principle be applied?
 What would be required if Israel turned to the Lord?
 How could they then consider idols?

What similar decision must others make?
 Why would Israel be like "a green fir-tree"?
 What is said about the source of fruit?

V

What is meant by "these things"?
 What is proved by their experience?
 What conclusion will the wise and prudent reach?
 What is said about "transgressors"?
 What lesson is in Hosea 13: 1?
 What doctrine is taught by their experience?

Practical Thoughts

What is the evidence of God's care for mankind?
 What will prevent our receiving his blessings?
 Why should all gladly obey the Lord?
 What shows our obligations to God?
 What should wise and prudent people do?

Lesson X—September 2, 1934

MICAH CHAMPIONS THE OPPRESSED

Micah 6: 1-12.

- 1 Hear ye now what Jehovah saith: Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice.
- 2 Hear, O ye mountains, Jehovah's controversy, and ye enduring foundations of the earth; for Jehovah hath a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel.
- 3 O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.
- 4 For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
- 5 O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him; remember from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteous acts of Jehovah.
- 6 Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old?
- 7 Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
- 8 He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?
- 9 The voice of Jehovah crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom will see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.
- 10 Are there yet treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and a scant measure that is abominable?
- 11 Shall I be pure with wicked balances, and with a bag of deceitful weights?
- 12 For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"* (Micah 6: 8.)

TIME.—About 710 B.C.

PLACE.—Uncertain; possibly Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Micah and the people of Judah and Israel.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—James 1: 22-27.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 27.	M.	-----	Micah Champions the Oppressed (Micah 6: 1-12)
August 28.	T.	-----	Oppression Denounced (Zech. 7: 8-14)
August 29.	W.	-----	Oppression Forbidden (Lev. 25: 13-17)
August 30.	T.	-----	Oppression Punished (Job. 27: 13-23)
August 31.	F.	-----	Oppression Judged (Isa. 5: 1-10)
September 1.	S.	-----	Saving the Oppressed (Ps. 72: 8-14)
September 2.	S.	-----	Relieving the Afflicted (James 1: 22-27)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Jehovah's "Controversy With His People" (Verses 1, 2).
 - II. Jehovah's Complaint Stated (Verses 3-5).
 - III. The People Inquire Concerning Duty (Verses 6, 7).
 - IV. Their Inquiry Answered (Verse 8).
 - V. Further Remonstrance Against Sin (Verses 9-12).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Personal Reference.—After the usual Bible fashion the prophet introduces himself (1: 1) as "Micah the Morasthite." This title was given because he was born at Moresheth, a village southwest of Jerusalem. The same verse shows that he prophesied "in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." As the combined reign of these three kings was about sixty years, it is presumed that Micah's prophetic labors continued some forty or fifty years. In his case, as in that of other Bible writers, doubtless a small amount of what he really taught during that long period was recorded. Evidently the essential truths he presented are given in his book. His predictions were "concerning Samaria and Jerusalem"—capitals of the two kingdoms; hence, they were directed against the people of both Israel and Judah. As both were recognized as God's people, this was appropriate.

A Comparison.—Isaiah 1: 1 compared with Micah 1: 1 shows that these two prophets were contemporary. Though much briefer than Isaiah, Micah's prophecies are strikingly similar to his. One passage in particular is given in substantially the same words. (See Isa. 2: 1-5; Micah 4: 1-5.) These two are so nearly identical that it has been supposed that one may have quoted from the other. This, if true, would be no proof against the inspiration of either prophet. Nothing is more common than for one writer to quote from another, a privilege which is not to be denied inspired men. Being a common truth which both had doubtless often repeated, the one getting it from the other could have easily quoted from memory, which would account for the close resemblance and the slight variations. But inspiration could have led both prophets to write their words just as they did independently of each other. It is of no practical value to know which quoted from the other, if that be the fact in the case.

Matter and Manner.—As was true of other prophets, Micah condemns sins, both public and private, in unsparing terms. This he does in a bold and lofty style. His strong rebukes are interspersed with glorious promises of good things for the Lord's people when true

to him. He foretold that after their impending captivity had been accomplished and they had been sufficiently punished for their sins, God's mercy would again be extended to them, and they would return to the homeland. This would be in keeping with the promises made to the fathers (7: 21). These words may also imply the fulfillment of the spiritual promise "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12: 3.) This, of course, referred to Christ's kingdom.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jehovah's "Controversy With His People" (Verses 1, 2)

A Call to Court.—Micah commands the people to come into the presence of Jehovah that the controversy between him and them might be settled. The circumstances and language indicate that this important meeting is represented as a case at court in which Jehovah, as plaintiff, brings his charges against his people; and they, as defendants, are commanded to show cause why judgment should not be rendered against them. They are told to "arise, contend." The Hebrew word for "contend," and "controversy," has the general meaning of contending for or against any one, but also has the special significance of pleading a case at court. The people of both kingdoms had become so persistently wicked, and had so corrupted the worship of God by their practice of idolatry that punishment had become a necessity. With justice both in fact and in form, they were offered a chance to make defense.

An Open Trial.—This call to hear charges and make legal defense is full proof of God's merciful desire to consign no one to punishment, unless his lack of defense proved him justly condemned. Human law grants the accused the opportunity to be heard personally, or through counsel. This righteous rule doubtless became a common practice because of the unquestioned justice of Jehovah in dealing with sinners. They were asked to contend "before the mountains," and let "the hills hear thy voice." If these words are taken literally, they are called upon to let inanimate nature hear their defense; meaning, perhaps, that the case against them would be so evident that nature would tremble with disapproval of their great iniquity. Maintaining the same figure of speech, the mountains are asked to hear Jehovah's complaint against them. Few passages of symbolic language present cases with more beauty and force. The whole scene displays vividly the righteousness and justice of God.

II. Jehovah's Complaint Stated (Verses 3-5)

What Fault?—Before stating his charges against them, the people are asked to point to one injustice God had done them, or one unnecessarily heavy burden he had placed upon them. Failing in this they would have to admit that all guilt was on their side. During the nearly eight centuries they had been God's special people they had often grieved him with their ingratitude and outright sins, yet because of his promises they were under his providential care. Here he tenderly refers to them as "my people." Without cause, and forgetful of his love, they had often wearied him, but they were unable to mention one instance where he had unjustly given them cause for grief.

Redeemed Them.—The outstanding event in Hebrew history is the delivery from Egyptian bondage. It occurred under circumstances when nothing less than divine power and leadership were adequate for the task. There was nothing in their existence, as a people, that was better known, or the importance of which would be more readily admitted. Its very mention should have caused every descendant of Jacob to feel a deep sense of responsibility to God. They were reminded of this remarkable evidence of God's affection for them. They had neither power nor leader; God sent them both. Moses equipped with miraculous power defeated Pharaoh and led them out. God sent them Aaron to become their spiritual leader and intercessor, and Miriam as a prophetess and director of women. In short, nothing necessary to their freedom was omitted.

Enemies Defeated.—Notwithstanding, their sins caused them to wander forty years in the wilderness, yet God fed them with manna, and defeated their enemies when their own safety was in danger. They were asked to remember the efforts of Balak to have them cursed by Balaam, and how God mercifully refused to let him do it. See the story in Numbers, chapters 22-24, especially 22: 1-14. They were finally reminded of protection and aid, from their camp in the plains of Moab till they reached Gilgal in the promised land. This included the destruction of twenty-three thousand at Shittim and the miraculous crossing of the Jordan. With such displays of power and mercy in their behalf, their crimes, idolatries, and apostasies were inexcusable.

III. The People Inquire Concerning Duty (Verses 6, 7)

How Approach Jehovah?—Still representing the matter as a case at court, the defendants are allowed to be heard—to contend or plead their cause. One, as representing the people, is heard in reply to Jehovah's charges. Instead of making any defense, or trying to excuse the people's sins, he confesses their sins and inquires how they may suitably come and bow before the high God. As sinners they really had no right to come before him, yet they must come or suffer punishment. They had to plead their case, but how to do so before an infinite and sinless Being with such power was beyond their ability to determine. The matter was confusing.

Things Suggested.—Naturally the common means of approaching God were suggested to their minds, and the representative speaker mentions them in a way to indicate that they would be inadequate for those so sinful. Sacrifices offered according to the law, of course, would be acceptable, but they could not avail for those whose hearts were far from God. From such people God would be no better pleased with "thousands of rams" than with one. "Ten thousands of rivers of oil" could not atone for the sins of one unrepentant soul. This impossible and extravagant amount is mentioned to show that no human offering can save, unless men come into accord with God's will. The offering of a son—a thing sinful in itself, but which had been done on some occasions—could not blot out sins for those still in wickedness. What a wonderful description of God's power and man's weakness!

IV. Their Inquiry Answered (Verse 8)

"What Is Good."—Without any verbal note of the change, the prophet turns to the side of the plaintiff and presents God as showing them what is good. If they would in fact truly reform, as the symbolism here represented them as doing, then the favor of God would rest upon them. In order to bring to them such happy condition, God is here telling them what good things they must do. That truly repentant people need to know what they should do to bring forth "fruit worthy of repentance" is an undoubted fact. Without this corresponding reformation, their repentance would be valueless. Only God would know how to give this good information in the precise way needed. The good things, therefore, were what Jehovah required of them.

Justice to Man.—In every age and in every covenant man's duties logically divide themselves into two fundamental classes: duties to man, and duties to God. Here man's duties to his fellow man are divided into two general classes: matters involving justice in dealings, and kindness to the needy and unfortunate. The former would include all business transactions of every sort where the interests of others are involved. It would not only prevent the high crimes, such as murder and theft, but also everything in which one might take an unfair advantage of another. Nothing short of strict honesty in both word and deed will harmonize with this high duty. This includes both small and great things. The "love of kindness" cannot mean less than an earnest desire to be helpful to the needy. It requires that we lend aid to relieve his distress as we are able, and refuse to take advantage of his condition to lay upon him a heavier burden. This is the heart of the Golden Rule as stated by our Lord.

Walk With God.—Man's higher obligation naturally is to his Creator. No reformation is complete when man ignores his responsibility to God. Nothing man can do compares with the divine mercies extended us daily. The rankest ingratitude possible is that shown in disobedience to God. Nothing is more delightful than being in accord with benefactors. The prophet here declares that this means to "walk humbly with thy God." This is a forceful way of saying that man should always be ready to hear and do what God requires. Only those anxious to obey God can be said to walk with him.

V. Further Remonstrance Against Sin (Verses 9-12)

Wise Will See.—Micah here states a common fact: Men of genuine wisdom, when facts are sustained by relevant evidence, will not only admit them, but regulate their conduct accordingly. The expression "see thy name," according to the margin, should be "fear thy name." This seems not only a better translation, but one that is necessary to bring out the thought intended. All should hear of the rod—punishment promised for sin—and consider who hath appointed it. This would prove a strong inducement to make sinners reform.

"Treasures of Wickedness."—The question, "Are there yet treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked?" implies that a complete reformation may not have taken place, or all the people had not put away sin. This, of course, in fact did not occur, for both

kingdoms were finally taken captive. But it does show that little success could be made by individuals or nations while they were trying to retain some evil. "Scant measure" and false weights were in conflict with the good things Jehovah had shown them were necessary, if they approached him acceptably. In fact, such dishonest devices in business were, according to Solomon, "an abomination to Jehovah." (Prov. 11: 1.) No one could be pure before God with such deceitful practices then; neither can they now.

"The Rich Men."—The rich men in this text, like those described by the Savior, were those who trusted in their riches rather than in God. They probably became rich through the dishonest business methods just mentioned. Their riches had given them such power that they used violence against the poor. They were unscrupulous regarding the way they obtained their wealth. They did not hesitate to use deceitful words, or to deliberately deal in falsehoods. Such wilful dishonesty and unmerciful treatment of the oppressed deserved the sternest denunciation and severest punishment. No nation tolerating wickedness of that nature could avoid disaster sooner or later. The terrible price of sin must at last be paid by all. God's people, though under his especial providence and care, could not trample justice and mercy under their feet and escape the consequences. Justice, kindness, and walking with God offer the only safe retreat for man here and hereafter.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. That the Jews as God's people should be required to meet their record, and receive appropriate punishment for their sins was the reasonable thing. The same thing will be true with his people now. Paul declares we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ that each may receive what his works deserve. (2 Cor. 5: 10.)

2. The justice, mercy, and love of God are all manifested without the least fault or mistake. This will be perfectly evident when all the facts are considered. David declared all God's precepts concerning all things to be right. (Ps. 119: 128.)

3. All acts of obedience to God's word must be "from the heart" to be acceptable. Being scrupulously exact in the prescribed form is necessary, but worthless unless accompanied with a sincere purpose.

4. Frankly meeting the moral obligations we owe to mankind is unquestionably the duty of all, but meeting these obligations is not enough to save those who refuse to "walk with God."

5. Posing as God's people while using wicked schemes to oppress and mistreat the unfortunate is the worst kind of hypocrisy. Honest and good hearts alone are the good ground where the seed of the kingdom will grow successfully.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Why the title "Morasthite"?
When did Micah prophesy?
To whom were his predictions directed?
How does Micah compare with Isaiah?

What prophecy is nearly identical with Isaiah's?
 How do you explain this?
 Describe Micah's manner.
 What does he say of their future?

I

What command does Micah give?
 What is meant by "contend" and "controversy"?
 What did the open trial show?
 What is said about the mountains and hills?
 What is the probable meaning of this language?

II

What are the people asked to do?
 What would their failure to do mean?
 Explain his tender reference to them.
 Of what great event were they reminded?
 What persons had been sent to them?
 Why the reference to Balak and Balaam?
 What other displays of his power are mentioned?

III

What privilege was granted the people?
 What kind of reply was made?
 What inquiry did the speaker make?
 What things are mentioned by the speaker?

Why were their sacrifices not acceptable?
 What extravagant thing is mentioned?
 What wrong thing is mentioned?

IV

What change is made in the scene?
 What do repentant people need to know?
 What is the fundamental division in man's duties?
 What division is here made in duties to men?
 How is duty to God expressed?

V

What will truly wise men do?
 What is meant by "see thy name"?
 What is implied in the question about wickedness?
 How does God consider "scant measure"?
 Describe the rich men of this text.

Practical Thoughts

What does Paul say about final rewards?
 What is David's estimate of God's precepts?
 What is required in all acts of obedience?
 What is necessary if men are to be saved?
 What is rank hypocrisy?

Lesson XI—September 9, 1934

HEZEKIAH LEADS HIS PEOPLE BACK TO GOD

2 Chon. 30: 1-9, 13.

1 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto Jehovah, the God of Israel.

2 For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the assembly in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month.

3 For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves in sufficient number, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem.

4 And the thing was right in the eyes of the king and of all the assembly.

5 So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, at Jerusalem: for they had not kept it in great numbers in such sort as it is written.

6 So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may return to the remnant that are escaped of you out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.

7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, who trespassed against Jehovah, the God of their fathers, so that he gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

8 Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were: but yield yourselves unto Jehovah, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever, and serve Jehovah your God, that his fierce anger may turn away from you.

9 For if ye turn again unto Jehovah, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that led them captive, and shall come again into this land: for Jehovah your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

13 And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great assembly.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*God is gracious and merciful.*” (2 Chron. 30: 9.)

TIME.—726 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Hezekiah and the people.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 72: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 3.	M.	.....	Hezekiah's Good Reign (2 Chron. 29: 1-11)
September 4.	T.	.....	Hezekiah Leads His People Back to God (2 Chron. 30: 1-9)
September 5.	W.	.....	Hezekiah Keeps the Feast (2 Chron. 30: 13-17)
September 6.	T.	.....	Hezekiah Overthrows Idolatry (2 Chron. 31: 1-4)
September 7.	F.	.....	Josiah's Good Reign (2 Chron. 34: 1-7)
September 8.	S.	.....	Ezra Instructs the People (Neh. 8: 1-8)
September 9.	S.	.....	Looking to the Messiah (Ps. 72: 1-6)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Hezekiah Invites All Israel and Judah to the Passover (Verse 1).
 - II. Time Fixed by Royal Decree (Verses 2-5).
 - III. Contents of the Decree (Verses 6-8).
 - IV. The Conditional Nature of God's Favor (Verse 9).
 - V. The Great Assembly at Jerusalem (Verse 13).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

A Good Reign.—Hezekiah began his twenty-nine years' reign in the third year of Hoshea the last king to rule over Israel. His was the best reign of any of the kings ruling in either kingdom after the division, surpassing Asa and Josiah who both manifested much respect for God's law. Many kings walked after the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, but Hezekiah did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord as did David his ancestor. High places and groves where idolatry had been practiced he removed; the brazen serpent made by Moses, which had been preserved and made an object of worship, he brake in pieces. He clave to Jehovah and kept the commandments of Moses. For these facts see 2 Kings 18: 1-7. His good reign is refreshing when compared with the crimes, idolatries, and departures from the Lord that are charged against so many other kings.

Historical Settings.—Preceding Hezekiah's reign, Rezin king of Syria and Pekah king of Israel formed a confederacy to fight against Ahaz king of Judah. He formed a similar confederacy with Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, who took Damascus and slew Rezin. (2 Kings 16: 5-9.) This friendship between Assyria and Judah evidently continued into the reign of Hezekiah. Shalmaneser the Assyrian king had laid a tribute upon Hoshea, the king of Israel, who had formed a conspiracy with the king of Egypt and refused payment. This caused Shalmaneser to besiege Samaria and take it after a three years' effort. This finished the captivity of Israel, and ended their national existence. Some considerable time after this Sennach-

erib who was then king of Assyria, came against Judah, taking many fortified cities and threatening Jerusalem itself. Hezekiah begged for peace, offering to pay any price the Assyrian king would demand. He exacted the huge sum of nearly a million dollars in gold and about half as much in silver. This Hezekiah paid by taking the treasures from the Lord's house and his own house. (2 Kings 18: 13-16.) Probably angered by adverse circumstances, Sennacherib sent messengers with an insulting demand. Hezekiah sent for Isaiah and committed his case to the Lord. That night an angel of the Lord defeated the Assyrian army, Sennacherib fled and was slain by his sons. (2 Kings 19.)

Some Faults.—Some blemishes mar the otherwise good character of Hezekiah. His miraculous cure, occurring when Berodach-baladan was king of Assyria, prompted that king to send messengers with a present to Hezekiah. Proud of his wealth and accomplishments he showed all to these messengers. Isaiah rebuked his pride and predicted the final captivity in Babylon. (2 Kings 20: 1-21.)

LESSON NOTES

I. Hezekiah Invites All Israel and Judah to the Passover (Verse 1)

The Occasion.—Ahaz, father of Hezekiah, ruled Judah sixteen years. Instead of doing things right in the eyes of Jehovah, he "walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for the Baalim." (2 Chron. 28: 1, 2.) He sacrificed to false gods and built altars throughout Jerusalem. He took the vessels out of the temple, closed the doors, and suspended the worship indefinitely. The doors remained closed till the beginning of Hezekiah's reign. (2 Chron. 9: 3.) Since Ahaz reigned sixteen years, it is probable that the temple doors remained closed the greater part of that time. Opening the temple and renewing the worship was what led to Hezekiah's invitation to the people to attend the Passover.

Temple Cleansed.—In the first year of his reign, and in the first month of the Jewish year, Hezekiah began the work of restoring the worship. The first thing, of course, would be the reconsecration of the priests or appointing others, the purifying of the Levites to assist in the service, and the cleansing of the temple and its vessels and furniture. Standing so long unused, the building and what furniture was left had become legally defiled and had to be purified. Probably a lot had been destroyed and new had to be supplied. Everything had to be so scrupulously exact that much time was required. They finished the work in sixteen days, sacrificing twenty-eight animals during the process. (2 Chron. 29: 17-24.) After this a thank-offering and other sacrifices in which they used a few thousand animals. (Verses 31-36.)

The Passover.—The law required the regular Passover sacrifice to be offered on the fourteenth day of the first month. As Hezekiah was renewing the temple service in the first month, it was very natural that he should consider the Passover, perhaps regarded as the most important feast in all Jewish service. After years of neglect the people would have to be notified and told to come. For some unexplained reason Hoshea, king of Israel, did not offer any objection to

this invitation being sent to the tribes in his kingdom; at least, no objection is recorded. He might have been much concerned about protecting his kingdom from enemies, and paid little attention to the idolatrous religion of his people at that particular time. Doubtless there were many in the ten tribes who were anxious to return to the true worship, and took advantage of the opportunity to attend this Passover. Some of them may have remained with Judah permanently.

II. Time Fixed by Royal Decree (Verses 2-5)

Reason for Change.—The Passover feast could not be held till the temple was thoroughly renovated and prepared, and the priests and Levites had been sanctified in great numbers. All this work required sixteen days. As it was begun on the first day of the first month, it was not completed till the time for the Passover had passed. Either that Passover had to be omitted and wait for another next year, or it had to be had on a different day. Being such an important feast, Hezekiah evidently did not want to omit it, especially when the entire system of worship was being renewed. After consulting with the princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem, it was decided to keep it on the second month. This decision was based upon three facts: The regular legal time was already passed; not enough priests had been sanctified to officiate; and the people had not gathered for it. The Passover required considerable previous preparation, not the least of which was the people's coming from their homes to Jerusalem.

A Precedent.—Hezekiah's taking counsel with others regarding the change shows that he was not willing to violate any law; to do so would have been contrary to the spirit of reformation then prevailing. The law itself made provision for the celebration of the Passover on the same day of the second month under certain conditions. (Num. 9: 9-12.) One prevented from eating the Passover at the regular time by uncleanness, or being too far away to reach Jerusalem in time, was allowed to eat it the fourteenth of the second month. This legal exception, no doubt, was the reason it was decided to have this Passover feast on that date. The situation that confronted them was so similar to the legal one that they decided to make the exception apply generally. Since they had not kept it in a long time, "in such sort as written," the decision to use the second month was satisfactory, and proclamation was sent throughout the whole country to that effect.

III. Contents of the Decree (Verses 6-8)

"Turn Again Unto Jehovah."—According to the king's command, messengers were sent throughout the land with letters containing the call to attend the feast. The king addresses them all as "children of Israel" because they were all in fact descendants of Jacob, or Israel. Even after the division into two kingdoms—Judah and Israel—the word Israel often refers to all, for the reason just mentioned. They were urged to return to Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. This appeal went back of their division to the time when they were one people nationally as they were by descent from the patriarchs. Their pride of ancestry, and their knowledge of their

departure from God's worship made this a very strong appeal. It could hardly have been put in better form.

An Added Reason.—The king added the very convincing reason that such turning to God would cause him to "return to the remnant that are escaped of you out of the hand of the kings of Assyria." Being assured that upon proper reformation God's favor would be upon them as a remnant threatened with captivity was making a strong case. Impending calamities often make people do some honest thinking, and drive them to seek refuge. The King enlarges upon the point by urging them not to be like their fathers whose trespasses caused God to abandon them to their enemies. He appealed to their own consciousness of the facts by the words, "as ye see." The king also begged them not to be "stiffnecked, as your fathers were" in refusing to yield to Jehovah's law. He reminded them that they should enter into the sanctuary service which had been "sanctified forever"—that is, it was to last as long as they remained God's people. There would therefore be no time when they might safely leave it for something else, till God himself would cause it to end. This was not done till Jesus died on the cross.

IV. The Conditional Nature of God's Favor (Verse 9)

"If Ye Turn Again."—Hezekiah here states and approves a principle that has always been true regarding man's relationship to God—divine favors are received when man complies with the conditions specified. God never requires impossible conditions, nor does he force man to comply contrary to his will. No Bible truth is more fully revealed than that God demands a willing service, and that man is to "do according as he hath purposed in his heart." (2 Cor. 9: 7.) Hezekiah wanted the people to decide in their own hearts that they would turn to the Lord. Without this decision he knew that their attendance at this great feast would not amount to much. Their participation in the Passover should indicate that their hearts had really turned to God.

The Lord's Compassion.—The king assured them that such genuine reformation on their part would bring the Lord's favor; that it would reach those who had at that time been taken captive, or might afterwards be taken. In some providential way God would cause their captors to have compassion on those left, and they would be returned to their own land. Though Judah was later taken captive by the Babylonians, this promise of the king was signally fulfilled seventy years later when they were permitted to return and rebuild the temple.

A Final Appeal.—Hezekiah's final appeal was for them to remember that "your God is gracious and merciful." If treated as their sins deserved, they would have been rejected, but he promised them that God's mercy would not be taken from them if they turned to him. It was implied, of course, that they would stay turned to him. Some in the tribes of Israel laughed the messengers to scorn, but some others came to the Passover. The king's proclamation was favorably received throughout Judah, and they were convinced that they should obey Jehovah's commands. (Verses 10-12.)

V. The Great Assembly at Jerusalem (Verse 13)

"Much People."—The Passover, being the greatest of the three great annual festivals, always brought many people to Jerusalem. That was a natural result from the nature of the feast, and the requirements of the law. Beginning with the slaying of the passover lamb, the feast of unleavened bread lasted eight days. It was one of the three annual feasts that all the males should attend. (Exod. 23: 14-17.) Naturally many females attended, though not required by law to do so. Probably this special Passover, after the temple service had been suspended so long, brought an unusual number together. Those coming from the tribes of Israel added still more. All these were reasons to lead the historian to say that "much people" kept that feast, and that there was "a very great assembly."

Greatness of the Feast.—From verse 26 of the lesson chapter, it appears that there had not been so great a Passover feast since the days of Solomon when all were in one kingdom. In the long period of no sacrifices, the laws on purification had been neglected. The advance notice which the king gave of this Passover did not result in all those who attended being clean and ready to eat the supper. Apparently many in that class were purified after the feast began, and observed the unleavened bread part of the feast, whether they ate the lamb supper or not. The whole assembly counselled together, and decided to extend the feast seven days more. The king and his princes gave some nineteen thousand animals for sacrifices. All that was doubtless to express their thanksgiving to God for all his blessings. It was a season for great joy—universal rejoicing. After the feast ended, they returned to their cities and destroyed the altars and high places where idolatry had been practiced. It was a glorious and thoroughgoing piece of reformatory work.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Hezekiah realized that the only way to lead the people back to God was to abolish all idolatrous worship, and restore the temple service just as it was originally established. Not only must the building and furniture be legally cleansed, but each item of worship must be reproduced as Moses gave it. In any age, speaking as the oracles of God is necessary, if apostasies are to be ended.

2. Changing anything pertaining to the worship of God is a dangerous procedure, if we have neither example nor command for it. In changing this Passover to the second month, they had the example of a change authorized for reasons very similar, if not identical with their reasons. Apparently the precedent justified their action. Under normal circumstances there are not such reasons for changing. Moreover this was only a change of time, not a change in the essential features of the feast.

3. The king offered the best reasons for their return to God. A failure on their part would have been uncomplimentary both to their intelligence and sincerity. Rejecting convincing reasons is to display indifference or stubbornness.

4. The Lord requires no unreasonable conditions when offering us his blessings. Those conditions, however, must be complied with, if we are to show ourselves worthy of the favors.

5. There is ample reason for rejoicing when we do exactly what God requires. His promises are sure; with obedience rendered to his commands, we may safely leave the rest to him.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

When did Hezekiah begin to reign? How long?
How did his reign compare with those of other kings?
What is said of him in 2 Kings 18: 1-7?
What confederacies were made by the Jewish kings?
Describe Sennacherib's effort against Judah.
How did Hezekiah pay the tribute laid upon him?
What mistake did Isaiah rebuke?
What prediction did Hezekiah make?

I

What is said of Ahaz as king?
What did he do to the temple and its vessels?
How long did the temple remain closed?
When was the temple cleansed?
What other purifying was necessary?
How many animals were offered in this work?
What additional offerings were made?
Why was it necessary to notify people of the Passover?
Why did the king of Israel allow his people to be asked?

II

What was necessary before the Passover could be had?
Why not keep it at the regular time?
Give reasons for the second month.
What precedent did they have for a change of time?

III

How did the king's proclamation reach them?
Why address them as "children of Israel"?
Why refer to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel?
What additional reason did the king give?
How did the king enlarge upon the point?
What did he beg them not to do?
What did he say about the sanctuary service?

IV

What principle did Hezekiah state and approve?
What kind of service does God require?
What did the king assure them?
What would God cause their captors to do?
What final appeal did the king make?
How was his proclamation received?

V

Why did so many attend the Passover?
Who were required to attend?
What was said about the greatness of this feast?
What extension was made?
What other sacrifices were offered?
What did the people do on returning home?

Practical Thoughts

What was necessary in leading them back to God?
How can their change of time be justified?
What does rejecting convincing reasons show?
How can we show ourselves worthy of God's favors?
When do we have reasons for rejoicing?

Lesson XII—September 16, 1934

ISAIAH CONTRASTS FALSE AND TRUE WORSHIP

Isa. 1: 10-20.

10 Hear the word of Jehovah, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

11 What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah: I have had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats.

12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts?

13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies,—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting.

14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary of bearing them.

15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah? And who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.” (Ps. 24: 3, 4.)

TIME.—About 760 B.C.

PLACE.—Probably Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Isaiah and the people of Judah.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 4: 20-24.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 10.	M.	Isaiah Contrasts False and True Worship (Isa. 1: 10-20)
September 11.	T.	Preparations for Worship (Ex. 19: 7-13)
September 12.	W.	Reverence in Worship (Ec. 5: 1-7)
September 13.	T.	Thanksgiving in Worship (Ps. 100: 1-4)
September 14.	F.	Blessedness of Worship (Ps. 84: 1-12)
September 15.	S.	Worship in Heaven (Rev. 5: 8-14)
September 16.	S.	Spiritual Worship (John 4: 20-24)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Isaiah's Address to the Rulers (Verses 10-12).
 - II. Vain Worship an Abomination to Jehovah (Verses 13, 14).
 - III. Their Prayers Not to be Heard (Verse 15).
 - IV. A Reformation Enjoined (Verses 16, 17).
 - V. Blessings Promised to the Obedient (Verses 18-20).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Prophetic Period.—Verse 1 clearly fixes the time that Isaiah flourished as a prophet, saying it was “in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” It is not certain whether he died in the reign of Hezekiah, or his successor, Manasseh. His prophetic labors could hardly have been less than about fifty years. Much of his work was before the captivity of Israel, though his death likely occurred some years after that event.

Nature of Work.—Isaiah by common consent heads the list of Old Testament prophets. Though his style surpasses the others in grandeur, the nature of his work is essentially like theirs. To prophesy literally means to speak for or in behalf of another; and, of course, Bible prophets are those who spake for God. As such special servants of God were inspired for their labors, it is easy to associate in-

spiration with prophecy, though that idea is not in the word itself. Foretelling future events was one part of the work done by inspired teachers; therefore, in time, the word came to be applied very generally to that part of their work. But Bible prophets (those speaking for God) were also just ordinary preachers of practical and vital truths. They instructed, warned, and commanded the people by God's authority. A casual study of any prophetic book will show that much of its contents is composed of such teaching—foretelling future events being a small per cent.

Occasion for This Lesson.—Such rank sins as Isaiah condemns do not come about in a day, but are rather the results of long periods of transgressions. Forgetting the favors and mercies of God, a matter of frequent occurrence since they left Egypt, such deplorable apostasies as the prophet here mentions are not any surprise. The wicked rulers that had disgraced both kingdoms had increased the general proneness to do evil. The few good kings did not counteract the general spirit of apostasy that had prevailed for so long. As shown in last lesson, Hezekiah was a good ruler and brought about a great reformation, but his father, Ahaz, was desperately bad. Upon the whole it was "a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that deal corruptly." (Verse 4.) As compared with a diseased physical body there was no soundness in the nation, but "wounds, and bruises, and fresh stripes." It is possible that this particular rebuke was uttered at some time when corruption, both moral and spiritual, was especially evident. The contrast between the false and true is vividly drawn.

LESSON NOTES

I. Isaiah's Address to the Rulers (Verses 10-12)

Sodom and Gomorrah.—In previous verses Isaiah presents God as saying that he had nourished Israel, yet they had rebelled against him. Their degradation had reached such depths that they were really below animals. The animals act by instinct; man has intelligence and is, therefore, expected to move upon a higher plane and be responsible for conduct. The ox and ass, though under the lower law, know their owners and the cribs from which they are daily fed. With regularity they return to receive what the owner gives them. But the prophet declared that God's people neither knew nor understood whence their blessings came. They did not appreciate God as the giver of all good in a way to be duly thankful for his mercies. The normal animal was more true to his owner from instinct than were the people to God under the high law of intelligence. Their country was desolate, cities burned, and, except for God's merciful providence in saving a remnant to fulfill his promise to the fathers, they would have been utterly destroyed as a nation just as Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. This reference to the destruction of those wicked cities probably suggested the idea of calling the leaders "rulers of Sodom" and the "people of Gomorrah."

Sacrifices Unacceptable.—To the command to hear and give heed to God's law the prophet added the statement that God would have nothing to do with their sacrifices—that they need not expect them to be acceptable or bring them a blessing. They were further told

that God had enough of burnt-offerings and of fed beasts. That meant he did not want them to continue in such services unless their moral conduct was made to harmonize with his law, and their worship became more than mere formality. He had no delight in what they offered to him. In fact, as Amos expressed it, God said: "I hate, I despise your feasts, and will take no delight in your solemn assemblies." (Amos 5: 21, 22.)

"*Who Hath Required This?*"—The prophet plainly puts the case up to them in asking who required them to do what they did as worship in the courts of God's house? If God did, well enough; if men, then the worship was vain. The same truth precisely is still applicable to worship in the church. (Matt. 15: 1-9.) There could not be a clearer declaration that acts of worship to God must be in harmony with his will, and because *he* has commanded them. Doing God's will is the only way to enter his kingdom. (Matt. 7: 21.)

II. Vain Worship an Abomination to Jehovah (Verses 13, 14)

A Perversion.—The things mentioned as not pleasing to God were not wrong in themselves; on the contrary they were things specifically required by the law and wrong to omit. The trouble was that the manner of their offering them was a clear perversion of the intent of the law. A service may be perverted in two ways: changing the form, or doing it with the wrong spirit or purpose. The perversion Isaiah was condemning was of the latter kind; it is probable they were following the prescribed form reasonably close. No service at all is better than a perverted one. This is plainly the implication in God's words forbidding such offerings to be made.

Things Mentioned.—Oblation is a more general term meaning anything offered to God. Vain oblations are such as will fail in bringing the results desired. If they were making offerings to satisfy their own vanity, the case would be the same—disappointing in results. Incense—a type of prayer, Ps. 141: 2—was a service in the temple proper for the most part. Pride and formality in such a service was intolerable then as it is now; or, as expressed by Isaiah, is an *abomination* to God. The new moon, Sabbath, and the calling of assemblies—all sacred times and seasons—were made the occasions for doing things highly displeasing to God. The expression, "I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting," is peculiar and its meaning obscure, but the general idea of the section is unquestionably that God could not, with his pure nature, longer tolerate such a pretense and perversion of sacred things. In his mind there was no place for approval of such worship as they offered.

"*Trouble Unto Me.*"—God's disapproval of anything could hardly be expressed with more vigor than Isaiah uses here. He first declares in a general way that their offerings were vain; then, that they were an abomination in his sight; then, he could not longer tolerate them; then, that he *hated* them; and finally that they were a trouble to him—a cumbrance that he could no longer bear. He had become weary with their persistent perversions of his worship.

III. Their Prayers Not to be Heard (Verse 15)

"*Hide Mine Eyes.*"—Some attitude of bodily pose has always been used in offering prayer. In supplications for help or benefits, it is

natural to extend the hands. Paul expresses the desire for men in every place to pray, "lifting up holy hands." (1 Tim. 2: 8.) In his prayer of dedication, Solomon "spread forth his hands toward heaven." (1 Kings 8: 22.) Other examples are Moses and Jesus. (Exod. 9: 33; Luke 24: 50.) Through the words of Isaiah here, God told them that when they extended their hands in supplication for his benefits he would hide his eyes from them—would refuse to see them. Their appeal would be given no consideration.

"Will Not Hear."—The word "hear" in reference to prayer often means to answer; that is its evident meaning in this place. God hears prayers in the sense of knowing that the prayer is being made oftentimes when the prayer is not answered. It fails in the conditions necessary to acceptable prayer, and is not answered. The fact that they made "many prayers"—prayed often or with many repetitions of requests in the same prayer—would not affect the divine mind. God would not hear a prayer coming from a heart filled with pride, stubbornness, and rebellion against purity and truth. Rebellion against God is out of harmony with the spirit that prompts acceptable prayer.

IV. A Reformation Enjoined (Verses 16, 17)

"Wash You."—Bodily filth is made to represent spiritual impurity. We put away the former by literal washing; hence, by a figure of speech, those guilty of sin are told to "wash" and make themselves clean. While not a literal washing as the body is washed with water, yet it is none the less real. A physical fact is made to represent a mental one. With a proper reformation they would put out of their hearts and lives evil practices just as they would put dirt off of the body by washing. The duty is figuratively expressed, but done really. This truth is more fully expressed by the following words in which the prophet explains his own figurative language. Without figure he says: "put away the evil of your doing from before mine eyes." This form of command allowed no misunderstanding. The figurative use of the word wash gave additional force to the command, implying the thoroughness with which the work should be done, leaving a clean heart and, consequently, a clean life.

Affirmatively Stated.—Man's duties have always been both negative and positive—regulated by prohibitions and commands, things forbidden and things required. This is a truth so universally acknowledged that no nation or other society of men has tried to get along without it. With all man's failures and injustices in trying to apply these laws, none will deny that they are basically necessary. Ceasing to do evil cuts the taproot—destroys the bad tree; but, like any other half-done job, fails of the main purpose unless a good tree is planted in its stead. We must learn to do well. Instead of looking for some opportunity to practice injustice, we must seek justice; rather than oppressing the unfortunate that may be in our power, we should use every available means to relieve them. The orphans should receive mercy at our hands, and the widows justice in their cause. In short, our moral conduct should be free from all forms of active wickedness, and filled with earnest efforts of kindness, justice, and mercy toward others.

V. Blessings Promised to the Obedient (Verses 18-20)

"Reason Together."—Through the prophet Jehovah invited the people to reason the matter out—to give conscientious consideration to all he had to say to them. They needed to realize the facts, understand the dangers that confronted them, and know exactly what final results would follow their sins. They were in a condition that required some straight thinking and some honest decisions. This invitation implied their ability and responsibility, and that no injustice was to be permitted. Their future, if they were to be successful and happy, was to be in the form of a renewal contract, and they needed to understand its conditions and benefits fully. This they were asked to see by their own reason.

The Reformation Possible.—In the divine record we are frequently reminded that God requires a reasonable service. Here God assured them that, though their sins had been of a deeply grievous nature, they could reform; the way back into his favor was still open. It is a remarkable evidence of God's long-suffering and mercy that such flagrant sinners can be saved at all. It is thought that the word "scarlet" carries the idea in the original word of repetition. The thought being that by repeated dipping the color would be fixed—unremovable. But they were encouraged by the promise that their sins, though as firmly set as scarlet, could be removed by his grace and mercy. The crimson red could be changed to pure white.

The Condition.—Pardon was offered; its reception depended upon their willing obedience. With such obedience they could eat the good of the land; without it their land was certain to fall into the enemies' hands and be despoiled. This truth was asserted in unmistakable words by the prophet. He said, "but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword," declaring that to be just what God said about it. Man's ability to do both good and evil is here most plainly shown. The positive and negative sides of duty are emphasized; they must turn from sin—not refuse or rebel against God; they must willingly do what God said. A failure in either meant loss of country, and their captivity. Unfortunately for them these very things happened.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Jesus said: "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.) No one should ever engage in any kind of religious worship to God without knowing who gave the command he is attempting to obey. If not God, then refrain.

2. According to Jesus (Matt. 15: 9) vain worship consists in doing the commandments of men in pretended service to God. The principle is just the same, whether something entirely different is substituted for what God says, or his requirements are perverted with some addition or change.

3. The subject of acceptable prayer is most strikingly presented by the apostle Peter in these words: "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears open unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is upon those that do evil." (1 Pet. 3: 12.)

This he quotes from Psalm 34: 15, 16. The meaning is, as expressed in the Psalm, that God's face is against evildoers.

4. It is unreasonable from any viewpoint to think people should be blessed who persist in their rebellion against God. Those who mistreat their fellow beings never worship God "in spirit and in truth." Fearing God and doing good are both necessary.

5. Those who use common sense and reason know that God's ways are right. They also know they should render willing obedience to his commands, or else deserve to be lost.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

When did Isaiah prophesy?
Over how long a period?
Name a special characteristic of his writing?
What is the literal meaning of "prophecy"?
What was the occasion for this lesson?
What was the character of the kings generally?
How did Isaiah describe the nation?
When may this lesson have been given?

I

What comparison is made of man with animals?
What lesson is intended by it?
What did he say of their country?
Why had they not been completely rejected?
Why the reference to Sodom and Gomorrah?
What did God say about their sacrifices?
How did Amos express the matter?
What question was asked the people?
How did Jesus state the case?

II

What made their offerings wrong?
How may we pervert the worship of God?
What does the forbidding of such offerings imply?
Why were their oblations vain?
What other items of worship are mentioned?

What is the general idea of this text?
What different ways did Isaiah express God's disapproval?

III

How did Paul say men should pray?
What is said of Solomon's prayer?
What other statements are given on the same point?
What does the word "hear" mean in this text?
Why are prayers often not answered?

IV

What is meant by the word "wash"?
How could they "wash" themselves?
How does the prophet explain his own words?
What has always been true of man's duties?
What is man's positive duty as here expressed?
How may the case be stated briefly?

V

What invitation was extended to the people?
What does this invitation imply?
What did they need to understand fully?
What is the nature of the service God requires?
What did God assure them?
What condition is expressed in the text?
What was to happen if they refused to obey?

Practical Thoughts

What should we know when approaching God?
What is "vain" worship?
How does God regard our prayers?
What two things are necessary?
Who knows that God's ways are right?

Lesson XIII—September 23, 1934

ISAIAH COUNSELS RULERS

Isa. 31: 1-9; 37: 36, 37.

1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah!

2 Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words, but

will arise against the house of the evil-doers, and against the help of them that work iniquity.

3 Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit: and when Jehovah shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is helped shall fall, and they all shall be consumed together.

4 For thus saith Jehovah unto me, As the lion and the young lion growling over his prey, if a multitude of shepherds be called forth against him, will not be dismayed at their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so will Jehovah of hosts come down to fight upon mount Zion, and upon the hill thereof.

5 As birds hovering, so will Jehovah of hosts protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will pass over and preserve it.

6 Turn ye unto him from whom ye have deeply revolted, O children of Israel.

7 For in that day they shall cast away every man his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.

8 And the Assyrian shall fall by the sword, not of man; and the sword, not of men, shall devour him; and he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall become subject to taskwork.

9 And his rock shall pass away by reason of terror, and his princes shall be dismayed at the ensign, saith Jehovah, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

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.

37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee."* (Isa. 26: 3.)

TIME.—About 713 B.C.

PLACE.—Probably Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Isaiah and the people of Judah.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 21: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 17.	M.	Isaiah Counsels Rulers (Isa. 31: 1-9)
September 18.	T.	Hezekiah's Prayer (Isa. 37: 14-20)
September 19.	W.	David's Prayer (Ps. 51: 1-13)
September 20.	T.	Solomon's Prayer (1 Kings 8: 22-30)
September 21.	F.	Counsel Rejected (Prov. 1: 24-33)
September 22.	S.	Kings Subject to God (Ps. 72: 10-20)
September 23.	S.	Victory from God (Ps. 21: 1-7)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. Danger of Trusting Human Power (Verses 1-3).

II. Jehovah Promises Protection to His People (Verses 4-6).

III. Defeat of Enemies Promised (Verses 7-9).

IV. The Promise Regarding Jerusalem Fulfilled (Isa. 37: 36, 37).
Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Isaiah Sent to Ahaz.—The promise made to Abraham of a world's Redeemer was to be fulfilled through the tribe of Judah. That required special providential protection for the kingdom of Judah to save at least a remnant. Ahaz, though a wicked king, ruled Judah, and that accounts for Isaiah's being sent to advise him against enemy kingdoms. (Isa. 7: 3, 4.) If they were not checked, Judah was in

danger of complete destruction. It should not be concluded that in sending Isaiah to counsel Ahaz, God was endorsing his personal sins. In spite of his individual sins he needed encouragement in such a critical time to enable him to make proper preparation to protect the kingdom against others more sinful than himself. The fulfillment of the promise to Abraham was doubtless the special reason this aid was given him.

The Situation Faced.—Apparently the confederacy between Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel (here called Ephraim), was made when Jotham, the father of Ahaz, was king of Judah. (2 Kings 15: 37.) The attack on Jerusalem by these confederated kings was made after Ahaz began his reign. When "the house of David"—the king and people of Judah—were told of this invasion of their country there was great consternation, they trembled with fear "as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind." (Isa. 7: 2.) In such a disturbed state defeat was certain unless assistance was given. Isaiah was sent for the purpose of quieting them, removing their fear, and giving them such confidence that they would make proper efforts for their protection and defense. He advised the king to give heed to his words, "be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands"—the fierce anger of Rezin and Pekah. (Isa. 7: 4.)

Jehovah's Promise.—Isaiah told Ahaz that the thing purposed by these enemy kings would not come to pass; that Damascus and Samaria, their two capitals, would be taken; that Israel as a people would be destroyed, which work would be completed within sixty-five years. (Isa. 7: 7-9.) By the payment of a large sum of money, Ahaz secured the help of Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, who went against Damascus and took it, slaying Rezin. (2 Kings 16: 7-9.) The main part of the prediction against Israel was fulfilled about twenty years later, when the Syrian king, Shalmaneser, took Samaria after a three years' siege because Hoshea failed in paying tribute. The work of carrying Israel away was probably finished by Esar-haddon, the Assyrian king, about forty-five years still later, and all vestige of their national existence disappeared.

LESSON NOTES

I. Danger of Trusting Human Power (Verses 1-3)

A Reproof.—There can be no strong reproof of evil than a woe pronounced upon the evildoer. The prophet here shows the futility of depending upon human power for safety, whether it be personal ability or material means or both. Everything must ultimately fail that comes against divine power. For that reason the prophet rightly condemns those who rely upon such means, but "look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah."

Warning Illustrated.—The part that Egypt had had in Israel's past history was known to all. Their failure to ever get any permanent good from that source was an appropriate fact to use as a timely illustration to enforce his warning. Their main experience with the Egyptians, of course, was their long stay in that land—a time when the little benefit received at first was greatly surpassed by the bitter experience of a cruel bondage. They went there in a time

of dire need for an assistance that seemed absolutely necessary. Apparently it was a wise thing to do in such emergency, yet the final result was such a bondage that only the power of God could bring them back to liberty. For Ahaz and other rulers to rely upon Egypt rather than God was to forget the deliverance of their ancestors from that very country as well as other unfortunate experiences of less magnitude. Solomon "made affinity" with Pharaoh and married his daughter. (1 Kings 3: 1.) This, with other like affiliations, introduced idolatry, and finally resulted in the division of his kingdom. Hoshea, the last king of Israel, sought Egypt's help to break his dependency to Assyria, but lost his capital city for his effort. (2 Kings 17: 4-6.) After this warning of Isaiah, his prediction came true when Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, appealed to Egypt for aid against the Babylonian king. He also failed. (2 Chron. 36: 13; Ezek. 17: 15-20.)

Further Explanation.—The number of chariots and the strength of horsemen would not avail when used against the will of God, whether by God's rebellious people or their allies. When God's people resorted to such means of defense, their efforts failed. Isaiah advised the Israelites that the Egyptians were men, not God; their horses were flesh, not spirit. How could mere men, depending upon animals with the strength of flesh, successfully meet God who has infinite wisdom and power? The folly of such an attempt is evident. Incidentally the prophet's words show man to be a creature below God and above animals. Men, like animals, have flesh with all its limitations, God is an infinite Spirit; men have spirits, animals do not. The materialistic doctrine that man has no spirit is certainly shown false by Isaiah's placing man below God and above animals. To depend upon such human help meant that the helpers and the helped would both be consumed.

II. Jehovah Promises Protection to His People (Verses 4-6)

First Similitude.—Perhaps there are no figures of speech more impressive than those in which animals acting by instinct furnish a lesson for man with his intelligence. Isaiah presents in these verses the certainty of God's protection to his obedient people by two very striking similitudes. The first is the way a lion will defend his prey against all efforts to drive him away. The picture is vividly drawn, and the application lies upon the surface. Realizing his strength, the lion will growl at the approach of man or beast that would interfere with his eating his prey; he will not be frightened away by a great number, or sternness of their voices; he will not slink away because of the great noise they may make. Having taken his prey by his great power, he will protect it by the same power. So divine power having saved a people remains able to protect them. Neither the number of their enemies nor the noise they may make will render God's power noneffective. Hence, Isaiah counsels rulers to rely upon God's power in emergencies, rather than alliances they might make with other people.

Second Similitude.—This comparison likewise presents God's readiness to aid his people, but the imagery is entirely different. Not a lion ready to use his prodigious strength to hold his own, but the efforts of a mother bird to protect her young against rapacious ani-

mals of all kinds. She spreads her wings and hovers them, or flies near them to attack any intruder that would harm them. Their helplessness makes her all the more desperate in her efforts to make their nest safe. In like manner, God spreads his protecting care over his people, always ready to substitute his power for their weakness in cases of real need. Instinct makes the young bird trust its safety to the mother; intelligence should cause man to place his spiritual and eternal welfare in God's hands. Man should not allow himself to be surpassed by birds in honoring his Creator.

A Condition.—The animal, under the law of instinct, pursues his natural course until some superior power ends his efforts. Man, with his intelligence and ability, can select his own course, receiving or rejecting at will assistance offered by either God or man. Regardless of how good the offer may be, or the spirit with which it may be presented, man must be *willing* to receive it. He is not forced to have it against his will. This great fact inspired writers do not overlook. Hence, Isaiah said: "Turn ye unto him from whom ye have deeply revolted." This certainly implies that if they wanted God's protection to be over them, they must turn to him. God does not protect the rebellious; his people must not rebel; or, if they have, they must return to him.

III. Defeat of Enemies Promised (Verses 7-9)

Cast Away Idols.—When the time would come for Jehovah to protect and deliver Jerusalem, it would be necessary for them to have made the reformation mentioned in verse six. That meant that they would not then be worshipping the idols of silver and gold which their hands had made. Such worship was sinful because it violated two of the Ten Commandments and led the people away from God. They could not return to him and retain their idols. They could not have his protection without returning; hence, their idolatry had to cease before their city would be made secure. In these words the prophet laid before them in unmistakable terms just how they might have the promised protection.

Enemy's Defeat Assured.—Verse eight shows that an Assyrian was the enemy in the prophet's mind at the time. He was to fall by a sword, but not one in the hands of a soldier in the course of regular warfare; it was to be by men in some peculiar relationship or position. He would flee from the scene of battle, yet be slain under unusual circumstances. His "rock"—perhaps meaning strength or courage—would depart from him through terror, and his princes would be dismayed. The latter might have reference to his military aides becoming dismayed at the terrible defeat in such an unusual way. The Lord's power, like a burning fire, would prevent the Assyrian entering Jerusalem.

IV. The Promise Regarding Jerusalem Fulfilled (Isa. 37: 36, 37)

The Assyrian Named.—This passage tells us that Sennacherib was the Assyrian king to be defeated. Ahaz, as king of Judah, formed a league with Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings 16: 7-9), whose successor, Sennacherib, waged war against Judah in the days of Hezekiah, tak-

ing fortified cities. Hezekiah tried to make peace with him by the payment of huge sums of gold and silver. (2 Kings 18: 13-16.) For some reason Sennacherib made insulting and impossible demands. Hezekiah was greatly disturbed, went to the house of the Lord in mourning, and sent for Isaiah to reveal to him the Lord's will in the matter. (Isa. 37: 1-4.) Hezekiah also laid the matter before God in prayer. (Isa. 37: 14-20.) Isaiah assured Hezekiah that Sennacherib would not enter the city, cast a mound about it, or shoot an arrow against it.

"The Angel of Jehovah."—The word "angel" means messenger and may be applied to any kind of messenger. Ordinarily it refers to some living being, but not always. Winds and fire are called messengers and ministers. (Ps. 104: 4; Heb. 1: 7.) Here the word probably means some element with destructive power that overspread the Assyrian army resulting in so many deaths that that king and his soldiers were struck with consternation; the defeat was so great that, as the prophet said, not an effort was made against the city. In the parallel passage, 2 Kings 19: 35, it is said, "it came to pass that night, that the angel of Jehovah went forth." The city was saved by the Lord's intervention, not by the military wisdom of its defenders. Hosea expresses the same thought in these words: "But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by Jehovah their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen." (Hosea 1: 7.)

The Number.—The record says that this destructive power sent forth smote one hundred and eighty-five thousand. However large an army Sennacherib had, it would be a stunning blow to find that many soldiers dead at one time. Without alarm, some pestilential element—perhaps something like a suffocating wind—swept through the camp and this great number died without disturbing any one. So noiseless was everything that apparently it was not known what had happened till those left alive were awakened next morning. In such an appalling situation no effort could be made against the city. The necessary disposal of the dead required immediate attention. Doubtless Sennacherib, heathen though he was, looked upon the mysterious destruction of so many of his army as proof that his gods were displeased with him. The Hebrews seeing such a literal and drastic fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction were doubtless equally amazed and made no effort to inflict greater loss upon the Assyrians.

Sennacherib's Departure.—The destruction of his army was so decisive that Sennacherib abandoned the campaign against Judah and departed. He went to Nineveh to reside. Soon after this, while he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, two of his sons slew him and escaped to the land of Ararat. His son, Esar-haddon, reigned in his stead. (Verse 38.) Thus closed the career of one of Judah's bitter political enemies. Their capital city was saved and they were given a respite. But about one hundred and twenty-five years later, because of their wickedness, God allowed them to be taken to Babylon, where they remained in captivity for seventy years.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. We are not only taught to rely upon God instead of men, but we are also told "To trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean

not upon thine own understanding." (Prov. 3: 5.) If we can't exalt the wisdom of others above God's, we can't exalt our own. To do so is presumption.

2. God's law is *impressed* upon inanimate nature and animals; it is *expressed* to man. Nature's laws respond and always work as designed—seed bearing after its kind; animals by instinct are true to the nature God gave them; man, with powers infinitely above the animals, should promptly obey the expressed laws of God. Failing, he does not fill the designed position as well as trees and animals.

3. When God promises a blessing, it must be understood that man must comply with all necessary conditions, whether they are expressed or not. If any conditions are expressed in other passages, it must be understood that they are implied in passages on the same subject where not expressed. Man's ability and responsibility also makes it necessary to understand that conditions must be met.

4. Most people, whether good or bad, call for the Lord's help in times of extreme danger. The good show their faith by committing their case into God's care; the wicked call because of their fear to meet the situation. Live right, and leave the rest to God.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Why was Isaiah sent to Ahaz?
Why send aid to a wicked king?
What confederacy did Ahaz have to face?
How did this invasion affect the people of Judah?
Why was Isaiah sent to them?
What did he tell Ahaz?
Where and how did Ahaz get help?
When was the prediction fulfilled?

I

What does the prophet here show?
What must ultimately fail?
What event is used as an illustration?
What was the lesson in this illustration?
Who else was affiliated with Egypt with bad results?
Who did the same after this warning?
What did Isaiah say about the Egyptians?
What doctrine is here shown false?

II

What kind of figurative language is used here?
What does he teach in these figures?
What lesson is given in referring to the lion?
What in referring to the mother bird?

What distinction between man and animals must be noted?
What condition did Isaiah express?

III

What must they do before the day of deliverance?
Name two reasons why such worship is sinful?
What enemy was to be defeated?
How was he to fall?
What is meant by "rock" departing?
What would the Lord's power do?

IV

What king was named?
Who did Sennacherib succeed?
Who was king of Judah when Sennacherib came against Jerusalem?
How did Hezekiah try to make peace?
What greatly disturbed Hezekiah?
What two things did he do?
What assurance did Isaiah give him?
What was meant by "the angel of Jehovah"?
When did the angel smite the Assyrians?
How many were slain?
How did it affect the Assyrians?
What happened to Sennacherib?

Practical Thoughts

Upon whom should we rely?
How can man fill the position designed for him?
What must be understood respecting God's promises?
Why do good and bad both call on God?

Lesson XIV—September 30, 1934

ISAIAH PREDICTS CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Isa. 2: 1-4; 9: 1-7.

1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

3 And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.

4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

1 But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as in the day of Midian.

5 For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall be for burning, for fuel of fire.

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Dan. 2: 44.)

TIME.—About 760 B.C. for sections 1 and 2; 740 for sections 3-5.

PLACE.—Possibly Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Isaiah and the people of Judah.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 15: 1-5.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

September 24.	M.	-----Kingdom for Both Jews and Gentiles (John 10: 14-18)
September 25.	T.	-----The King Exalted (Phil. 2: 5-11)
September 26.	W.	-----A Spiritual Kingdom (John 18: 33-37)
September 27.	T.	-----Entered by a Spiritual Birth (John 3: 5-15)
September 28.	F.	-----Contains Spiritual Blessings (Rom. 14: 13-23)
September 29.	S.	-----Began after Death of Christ (Matt. 21: 33-43)
September 30.	S.	-----Our Citizenship Is in Heaven (Phil. 3: 17-21)

LESSON OUTLINE.

Introductory Study.

I. Jehovah's House to Be Established in Zion (Verses 1-3).

II. Christ's Kingdom a Spiritual One (Verse 4).

- III. Kingdom to Include Gentiles (Isa. 9: 1-5).
 - IV. "The Prince of Peace" (Verse 6).
 - V. "Upon the Throne of David" (Verse 7).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Scope of Isaiah's Work.—Isaiah began his prophetic labors several years before the captivity of Israel, and completed it probably more than a half century before the captivity of Judah. The opening statement of his book (1: 1) calls it a vision of Isaiah "concerning Judah and Jerusalem." While it was doubtless his main purpose to reveal things pertaining to the kingdom of Judah, yet his teachings and predictions included others also. It is usual—even necessary—for historians and prophets to make more or less extended references to those who in some way are related to the people under review. In chapter seven, mentioned in our last lesson, Isaiah definitely foretells the captivity and final destruction of the kingdom of Israel. In chapters 13-23 will be found predictions against Babylon, Moab, Egypt, Damascus, and Tyre.

Judah's Captivity.—The two great events in Judah's history as a kingdom were their captivity in Babylon for seventy years, and their return to their own land. Their sins, apostasies, and idolatries that led to the former, and the promise of God which made the latter necessary, furnished the reasons for much that Isaiah said to them and about them. In this particular, later prophets followed his example and made many references to the subject. A period of bondage, second only to that of their ancestors in Egypt, naturally occupied the attention of their prophets and teachers. The amazing thing, evidence of human weakness and proneness to forget is the fact that the experience of their fathers did not keep them out of similar trouble.

Messiah's Kingdom.—Isaiah's book, like the Psalms, contains many statements that are quoted by New Testament writers and applied to some phase of Christ's kingdom. In his peculiarly lofty style, he sometimes directly refers to Christ or his kingdom. Sometimes the apostles quote the substance of his words, because the sentiment or form of expression fits the kingdom of Christ as well as the thing to which direct reference is made. When the prophet changes from things pertaining to temporal Israel to describe spiritual Israel in some feature, he gives no indication that he intends such change—in fact, it is likely that he, though inspired, did not himself realize the import and application of his words in such cases. Without such note of change of subject, great care must be exercised lest we apply some passage to Christ's kingdom that was meant for fleshly Israel. If a New Testament writer so applies a text, we are safe in doing likewise. Others substantially the same in meaning, or too lofty to fit the temporal kingdom, probably should be so applied.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jehovah's House to Be Established in Zion (Verses 1-3)

"*In the Last Days.*"—Verse 1 says this word that Isaiah saw concerned "Judah and Jerusalem." Verses 2-4, as the facts easily show,

refer to the establishment of Christ's kingdom, not to literal Jerusalem or the kingdom of Judah. The expression "latter days" sometimes means the latter part of some stated period (2 Tim. 3: 1), but in this text it refers to the Christian dispensation in contrast with the Jewish, former days and latter days being the contrasting expressions. This view is necessary, since Christ's kingdom would have to come within the limits of the Christian age. Beginning the first day of that age would not change this fact.

"Shall Be Exalted."—The word "mountain" when used figuratively, as it is in this verse, means something eminent or exalted. The "mountain of the Lord's house" expresses the idea that the Lord's kingdom is an exalted institution. To be established "on the top" of the mountains (the margin says, "at the head") indicates that in majesty and power it was to surpass or be above all other institutions. The words, "exalted above the hills," mean the same thing; for, it was a common Hebrew custom to express the same truth or fact in two different sets of words.

"All Nations."—Isaiah here declares that when this kingdom was established, people from all nations would flow into it. This is a distinguishing peculiarity of Christ's kingdom, because not true of earthly nations, and not even true of the Jewish nation. Many peoples—meaning the same as all nations—would hear of its benefits and decide to enter it. Nothing would prevent, for the conditions would be the same to all, its door open to all. Those who decide to enter would want the Lord's teaching, and would be required to walk in his paths. This universal nature of the kingdom could not be declared more plainly. This truth caused many Jews to reject Jesus as the Messiah; his kingdom was not what they supposed it must be.

Place of Beginning.—Again the prophet uses the double expression and says that "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." These words can only mean, by any fair construction, that Christ's kingdom was to begin in the city of Jerusalem. Any church that did not begin in Jerusalem is not the one Isaiah predicted and Jesus established. Jesus endorsed Jerusalem as the beginning place. (Luke 24: 47.) The time of beginning was the day of Pentecost, when repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ was first preached, the thing Jesus said would happen. (See Acts 2: 38.)

II. Christ's Kingdom a Spiritual One (Verse 4)

"He Will Judge."—In this new kingdom that Isaiah foresaw, Jehovah would judge "between nations" and decide "concerning many people." Of course the law of God had been the rule of conduct in the old Jewish kingdom, but the prophet here probably means that the judging and deciding had reference to what nations and peoples would be allowed to enter the Messiah's kingdom. If it had been left to the Jews, only they would have been permitted to enter, unless others became adopted into the Jewish family. In other words, they would have brought their practice on this point into the new kingdom. Isaiah had just said that all nations would flow into it. In this verse he shows that Jehovah would be the judge as to *how* they should enter. The facts show that his decision was that they

come as they are without being required to change their nationality. This fact was the most distasteful to the Jews of anything pertaining to Christ's kingdom.

Swords and Spears.—The spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom is beautifully and forcefully expressed by saying, "they shall beat their swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks." In the Jewish kingdom, because it was a real earthly kingdom, God allowed and commanded defense by the sword. The feature is plainly excluded from Christ's kingdom by his own words. He said his kingdom was not of this world, and refused to let his disciples use the carnal sword. (John 18: 36; Matt. 26: 51, 52.) The Christian's means of defense is the sword of the Spirit. (Eph. 6: 17.) When people of all nationalities became a "holy nation" (1 Pet. 2: 9) in Christ's kingdom, they were to leave their carnal weapons out. Though formerly enemies, not so in the new relationship. To say the prophet meant that political nations would cease to have disagreements and wars is to miss the point of his prophecy. The twenty-seven hundred years that have elapsed since Isaiah's day prove that was not his meaning; warfare among nations has continued. In another highly figurative passage, Isaiah said: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in my holy mountain." (Isa. 11: 9.) So the carnal warfare was to be excluded from the Lord's kingdom; so teaches the New Testament.

III. Kingdom to Include Gentiles (Isa. 9: 1-5)

"In the Former Time."—In this section Isaiah definitely extends the promise of the Messiah's kingdom to the Gentiles by mentioning Gentile territory and telling what would come to them. The general statement of 2: 1-3 is here specifically explained. The territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, the general section about Lake Galilee, is the country referred to. This section had suffered by the Assyrian invasion under Tiglath-pileser. (2 Kings 15: 29; 1 Chron. 5: 26.) In that time there was anguish, and the land was brought into contempt. But in the latter time—that foreseen by the prophet—this same country would be made glorious by being the scene of much of the labors of the Messiah.

"A Great Light."—This territory belonged to the kingdom of Israel. When they were taken captive, it was repopled by heathen. This led to the deep moral and spiritual darkness that had overspread the land when Jesus came to earth. Centuries of mingling idolatry with a perversion of Moses' law brought a most deplorable state described as "the shadow of death." It was in this very country that Jesus as "a great light" did most of his teaching and mighty works. It was after Jesus made Capernaum his place of residence that he quoted this prophecy as having fulfillment in himself. (Matt. 4: 12-17.) With his benign influence as the "Sun of Righteousness," he shined upon that benighted country.

Great Joy.—In the blessings Christ's kingdom brought to them, as well as to all others walking in darkness, there was great joy such as men have in the harvest, or when they divide the spoil. In Christ their burdens as a yoke were removed, the staff laid upon the shoulder had been lifted, and the rod of the oppressor broken. The conquests of Christ were glorious as Gideon's defeat of the Midianites.

(Judges 7: 16-25.) The peace and joy they were to have in Christ was represented as permanent by saying that all the armor and bloody garments were to be fuel for fire. Burned because no longer to be needed.

IV. "The Prince of Peace" (Verse 6)

"A Son Is Given."—From the permanent joy that the Messiah's kingdom would bring to those in the shadow of death, the prophet turns to a glorious description of the king himself. Using what is called the prophetic present tense of the verb, he says a child "is" born, a son "is" given. Clearly his meaning is that a child "will be" born. The present tense is used to make it emphatic; the event is considered so certain that it is spoken of as if it had already occurred. In fact, the past tense is sometimes used in the same way to express a future event. (See verse 2.) This use of the verbs "is" and "have" will furnish the key to understanding several passages in the New Testament. (See Matt. 3: 10; Mark 9: 31; 1 Cor. 15: 12; Heb. 3: 14.)

His Names.—Perhaps the titles and names Isaiah uses to describe the Messiah's glorious majesty are best left without effort at comment or explanation. They are appropriately grand without addition or subtraction. Instead of two words "Wonderful" and "Counselor," the margin gives "Wonderful counselor." "Mighty God" is supposed to mean the prevailing or conquering God. "Everlasting Father" indicates the enduring nature of his work, and "Prince of Peace" the nature of his kingdom. The latter expression is further proof that his kingdom is not a fleshly, but a spiritual one.

V. "Upon the Throne of David" (Verse 7)

No End of Reign.—The statement that there was to be no end of his reign is to be understood as meaning that he would have no successors on the throne, as did the Jewish and other earthly kings. That he would turn the kingdom—reign—back to the Father at his second coming is the plain assertion of Paul. (1 Cor. 15: 24-26.) But preceding that event, he reigns uninterruptedly without successors. This uninterrupted reign proves he did not begin till after his resurrection; or, viewing him as a priest instead of king, his priesthood did not begin till after his ascension. (Heb. 8: 4.) Heb. 10: 12, 13 definitely fixes the beginning of his reign at the time he sat down at God's right hand after the ascension. So between that event and his second coming, his reign continues without change. It follows, then, that if Christ is not now reigning, he never will. There is no place before his ascension or after his return for it.

On David's Throne.—It is conceded by all that Christ's reign, regardless of when it is, will be upon David's throne. Those who deny that Christ is not now on David's throne, also say Christ's kingdom is not yet established. This contention is unavoidable, since this text says his reign is on David's throne. Any proof that shows that Christ now reigns is equal proof that he is on David's throne. The evidence presented in the preceding paragraph is decisive proof on this point. The angel, Gabriel, told Mary that Jesus would do exactly what Isaiah here says would be done. (Luke 1: 30-33.) To sit upon David's throne meant that he, as a descendant of David,

would be a ruling king. It was not to be a kingdom "of this world"; Jesus said so. According to both Jesus and Isaiah it was to include Gentiles. (John 10: 16.) When Jesus came no descendant of David had been upon his earthly throne for about four centuries. His ruling house had fallen. The prophet Amos said that God would raise up the tabernacle of David that had fallen, and do it that the Gentiles might call on his name. (Amos 9: 11, 12.) The apostle James defended the reception of Gentiles into the church, a thing that had already occurred, by quoting this passage as proof. (Acts 15: 13-18.) As the restoring of David's house meant a descendant must become king, and this had to be done "that" the Gentiles might have his name called upon them, then Christ was on David's throne, or James made a mistake in his use of the prophecy. As this cannot be, Christ is now on David's throne.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Worldly kingdoms with all their wealth and glory have risen and fallen as the centuries have come and gone; new ones builded upon the ashes of others to be finally succeeded by others still. The kingdom of Christ, without ostentation or earthly glory, towers above them all as the stately mountain rises above the hills.

2. Christ's kingdom is none the less real because it is of a spiritual nature. The church is called a kingdom because in certain particulars it is like an earthly kingdom. Heaven is our capital city (Phil. 3: 20) where our king resides; we, his citizens, serve him on earth where we abide.

3. Christ's kingdom is the only one on earth that receives into its territory subjects from all nations and classes on precisely the same terms.

4. It is the only kingdom that in fact deserves the title kingdom of peace. Its King is "Prince of Peace"; it forbids the use of the carnal sword; it gives its subjects peace of soul.

5. That Christ fulfilled the prophecies by actually sitting upon David's throne is proof that promises will all be fulfilled.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the scope of Isaiah's work.
What is necessary for historians to do?
What other peoples are included in his prophecies?
What are the two great events in Judah's history?
What else do we find in his book?
How do the New Testament writers quote his prophecies?
Why must we use great care in applying prophecies to the church?

I

What is the reference in verses 2-4?
How is the expression "latter days" used?
What is the meaning of the term "mountain" here?
What is meant by "on the top" of the mountains?
What common Hebrew expression is used here?
What distinguishing peculiarity of the kingdom is stated?
What fact was especially hard for the Jews to accept?
What place of beginning is named?
How did Jesus endorse this?
How does one know that Pentecost was the time?

II

What was meant by judging and deciding?

What was God's decision on this point? How does he show the spiritual nature of the kingdom?

What did Jesus say of his kingdom?

What shows the prophet did not mean political kingdoms?

What additional evidence is there from Isaiah?

III

What is the general point in this section?

What territory is mentioned?

How had this country suffered?

What was the condition of the people when Christ came?

How does the prophet describe Christ?

When did Jesus quote this prophecy?

How did the prophet indicate the peace was permanent?

IV

What is described in this section?

Why did he say "is" born?

Give New Testament examples of the same use?

How may these names be explained?

V

What is meant by Christ's kingdom having "no end"?

What proved his uninterrupted reign?

What is the teaching of Heb. 8: 4?

What is the teaching of Heb. 10: 12, 13?

If Christ now reigns, what about his throne?

What did the angel tell Mary?

What evidence is in Amos 9: 11, 12;

Acts 15: 13-18?

Practical Thoughts

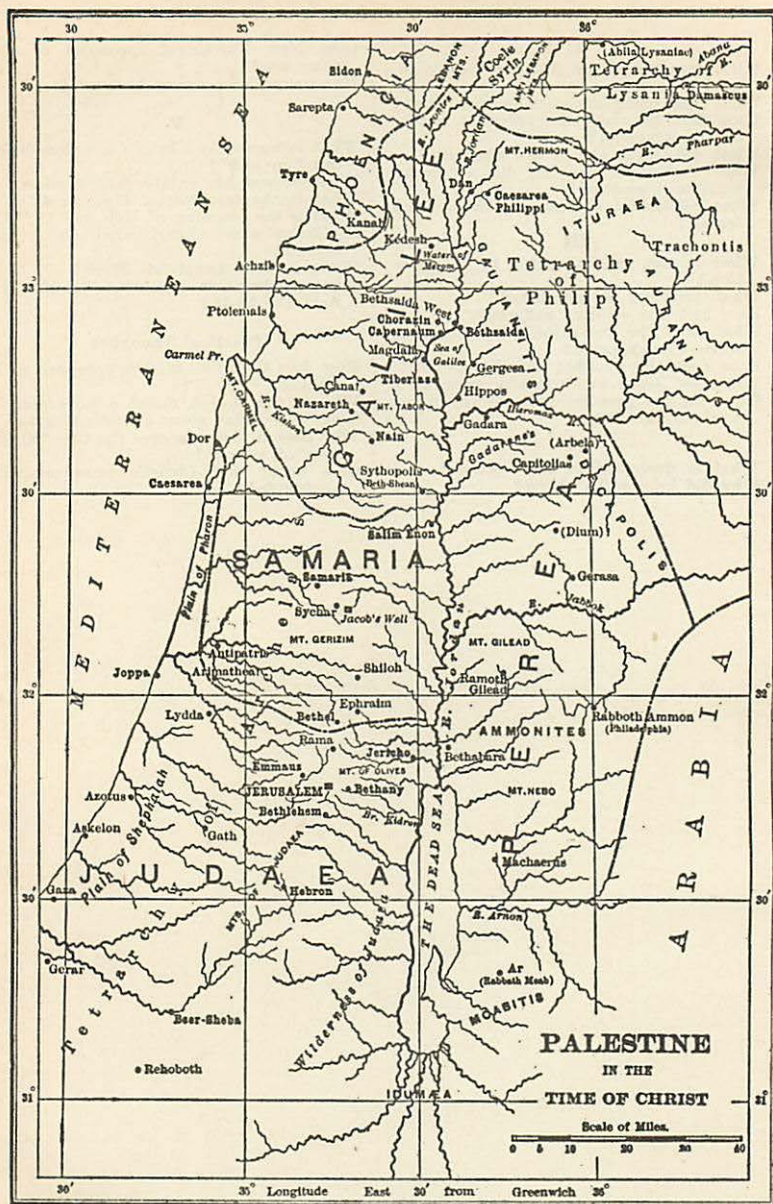
How does Christ's kingdom compare with others?

Why is the church called a kingdom?

What is peculiar about Christ's kingdom?

Why does it alone deserve the title "kingdom of peace"?

Give proof that Christ's promises will be fulfilled.



FOURTH QUARTER

STUDIES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

AIM: *To interpret and deepen Christian experience by showing how it is rooted in Christian faith, develops by study and worship, and expresses itself in Christian attitudes and service.*

Lesson I—October 7, 1934

FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST

John 15: 1-16.

- 1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.
- 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.
- 3 Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you.
- 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.
- 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing.
- 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.
- 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.
- 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples.
- 9 Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love.
- 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.
- 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.
- 12 This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.
- 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
- 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.
- 15 No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you.
- 16 Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me."* (John 15: 4.)

TIME.—Thursday night before the crucifixion.

PLACE.—Upper room in Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the eleven.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 4: 18-25.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

- | | | |
|------------|----|---|
| October 1. | M. | Christ's Relationship to Us (John 15: 1-7) |
| October 2. | T. | Our Relationship to Christ (John 15: 8-16) |
| October 3. | W. | Abraham the Friend of God (James 2: 18-26) |
| October 4. | T. | God Speaking with Moses (Ex. 33: 9-16) |
| October 5. | F. | Jesus the Friend of Lazarus (John 11: 1-11) |
| October 6. | S. | Jesus the Friend of Sinners (Luke 7: 39-50) |
| October 7. | S. | Choosing Companions in Service (Matt. 4: 18-25) |

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Relationship of Vine and Branches (Verses 1-3).
- II. Branches Must Abide in the Vine (Verses 4-6).
- III. Disciples Glorify God in Fruit Bearing (Verses 7, 8).
- IV. How to Abide in Christ's Love (Verses 9-13).
- V. Christ's Followers Are His Friends (Verses 14-16).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Farewell Discourse.—Our lesson text is a part of Jesus' farewell discourse on the evening before his crucifixion. The entire speech (chapters 14-16) was delivered in the room where he and the apostles had just eaten the last passover supper. Apparently the discourse followed the establishment of the Lord's Supper. After the prayer that followed (chapter 17), he and the eleven went to the Garden of Gethsemane, where he was arrested that night and brought before the Jewish and Roman authorities early in the morning.

To Whom Applicable?—The circumstances under which this address was delivered made it impossible for a general audience, either of the people or his disciples, to hear it. As single families or small groups ate the passover supper together, Jesus and his apostles made one such company, and no others were present. The eleven apostles (Judas having already left, John 13: 30) were the ones who actually heard Jesus speak these words. This, however, does not mean that all he said was applicable to them only. That he said some things that were for them exclusively is undoubtedly true, but not everything. The promise of the Holy Spirit as a comforter (guide or director) to take his place after he went away was most certainly applicable to them only. Applying these promises to all Christians, as Jesus did to the apostles, is to miss his teaching, and misrepresent him. The following passages refer to the special power of the Spirit (called a baptism, Acts 1: 5, 8) which the apostles had to have to qualify them for the work Jesus authorized them to do: John 14: 16, 17, 25; 15: 26, 27; 16: 7-15.

Things Common to All.—The special classes in the church, such as apostles, elders, deacons, and evangelists, are all, nevertheless, Christians. Any commands affecting Christian duty or Christian benefits would go to all alike; any commands pertaining to the work of some special class would belong to that class alone. Whatever was a common duty for Christians fell upon apostles, since, as individuals, they were disciples or Christians just as others; whatever they needed in power and qualification, as apostles, to do apostolic work we do not need, nor do we receive. Those who imagine they receive the Spirit as did the apostles are simply mistaken. They rely upon their feelings, instead of what Jesus said.

LESSON NOTES

I. Relationship of Vine and Branches (Verses 1-3)

The Occasion.—As it was the habit of Jesus to illustrate spiritual truths through the medium of common objects, his reference here to

the vine, branches, and fruit is a most natural one. Some have thought that this sermon was delivered after leaving the supper room, and while on the way to Gethsemane. They imagine that the vines they were passing suggested the comparison. But in a country where vines were grown so generally such a comparison might have been made at any time. It seems more probable that its use in the Old Testament might have suggested its use by Jesus. The prophets represented God as taking a vine out of Egypt and planting it in Canaan, saying definitely he had reference to the Israelites. (Isa. 5: 1-7; Ps. 80: 8-10.) Nothing was more appropriate than using the same figure to indicate the relationship of Christ and his disciples. None more touchingly explains the relationship, or more strikingly shows the necessity of being "in Christ" as the source of spiritual life.

"The True Vine."—Natural vines might be called "true" because of the kind claimed for them, or because they bear good fruit in contrast with those that bear bad fruit or none at all; but Jesus probably refers to himself as the "true vine" because he fulfilled the old covenant types and was, therefore, the real Messiah that was to come. He was, of course, the real Christ in contrast with all others who might make such claims. Other comparisons show the vital nature of the disciples to Jesus with equal force and clearness, if not with as much tenderness. The one body and temple are examples. (Eph. 2: 15-22.)

Husbandman.—By saying, "my Father is the husbandman," Jesus represents God as related to the church as the owner to the vineyard, with the natural right to have it cared for in any way needed. This was the relationship God claimed for himself under the old covenant. (Isa. 5: 1-7.) This is also indicated in the New Testament use of the expression "church of God." Care of a vineyard involves removing dead branches, and pruning others to increase the quantity and quality of fruit.

"Already Ye Are Clean."—As the figure has not been changed, the word "cleanseth," verse 2, and the word "clean," verse 3, must be understood in the sense of pruning. The dead branches are cut off, but the fruit-bearing ones are pruned to make them bear more fruit. The pruning process for the apostles had already been done through Christ's words. During his ministry they had been with him, heard his teaching, and by it prepared themselves like pruned branches to bear the fruit required when the proper season arrived. That came on the following Pentecost when, qualified by the Spirit as Jesus promised them, they began their fruit-bearing work in the church. As they were prepared for their fruit bearing through Christ's words so are we.

II. Branches Must Abide in the Vine (Verses 4-6)

Nature's Lesson.—A natural fact, denied by none, is that the very moment a branch is severed from the vine its fruit-bearing possibilities are destroyed, regardless of the condition of the branch before being removed. This fact is used by Jesus to illustrate a more vital one—namely, out of Christ no one can bear fruit unto eternal life. This spiritual truth cannot be denied by any one who has proper respect for Christ's authority. Our only course is to either accept

the fact stated, or deny that Jesus stated the truth. Nature's law we *must* accept; Christ's application we *must* believe, if we are to have his approval.

"Abide in Me."—Christ's abiding in us depends upon our abiding in him. That he means a spiritual relationship, not a fleshly one, is too evident to even need stating. It means that we stand in a relationship that he approves and will bless. When he applied these words to the apostles, they stood in such relationship as individual disciples. When the church became an established institution on Pentecost, they still stood in an approved relationship, but as foundation stones in the temple—church—of God. (Eph. 2: 21, 22.) Since that time not only they, but all others, are "in Christ" when they become members of the church, of which as a body he is the head. (Eph. 1: 22, 23.) He meant for the apostles to continue to abide in him; he means for us to do the same.

"Ye Are the Branches."—The expression, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," indicates the individual and personal relationship of Christ and his disciples. He could not have meant denominational churches by the term "branches," for no such thing existed for many centuries later. Besides, he said: "He that abideth in me, and I in him." In the next verse, he says, "If a man abide not in me." Such language would not have been used, if he had had any reference to churches as branches. A worse perversion of a text could hardly be made than trying to make this one sustain the modern "branch church" idea.

A Contrast.—Those abiding "in Christ" bear "much fruit"; those not remaining in that state of approval, like severed branches, cannot bear fruit because cut off from fruit-bearing life. As the withered branches are burned so the fruitless branches in the spiritual vine will be rejected and lost. The Lord's reasoning here is too plain for misunderstanding.

III. Disciples Glorify God in Fruit Bearing (Verses 7, 8)

"If Ye Abide in Me."—This verse shows that acceptability of our prayers depends upon our relationship to Jesus. This is a general truth that applies to us just as it did to the apostles to whom Jesus spoke these words. The promise that our requests will be granted is made conditionally. Two things are necessary to assure its fulfillment: (1) If we abide in him. (2) If his words abide in us. To be in him—in his church—is to be under his approval. To abide in a state having the Lord's approval is the only consistent thing. Those in rebellion against God and Christ are not in the proper condition to pray. Praying God for blessings while in rebellion is a palpable absurdity. If his words abide in us, we will ask only for things consistent with his will. Such an one, even with some human faults, will be striving to honor Christ. Such fellowship entitles one to blessings that are in harmony with God's will; without such fellowship our prayers are worthless.

The Father's Glory.—In such fellowship and its consequent "much fruit" there will be the glory of God. A life so remarkably in harmony with God's will that the prayers are answered will have a remarkable influence on others; many will be led to Christ. God will be glorified both in the individual's obedience, and the good it will

accomplish in reaching others. It is an honor to the husbandman if he has a good vineyard with fruitful vines; so it is an honor to God for those in Christ to bear much fruit. "So shall ye be my disciples" means that you will continue to be my disciples. That means that if they did not bear fruit, they would cease to be his disciples.

IV. How to Abide in Christ's Love (Verses 9-13)

"Abide Ye in My Love."—The command to abide in his love suggested the thought of telling how it is done. The sap flows from the vine into the branch, which in turn makes the fruit from the life thus furnished. The visible appearance of fruit is evidence that the sap is there. As God loved Jesus, and he in turn loved the Father, so Christ loves us, and we in turn should love him. Jesus made his own obedience to the Father's commands the evidence of his love to the Father just as he makes our keeping his commandments evidence of our love to him. He said he did his Father's commandments that the world might know he loved the Father. (John 14: 31 and verse 10 of our text.) Just as fruit is proof that sap is in the branch so obedience is proof that love for Christ is in our hearts. Those who say they love the Lord, and yet fail or refuse to obey him are self-deceived.

Source of Joy.—The Lord declared that he had spoken these things that his joy might continue or remain in them; their continued obedience would be a source of continuous joy to him. Such would also enable them to make their joy full—complete their joy, or fill their hearts with it. Another source of this joy would be to love one another as he had loved them. A loving service to others would bring much real joy; how much, only those who render such service know. No greater love could any one have than to lay down his life for his friends. The Lord went further than that by laying down his life for his enemies. When one gives his life for another, he has gone the limit of what he can do. Jesus' act next day was an example of his words. If his love was such that he could die for them, and his enemies as well, they could at least show by acts that they loved each other. The sources of full joy were at their command; why not use them? A searching question for our hearts, too.

V. Christ's Followers Are His Friends (Verses 14-16)

Friendship Conditional.—Having stated that the greatest proof of friendship was to give one's life for another (a thing he was to do next day), Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you." The statement means you will show that you are my friends by your obedience, and will continue to remain my friends by continual obedience. A failure here would forfeit the friendship. Friendship is an individual feature of our relationship to Christ. To use the name "Friends' Church," as some do, is without any scriptural reason. Might as well say, "Brethren Church," "Saints' Church," or "Disciples' Church." Individual traits of Christian character are not appropriate as names for the church as a body.

Servants Versus Friends.—That the apostles were servants, in fact, in the sense that they did what Jesus commanded, is clear from this lesson as well as the fact that they sometimes so designate themselves. Ordinarily a servant does not know what his master does—that is,

why he does certain things. His duty is to obey, not to know what reasons the master has. But Jesus had taken them into a closer and more intimate relationship, that of friends to share in the joys of service because of knowledge as to the Master's purpose. He had revealed to them the Father's motives in asking for their service. The same is true of faithful servants now, even though we are not apostles. He assured them that his love would be lasting. Of his own will he chose them, and would be true to his choice; he has done the same in extending the offer of salvation to all men. Only disobedience will destroy that fellowship.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. When God planted the Jews as a vineyard in the land of Canaan, he gave them all care and protection needed. Rightfully he asked for good fruit, but they "brought forth wild grapes," for which God rejected them. (Isa. 5: 1-7.) In like manner those in the spiritual vineyard that do not produce good fruit will be cut down and burned—rejected.

2. Dead and fruitless branches are worthless, really damage the vine, and make the vineyard look uninviting. Church members, too dead to bear fruit, damage the church and disgust those who might otherwise be interested. God in due time will remove such branches.

3. Faithfulness in any work honors not only the worker, but also the author or institution requiring the labor. Cutting off a branch leaves the vine with its fruit-bearing food ready to supply other branches that have life enough to bear fruit. Christ blesses the faithful, regardless of how many become faithless.

4. Obedience puts one into Christ; continued obedience keeps him in Christ's favor.

5. Intimate friendship is one of life's choicest blessings. Its value increases with the worth of friends. None can be better than the Master of all. His friendship is earth's greatest blessing.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Of what is our lesson text a part?
When and where was this discourse delivered?
Who only heard it, and why?
What part is applicable to all Christians?
What applies to the apostles alone?
What special passages apply to the apostles?

I

What habit of Jesus does this lesson show?
What do some think suggested this comparison?
What else may have suggested it?

How did Isaiah and David use it?
In what sense is he called the "true" vine?
How does Jesus represent the Father?
What is meant by the words "cleanseth" and "clean"?
When did the fruit-bearing season begin for the apostles?

II

What is the natural fact here referred to?
What is the lesson Jesus draws from it?
What depends upon our abiding in Christ?
What is meant by being "in" Christ?
What shows Jesus means a personal relationship?
What shows he could not mean "branch churches"?
What contrast does Jesus make?

III

What are conditions of acceptable prayers?
 Why is each condition necessary?
 Why will complying with these conditions glorify God?
 What is meant by shall be my disciples?

IV

What command did Jesus give them?
 Of what is fruit evidence?
 What is the evidence of love in the heart?
 Why did Jesus speak these things?
 What did he say was the greatest evidence of love?
 What other source of joy did he mention?

V

What did Jesus call them?
 Upon what condition would they be friends?
 What is the full meaning of his words?
 Why is "Friends' Church" an unscriptural name?
 In what sense are all Christians servants?
 Why did Jesus say they were friends?

Practical Thoughts

What will happen to those who do not bear fruit?
 Why are fruitless branches worthless?
 Who is honored by faithfulness?
 What does obedience do for us?
 What is earth's greatest blessing?

Lesson II—October 14, 1934

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS BIBLE

Acts 8: 26-39.

26 But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert.

27 And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship;

28 And he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.

29 And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this,

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
 And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,
 So he openeth not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:
 His generation, who shall declare?
 For his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?

35 And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Oh, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day." (Ps. 119: 97.)

TIME.—About 35 A.D.

PLACE.—On the way from Jerusalem to Gaza.

PERSONS.—Philip and the eunuch.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 119: 41-48.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:—

October 8.	M.	.....	The Word of God (Isa. 55: 6-13)
October 9.	T.	.....	A Teacher Wanted (Acts 8: 26-31)
October 10.	W.	.....	A Teachable Hearer (Acts 8: 32-40)
October 11.	T.	.....	A Fruitful Hearer (James 2: 19-27)
October 12.	F.	.....	The Holy Spirit as Author (2 Tim. 3: 12-17)
October 13.	S.	.....	The Holy Spirit as Teacher (1 Cor. 2: 6-16)
October 14.	S.	.....	Happy in the Truth (Ps. 119: 41-48)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Philip Sent to Meet the Eunuch (Verses 26-29).
- II. Philip's Question, the Eunuch's Answer (Verses 30, 31).
- III. Philip's Sermon (Verses 32-35).
- IV. The Eunuch Baptized (Verses 36-39).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

The Jerusalem Church.—According to the prophecies and the teaching of Jesus, the church as an institution began in Jerusalem. The congregation there was of necessity the first congregation established. It began with glorious indications of speedy success, but soon found itself the object of severe persecutions. Stephen, its first martyr, made a bold defense for the truth, and his enemies were not "able to withstand the wisdom and Spirit by which he spake." (Acts 6: 10.) Being deeply angered by his cutting charges, they rushed upon him mob-like, cast him out of the city, and stoned him to death. This event started that day a great persecution against the church, which caused a general dispersion of the saints. Apparently this occurred soon after the funeral of Stephen. Though the brethren were fleeing for their lives, for some reason the apostles thought it necessary to remain there, which they did regardless of the imminent danger to themselves.

"Preaching the Word."—This forced dispersion, though it brought the brethren much inconvenience and personal loss, yet was a circumstance that did much toward carrying out the commission to "go into all the world." The record says that they "went about preaching the word." Being driven from home, and fleeing for safety did not cool their ardor for the gospel; they preached it in the new fields into which they were driven. They had gladly received it themselves; doubtless they felt that all others should share in its blessings; and persecutions could not prevent their telling it. If they had been led by human wisdom they probably would have decided that it was the part of prudence and good sense to say little about the church or its founder. Stephen's fate would have been considered a warning against any heroic efforts to propagate the faith. But as an eminent Bible critic (J. W. McGarvey) once said: "This time-serving expediency was reserved for the disgrace of a later age." What a misfortune to the church that all members do not have the zeal for spreading the gospel that characterized these brethren of the first congregation!

Philip in Samaria.—After the general statement that they were scattered abroad, Luke next relates the personal labor of Philip as

we have it in the eighth chapter of Acts. Jesus had given the order of procedure as Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. (Acts 1: 8.) Philip being the first one to take the gospel to Samaria, it was natural for Luke to make his labors a part of his own record. It was while Philip was engaged in this Samaritan work that he was sent to the place where the incidents of our lesson occurred.

LESSON NOTES

I. Philip Sent to Meet the Eunuch (Verses 26-29)

Divine Directions.—Human wisdom, influenced by such success as Philip had in Samaria, doubtless would have said remain there, but divine wisdom often overrules the decisions made by human judgment. Without assigning any reason, so far as the record indicates, for changing his field of labor an angel of the Lord said to him, "Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza." Gaza was a Philistine city near the Mediterranean Sea, and about forty miles southwest of Jerusalem. It was on the direct course from Jerusalem to Egypt and of course the way the eunuch would go in returning to his home. Philip in traveling a general southern direction would intersect this road somewhere before it reached Gaza. As Abraham obeyed when called to go to another land (Heb. 11: 8) so Philip "arose and went."

An Ethiopian Treasurer.—The person Philip was sent to meet was a man of Ethiopia, an officer of high authority in the court of Candace the queen. That he was a person of prominence is seen in the fact that he had charge of all her treasure. Just what the eunuch's nationality was is not certainly known. That he occupied a position in the government of much importance might be considered presumptive proof that he was an Ethiopian. However the fact that he had been up to Jerusalem to worship must also receive consideration in trying to settle this question. Since all male Jews were required to attend the three great feasts at Jerusalem each year, it is possible that he, being a Jew, was going in obedience to that law. In that case the conclusion would be that he was a Jew, but had gained a position of trust in the country where he lived. If he was a native Ethiopian, then he had been proselyted to the Jewish religion. The former view seems the more probable one. Whatever his nationality, he was certainly pious and anxious to know more of God's word. His reading the Scriptures as the chariot moved along shows his interest in divine things.

"The Spirit Said."—This circumstance shows the power of divine foreknowledge. The angel knew just when to start Philip on his journey of near a hundred miles, so that he would meet the eunuch after he left Jerusalem. The Lord knew the eunuch would receive the truth when he heard it. Of himself Philip had no means of knowing this, or what traveler he should accost, if any. But when he sees the eunuch, divine power intervenes, and the Spirit tells him to join himself to the chariot. It should be noted that the angel and Spirit both spake to the preacher, not the man to be saved. The miracles brought the preacher and candidate together; after that the preacher and the gospel finished the work till the man was ready to obey.

II. Philip's Question, the Eunuch's Answer (Verses 30, 31)

"Do You Understand?"—Philip *"heard him reading,"* which shows that he was reading aloud. This he may have done to impress the thoughts on his own mind, or for the benefit of any servant or driver that may have been with him. The audible reading enabled Philip to know what scripture he was reading. It being the prophetic description of Christ's death in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, Philip knew at once he could not understand that unless he had learned the gospel of Christ. Though the question seemed abrupt, it was the very one to elicit the answer needed to show Philip how to proceed. Much preaching is lost because it does not fit the people for whom it was designed. Philip's question prevented that mistake in this case.

"How Can I?"—The eunuch's answer was brief, definite, and showed plainly that he was not a Christian; if so, he would have understood the prophet's words as applying to Christ. By asking how he could understand it without some one to guide him, he was conceding the fact that he did not understand it. He invited Philip to sit with him in the chariot, and this meant he wanted an explanation of the words he had been reading. Knowing by this exchange of questions that the eunuch was not saved, Philip knew just how to proceed. It probably then occurred to him that the conversion of this man was the divine reason why the angel directed him to leave Samaria at the time. These verses do not mean that sinners cannot understand what the Bible says they must do to be saved, unless they receive some miraculous spiritual enlightenment. Not possessing a New Testament, for it was not then written, and not having heard any gospel preacher, he did not know the fulfillment of this prophecy. When Philip explained its fulfillment in Christ, he did understand. We can understand the written explanation as well as he did the spoken.

III. Philip's Sermon (Verses 32-35)

The Text.—In this case the eunuch furnished a most suitable passage of scripture as a text or foundation for Philip's sermon. The eunuch was reading Isaiah, fifty-third chapter, which is conceded to be the most beautiful and touching prophecy of Christ's death to be found anywhere. The part he was reading at the time, as quoted by Luke, was from verses seven and eight. It represents Christ's being led to his death as sheep are led to the slaughter; and as the animals are dumb, so Christ opened not his mouth—that is, he offered no defense for himself with the purpose of evading the crucifixion. In his trial justice was denied him, and no one was found to declare his righteousness, or otherwise defend him. He submitted to the awful injustice without bitterness or complaint, even praying for those who clamored for his death.

The Eunuch's Perplexity.—Such language showed that the event was a momentous matter, whoever the prophet might have in mind. He asked Philip if the prophet meant himself, or some other man. Evidently nothing ever occurred in the prophet's case to warrant such lofty expressions. The man's perplexity, with no knowledge of the gospel of Christ, is not at all surprising.

"Beginning from This Scripture."—This expression means that he used the prophet's words as the starting point of his sermon, the text

upon which the sermon was based. The statement that he "preached unto him Jesus" is certain evidence that the prophet meant Jesus. The words, "preach Jesus," are very often misunderstood. No one would deny that preaching Jesus included preaching his death, burial, and resurrection; or, as the case is sometimes put in a quotation from Paul, "Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Cor. 2: 2.) But that cannot be made to mean that Paul used no other words in his sermons than that "Jesus Christ was crucified." Such an absurdity would not be defended by any one. To "preach Jesus" means to preach all the facts that constitute the evidence that he is the Christ; it also means to preach all the commands he has given as terms of salvation; and it means to preach all the blessings he has promised to the obedient. No one would care for the facts of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, except as they are related to the truth that he is the Savior of the world. This requires preaching the commands of Christ. But his commands would not be interesting except for the blessings offered. Acts 8: 5 says that in Samaria Philip "proclaimed unto them the Christ." Verse 12 says they believed "Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ." So preaching Christ means to preach anything pertaining to salvation through him—facts, commands, and promises.

IV. The Eunuch Baptized (Verses 36-39)

"The Same Is Best."—When Philip was told to leave Samaria and go south till he reached the road going from Jerusalem to Gaza, the explanation was added, "the same is desert." Some apply the term "desert" to Gaza, others to the country through which part of the road passed. Some have even stressed the latter idea as furnishing some proof against the eunuch's being immersed. The objection is so clearly erroneous that one cannot give it serious consideration, if disposed to accept the record of God's word. The section was not "desert" in the sense of being waterless, but as being thinly settled. If a part of the way was waterless, they evidently passed out of it; for, the record says they "came unto a certain water." It is plain skepticism to deny what the Bible states as a fact. One who has any regard for "his Bible" will not do it. The sermon was preached as Philip sat in the chariot. How far they went while the sermon was being preached is not stated; but one thing we know, they went far enough to bring them to a certain water.

"What Doth Hinder?"—The eunuch called Philip's attention to the fact that they had come to water, and asked what would hinder his being baptized? An interesting inquiry is: What caused the eunuch to ask this question? Where did he get the information that baptism was a requirement? Not from the New Testament for it was not written at that time; not from the Old Testament, for baptism is strictly a New Testament duty. The only reasonable and common-sense answer is that Philip preached it to him in preaching Jesus—in fact, that was his only way to get that information. It was Jesus who commanded baptism and promised salvation after it. (Mark 16: 16.) In preaching Jesus, Philip would not have left out the law of pardon. Hearing Jesus' words and seeing the water led to the question, for the sequel shows he wanted to be saved. The eunuch, honest with himself and with God, wanted to know what hindered his

being baptized; most people now want to know, if there is any way to reach heaven without it. True believers stand with the eunuch on this question.

"Went Down into the Water."—After ordering the chariot stopped, Philip and the eunuch both went into the water, where the baptism occurred. The going into the water was not the baptism; it was simply getting to the place where it could be performed. After the baptism they "came up out of the water." We are justified in presuming that both men were sensible. If so, they must have gone into the water because the act to be performed required it. Otherwise they would have stayed out of it. Immersion requires going into the water and coming out of it; sprinkling and pouring do not. This is presumptive proof of the strongest kind that he was immersed. Since the Greek word baptize means immerse the positive proof makes the presumptive certain. With the eunuch baptized into Christ (Rom. 6: 4), Philip went to other fields of labor and the eunuch "went on his way rejoicing," as well he might.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. It should be observed that in the story of this conversion there are two miracles recorded, but both of them were performed upon the preacher, not the man to be saved. The angel gave Philip a command to leave Samaria, and another command by the Spirit told him to join himself to the chariot. The conversion was effected by the gospel which was preached by Philip.

2. Philip's question was an appropriate one. Understanding what is read is the important thing, if the reader is to receive any benefit. Those who close their eyes to the plain import of the text, or to what other passages teach on the subject, will never understand the truth.

3. Philip answered the eunuch's question by showing that the prophet referred to Christ. The explanation was satisfactory as seen by the fact that the eunuch rendered obedience to Christ at his first opportunity. When those miraculously directed by the Spirit tell us what Jesus requires, we, like the eunuch, should obey promptly. Their record is in the New Testament; what that says is final.

4. The eunuch's baptism is a concrete example of what baptism means. The simplicity and plainness of the words used to describe it admit of no doubt; only prejudice will prevent one's accepting immersion as the act performed.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Describe the beginning of the Jerusalem church.
Tell briefly the story about Stephen.
What happened after his death?
What did the disciples do when scattered?
What evidence is there that they were not led by human wisdom?

What order of procedure did Jesus give?
What labors did Luke next record?

I

Why did Philip leave Samaria?
Where was he sent? By whom?
Where was Gaza located?
Whose obedience did Philip imitate?
What position was occupied by the eunuch?
Of what nationality was he?
If not a Jew, what must be true in his case?
What does this circumstance show?
What command was given by the Spirit?

II

How is it known that he was reading aloud?
 What passage was he reading?
 Why did Philip ask him if he understood?
 How did he show that he did not understand?
 What enabled him to understand?
 How can we understand?

III

What subject does Isaiah discuss in this passage?
 Give the items mentioned.
 What is meant by "beginning from this scripture"?
 What does preaching Jesus include?
 What does Paul mean in 1 Cor. 2: 2?
 What facts must be preached?
 What commands?
 What promises?

IV

What is meant by "the same is desert"?
 What does the record say about water?
 What statement did the eunuch make to Philip?
 What question did he ask?
 Where did the eunuch get his information about baptism?
 Describe the baptism.
 What is the proof here for immersion?

Practical Thoughts

What was accomplished by the miracles in this case?
 What is necessary to receive benefit in reading?
 What shows Philip's answer was satisfactory?
 What conclusion must we reach regarding this baptism?

Lesson III—October 21, 1934

THE CHRISTIAN AT PRAYER

Matt. 6: 5-15.

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.—"Continuing stedfastly in prayer." (Rom. 12: 12.)

TIME.—A.D. 28.

PLACE.—Mountain near Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the disciples, and the multitudes.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 17: 17-26.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 15.	M.	.....	The Christian at Prayer (Matt. 6: 5-15)
October 16.	T.	.....	Praying for Christians (Eph. 3: 14-21)
October 17.	W.	.....	Praying for Sinners (Ex. 32: 30-35)
October 18.	T.	.....	Fellowship with God (Ps. 63: 1-11)
October 19.	F.	.....	Abraham's Prayer (Gen. 18: 22-33)
October 20.	S.	.....	Hezekiah's Prayer (2 Kings 19: 14-20)
October 21.	S.	.....	Jesus' Prayer (John 17: 17-26)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Ostentation in Prayers Condemned (Verses 5, 6).
 - II. Vain Repetitions in Prayer Are Forbidden (Verses 7, 8).
 - III. An Example of "How" to Pray (Verses 9-13).
 - IV. Forgiveness Required of Those Forgiven (Verses 14, 15).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Children of God.—There are two basic relationships which furnish the occasions and demands for all man's duties—that to God as a Creator; that to man as a fellow creature. Jesus says the two fundamental commands are these: to love God with all our capacity and to love our neighbors as ourselves. (Matt. 22: 37-49.) Anything that is purely devotion or worship to God is required by our relationship to him; it rests upon the fact that he is Supreme, and the plainly expressed truth that he cares for us as a father does for his children. Of the many things that come in the class of worship, none is more necessary or helpful than prayer. That it is a plain duty is clear from the commands, exhortations, and admonitions regarding it found throughout the divine record.

A Natural Impulse.—Because prayer is commanded as a duty does not change the fact that it is a natural expression of the soul's desires. The feeling that we must pray arises from two facts: the first is that we consider ourselves children of God—belong to the divine family; the other is that we often realize we need things which only an infinite Being can supply. As the child feels that it has the natural right to ask its father for what it wants so children of God feel it their divine privilege to appeal to the heavenly Father for what they need. In times of deep distress or dire need, it is just as natural to ask God for help as to breathe. Even rebellious sinners, with no moral or legal right to God's favors, will cry for help when in some great danger. This fact alone should teach all that man should put himself in such spiritual relationship to the Father that prayer would be his inalienable right.

Nature of Prayer.—Perhaps prayer is the most difficult thing in all Christian service to do exactly as the scriptures teach and as the nature of the service demands. In general we easily recognize the two fundamental elements of prayer—asking for blessings, and offering thanks for those already received. But the proper state of heart, the spirit in which offered, and the manner of doing it are the things hard to make strictly appropriate. That formality or insincerity in our prayers is not acceptable will be admitted by every one. Such in prayer are palpable absurdities. Perhaps the occasion for our most scriptural prayer is when the soul cries for help in some deep sorrow, provided the ordinary conditions of acceptable prayer are present. At least, on such occasions there is the less danger of insincerity and cold formality.

LESSON NOTES

I. Ostentation in Prayers Condemned (Verses 5, 6)

Not as Hypocrites.—Men do not play the part of hypocrites because they want to be like other hypocrites. As hypocrisy represents a state of heart, one may be such without any intentions of imitating some one else. The admonition of Jesus is given as a warning against Christians falling into this evil. Hypocrisy is one of the most despicable characteristics that affect the conduct of men. The Greek has several words to express the ideas of beseeching, thanksgiving, and prayer. The one used in this verse seems to carry the idea of pouring out—that is, pouring out our souls in vows, petitions, and thanksgiving to God. Nothing but the purest honesty will harmonize with such service. In nothing is hypocrisy more intolerable than in the devotions we render to God.

"Seen of Men."—A desire to be seen of God is sincere devotion; to render religious acts to be seen of men is pure hypocrisy for which there is no excuse to be offered. There was nothing wrong in *standing* in prayer since that posture was both used and endorsed. (1 Sam. 1: 26; 1 Kings 8: 22; Mark 11: 25.) In fact, standing upon street corners while praying would be less conspicuous than kneeling. Neither was prayer in synagogues wrong, for they were regular places for such devotions. The proper kind of prayer would not even have been objectionable on street corners, as silent, individual prayer is appropriate anywhere. The condemnation here is against the wrong manner and wrong intent. They assumed affected poses, and desired to impress men with their pretended piety. All such displays of hypocrisy is promised a proper reward. Men who look on the outward appearance may be deceived; God who looks upon the heart will not be.

"Enter into Thy Closet."—This expression should be taken as a condemnation of all kinds of ostentation, not as forbidding public prayers, which are clearly sustained by Bible examples. (1 Kings 8: 22; Acts 12: 12.) The instruction, however, may be accepted literally, if applied to individual prayers; for it is certainly most appropriate for such prayers to be offered in secret, where nothing can distract the mind of the worshipper, and where there is nothing to suggest hypocrisy. God who is infinite does not need display, or the approval of men, to know what prayers deserve an answer. Though one may close the door of his heart to men, and pray to God in secret wherever the body may be, yet the quietness of solitude is conducive to sincerity in prayers.

II. Vain Repetitions in Prayer Are Forbidden (Verses 7, 8)

"As the Gentiles."—Jesus said his disciples should not be insincere in their prayers like the hypocrites; now he says they should not use vain repetitions as the Gentiles (nations) do. This statement is not to be taken without qualification. Note that he does not forbid repetitions, but *vain* repetitions. Long prayers, and saying the same words are both endorsed by example in the Bible. Jesus prayed all night (Luke 6: 12), and in Gethsemane he used the same words three times (Matt. 26: 42-44). Earnest persistence and the repeated use of proper expressions in the right way are really the outpourings of honest souls, but making long, formal prayers with useless repeti-

tion as an essential feature is unmistakably condemned. Most Bible examples of prayer are short, and all are free from useless words. Adam Clarke says: "Unmeaning words, useless repetition, and complimentary phrases in prayer, are in general the result of *heathenism, hypocrisy, or ignorance.*"

"*Your Father Knoweth.*"—Those who depend upon vain repetitions either do it to be heard of men, or imagine that by a profusion of words they can better plead their cause before the Lord. The former is hypocrisy, the latter is folly. Infinite intelligence does not need to be told of man's condition; that is known before man speaks. Complimentary expressions, or trying to inform God with our "much speaking," is wholly inconsistent with his nature and the purpose of prayer. When a realization of deep need brings from honest hearts the repetition of appropriate expressions, nothing is more scriptural, but vain and meaningless words merit the condemnation of God and the disgust of men. Prayer should be the natural desire expressed in thanksgiving and petition to God in the simple and direct manner that means sincerity. Such evidently is the Master's teaching.

III. An Example of "How" to Pray (Verses 9-13)

"*After This Manner.*"—These verses contain what is popularly, though erroneously, called the "Lord's prayer." The real fact is that they give what he taught his disciples on *how* to pray. It is a model in arrangement, matter, and expression. That is what Jesus himself said about it in these words: "After this *manner* therefore pray ye." He did not mean for them to use these identical words, with endless repetition, but to formulate their own prayers with this as an example of appropriate manner. Their prayers—in fact, all prayers—should in each case have been governed by needs, and the special situation in which they found themselves. This basic truth regarding prayer should never be overlooked. In justice to the text, nothing more can be gotten from this prayer than that it furnishes a model of manner and appropriateness.

The Address.—The address, verse 9, shows the plain, simple, and reverent way we should approach God. Proper deference should always be manifest in addressing superiors. Recognizing God in the relationship of a loving Father justifies an appeal from those who are obedient children. This is all implied in the words, "Our Father." Heaven is God's dwelling place (1 Kings 8: 39), and so far as we know the only suitable dwelling place for one so high and exalted. It also serves the purpose of showing how infinitely above man God is. This receives appropriate mention in the address. "Hallowed be thy name" means that we should give God's name a sacred place in our hearts.

General Requests.—It was strictly appropriate then for the apostles to pray, "Thy kingdom come." John the Baptist and Jesus both had preached the kingdom as "at hand"; Jesus told the apostles to preach it. (Matt. 10: 7.) Nothing was more natural than that they should pray for the kingdom to come. As the kingdom has been in existence since the first Pentecost after his return to the Father, that particular request is not now appropriate. There are many general petitions regarding the kingdom we might make, but not that one. Praying for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven is al-

ways appropriate; as much so for us as it was for them. This petition does not mean that God's children on earth are to do the same things angelic beings do in heaven; such a view is a plain perversion of the text. It can only mean that we should render service to God in our sphere on earth as heavenly beings do in their sphere.

Personal Petitions.—The personal requests are three in number: daily sustenance, forgiveness of sins, and freedom from temptation. These three cover the essential personal needs of men, both physically and spiritually. The petition is for daily bread—things needful—not for luxuries, extravagances, or useless things. Asking for it daily—as needed—implies trust in God's arrangement for its future provision. This does not mean that we expect God to supply it miraculously, as he did manna in the wilderness, but through the ordinary means he has ordained to that end. Those praying for temporal blessings manifest the greatest faith by using the available means at hand for securing them, realizing that the means as well as the blessings are from God. Sin is here represented as causing the guilty one to owe a debt to justice. As our sins are many, it is put in the plural—debts. Since man cannot do anything that would be of enough intrinsic value to pay that debt, then it must be forgiven, no difference how many conditions may be required before the pardon will be granted. God does not tempt us (James 1: 13-15), but he may permit it, if we are determined to sin. Those determined to sin would hardly be praying not to be led into sin; those capable of such a prayer will do their best to avoid temptation, and thus help to answer their own petition. A strong horror against sin, and an earnest desire to escape it will prove man's greatest security. The Revised Version says, "the evil one;" but since the word *one* has no corresponding word in the Greek, the margin gives the one word "evil." The former refers to Satan; the latter to any and all kinds of evil. Either idea would be a proper reason for the petition.

IV. Forgiveness Required of Those Forgiven (Verses 14, 15)

The Doxology.—The words, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen," are omitted in the Revised Version. This does not mean that these words express anything not true, but only that textual critics do not think they were written by Matthew here, as this verse indicates. A statement may be true and appropriately repeated, yet it may not have been said at the supposed time.

"If Ye Forgive."—These verses are not a part of the prayer, but just a full explanation of one petition of it. Jesus taught them to say, "forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." The heart that will not forgive is in no condition to receive forgiveness. The expression is, "have forgiven"; the forgiving spirit must already be in the heart before there is any need to ask God to forgive us. Putting it in the affirmative form, Jesus said, "if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." The justice of this condition is too evident to need logical argument as defense. Those disposed to be fair, and needing forgiveness, will be ready to accept the necessity of this requirement.

Negative Statement.—Jesus presents this condition of receiving forgiveness both negatively and positively. This indicates that he did

not want us to fail to understand it. If we forgive not, then God will not forgive us. A failure on our part will close the door of mercy against us. Giving the spirit of forgiveness a welcome in our heart may be a difficult thing to do, revenge being more pleasant to the carnal mind, but it is necessary to our own forgiveness. We should not be blinded to this necessity.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Pleasing men in things that edify and bring them closer to God is one of the highest ideals in Christian service. (Rom. 15: 2.) Striving to please men rather than God will destroy the possibility of rendering acceptable service to him, and will certainly result in our rejection. (Gal. 1: 10.) Paul commands that we act "not in the way of eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." (Eph. 6: 6.)

2. Doing things to be seen of men while claiming to serve God is hypocrisy; doing them in a cold, formal way, instead of a genuine heart service, disgraces the pretended worshipper and displeases the heavenly Father. Such service may deceive man—in fact, often does, but it cannot deceive God. As all efforts at serving God must be approved by him, it is foolish to suppose we can deceive him.

3. Some examples can be imitated in exact detail, others are only intended to show in general how things should be done. Appropriate expressions may be repeated on proper occasions; this is done in both prayers and sermons. But making them a rigid form to be continuously repeated without variation hinders rather than helps personal devotion.

4. When divine wisdom expresses a condition upon which blessings are to be bestowed, it is both ungrateful and presumptuous to insist that the blessings may be had without complying with the condition.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What two fundamental commands does Jesus mention?
How do these commands divide man's duties?
What two facts show that prayer is a necessity?
Why do Christians feel their natural right to pray?
When do both saints and sinners pray as a natural impulse?
What are the two fundamental elements of prayer?
What makes it difficult to offer strictly scriptural prayers?
When are prayers likely to be more sincere?

I

What evil does Jesus warn against?
What is the meaning of the word for prayer in this text?

What is devotion and what is hypocrisy?
What endorsement is there for standing in prayer?
What is wrong about prayers in synagogues, or on street corners?
What is meant by "enter into thy closet"?
When is it appropriate to take the expression literally?

II

What does Jesus forbid in prayer?
Give proof that long prayers and repetitions are not wrong.
What then is the point Jesus condemns?
What is true of Bible examples of prayer?
What reason does Jesus give for his command?
What should prayers be naturally?

III

Is this the Lord's prayer? Why not?
Of what is it a model?
What did Jesus say about it himself?
How did he mean for them to use it?

What should govern our prayers in matter and manner?

What does verse 9 show?

What is shown by the words "our" and "heaven"?

What is meant by "hallowed be thy name"?

What prayer were they to offer for the kingdom?

Why is it not appropriate for us?

Name the three personal requests.

In what sense does God bring us into temptation?

IV

What is omitted by the Revised Version?

What do these verses contain?

What about a heart without a forgiving spirit?

Why did the Lord state the condition negatively and positively?

What will a failure on our part do for us?

Practical Thoughts

When is pleasing men right? When wrong?

How does cold, formal worship affect both man and God?

How may we use examples?

When are we ungrateful and presumptuous?

Lesson IV—October 28, 1934

THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDARD OF LIFE

(INTERNATIONAL TEMPERANCE SUNDAY)

Eph. 4: 17-27; 5: 15-21.

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind.

18 Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart;

19 Who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But ye did not so learn Christ;

21 If so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus:

22 That ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit;

23 And that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

24 And put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

25 Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

15 Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise;

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

18 And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit;

19 Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

20 Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

21 Subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit."* (Eph. 5: 18.)

TIME.—A.D. 61.

PLACE.—In the Roman prison.

PERSONS.—Paul and the saints at Ephesus.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Col. 3: 12-17.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 22. M.-----The Christian Standard (Eph. 4: 17-27)

October 23. T.-----The Christian Walk (Eph. 5: 15-21)

October 24. W.-----A Temperate People (Jer. 35: 5-14)

October 25.	T.	-----An Intemperate People (Isa. 28: 1-10)
October 26.	F.	-----Disaster through Drunken Leaders (1 Kings 20: 13-21)
October 27.	S.	-----Living the Simple Life (Dan. 1: 8-13)
October 28.	S.	-----Christ in the Heart (Col. 3: 12-17)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Christians Distinguished by a Godly Walk (Verses 17-19).
 - II. Paul's Appeal to Christ's Teaching (Verses 20-24).
 - III. Falsehood and Anger Forbidden (Verses 25-27).
 - IV. The Apostle Enjoins Wisdom (Eph. 5: 15-17).
 - V. Praise and Thanksgiving Commanded (Verses 18-21).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

The Church at Ephesus.—The city of Ephesus was in Paul's day the metropolis of Asia Minor, and was noted for commerce, riches, and idolatry. The magnificence and splendor with which idolatry flourished there is seen in the fact that the temple of Diana was located near it. Paul's first visit there was a brief stop on his way from Corinth to Jerusalem. (Acts 18: 18-21.) In this short stay he doubtless saw not only how badly the city needed the gospel, but also the possibilities of reaching the Gentiles to whom he was especially sent. Hence, his promise to return, if it was God's will. This promise he was able to keep probably about six months later. When he returned he spoke three months in the synagogue; but when serious opposition arose, he used the school of Tyrannus for two years. (Acts 19: 1, 8-10.) This work resulted in people hearing the truth from all parts of Asia. That the congregation at Ephesus was largely of Gentile converts seems certain; hence, the propriety of Paul's strong exhortation not to walk as they had before turning from idols to serve the living God.

A Heavenly Calling.—In contrast with their former worship of idols, Paul assured them of their heavenly calling, and besought them to walk worthily of it, because of its incomparable superiority. A failure to do so was such an obvious absurdity that no apology could be made for it. This new relationship he calls the one body with Christ as its head. There could be nothing more important than being a member of this body. Being admitted as Gentiles into that body on equal terms with Jews was an honor not to be lightly esteemed. Because certain classes of members then in the church, such as apostles and prophets, were miraculously endowed, the church was destined to reach the highest state of perfection in teaching ever known. This was designed to protect them against false teachers, and prepare them to defend the truth, and extend their borders. The high honor of being a member of such a body would not allow ignoble conduct.

A Final Consideration.—A final and very decisive reason why Christians should not return to the worldly practices engaged in previous to conversion is that it means eternal condemnation, unless repented of as at first. The dishonor to God and his church that such conduct brings is so remarkably bad that any church member should be ashamed to be guilty. For any one to be lost, when opportunities

for salvation are so richly provided, is a sad thing; for those to be lost after having been saved is too sad for words.

LESSON NOTES

I. Christians Distinguished by a Godly Walk (Verses 17-19)

"This I Say Therefore."—In addition to the distinguished honor of being members of Christ's body as a motive for right conduct, Paul in these verses gives further instruction on how to "walk worthily" of their calling. To walk as unconverted Gentiles did meant a practical return to their own unsaved state. This would defeat the purpose in view when they became Christians. Why enter the church, if their conduct was to remain the same? Paul also says they were dead through their sins when they "once walked according to the course of this world." (Eph. 2: 2.) What advantage in being quickened (made alive), if they were to maintain the dead state afterwards? According to Peter, the working out of the "desire of the Gentiles" in the past (the unsaved state) should have been sufficient to prevent its continuance in their lives as members of the church. (1 Pet. 4: 3.)

"Vanity of Their Mind."—Both Paul and Peter describe the horrible depravity of the Gentile world at that time. Since actions come from the heart as water flows from the fountain (Matt. 15: 19), Paul correctly represents their corrupt walk as proceeding from the "vanity of their mind." With minds filled with delusions, instead of divine truth, they imagined they could receive help from the gods of their own creation. They were "darkened in understanding" when they thought they were really wise. Such delusions hardened their hearts so effectively that no place was left for truth. The hardening of their hearts, and the consequent ignorance alienated them from the love of God; left them "without God," and without hope, as Paul had already said. (Eph. 2: 12.) No wonder Paul so strongly urged them to continue no longer to walk as such Gentiles did then. Many in the world are no better now; so Paul's admonition is still appropriate.

Effects of Such Conduct.—Such abandoned sinners soon reach the stage of "being past feeling," and give themselves over to unrestrained licentiousness, working all kinds of uncleanness with ever increasing desire. When men throw off all sense of shame and have no remorse because of their sins, the case is desperately bad, yet that is just the horrid picture that inspiration draws of final results in the cases of abandoned sinners. All sinners will not reach such depths of degradation, but such is the possible ending of any one who refuses to turn to God. The possibility is enough to fill pious hearts with fear and trembling. What a blessing if church members would not ignore Paul's teaching on this point!

II. Paul's Appeal to Christ's Teaching (Verses 20-24)

"Did Not So Learn."—Paul declares the superiority of the teaching they had received by saying, "Ye did not so learn Christ." By "learn Christ" he meant they had not learned any such corrupt practices from the gospel of Christ. By a common figure of speech, Christ is put for his gospel just as Moses was put for his law. (Luke 16: 29.) Verse 21 speaks of their having heard Christ, which must not

be understood to mean they heard him personally, but that they heard Paul as his apostle to the Gentiles. The words "if so be" may be construed with the meaning of "since"; the thought being that they did not so learn the gospel, since Paul had taught them in exact accord with the truth revealed through Christ. If the words convey the idea of a condition, then he meant they had not been taught in the gospel that the ungodliness mentioned would be tolerated, if they had learned the true teaching of Jesus.

"The Old Man."—The old man is here defined to be the "former manner of life"—their conduct before accepting the gospel of Christ, which the apostle declared "waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit." Indulgence in deceitful lusts would grow or increase with continuous use. Paul told them that the gospel of Christ required that they put off all corrupt practices as one lays aside an unclean garment. Such things are deceitful because they lead people to think they are harmless and can be abandoned when desired. They learn when too late that they have been deluded.

"The New Man."—Their former manner of life, including a mind filled with vanity, darkness, lusts, idolatry, was to be exchanged for a new manner of life, including a renewed spirit filled with righteousness and holiness of truth. As the former was represented as being put off like a filthy garment so the latter is said to be put on as a clean or fresh garment. Dispositions of mind are compared to garments because they affect the appearance according to their nature. Then, like garments, we have the power to put them on and off as we desire. Stage-players, changing costumes to represent different characters, probably furnished the reason for representing man's change of conduct as being like the change of garments.

III. Falsehood and Anger Forbidden (Verses 25-27)

"Speak Ye Truth."—The Decalogue (Exod. 20: 16) presents this matter in the form of a prohibition, using the words, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." This by implication, of course, prohibited all kinds of falsehoods. But in our text the apostle, as is his common custom, states the matter both negatively and positively—prohibits falsehood and commands speaking the truth. With his words there is no chance to evade duty in this matter. The heathen, of whom these Gentile Christians had been a part, in the past probably considered lying no very serious crime; may have on certain occasions even deemed it right or better than truth. The gospel which they had received allowed no such deceptions in word or deed. The strong reason that bound them to the truth was the fact that they were "members one of another"—that is, members of one body. Members of the physical body are never untrue to each other; members of Christ's body *must* not be. Such righteousness in the church must be extended to all, for Christians must do right.

"Be Ye Angry."—Two views have been suggested for this expression, either of which may be correct, and neither of which conflicts with truth: (1) If anger be taken in the sense of "displeasure," then it is perfectly right, and even necessary, to be angry on many occasions. We should be highly displeased with all sinful things. In that sense God is often justly angry. (2) The other view is to suppose that the word "if" is understood; the sense being, "If ye be angry,

sin not." This allows anger its ordinary meaning, and concedes the possibility of its occurrence. Paul's instruction then would be that, though angry, do not allow that to lead to sin. To prevent that possibility, do not allow anger to continue—let it end the same day. Harboring anger would easily give the devil a place to lodge some of his devices. If the Greek word for devil is to be understood of any false accuser, as some contend, then the apostle forbids that we give countenance to those who spread malicious falsehoods of any kind. Doing so is giving place to the devil directly or indirectly.

IV. The Apostle Enjoins Wisdom (Eph. 5: 15-17)

Walk Carefully.—A careful walk displays wisdom; a careless one, folly. The word "circumspectly," used in the Common Version, means "looking around." To walk circumspectly is to walk cautiously, carefully watching to prevent any false step, or meeting unexpectedly some danger. The original word, however, means *exactly* or *accurately*. The admonition might be expanded thus: We should use great care in our deportment to be in exact accord with the precepts of the gospel, and to avoid all possible mistakes. As those addressed by Paul had been awakened from a dead, sinful state, they had Christ the true light shining upon them; hence, the necessity of a careful walk that they might be worthy of their calling.

"Redeeming the Time."—The margin of the Revised says, "buying up the opportunity." By a wise and zealous use of opportunities, time would be so conserved that none would be wasted. The necessity for this in their day was the imminent perils that threatened their peace and safety. There are always enough dangers, seen and unseen, to make this admonition appropriate to all Christians in any age. In the next verse the apostle says it is wise to understand the will of the Lord, and foolish not to do so. Those who understand can walk accurately; others cannot. Only those who walk accurately can be sure of pleasing God, or benefiting men—life's two main purposes.

V. Praise and Thanksgiving Commanded (Verses 18-21)

"Filled with the Spirit."—In the parallel passage, Col. 3: 16, Paul says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." This shows that to be filled with the Spirit means to let his words dwell in us richly. This is the same thing as "understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Verse 17.) This instruction was to show the contrast between worshipping God and the heathen worship of Bacchus, the god of wine, wherein there was drunkenness and riot. Here the apostle again indicates the superiority of Christianity over heathenism.

The Songs.—Instead of the lewd songs used by drunken priests in their Bacchanalian orgies, they were to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. We may never be able to define with certainty the exact difference between the kinds of songs mentioned, but we are sure they are all of a spiritual nature, to be used in praising God. In them we speak one to another, or teach and admonish one another. (Col. 3: 16.) They may include some of the psalms of David, or some of our own composition, but they must teach, admonish, and be truthful to be accepted as worship to God.

"Melody with Your Heart."—All forms of worship with which the

heart is not in accord must of necessity be vain. (Matt. 15: 8.) That such is true in song service is clear from Paul's words: "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." (1 Cor. 14: 15.) The superiority of Christian song service is shown in the fact that it is accompanied by the heart vibrating in full accord with the sentiment of the songs, not by mechanical instruments as were heathen songs. "Making melody" is a translation of a Greek participle from the verb *psallo*. Since Paul plainly declares we *psallo* with the heart in our song worship, it clearly contradicts his argument to say we may *psallo* on a mechanical instrument. Not only so, but it conflicts with the plain contrast which he draws between heathen and Christian worship in these two verses.

"Giving Thanks Always."—The apostle concludes this part of his instruction by saying that thanks should be given for all things to God in the name of Christ, and that we should subject ourselves to one another, but all this in the fear of Christ.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Christians by their conduct become living epistles, "known and read of all men." If their deeds are good, the church is commended by them; if evil, then they cause the church to be condemned. We cannot escape the natural law that a tree is known by its fruit.

2. The church is not responsible for the evil conduct of those who are members, neither is Christ to be charged with the inconsistent lives of those claiming to be his disciples. The gospel requires the saved to be new creatures in Christ; if they fail, they and not the gospel should be condemned.

3. Man cannot change his nature, neither is it necessary that he should. He cannot destroy the faculties of his mind, or prevent its natural operation, but he can control and regulate those operations in a way to harmonize with Bible teaching, and he must if he is to be saved.

4. Careful and correct deportment is necessary to success in temporal things; how much more important in divine things? We must strive to protect against possible dangers.

5. Nothing is more clearly taught in the Bible than that God's worship must be kept distinct from all contact with heathenism and worldliness. Every effort to mingle them, as mentioned in the divine record, has brought the condemnation of God.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Why were apostles and prophets set in the church?
What decisive reason is given for not returning to worldly practices?

I

Introductory Study

For what was Ephesus noted?
What idol temple was located there?
When did Paul first visit it?
Describe his work on his return.
What did he beseech the saints there to do?

What did it mean to walk as unconverted people?
What statement did Peter make on this subject?
From what did their evil conduct come?
What effect did their evil have on them?
Why is Paul's admonition appropriate now?

What stage is soon reached by abandoned sinners?

II

How does Paul show the superiority of Christ?

How had those Gentiles heard Christ?

What is meant by "if so be"?

What is meant by "the old man"?

Why are dispositions of mind like garments?

III

How does the Decalogue present this subject?

How does Paul present it in our lesson?

How did the heathen consider falsehood?

What special reason is given for speaking the truth?

When is it right to be angry?

What other view of the passage may be correct?

What other command is given regarding anger?

How is the original word for devil some times understood?

IV

What does the apostles teach about the Christian walk?

What is meant by "redeeming the time"?

What does verse 17 teach?

V

What is meant by "filled with the Spirit"?

What contrast does Paul make here?

What contrast is in the kinds of songs?

What is true of all the songs mentioned?

How do we affect others with our songs?

Where is the melody to be made?

What does Matt. 15: 8 teach?

In what other way is the superiority of Christian worship shown?

Practical Thoughts

How do our deeds affect the church?

Is the church responsible for the evil of its members?

What can man do regarding his conduct?

What is necessary for all Christians?

What is taught regarding worship?

Lesson V—November 4, 1934

CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Luke 2: 42-52; 2 Pet. 1: 5-8.

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.

5 Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge;

6 And in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness;

7 And in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 3: 18.)

TIME.—A.D. 8 for Luke; probably A.D. 66 for 2 Peter.

PLACE.—Jerusalem for Luke; place uncertain for 2 Peter.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his parents, and teachers of the law; Peter and Christians generally.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 4: 10-19.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 29.	M.	.....	The Growth of Jesus (Luke 2: 42-52)
October 30.	T.	.....	Growth in Christian Graces (2 Pet 1: 1-8)
October 31.	W.	.....	Hindrances to Christian Growth (1 Cor. 3: 1-9)
November 1.	T.	.....	Pressing toward Perfection (Phil. 3: 7-16)
November 2.	F.	.....	Advancing in the Faith (Heb. 11: 39 to 12: 6)
November 3.	S.	.....	Unity through Growth (Eph. 4: 11-16)
November 4.	S.	.....	The Path of the Righteous (Prov. 4: 10-19)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Jesus at the Passover (Verses 42-45).
- II. Jesus Among the Teachers of the Law (Verses 46-50).
- III. Joseph's Family Again in Nazareth (Verses 51, 52).
- IV. Christians Must Grow in Grace (2 Pet. 1: 5-7).
- V. Results Stated (Verse 8).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Growth a Necessity.—An observable fact in the material world is that a movement of the elements is constantly taking place. Some move too slowly to be seen with the eyes; others too fast to be comprehended with finite faculties. The tides ebb and flow with regularity, the clouds come and go at irregular intervals, spring brings the plants, buds, and fruit, and winter spreads cold, snow, and barrenness. This constant changing continues in strict accord with nature's law. It is absolutely necessary for material success and man's temporal good. It is nature's process of development and expansion—in a word, it's natural growth.

Man's Growth.—All living things pass through the stages of growth, decay, and death. Man himself is the most remarkable example. Unless the physical body of the babe grows, something has interfered with natural law. A lack of growth would be disastrous to the babe, and a source of much sorrow to parents. To prevent such a possibility care is taken to supply suitable nourishment and proper exercise. Along with this, and because considered far more important, usually diligent efforts are made for the development of the mind. This growth is effected by a system of training and study suited to capacity. If reasonable results do not follow our efforts, it is considered a misfortune of great importance; parents grieve and friends feel sympathy. Fond hopes are blasted all because there was not the natural growth in mind and body that was expected.

Moral Growth.—That man is born with an undeveloped capacity for ability and responsibility admits of no doubt. That he must, when his capacity has been developed, pay penalties for violating the laws of God and man is equally without doubt. The moral capacity for honor and integrity must be directed along proper channels, or the life will become a misfit, and a criminal career will be the result.

The black cloud of crime that has settled down so thickly upon the earth is a melancholy proof of what it means to leave the moral nature undeveloped. No amount of intellectual attainments can compensate for the lack of moral integrity.

Spiritual Growth.—The climax of all desirable growth attainable by man is accomplished in his capacity for spiritual things. With a nature inclined to worship, and the church in which that worship may be directed toward the true God, "growth in grace" becomes the highest ideal to be sought, and the greatest work to be done. Failure in this disgraces any Christian, and grieves the heavenly Father.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jesus at the Passover (Verses 42-45)

"Twelve Years Old."—This visit to the Passover at twelve years of age is the only recorded event in Jesus' life after the return from Egypt at Herod's death till his baptism when thirty years old. The law required all males to attend this feast (Exod. 34: 23), and many women, equally interested with the men, did attend. The preceding verse says that Jesus' parents went every year. This shows their strict obedience to God's law, a thing certainly appropriate in a pair intrusted with the rearing of him who was to redeem man. The record does not say, nor imply, that this was the first time Jesus attended the passover feast; but because of the striking incident that happened, it was especially worthy of a place in the record. It is possible that custom fixed the twelfth year as the age when boys would be considered personally responsible for obedience to the law. If so, it was an opportune time for something to transpire that would manifest him as an unusual person.

"Tarried Behind."—The passover lamb was killed on the fourteenth of Abib, the first Jewish month, and the feast of unleavened bread lasted till the twenty-first. When they had "fulfilled the days," meaning when the eight days had ended, they started on the return trip to Nazareth. Jesus remained in the city without his parents' knowledge or permission. Their not being disturbed about him is explained by the text which says they supposed "him to be in the company." The general attendance at the Passover would naturally be made by those with common interests falling into groups for company and protection. Apparently they were not disturbed till the day's journey ended, when they sought him "among the kinsfolk and acquaintance," but failed to find him. They returned to Jerusalem and after three days found him in the temple. Only inspired writers record such incidents in so few and simple terms.

II. Jesus Among the Teachers of the Law (Verses 46-50)

"In the Temple."—It is well to understand once for all that the words "in the temple" here, and in similar texts, do not mean in the temple building proper—either holy or most holy place—but in the outer court, where throngs of people gathered for various purposes. Chambers and porticos are said to have been built against the walls inside this court. It was in one of these where they probably found him with the teachers. Even Jesus himself, not being a priest, could not enter the temple building.

"Asking Questions."—The situation presented two amazing features: (1) The fact that one so young should presume to ask questions of those supposedly so learned. (2) The remarkable wisdom which his questions and replies indicated. In verse 40 of our chapter, it is said of Jesus: "And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." This, however, is a general statement of his natural growth during the entire period of thirty years. How much of this development had been accomplished at the age of twelve will have to be supposed from this brief record alone. That he was a natural child with perfect developments need not be questioned; neither do we have to assume that at the age of twelve he was exercising full divine power, and making himself a teacher of teachers.

Mary's Complaint.—If the parents told Jesus when they would leave, they probably felt his remaining without permission was a degree of disrespect for themselves. Nothing but a higher constraining influence—respect for God's will—justified this apparent disobedience to parents. Her tender rebuke indicates the genuine distress which his unexpected action had caused them.

Jesus' Reply.—To Mary's question as to why he had dealt thus with them, Jesus replied by asking what reason they had for seeking him. His words seem to imply that, if they had fully appreciated the higher concerns of life, they would have been there too, or would have known that they would find him at the temple. He further pressed the point by asking: "Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" Mary had just referred to Joseph as "*thy* father," which was true in a legal sense, though not naturally. In Jesus' reply he said "*my* Father," indicating the higher and more important relationship to which he *must* give earnest consideration. The Common Version says, "my Father's business"; the Revised says, "my Father's house." The literal idea is "in the (things) of my Father." The word "things" or some similar word has to be supplied. God's house or business involves the things or affairs that concern God's house; hence, either expression will satisfactorily express the thought.

"Understood Not."—Remembering the birth of Jesus and the prophecy of Simeon regarding his future, it is remarkable that Mary and Joseph should not have understood his words better; but in their distress for his being lost, amazement caused them to overlook or miss the great truth expressed. How often do we allow temporal affairs to affect us in the same manner!

III. Joseph's Family Again in Nazareth (Verses 51, 52)

"Subject Unto Them."—Whatever the divine purpose in the incident just considered, it had been accomplished and Jesus was ready to return with his parents to their home at Nazareth. This obscure Galilean village became world-famous because the earthly home of God's Son for nearly thirty years. Regardless of the consciousness of any divine power that he possessed, Jesus remained subject unto them. As the time had not come to enter publicly upon his real work, no other course was in keeping with the fitness of things. His mother kept these sayings in her heart. That they indicated something more than ordinary, she well knew; but that she did not comprehend their

deep spiritual import is certain from the preceding verse which says they "understood not."

"Advanced in Wisdom."—During the following eighteen years, as his body naturally grew, he advanced in wisdom. With a perfect and pious mind, and pious training, he would increase in the wisdom common to man. The text might also mean that he gradually became more conscious of his divinity. That he was always under God's grace is certain, but during these years he may have advanced toward that divine completeness which only the infinite mind can comprehend. It is useless to hazard a guess at the full meaning of this expression.

IV. Christians Must Grow in Grace (2 Pet. 1: 5-7)

Reason Assigned.—Peter had just said (verse 3) that God's "divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." In our lesson text, he says, "for this very cause"—that is, the promises of God—we should use all diligence to attain that development in the Christian life that will make "our calling and election sure." The basic idea of verse 5 seems plain enough, yet the versions have varied greatly in translating it. Perhaps the following comes as near expressing correctly the original idea as any, though not offered as a literal translation of the words: By great diligence we should on our part in our conduct lay these graces down beside the precious promises made on God's part. Or it may be stated thus: By proper growth we should, on the human side, match in a suitable way what God has done for us on the divine side. Instead of "add to your faith," the Revised says, "in your faith supply," meaning that each grace is supplied through the exercise of the one mentioned before it. That means that each grace added will be the means by which another may be supplied.

The Graces Named.—1. *Virtue.* The original word is one of broad application, signifying any kind of excellence either of body or mind. The particular kind in each case depending upon the wording of the text or context. Some think Peter used it here in the sense of courage, to show that disciples should always be ready to confess their faith in Christ, regardless of any danger or persecution. The disciples, then, did need such courage—in fact, many still need it who will be lost for lack of it. 2. *Knowledge.* As Peter was addressing those of "like precious faith," he did not mean the primary knowledge necessary to belief, but the development of such additional knowledge as would direct their courage aright, and prevent their discouragement in times of great danger. 3. *Self-control.* This grace would prevent their doing the wrong, and keep them in proper bounds regarding matters that were right. For correct conduct self-control is especially effective. 4. *Patience.* With the exercise of self-control, patience or steadfastness would quickly develop. It would protect them against being swept off their feet by cross currents of persecution. 5. *Godliness.* The God-fearing and God-honoring spirit would be a safe refuge in all kinds of religious storms. It would be a secure retreat when everything looked like defeat; a place to go when all men forsake us. 6. *Brotherly kindness.* In the margin it is given, "love of the brethren," which is a more literal translation. When we add love of the brethren to our efforts to be like God, we have

two of the strongest reasons for faithfulness. 7. *Love*. To the narrower term of loving the brethren, we should add the love of the whole world in imitation of our Lord whose love for man led him to give up his life. This chain, beginning with faith and ending with love, rounds out the completion of Christian growth.

V. Results Stated (Verse 8)

Condition Expressed.—After naming these graces which are vital to growth and success, Peter indicates the possibility that some Christians may not have them by saying, "if these things are yours and abound." To obtain the benefit, we must have that which produces it. In the matter of these graces, we not only need them, but we need them in abundance—up to the full measure of our capacity. Then, desired results are sure to follow.

What They Do for Us.—Having these excellent dispositions in a multiplying degree will prevent our being idle in trying to reach a perfect knowledge of his will, or in any service by which the kingdom of the Lord may be advanced. Neither will we be unfruitful—fail to produce the required results in our service. Growth makes trees active, and leads to fruit bearing; growth in grace leads to spiritual activity and fruit bearing in the Lord's vineyard. Without it our pretensions are vain.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Obedience to God does not conflict with proper duties to man. Higher obligations supersede lesser ones and demand first consideration. "We must obey God rather than men," is a most vital truth which no one can safely ignore.

2. It is amazing how much knowledge can be obtained, even by the twelfth year, with proper effort and environment. This has been verified in numberless cases by parents who have taken the pains to lead their children into right paths. A pious, consistent example, with diligent teaching of God's word, will in most cases affect the child's whole career for good. Parenthood is a grave responsibility.

3. Nothing is ever gained in great undertakings by a neglect of the plain, everyday obligations. Claiming to serve God cannot compensate for neglect of filial or parental duty; such claims are pious pretense, and receive no credit from the Lord. (See Matt. 15: 4-7.) Neither will common duties excuse us from serving God.

4. Life and growth are vital to human existence. Mental and spiritual growth continue long after the body has reached its full stature. Even when the mind begins to lose some of its vigor, the spirit is renewed day by day.

5. As vines and trees increase the spread of their branches, their blooms are more profuse and the fruit more abundant. So, the greater our growth in grace, the richer our fruit bearing in the Lord's service. The more capacity, the greater the amount of fruit.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What natural fact is observable?
Give some examples.
Of what is man a remarkable example?
What great care do parents have for children?

What must be done for moral capacity?
 What results when this is not done?
 What is the most important growth?

I

What record have we of Jesus up to his thirtieth year?
 Who had to attend the Passover?
 Why was this particular event recorded?
 What is meant by "fulfilled the days"?
 Why were the parents not disturbed about Jesus?
 When and where did they find him?

II

What is meant by "in the temple"?
 What features of the incident were amazing?
 How much time is covered by verse 40?
 What complaint did his mother make?
 What justified his apparent disobedience to parents?
 How did Jesus reply to his mother?
 How did Jesus probably indicate a higher relationship?
 Name the different translations of his reply.
 Why did they not understand his words?

III

What is said of Jesus when they returned home?

What is meant by keeping "these saying in her heart"?
 What is meant by verse 52?

IV

What reason is assigned for Christian growth?
 How may the general truth of verse 5 be stated?
 What is the difference between "add to" and "in" your faith?
 Give the meaning of the word "virtue."
 What "knowledge" is meant?
 Explain the next two graces.
 Show the great value of "godliness."
 Explain the difference between "brotherly kindness" and "love."

V

What is indicated by the word "if"?
 In what measure do we need these graces?
 What results will follow?

Practical Thoughts

What is a most vital truth?
 What will affect the whole career?
 What receives no credit from the Lord?
 How long will the spirit be renewed?
 Why do we need to increase capacity?

Lesson VI—November 11, 1934

THE CHRISTIAN CITIZEN

Gal. 5: 13-26.

13 For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another.

14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties,

21 Envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 Meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.

24 And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

25 If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.

26 Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matt. 26: 52.)

TIME.—Probably A.D. 58.

PLACE.—Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Galatian brethren.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Micah 4: 1-5.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 5.	M.	.....	The Christian Citizen (Gal. 5: 13-26)
November 6.	T.	.....	Reconciliation with Offenders (Matt. 5: 21-26)
November 7.	W.	.....	Abram as Peacemaker (Gen. 13: 5-12)
November 8.	T.	.....	The Prince of Peace (Isa. 9: 1-7)
November 9.	F.	.....	Universal Triumph of Christianity (Micah 4: 1-8)
November 10.	S.	.....	Blessings of Universal Peace (Isa. 11: 1-9)
November 11.	S.	.....	Promise of Universal Peace (Micah 4: 1-5)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Correct Use of Christian Freedom (Verses 13-15).
 - II. Warfare Between Flesh and Spirit (Verses 16-18).
 - III. Works of the Flesh Bring Disaster (Verses 19-21).
 - IV. The Fruit of the Spirit Described (Verses 22-24).
 - V. Living and Walking by the Spirit (Verses 25, 26).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Scope of Subject.—The expression "Christian citizen" may be used in two distinct senses: a Christian as a citizen of some earthly kingdom, republic, or empire, or a citizen of the kingdom of Christ. A popular treatment of the subject will use the former sense; a strictly Biblical discussion must take the latter. Regarding all kingdoms two things are apparent and their necessity conceded, irrespective of the kind of kingdom in view. 1. One cannot be a citizen of any kingdom without *becoming* one. This can only be accomplished by entering the kingdom in the way specified—no others are considered citizens by any one. 2. To be a worthy and acceptable citizen of any kingdom requires that one be obedient to its laws. A Christian must be an honorable citizen in either a world kingdom or the divine one. Those disobedient to laws are criminals and deserve punishment; those obedient—good citizens—deserve and receive protection. The principles of citizenship are the same in all kingdoms, but the laws for entrance and maintaining citizenship differ greatly.

Christ's Kingdom.—That Christ has a kingdom, and is now ruling as king, has been shown in the first two quarters. Paul says our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3: 20)—that is, heaven is our capital city, the dwelling place of our king. A number of comparisons have been used in presenting Christ and the institution he established. When the church is represented as a body, Christ is called the head. (Eph. 1: 22, 23; Col. 1: 18.) When the church is called the temple, Christ is represented as the foundation. (1 Cor. 3: 11, 16.) In like manner, when the church is called a kingdom, Christ must be called king. The church is not like any of these things in every particular, but enough like each to justify calling it by these names.

Man's Whole Duty.—Solomon said: "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." (Eccl. 12: 13.) God's commandments include all acts of devotion and service to him,

and all moral obligations to mankind. The latter requires respect for, and obedience to, the state or nation of which we are citizens. (Rom. 13: 1-7.) Jesus taught to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." (Luke 20: 25.) According to Paul's words, not to do so is a sin against God. Thus, those who hold citizenship in heaven have a twofold reason for being good citizens of a temporal government. The only justifying cause they can have for rejecting state authority is when governmental law conflicts with God's law. "We must obey God rather than men," is the language of inspiration. (Acts 5: 29.)

LESSON NOTES

I. Correct Use of Christian Freedom (Verses 13-15)

Freedom Defined.—Christian freedom, as discussed by Paul in this letter, means freedom from the Jewish law—a liberty in and through Christ. (Gal. 5: 1-4.) This fact he fully establishes in his allegory (Gal. 4: 21-31), which he concludes by saying we are children of the "freewoman." The Galatian Christians, probably Gentiles in the main, were being disturbed by a Judaizing element demanding that Gentile converts be required to be circumcised and observe Jewish rites. This would have been restoring the yoke of bondage, which Peter said neither the fathers nor themselves were able to bear. (Acts 15: 10.) To the Jews this would have been going back to their old bondage—an extreme folly; equally foolish for Gentiles to take up something which had to be abandoned by the Jews. It would have been much like going back to their old heathen bondage. Paul assured them that he who practiced the rite of circumcision because a part of the law must acknowledge himself a debtor to do all the law. Those doing it had "fallen away from grace"—left Christ for Moses. (Gal. 5: 4.) Those who go to the law for the seventh-day Sabbath and mechanical music in worship do exactly the same thing.

A Caution.—Paul warns Christians against using their legitimate freedom in Christ as an occasion to gratify the passions and desires of the flesh. He reminds them that liberty is not license. The gospel frees from the burdens of the law, but binds with the restraints and requirements of the moral and spiritual commands of Christ. They were to recognize themselves in bondage to the law of love, which said: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." There was no conflict then between freedom from the law of Moses and bondage under the gospel; neither is there any conflict now between any legitimate liberty we may have and strict bondage to the law of love.

Results Stated.—The contentions in the congregations then between the Judaizing teachers and the Gentile element over law ceremonies greatly endangered their success in the Lord's work, both as individuals and congregations. Such biting and devouring one another, he told them, would consume them—destroy the work. Christians, with their holy privileges and great rewards, cannot afford to be anything but good citizens in Christ's kingdom.

II. Warfare Between Flesh and Spirit (Verses 16-18)

What Spirit?—It is at least a question whether the word "Spirit" in verse 16 refers to the Holy Spirit or the human spirit, though man's duty is not affected by either view. It is an indisputable fact that

the Greek word translated spirit refers to God, the Holy Spirit, man's spirit, evil spirits, and dispositions, or temper. The English rule pertaining to the use of capital letters has no bearing on the subject. The Greek word for spirit begins with a small letter in all the different meanings. Whether the word should begin with a capital depends upon the text and context as to just what the passage means. The last expression of this verse, in connection with verse 17, strongly indicates that the human spirit is meant in the command, "Walk by the Spirit."

Perpetual Conflict.—Every thoughtful Christian will willingly admit that a constant warfare rages between the two elements of his nature—the inward and outward man. The better part of man's nature, here called the spirit, is the part that makes him responsible for his conduct. Because of its power to control actions, guilt is charged to it in case of sin. (Matt. 15: 18-20.) The fleshly appetites demand unrestrained gratification. This use of nature's powers results in lust, with its train of evils. This conflict Paul more fully describes in Rom. 7: 18-23. There he calls it the "law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." Nature under proper restraint is perfectly right; hence, we must understand Paul as condemning the uncontrolled use of natural powers in gratifying passions that lead to sins. The fact that we have a nature capable of such wrong use is proof that the warfare will continue.

"Led by the Spirit."—In the endless struggle between the opposing elements of our nature, we are to be led by the Spirit. His teaching in the words of Christ and his apostles is our bulwark of safety—our protection against the seductive influences of Satan, and the propensities of the flesh. With a hearty submission to the Spirit's teaching we will be able to restrain the flesh and direct its actions along proper lines. Without this we cannot be good citizens in the kingdom of Christ.

III. Works of the Flesh Bring Disaster (Verses 19-21)

Personal Impurity.—The unrestrained gratification of fleshly desires is clearly manifest in evil deeds. Paul here mentions a number that are well known because of their common occurrence. The three sins mentioned in verse 19 refer to individual impurity in body, mind, and conduct. Such uncleanness destroys individual honor and family happiness. Their simple mention is enough to condemn them with all decent-living people.

Religious Perversity.—The evils mentioned in verse 20 probably were intended to refer to their religious faults and perversions. There can be no doubt that idolatry and sorcery fall in this class. Sorcery means their pretended communications with invisible powers to induce obedience to their idols. While the others referred to may have a broader application, yet it seems more probable that Paul was condemning strifes and divisions that were prevalent among the Galatian Christians, things that would have a bad effect upon the church.

Individual Sins.—In this class would come envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and others of a similar nature. Revellings were lascivious feastings, accompanied with lewd songs—in short, just a kind of drunken carousal. The apostle assured them that no such people could

inherit the kingdom of God. This would be equally fatal to those in the kingdom of Christ or out; a proof that Christians might be lost.

IV. The Fruit of the Spirit Described (Verses 22-24)

A Good Tree.—Jesus declares that a tree is known by its fruit; that a good tree produces good fruit, and a corrupt tree with its evil fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. (Matt. 7: 16-20.) The spirit of man, properly submissive to the Holy Spirit's teaching, is the good tree; uncontrolled gratification of fleshly appetites is the evil tree. The contrast between these two could not be shown more forcibly than by the two classes of fruit mentioned by Paul.

The Kinds Specified.—The first one mentioned is *love*. This Christian characteristic is a kind of foundation supporting all others, without which they would be all but meaningless. The Christian's spirit, properly enlightened, overflows with love for both God and man. The next is *joy*, which the Christian experiences in his knowledge of salvation, and the pleasure he has in being able to serve his fellow man. The next is *peace*. This he has in his assurance of pardon, and his confidence that all God's promises will be fulfilled. These personal comforts, and the realization that he has them through the favor of God, make him long-suffering, kind, and good to others; faithful to all obligations; manifesting meekness, and exercising self-control in all things. Surely a tree is good that bears such rich fruit in abundance. This fruit is so perfect that no law of any kind has ever been enacted against it.

"Crucified the Flesh."—Those "of Christ"—Christians—"have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof," is the way Paul puts it. Evidently this is an allusion to Christ's death by crucifixion. We become "of Christ" when raised in baptism to walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6: 4.) It is appropriate then that our death to sin be represented as crucifying the flesh—effecting a complete separation from sinful practices. It is worthy of note that the flesh is not converted (the gospel makes no provision for that), but it is to be crucified. Fleshly faculties remain the same in the Christian as they were in the sinner; instructed by the teaching of the Spirit, man's spirit directs them into right channels, and restrains them in things wrong. This, Paul declares, is to bring the body "into bondage (1 Cor. 9: 27), lest we should be rejected. This done, and the Christian is the best citizen in both his earthly government, and the kingdom of God.

V. Living and Walking by the Spirit (Verses 25, 26)

The Argument.—By the use of the word "if" Paul does not express any doubt about Christians living by the Spirit—in fact, as all will agree, that is the only way Christians can live. He was basing an exhortation upon that as an assumed fact; hence, the thought is, since we live by the Spirit, we should walk by his teachings. The special application of the words, however, is not so easily determined. One view is this: Since we live in the Spiritual dispensation, we should walk by the rules laid down by the Spirit. This is evidently true, and not in conflict with the general idea of the text. Another statement is: If we have been born of the Spirit, we should grow up under his directions. This is also true in fact. Still another

statement is: If we profess to believe what the Spirit says, we should be consistent enough to do what he tells us to do. Whatever special turn we may give these words, the general truth is plain. As Christians claim to accept the Spirit's teachings as God's revelation to them of their duty, it is absurd not to make an honest, diligent effort to walk as the Spirit directs.

Things to Avoid.—To be vainglorious—puffed up with pride—is utterly inconsistent for one who professes to be imitating the meek and humble Master. This danger Christians must avoid. Such unchristian conduct would provoke others to anger, and bring on the many evils incident to dissensions in the congregation. As there were spiritually gifted persons in the church in that age, the spirit of pride would have been easily developed. Continual wrangling and strife would have been the natural results. These, Paul had already condemned. Now he urges them to remove or prevent the cause that produced them. Modestly recognizing our weaknesses and properly esteeming others will prevent the spirit of envy—a thing poisonous to the individual, and damaging to the church.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Nothing is more important in every undertaking of any value than following a competent guide. In serving God, being led by the Spirit is the only safe thing. Those led by him will not go to the Mosaic law for their practice, nor to any of the precepts of men. Worship based on such is vain according to Jesus. (Matt. 15: 9.)

2. Because Paul condemns the unrestrained gratification of the flesh as productive of many evils, it does not follow that our fleshly nature is sinful in itself. The flesh with its appetites and passions remains the same after conversion that it was before. The gospel is addressed to man's spirit, not his flesh. Conversion changes the use of natural faculties, not their nature.

3. It is foolish to travel a road that can bring one only to ruin. The unfortunate fact is that many doing so do not realize their danger, or imagine they will be able to safely turn to another road before it is too late. Deception is bad at any time; that involving eternal life is distressingly so.

4. A worthy existence is a matter for joy in any realm. Good fruit proclaims the value of the tree; good conduct, the worth of the man; and the salvation of lost souls, the greatness of the church.

5. The only way to show our faith in Christ is to obey his commands; the only way to show that we really do appreciate his work as the Savior is to be faithful members of the church he established.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

How may the expression "Christian citizen" be used?
What things are apparent regarding all kingdoms?

What must a Christian be?
What have we already learned concerning Christ's kingdom?
How is the church represented?
What is man's whole duty?
What is included in God's commandments?
What twofold duty do Christians have?

I

What did Paul mean by Christian freedom?

What did Peter say concerning the law?
 What did Paul say about circumcision?
 What warning did he give regarding liberty?

What bondage is consistent with liberty?
 What results would follow biting and devouring?

II

What spirit is meant in verse 16?
 How is the word for spirit used in the New Testament?

How is its application known in any text?

What perpetual conflict is mentioned?
 How does Paul describe it in Rom. 7: 8-13?

What is meant by "led by the Spirit"?

III

What is referred to in the first three sins mentioned?

What is referred to in those mentioned in verse 20?

Name the sins mentioned.

What individual sins are mentioned?

What is meant by "revellings"?

IV

What are good deeds called?
 What illustration is used here?
 Describe the first three fruits mentioned.
 How do these comforts make one act?
 What is meant by crucifying the flesh?
 Why is the expression appropriate?
 How does Paul explain it in 1 Cor. 9: 27?

V

What did Paul mean by saying "if"?
 What different views have been expressed about it?
 Why should vainglory be avoided?
 What special danger was there of pride then?
 What will prevent envy?

Practical Thoughts

What is the safe thing in serving God?
 What does conversion do for us?
 What is the worst kind of deception?
 What is matter for real joy?
 How can we show we really appreciate Christ's work?

Lesson VII—November 18, 1934

THE CHRISTIAN AS CHURCH MEMBER

Matt. 5: 13-16; Acts 2: 41-47.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house.

16 Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need.

46 And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"We are members of his body." (Eph. 5: 30.)

TIME.—A.D. 28; Pentecost A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Mountain near Capernaum for Matthew; Jerusalem for Acts.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the disciples, and the multitudes; the apostles and the Jerusalem saints.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Eph. 3: 14-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 12.	M.	.....	The Christian as Church Member (Matt. 5: 13-16)
November 13.	T.	.....	The Brotherhood of Believers (Acts 2: 41-47)
November 14.	W.	.....	Consecration and Service (Rom. 12: 1-8)
November 15.	T.	.....	Diversities of Gifts (1 Cor. 12: 1-11)
November 16.	F.	.....	Unity in the Church (1 Cor. 12: 12-20)
November 17.	S.	.....	Unity in Christ (Eph. 2: 13-22)
November 18.	S.	.....	The Deeper Spiritual Life (Eph. 3: 14-21)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Saving Influence of the Church (Verse 13).
 - II. The Church Is "the Light of the World" (Verses 14-16).
 - III. The Law of Admission into the Church (Acts 2: 41).
 - IV. The Worship of the Church (Verse 42).
 - V. Practical Ministration of the Church (Verses 43-47).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Many Relationships.—Christians, like other classes of people, have varied relationships. No difference what or how many a Christian may have he is not allowed to neglect or forsake his profession of Christianity. The husband and father may be a banker, lawyer, doctor, or farmer, but his obligations in any of these do not change his relationship to his wife and children, or destroy his responsibilities to them. Man's membership in one order does not change his duty to another of which he is a member. If one is a Christian, no earthly relationship can relieve him of his obligations to the church. Having the benefits of one lodge will not give you those of another one. Regardless of all world relationships, men must have the blessings of church membership, else Christ died in vain; for he purchased the church with his blood. (Acts 20: 28.)

Becoming Christians.—It is self-evident that living the Christian life necessitates first becoming one. The process by which this change is made is not an indefinite, uncertain thing in time of method as many seem to think. It is just as clearly defined and easily understood as the law of initiation into a lodge, or the naturalization of foreign-born citizens. The word Christian is derived from the name Christ, and means one upon whom the name Christ has been called; or one who has obeyed the commands of Christ, and become a member of the company of which Christ is the head. To be a Christian, therefore, means to be a member of the church; for the church is called the body of Christ, and he is the head. (Eph. 1: 22, 23.) As people become Masons by becoming members of the Masonic lodge (just as true of all lodges), so one becomes a Christian when he becomes a member of Christ's church. People outside of lodges may be as good in moral conduct as those inside, but that does not make them members of the lodge. The same may be said of people outside of the church, but that does not make them Christians. To be a Christian and a member of Christ's church mean one and the same thing.

A Good Christian.—Men may be good, bad, or indifferent in all re-

lationships. Neglect, indifference, and rebellion are different phases of dishonoring one's profession. A drunken husband is a poor one, but a husband nevertheless. True he does not live up to the meaning of his title, but the relationship that justifies the title has not been cancelled. Children may be fearfully disobedient, but they remain children in spite of that fact. Christians that disgrace the church with bad conduct dishonor their name; legally Christians, actually poor ones.

LESSON NOTES

I. Saving Influence of the Church (Verse 13)

Those Addressed.—The teaching of Jesus which he intended for his church to have was, of necessity, given before the church began. The Sermon on the Mount, of which our text from Matthew is a part, was spoken to those who were individual disciples of his at the time. But character and influence would require the same kind of conduct in the church later as then; hence, the Savior's words are as applicable to us as to them. The church as Christ's body, and congregations as local bodies, are all made up of individuals. The church's power to save sinners is just equal to the sum total of all the efforts made by the individual members, since the church has no other way to work except through its members. Saving power may, therefore, be credited to the church, considered as a body, or to individuals as units composing the body.

"Salt of the Earth."—This expression implies a solemn duty in words well-nigh impossible to misunderstand. Salt is a preservative, exercising a saving power over certain things that would be lost without it. The application is evident; the Lord's disciples—Christians—exercise a saving influence in the world. Those not reached by the power of the gospel will be lost. Some with erroneous ideas of man's ability deny that man can do anything to save men. Of course, Christians do not save sinners in the sense of pardoning their sins. That prerogative belongs to God. We can save men by teaching them the way of salvation, and assisting them in their obedience to God. Those who deny this, deny plain Bible teaching. That we can save men is a fact, else the words of our text are misleading. Paul told Timothy that by taking heed to himself and what he taught he would save himself and those who heard him. (1. Tim. 4: 16.)

Lost Savor Fatal.—The power to save and the necessity of doing it are presented negatively also. The natural fact is that if salt loses its saving power, it is thrown away as worthless. The spiritual truth is that if we lose our saving influence, we will be rejected and lost. Christians who have no influence that will favorably affect people toward the church are worthless in the Lord's kingdom. Their final rejection by the Lord is a Bible truth based upon the ordinary laws of nature.

II. The Church Is "the Light of the World" (Verses 14-16)

Another Illustration.—Jesus used another natural fact to illustrate the manner of his disciples exercising their saving influence upon the world. As the sunshine spreads warmth and light upon the earth, so the disciples as Christ's body diffuse the light of truth

in the minds darkened by sin. The sun's rays are necessary to plant life; the gospel truth is necessary to spiritual life. Christians must shed the gospel light upon those about them, or disgrace their profession as servants of Christ.

"Cannot Be Hid."—The position of the sun makes it unfailingly throw its rays upon any part of the earth that is turned toward it. In like manner the church in position and nature is so exalted that its light-giving power can reach any one that wants the truth. Like a city set upon a hill that directs weary travelers to a place of rest, so the church points out the way, and continually beckons sinners to share its comforts and rest. There are just two reasons why the sun's light may not reach the earth, or travelers fail to find the city set on a hill. Clouds may drift between the sun and earth, or some object come between the city and the traveler. Any part of the earth that turns away from the sun, or any traveler who refuses to look for the city, will be cut off from the reception of light just as effectually. Disobedience on the part of Christians, like a cloud, may obscure the gospel light; the sinner by his own wickedness may turn his eyes from the Sun of righteousness. The Christian is to blame for one; the sinner for the other.

So Shine.—Man does not light a lamp and put it under a bushel. That would be inexcusable folly. If not put where its light will shine and be seen, the purpose in lighting it was vain. Christians reflect the light received from the Lord; unless this can be seen by men the Lord is not honored by our claim as his disciples. Christians let their light shine in two ways: by teaching the exact truth of the gospel on all available opportunities; by living in a way that is consistent with what they teach. We should deeply consider the fact that our evil deeds will also be known by the world. They drive people away from the church as our good deeds attract them to it.

III. The Law of Admission to the Church (Acts 2: 41)

The Beginning.—This verse states the conclusion and result of the preaching on Pentecost, recording the first conversions after the church began. As the apostles under direct inspiration of the Spirit did the teaching, the correctness of all transactions is guaranteed. This assures us that whatever they required the people to do to be saved—enter the church—is the law still upon the subject. This cannot be denied without rejecting apostolic authority.

"Received His Word."—To have all the facts before us, we must know what is meant by "they then received his word." Peter had already told them that Jesus, whom they had crucified, had been made both Lord and Christ. This they believed, as is shown by the statement, "they were pricked in their hearts," and the fact that they asked what they should do. If faith alone had been enough to save, there was no reason why Peter should not have told them they were saved already. The fact that he did not do so, but told them what to do, is proof that they were not saved, though they were then believers in Christ. Their receiving his word meant they accepted his answer to their question. Doubtless they were glad to learn that remission of sins could be received upon such simple and easy terms.

"Were Baptized."—Peter did not tell them to believe for the reason, as already mentioned, that they were believers when they asked what

they should do. Peter said that every one of them should repent and be baptized "unto the remission of your sins." (Verse 38.) The command to repent shows they did not have remission. All concede that men repent to obtain remission. Baptism is for exactly the same purpose as repentance; they have the same relation to the sentence. That baptism is an immersion is established by the highest authority. The law of induction then included faith, repentance, and baptism. No change has been made in that law since. Baptism administered according to the teaching of the Spirit brings one into the one body, which is the church. (1 Cor. 12: 13; Eph. 2: 16.)

Those Added.—Verse 41 says about three thousand souls "were added unto them." The words *unto them* are not in the Greek text, but were supplied by the translators to fully express what seems to be the thought—that is, those baptized became a part of that body of Christians, who were before that day the individual disciples of Christ, but on that day became the church. Verse 47 says: "and the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved." The margin says those that "were being saved." The Lord added them because it was by obedience to his commands that they became members of the body or church, just as foreigners by naturalization are by the government added to its citizenship.

IV. The Worship of the Church (Verse 42)

"Continued Steadfastly."—The original of this expression means to strongly adhere to, persistently cling to, give constant attention to. "Continued steadfastly" is an apt and terse way to translate it. In spite of their many difficulties, those ancient disciples persistently clung to the work and worship of the church. Their zeal and courage should put to shame many modern Christians who so grievously neglect duty. "Spasmodically" is the only term that will appropriately describe the intermittent service rendered by some church members.

Items of Worship.—Those first Christians not only received what the apostles taught on remission of sins, but they continued to receive apostolic teaching regarding Christian duties. As they obeyed the former to be saved so they obeyed the latter continuously to remain in God's favor. Doubtless this instruction was delivered mainly when they were assembled for that purpose. "Fellowship" expressed their common partnership in religious privileges, largely manifested in their associations in the work done in the assemblies. The breaking of bread, mentioned with the devotional service of prayer, refers to the Lord's Supper. The first Christians, directed by apostles, gave zealous and persistent attention to the regular assemblies in which God was publicly worshipped. This example all Christians should follow. The Christian's responsibility to the church of Christ is the matter of first importance—his first duty. (Matt. 6: 33; Acts 20: 7.)

V. Practical Ministrations of the Church (Verses 43-47)

Fear Came Upon Them.—Such a feeling is not surprising, if we take a glance at the events occurring from day to day. The great miracle on Pentecost, the charge of murdering the Son of God lodged against them, the "many signs and wonders" that the apostles con-

tinued to perform, and their matchless teaching all combined to inspire a serious awe and respect.

"Had All Things Common."—This was not a community of goods in which all was placed in a common lot and equally distributed; they distributed the goods "according as any man had need." Common distribution would not work practically. Each one more fortunate in worldly goods held himself ready to assist those in need; this is the true Christian fellowship that should always exist in the practical work of the church. This was a striking characteristic of the new institution, in contrast with the common neglect of the poor among other classes.

"In the Temple."—Luke tells us that day by day they were in the temple, and broke bread at home with gladness and singleness of heart. They continued to praise God and had favor with all the people. Their daily appearance in the court of the temple is most natural, while they remained in Jerusalem in those first weeks or months of their work. It had been the house of God to the Jews for centuries; Jesus had been there with them on various occasions; there the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles; there the first converts were made to Christ. Such associations naturally drew them to it, besides it furnished the practical place to reach the Jews. Their devotion to God, their efforts to convert sinners, and their common ministrations in behalf of the needy went hand in hand. The same should be true with us.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. If salt should lose its saving power, it could not be restored; the salt would have to be rejected. If a Christian destroys his saving power by becoming untrue to his calling, he, because an intelligent and responsible creature, can restore that influence, unless he sins willfully—that is, becomes an infidel—crucifies the Son of God afresh.

2. The only lamp that is of real value is one that gives a bright, steady light from a place where it can be seen. The Christian whose work is worthy of commendation is one who earnestly and persistently meets his obligations to the church.

3. The obedience of those on Pentecost shows that receiving the word meant not only accepting it as true, but doing what it said. See also Acts 8: 12, 14. Receiving Christ likewise means entering his church, not just admitting that he is Christ.

4. All institutions offer benefits to those who enter them; entrance, therefore, is necessary. But faithful observance of laws for members is equally necessary. Final salvation depends on faithfulness unto death.

5. The second greatest law under which man lives is meeting his obligations to mankind, especially to members of the church. This is a practical way to add glory to God and honor to the church.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

How must Christians consider other relationships?
What blessings must one have if saved?
What is necessary if we live the Christian life?

How does the law of entrance to the church compare with entrance to other organizations?

What is the meaning of the word "Christian"?

Show that entrance to the church is necessary.

What does it mean to be a "good" Christian?

I

To whom was the Sermon on the Mount addressed?

Why are the Savior's words still applicable?

To whom may saving power be ascribed?

What illustration does Jesus use?

What is the application?

In what sense can Christians save sinners?

Give other Bible proof?

What is meant by salt losing its savor?

II

What other natural fact is used as an illustration?

What is the application?

What lesson is in the reference to a city?

What may obscure gospel light?

What is the application of the reference to a lamp?

III

Of what is our text a part?

What assures its correctness?

What was the condition of the people at that time?

If faith alone was enough, what would Peter have said?

What is meant by "received his word"?

What is shown by the command to repent?

What does this show about the purpose of baptism?

Into what does baptism bring one?

What is meant by the Lord "adding" them?

IV

What is meant by "continued steadfastly"?

What effect should their zeal have upon us?

What items of worship are mentioned?

What is of first importance to a Christian?

V

What caused the general fear?

What is meant by "had all things common"?

Where were they daily?

Why were they there?

Practical Thoughts

Can a Christian restore lost saving power?

What Christian is worthy of commendation?

What does receiving Christ mean?

What two things are of equal importance?

What practical obligation rests upon Christians?

Lesson VIII—November 25, 1934

THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD

Matt. 25: 14-30.

14 For it is as *when* a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey.

16 Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents.

17 In like manner he also that received the two gained other two.

18 But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them.

20 And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22 And he also that received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents.

23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter;

25 And I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own.

26 But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter;

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest.

28 Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents.

29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away.

30 And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. 25: 21.)

TIME.—Tuesday before the crucifixion.

PLACE.—Slope of the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and the twelve.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Malachi 3: 7-12.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 19.	M.	Faithful Stewardship (Matt. 25: 14-23)
November 20.	T.	Unfaithful Stewardship (Matt. 25: 24-30)
November 21.	W.	A Steward's Responsibilities (Luke 12: 42-48)
November 22.	T.	Stewardship of Service (1 Pet. 4: 7-11)
November 23.	F.	Stewardship of the Gospel (1 Thess. 2: 1-9)
November 24.	S.	Stewardship of Position (Titus 1: 5-11)
November 25.	S.	Stewardship of Income (Malachi 3: 7-12)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Servants Entrusted with Their Lord's Goods (Verses 14, 15).
- II. The Service Rendered (Verses 16-18).
- III. The Lord Reckons with the Faithful Servants (Verses 19-23).
- IV. Plea of the Slothful Servant (Verses 24-27).
- V. The Unprofitable Servant Receives His Reward (Verses 28-30).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

The Occasion.—After his strong denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites (Matt. 23), Jesus left the temple court for the last time (Matt. 23: 38; 24: 1). This was near the close of Tuesday before his crucifixion on Friday. From Matt. 24: 3 it appears certain that the discourse in that chapter was spoken on the slope of the Mount of Olives, where he had stopped on his way back to Bethany for the night. It is probable that the parable in our lesson text was also spoken at that time, though we are certain only that it was spoken at least two days before the Passover. (Matt. 26: 1.) It is possible, therefore, that it might have been spoken after they reached Bethany that night, or even next day.

Those Addressed.—On leaving the temple enclosure, Jesus said it would be completely destroyed. As he sat on the Mount of Olives, four of his apostles asked him privately when this destruction would

occur, and what would be the sign of it. (Mark 13: 3, 4.) If the words recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter were spoken at that time (a thing at least possible), then this parable was evidently spoken to the apostles only. While they, as apostles, would need its lesson in the special labors they were called to perform, yet its teaching is so eminently practical that it fits all servants of Christ, in every age and in every class of service rendered. We should not forget that the apostles, though miraculously qualified for labors which no others could do, were, nevertheless, simply Christians. As individual Christians they needed the same instruction, warnings, and exhortations as other Christians. What they received in that line is correctly passed on to us. Special spiritual qualification for apostolic work ceased at their death.

Lesson Intended.—Each parable of the Lord has something peculiar that distinguishes it from all the others. They do not clash in their teaching, but just present some particular phases of gospel truth from a special standpoint. In the parable of the ten virgins, in preceding verses, their fault was mainly mental—concluding they had ample preparation to meet the bridegroom, and learning at the critical moment that they were mistaken. In that of the talents the fault was in not using the means at their disposal in a way to make the necessary gain. It was a deliberate failure to be true to active responsibilities. Either fault will lead to final ruin, though for different reasons. Things so dangerous that they may lead to final condemnation must be avoided, if we expect to be saved.

LESSON NOTES

I. Servants Entrusted with Their Lord's Goods (Verses 14, 15)

A Parable.—The parabolic nature of the language used in our lesson text is evident at once, though it is not definitely called a parable, neither is the comparison stated in full. The literal translation is, "For as a man going into a far country." That is exactly what the Revised Version says when the italicized words are omitted. Literally the text does not say what is like a man going into a far country. Assuming the kingdom of heaven to be the thing in the Lord's mind, the expression, "it is as when" means that the Lord's going away to heaven is like a man going into a far country. The King James says, "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country." Either version is sufficiently accurate to show that a comparison is to be made between the parable and the kingdom of heaven in some particulars. The disciples generally were expecting an earthly kingdom, and that it would immediately appear. (Luke 19: 11.) The parable shows that Jesus must return to heaven first.

The Application.—The application is too plain and natural to be misunderstood. Clearly the man represents Christ; his going into a far country, as already stated, represents Christ's returning to heaven; and the servants who received goods to be used in his absence represent Christians. In the parable of the pounds, spoken a few days earlier, and with substantially the same purpose, he said a certain nobleman went into a far country "to receive for himself a kingdom." (Luke 19: 12.) This shows he received the kingdom while in the far country. But our lesson parable shows that the servants

handled their lord's goods in his absence. His return is to reckon with them. He must have received the kingdom, and then delivered to them his goods. After ascending on high he "gave gifts unto men." (Eph. 4: 8-16.) These gifts were delivered on Pentecost. Hence, his kingdom must have already been received when powers were granted that day. Since that day, the servants of Christ—Christians—have been responsible for the safekeeping of his truth, and for the spread of his kingdom. That this is the proper application of the parable is clear from the words, "his *own* servants." It is a sacred trust, a solemn responsibility, a delegated work for which each must give an account of himself when the Lord returns.

According to Ability.—That God with his matchless love and mercy would require impossible things—something beyond one's capacity—is clearly out of the question. That individuals should be held responsible for their ability is universally accepted; that they should also be responsible for any increase in ability or capacity that they may reasonably make is also conceded. When ability was considered, each of the three received exactly the same—all he could use. The five-talent man received no more; the one-talent man, no less. The man delivering his goods to his servants before he went away, and Christ giving his after he ascended to heaven is a contrast; a necessity because Christ's kingdom is spiritual, and did not begin till after he left this earth.

II. The Service Rendered (Verses 16-18)

"Traded with Them."—Whether the word "straightway" refers to the departure of the lord of the parable, as the King James gives it, or to the servant receiving five talents beginning to use them, as the Revised Version puts it, is a matter of textual criticism. Either one might have been the thought expressed. The use of the talents extends from the day of Pentecost till the Lord returns to the earth, and includes all Christians throughout that period. Trading with talents represents using abilities or powers. Like any good business man, we should embrace all opportunities and strive for the greatest success in our Lord's business. The silver talent is estimated at not less than sixteen hundred dollars; the gold talent at about thirty-two thousand. Because of their great value they represent our abilities, temporal and spiritual, to do things and accomplish good for the kingdom of God.

Gain and Loss.—The five-talent man gained five more, or one hundred per cent. This is a highly satisfactory gain in any kind of business. The two-talent man gained two more which, in per cent, was equal to the man with five, though in quantity not half as much. The one-talent man did not gain anything, but kept his lord's money by hiding it. For this he deserved no credit, for his lord could have done that himself. While there was no loss of what his lord delivered to him, he lost in the sense of not having what he was capable of gaining.

III. The Lord Reckons with the Faithful Servants (Verses 19-23)

"A Long Time."—In the parable the lord is made to return "after a long time," which, at least, suggests in the application that Jesus

will return at the close of the Christian dispensation. What makes that application certain is the fact that on the lord's return his servants came before him for a settlement of their accounts. This must refer to Christ's final settlement with his servants upon his return. That, in fact, is just what Jesus himself taught without a parable in the concluding part of the same discourse. (Matt. 25: 31-46.)

"Other Five Talents."—The servant that had received five talents returned them together with five talents more as the gain made. The faithful servants doubtless appeared before their lord with joy, having in the gain made a solid reason for it. This is a true picture of the gladness with which the diligent servants of Christ will meet him at the judgment. Nothing can be a source of more real joy than to have a worth-while gain to lay at the Lord's feet. It was not a matter of telling his lord how faithful he had been in his absence; he was able to show the fruits of such labor. So, it will be with the servants of Christ; he will know how much we have "gained by trading." The lord said: "Well done, good and faithful servant," and then told him to enter into the joy of his lord. In like manner Christ will tell his faithful servants to enter the place he has prepared for them. (John 14: 2.)

"Other Two Talents."—The one to whom the lord delivered two talents gained two more. Relatively he had gained the same as the other, and his lord pronounced the same blessing upon him—"enter thou into the joys of thy lord." The words, "I will set thee over many things," are a part of the parable, and in temporal things can be understood literally; hence, an appropriate statement as part of the parable. In the application it means that Christ will properly reward his servants for faithful service. Just what those rewards will be cannot be known fully till we receive them. As the talents were distributed according to ability, the one gaining two was just as faithful as the one gaining five, and worthy of the same commendation.

IV. Plea of the Slothful Servant (Verses 24-27)

Charges Against His Lord.—Being required to meet the record of his stewardship, just the same as the faithful servants, the slothful servant was ready to excuse himself with charges against his lord. Neglectful Christians will probably manifest the same bitter and revengeful spirit, when they realize they are lost. All men, including both good and bad in the church, will have to give account of themselves at the judgment. (Rom. 14: 10-12; 2 Cor. 5: 10.) If by "hard" man the servant meant, which he probably did, that his lord was unfair, or unjust in his dealings, his charge was false, a sufficient proof being the fact that his lord graciously gave him all that he was capable of using. If, perchance, he meant that his lord was exact in his dealings, that was doubtless true, and became a fine reason why he should have been faithful. In either event the servant deserved the condemnation pronounced upon him. The fact that his lord received rent from land he did not cultivate himself was no proof of injustice.

His Lord's Reply.—The servant's remark that he was afraid to use the talent, lest he lose his lord's money was irrelevant, since it was delivered to him for that very purpose. No less foolish is the

Christian's excuse that he fears failure, if he tries, as a justification for his sloth. The same is equally absurd when made by a sinner. Those who think they can turn back their unused talents to the Lord at par value with salvation for themselves are doomed to disappointment. His lord called him a "wicked and slothful servant," wicked because he falsely charged his lord with severe injustice; slothful because he was too neglectful to use the talent he had. He did not even turn it to the bankers that his lord might have interest. Truly a vivid picture of Christians, too indifferent to make any effort for the church. Yet such deluded members feel that they should be saved. For what reason, pray? This servant was not condemned for not having two or five talents; it was because he did not use the one he had. This will be the count upon which most unfaithful Christians will be rejected: courteously referred to as sloth; plainly, as laziness.

V. The Unprofitable Servant Receives His Reward (Verses 28-30)

Talent Taken Away.—Naturally those furnishing means for accomplishing things will take them away if not used. Those who fail to pay interest may expect to be forced to give up the principal. Those failing to embrace opportunities when presented, generally find they soon disappear. This is in harmony with the general rule that from him that hath not shall be taken away that which he hath. Something cannot be taken from one, if he has nothing in any sense, but if he has an unused talent and does not have the interest or gain which he should have, the talent may be taken from him. That is clearly the meaning of this expression here. Giving the unused talent to the servant with ten, only shows that means faithfully used will increase both capacity and chances to do greater things. Success leads to still greater success. If one fails to work the field, it will be given to some one else.

"Outer Darkness."—Such unprofitable servants will finally be dismissed from service, with no chance to reënter. All their confessions of neglect and cryings for mercy will not avail then. This phase of the parable shows too clearly to allow of any mistake that unprofitable Christians will finally be rejected—lost. No Bible truth is more certainly revealed, or clearly stated, than that Christians may become unfaithful and fail to enter that final rest that remains for the people of God. (1 Cor. 9: 27; Heb. 3: 18, 19; 4: 1.)

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. A stewardship shows the kindness, mercy, and love of the one who entrusts his goods with others; that he has a right to expect faithfulness, honesty and service on their part is unquestionably true. In a general sense life itself is a stewardship under God, in which every one should recognize his obligations to his Maker. Christians have a special stewardship committed to them, and are therefore the more censurable if they are unfaithful.

2. Two things are important in the use of any and all talents: One is to lose no time in beginning the use. In everything much depends on an early start in making sure of success. The other is the

constant and persistent use of them. Exercise is necessary to healthy development, and often the only road to success.

3. Requiring an accurate reckoning, just returns and fair treatment are a cause for commendation rather than condemnation. It is the only way that divine procedure would be acceptable to men. Requiring the same of men is the proper thing.

4. Evil men, though conscious of the fact that they are getting justice, generally offer some excuse for their wickedness. If they know the law, which is usually the case, apologies are vain; if they could know, but do not, they are justly condemned for that.

5. It is too late to cry when our own neglect has brought upon us final condemnation. Open doors may be entered, closed ones cannot.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

When did Jesus leave the temple court the last time?
Where was Matthew 24 spoken?
Where was our lesson text spoken?
To whom was it spoken?
To whom is its lesson applicable?
What general fault is condemned by it?
What is true of each parable?

I

How do we know this is a parable?
What is a literal translation of its opening words?
How does the King James version give it?
What is taught by both versions?
Give general features of the application.
What similar parable did Jesus give?
Where did the nobleman receive the kingdom?
When did Christ give gifts to men?
What responsibility rests on Christians?
How do we know it represents Christians?
What rule is universally accepted?

II

How is the word "straightway" applied?
In what period does the parable apply?
What is meant by trading with talents?
What is the value of talents?
What servants gained, and how much?

III

What is meant by "a long time"?
What will be a source of real joy for Christians?
What blessing is pronounced upon faithful servants?
What is meant by "set thee over many things"?

IV

Who must give an account of stewardship?
What did the slothful servant probably mean by the word "hard"?
What other meaning might it have?
What is true in either event?
What foolish excuse do people sometimes make for neglect?
Why call him "wicked and slothful"?
For what reason was the servant condemned?

V

What happens when talents are not used?
What scripture statement is there on this point?
What is indicated by giving the talent to the servant with ten?
What is proven about the destiny of unprofitable servants?

Practical Thoughts

What general facts are involved in stewardship?
What is important in the use of talents?
What are causes for commendation?
Why are wicked men justly condemned?
When will it be too late to cry over sins?

Lesson IX—December 2, 1934

THE CHRISTIAN AS WITNESS

1 Thess. 1: 1-10.

1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

4 Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election,

5 How that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance; even as ye know what manner of men we showed ourselves toward you for your sake.

6 And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit;

7 So that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia.

8 For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything.

9 For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God,

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."* (Acts 1: 8.)

TIME.—A.D. 52 or 53.

PLACE.—Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul, Silas, Timothy, and the Thessalonian brethren.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ps. 107: 1-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 26.	M.	Witnessing by Word (2 Cor. 4: 1-6)
November 27.	T.	Witnessing by Life (1 Thess. 1: 1-10)
November 28.	W.	Witnessing Among Friends (Mark 5: 15-20)
November 29.	T.	Witnessing of Women (Matt. 28: 1-10)
November 30.	F.	Witnessing to the Rebellious (Ezek. 2: 1-10)
December 1.	S.	Witnessing to the Responsive (Acts 10: 30-35)
December 2.	S.	Witnessing a Duty (Ps. 107: 1-9)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Apostolic Praise for Thessalonian Church (Verses 1-3).
 - II. The Gospel in Word and in Power (Verses 4, 5).
 - III. The Thessalonian Brethren Ensamples to Others (Verses 6-8).
 - IV. Further Results of Faithfulness Stated (Verses 9, 10).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

The Church in Thessalonica.—This city was a seaport town in Macedonia, one hundred miles southwest of Philippi, and was a place of great commercial importance. A considerable element of Jews was in its population, as is indicated by the fact that Paul's first

work there was done in their synagogue. The location, commerce, and character of population made it a desirable center from which gospel light might radiate throughout that section. In his second missionary journey, Paul was miraculously directed to enter Macedonia (Acts 16: 6-12), and did his first work in Philippi. From there he went directly to Thessalonica for his second field of labor in that country. Silas and Timothy were fellow laborers with him in this work. (Acts 17: 14, 15.) They were successful in converting some of the Jews, a great multitude of devout Greeks, and not a few of the chief women. (Acts 17: 1-4.)

Persecution Arose.—As had been their experience, gospel success brought the unbelieving Jews into violent opposition. This is not at all surprising, since the preaching of Christ required charging the Jews as being guilty of his murder. The opposition became so pronounced that they used the synagogue but three Sabbath days. The Jews collected a crowd of the rabble and threw the city in an uproar, charging the disciples with disturbing the peace, and preaching contrary to the decrees of Caesar. The situation became so tense that Paul and Silas decided to go to Berea, a city about sixty miles southwest of Thessalonica. The people there were more kindly disposed toward the truth and many believed. When this was known in Thessalonica, the persecutors there came to Berea and stirred up the multitudes. Paul, doubtless knowing he was the special object of their hatred, departed for Athens, but left Silas and Timothy there to direct the new converts.

Occasion for His Letter.—First Thessalonians, the first of the New Testament epistles, was written in Corinth, where Paul had gone after his rather brief stay in Athens. He remained in Corinth eighteen months (Acts 18: 11), some time during which period he wrote this letter. Some of the Berean brethren went with Paul to Athens, and by them he sent back word for Timothy and Silas to come to him. Timothy came and was sent back to Thessalonica to comfort the church. Not long after reaching Corinth, Timothy came from Thessalonica (Acts 18: 5), and his report of conditions in the congregations was no doubt the reason for Paul's writing them this first letter, of which our lesson text is the opening chapter.

LESSON NOTES

I. Apostolic Praise for Thessalonian Church (Verses 1-3)

The Salutation.—As Silas and Timothy had been associated with Paul in the work at Thessalonica, he very appropriately includes them in this salutation. This was Christian courtesy, and probably carried some weight with the brethren when the letter was read. The address, "church of the Thessalonians," shows that it is proper to designate a congregation by the place located, or the nationality of its membership. He refers to them as being "in" God and Christ. John uses a similar expression in 1 John 5: 20. Such expressions evidently mean that we are subject to God and Christ, or subject to God through Christ. "In God" would distinguish the Thessalonian church from all kinds of Gentile idolatry; "in Christ," from the synagogues of the Jews. Both were necessary in pointing them out as a distinct religious body. Upon them, as such servants of Christ, Paul asked that God's favor rest.

Paul's Gratitude.—Paul's great pleasure at their conversion, and zeal for the gospel, led him to thanksgiving for their faithful labors, mentioning them in his prayers, and keeping them continually in his remembrance. Such fidelity on the part of a congregation is a source of much joy to the one who established it, as individual faithfulness is to the one who baptized the party into Christ.

Things Praised.—The apostle mentions their faith, love, and hope, the three fundamental graces which he said would remain when the miracles of the apostolic age had ceased. (1 Cor. 13: 13.) Their faith was not of a speculative, formal, or dead character that merely gives assent to the gospel facts, but an active one, made perfect by works. (James 2: 20-22.) Their love was not a kind of superficial admiration, but of a deep, steady character, as evidenced by their obedience to God, and their efforts to aid others in learning the truth. They gave the proof that their love really met the test as laid down by Jesus himself—obedience to his commands. (John 14: 21; 15: 10-14.) Their hope was not the wavering kind that subsided in the face of dangers, but of that persistent and steadfast order that endured afflictions by keeping their eyes fixed on Jesus, as the forerunner within the veil. (Heb. 6: 19, 20.) Such devotion to gospel truth and zeal for its propagation made them worthy of apostolic praise.

II. The Gospel in Word and in Power (Verses 4, 5)

"Your Election."—To elect means to select or choose; those chosen of God are therefore elected, no difference what his plan of choosing may be. That the elect may be lost is clearly implied in Peter's admonition to "make your calling and election sure," language spoken to Christians. (2 Pet. 1: 10.) God elects, not by selecting certain individuals unconditionally, but by decreeing those of certain character acceptable on specified conditions. Of the rebellious, Jesus said: "ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." (John 5: 40.) The invitation is: "he that will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22: 17.) Paul told the Thessalonians that their election came through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, and the call came through the gospel. (2 Thess. 2: 13, 14.) Plainly he meant that they became the elect of God when they believed and obeyed the gospel. It is also true that God chose the Gentiles as a class to become "fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." (Eph. 3: 6.) This may have been Paul's thought in our lesson text. In either case the election was through obedience to the gospel.

"Much Assurance."—Of their election as individuals, or Gentiles as a class, they had positive assurance in the way the gospel came to them. As this letter was the first New Testament book written, they had no record of gospel facts, but were dependent upon personal testimony adequately confirmed. This they knew they had. The gospel came to them in word through Paul's reasoning upon the Jewish prophets, and his personal testimony concerning relevant facts, but not in word only. Miracles wrought by the Holy Spirit confirmed his words (compare Mark 16: 20), so that their faith did not "stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. 2: 4, 5.) The apostles were to be witnesses. (Acts 1: 8.) Paul was chosen as a special witness to bear the Lord's name "before the Gentiles

the Lord comes some will be alive; they will be a part of the "we" Paul had in mind. What a glorious day when "we," his saints both and kings." (Acts 9: 15.) Such confirmation to the truth of the gospel gave them "much assurance" that their election of the Lord was a glorious fact.

Appropriate Conduct.—Paul also reminded the Thessalonian brethren of his manner of life among them. This was additional assurance to them that the gospel they had received made men live right; if they followed its teaching. This he did. The conduct of the messenger, the character of the message, and the accompanying miracles left no place for doubt that it was truth.

III. The Thessalonian Brethren Ensamples to Others (Verses 6-8)

"Imitators of Us."—To be an ensample implies worthiness of being imitated, but people should not be imitated in things wrong. Such examples should be studiously avoided. That Paul's testimony in word and deed among them was effective is seen in the fact that they became imitators of him. This should be understood as applying to their personal devotion to the church, and their practice of individual righteousness, not to the miracles which he used to confirm the truth. It is quite probable that he did impart some spiritual gifts to some of them, as was common in such cases (Rom. 1: 11), but he doubtless meant that the congregation in general imitated him in the practical features of Christianity. He wanted people to imitate him only as he imitated Christ. (1 Cor. 11: 1.) In fact our text says substantially the same thing in the words, "and of the Lord."

"In Much Affliction."—The afflictions—opposition and persecution—in which they received the word is described in Acts 17: 4-9. Their enemies resorted to mob violence, false charges before city rulers, and arresting members of the church. In spite of all this, they received the word with joy, because of the spiritual proofs of its truth, and the promises made by the Spirit through it. It was their genuine faith and undaunted courage in accepting and maintaining the gospel against such opposition that caused them to be examples to believers in Macedonia and Achaia. To these places, near enough to easily hear of them, the Thessalonian church became a living demonstration of true Christianity.

"Sounded Forth."—It is a genuine compliment to this congregation that Paul says they "sounded forth the word of the Lord"; many modern congregations are perfectly content to sound it *in*—that is, have all their preaching of the word done to themselves. So far as such congregations are concerned, Jesus might as well not have said, "Go into all the world." Visitors coming to Thessalonica and residents going elsewhere would soon spread the fame of this congregation. That they really sent out missionaries to other places can hardly be doubted of a congregation receiving such apostolic commendation. Sounding *out* the word is a duty resting upon every congregation in some measure; the doors of opportunity are open wide; it is inexcusable negligence not to have some part in this general extension of the kingdom. How much better to have our "faith to God-ward" go forth throughout all near-by territory than to pass the years of

our congregational existence away without even our home section knowing we have a name to live. Their faithfulness had such favorable influence that Paul had no need to speak anything in defense of himself or of them.

IV. Further Results of Faithfulness Stated (Verses 9, 10)

The Reports.—When Paul met those from other places who had come under the influence of this congregation, he received such reports as indicated his entrance among them had been highly satisfactory. To Titus, Paul wrote concerning the “defiled and unbelieving” that “They profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him.” (Titus 1: 15, 16.) The Thessalonians were not in that class. They, despite persecution, confessed Jesus with their words, and gave the more practical testimony in their deeds—lived consistently with their profession. This need not be construed to mean that they were sinless, or did not have an occasional violator of God’s law. His words were a description of the general state of the congregation. Some exceptions to rules usually occur, but do not change the general facts. Christians may make shipwreck of the faith (1 Tim. 1: 19), and deny the Lord (2 Tim. 2: 11-13). Their consistent witness to the truth, when their opposition would lead many to deny him, was a source for much thanksgiving to Paul.

Their Conversion.—The great fact in the report which had gone out concerning them was that they had turned from idols to God. This was a striking report in a time and in a country where idolatry flourished, and idol temples abounded, practically the entire Gentile population worshipping one or more. Such a radical conversion—turning—produced a profound impression upon all parties. Seeing relatives and friends desert heathen temples, turning their backs upon lifelong customs, were the affecting scenes which the idolaters were witnessing from day to day. This was a genuinely practical way of bearing testimony to the gospel truth. They not only quit the idol temples and their worship, but immediately began serving the living God, carrying out what is so often taught in the divine record—namely, that one must not only cease to do evil, but must actively engage in doing good.

Wait for Christ’s Return.—The return of the Lord is a doctrine dear to all his faithful followers, for it involves the consummation of all things, one of which is the receiving of our eternal inheritance. They knew perfectly (from Paul’s teaching, of course) that the exact time of his return was unknown. (1 Thess. 5: 1-6.) But the certainty of his return, Paul offers as a motive to induce them to wait patiently for it. In the meantime they were to go on in their steadfast course and be ready. When the apostle said (4: 15) “we that are alive” at his coming, he did not mean that he expected it to occur in that generation. This is evident from a statement in his second letter to them, in which he discusses that very point and declares that a great apostasy had to occur first. This apostasy he explained to be “the man of sin.” His description fits nothing else than the Catholic apostasy. (See 2 Thess. 2: 1-11.) By “we” he simply meant the church as the body of Christ throughout all its existence. When living and dead, will meet him. May we who are his disciples now patiently await his coming.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Nothing is more pleasing than to give praise where it is deserved. Many preachers have been made to rejoice from the general report that those converted by them have been faithful to God. But how many hearts have been saddened by a contrary report.

2. God has combined his promise, oath, and miraculous confirmation to give us "the strong encouragement" we need in being steadfast in his service. We can therefore come to him fully assured that what he has promised he is able to perform, for which reason our faith will be reckoned unto us for righteousness. (Rom. 4: 20-24.) By so doing we will be walking in the steps of Abraham's faith.

3. It requires strong faith, undaunted courage, and fervent zeal to accept a proposition under the fire of the bitterest opposition, especially when it involves a complete changing of most of life's customs and relationships. It is doubly trying when it means turning away from those we love, or losing our material possessions. Only real men and women will meet the test successfully.

4. Those who confess Christ in words should see to it that they do not deny him with their inconsistent practice. While faith is necessary to salvation, yet an apostle says we are blessed in our "doing." (James 1: 25.)

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Describe Thessalonica.
Where did Paul do his first work there?
How did Paul happen to go to Macedonia?
Why were the Jews generally so opposed to the gospel?
Where did Paul go from Thessalonica?
When and where was this letter written?
What was the occasion of writing it?

I

Who were associated with Paul in Thessalonica?
Why include them in the salutation?
What is shown by the words, "church of the Thessalonians"?
What is meant by "in" God and Christ?
Why were both expressions used?
What gave Paul such great pleasure?
What fundamental graces are mentioned?
What did he say about them in 1 Cor. 13: 13?
Explain his three expressions regarding these graces.
What test of love did Jesus give?

II

What is meant by "election"?
What did Peter say about it?
How does God elect?

Give proof that the elect may be lost.
What else did Paul tell the Thessalonians about it?
How were the Gentiles elected?
How did the gospel come to them?
Why did it come that way? (1 Cor. 2: 5.)
Of what else did he remind them?

III

What shows Paul's work there a success?
In what did they imitate him?
What is meant by "and of the Lord"?
Describe their "much affliction."
Of what were they a living demonstration?
What compliment did he pay them?
How was this sounding forth done?
What duty rests upon congregations now?

IV

What reports did Paul receive about them?
What practical witness did they give?
How may we deny the Lord?
How shall his words be construed?
Describe their conversion.
What did they know about the Lord's return?
When did Paul expect his return?

Practical Thoughts

What makes preachers both glad and sad?
Why can we have full assurance?
What is required to accept the gospel under persecution?
How may Christians deny the Lord?

Lesson X—December 9, 1934

THE CHRISTIAN AS TEACHER

Matt. 7: 24-29; Acts 18: 24-28.

24 Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock.

26 And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching:

29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.

24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the scriptures.

25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John:

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately.

27 And when he was minded to pass over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him: and when he was come, he helped them much that had believed through grace:

28 For he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth."* (2 Tim. 2: 15.)

TIME.—A.D. 28 for Matthew; probably A.D. 55 for Acts.

PLACE.—Mountain near Capernaum; Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Jesus, the disciples, and the multitudes; Apollos, Priscilla, and Aquila.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Tim. 3: 14-17.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 3.	M.	Teachers Needed (Matt. 9: 35-38)
December 4.	T.	Preparation for Teaching (Ezek. 2: 1-10)
December 5.	W.	The Gift of Teaching (Eph. 4: 7-16)
December 6.	T.	Teaching a Teacher (Acts 18: 24-28)
December 7.	F.	Teaching that Endures (Matt. 7: 24-29)
December 8.	S.	The Teacher's Reward (Dan. 12: 1-4)
December 9.	S.	The Teacher's Text Book (2 Tim. 3: 10-17)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Wise and Foolish Builders (Verses 24-27).
 - II. Jesus the Master Teacher (Verses 28, 29).
 - III. The Proficiency of Apollos' Teaching (Acts 18: 24, 25a).
 - IV. Apollos' Mistake Corrected (Verses 25b, 26).
 - V. Apollos Teaches in Achaia (Verses 27, 28).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

A Universal Duty.—Teaching in some form is the ordinary way of imparting knowledge of things both good and bad. It is recognized by all as one of the common necessities of mankind. Man's native capacity for growth along mental and moral lines, his many mistakes that need correction, and his responsibility for conduct all show that he should have continual teaching. The necessity of being taught involves the necessity of a teacher. Those with special preparation for some work are recognized as better teachers in that line than those without it. Even in teaching the common school branches a Christian, other things being equal, would have an advantage over the non-Christian. Knowing and living as the gospel directs, he is in a condition to give the most vital information; he can also better protect the taught from being led away with worldly and skeptical doctrines. Whatever else the Christian may teach, he must, if he does his duty, teach the gospel truth as much as opportunities permit. There is no reason why he should try to evade this duty, or be excused if he does.

Part of the Plan.—Teaching is not only a common, everyday duty, but it has also been made a part of God's plan in saving men. It is a plain requirement in the matter of carrying out the commission. Jesus said, "teach all nations." (Matt. 28: 19.) The Revised Version of this text says, "make disciples of all nations," which refers to the kind of teaching that makes people believers in Christ. Verse 20 uses the ordinary word for teach and refers to the teaching one should receive regarding Christian duty after becoming a Christian. Regarding this matter, Paul said: "It was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. 1: 21.) Teaching and preaching may be distinguished in the method or style used, but in the essential facts presented they are the same. Preaching is the highest ideal in teaching, both in subject matter and the purpose in view. Both words are used in giving the world-wide commission. (Matt. 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15.)

Classes of Teachers.—It needs no argument to prove that truth should be taught. Teachers may vary much in manner, style, or methods, but truth does not vary. Personal peculiarities, if not featured as an attraction, but used naturally, are generally pleasing to hearers; they do not, however, change facts. Some teachers were inspired and taught as directed by special spiritual influence; others taught what they had learned by patient study. We have only the latter class now in the church on earth. Jesus was the great Master Teacher; his apostles were next in authority and power. Now only plain people tell what they have learned directly or indirectly from God's word.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Wise and Foolish Builders (Verses 24-27)

Hearing and Doing.—Perhaps no Bible truth has been presented in clearer and more decisive terms than that those who hear the word of God must obey it to be saved. Man's inability to either devise or execute his own plan of salvation (1 Cor. 2: 9-11) makes it necessary for him to be taught of God (John 6: 44, 45). The law of

Moses, with its lack of power to save in the full sense, and man's inability to keep it because of weakness show that we must now hear Christ. (Matt. 17: 5; Heb. 1: 1, 2.) But to hear him is without value unless we obey him. With searching directness, he asked: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6: 46.) No one can count himself an acceptable believer while he refuses to obey Christ. Paul expressed a universal truth in these words: "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." (Rom. 2: 13.) James with unmistakable words declares that one who is "not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing." (James 1: 25.) Not to do this, he says, is "deluding your own selves." (Verse 22.)

Religious Builders.—Human life in whatever way its energies are used is much like constructing a house. One whose life includes doing what Jesus said is here put down as a wise man; one who hears but does not obey is called a fool. This is based upon what we know to be true regarding the construction of material buildings. That such buildings must have, if safe, a suitable foundation is accepted as a matter of fact. The foundation must also be of proper material, and of sufficient size to hold the great weight that is placed upon it. Our life structure, particularly the religious part of it, must have a surer and more lasting foundation than is required for any material house. The precepts of men perish with their using (Col. 2: 20-23); the words of Jesus shall judge us at the last day (John 12: 48). How foolish to reject them now!

Wisdom Versus Folly.—It is understood when we build houses that wind, rain, and floods, one or all, may come against them. Wise builders lay the foundation and construct the building with that in view; foolish ones trust to chance to preserve them, and build upon the sand. In like manner those spiritually wise, knowing that they must face the record of their lives at the judgment, will do what Jesus says, since his words will remain when heaven and earth have passed away. (Luke 21: 33.) A thing more enduring than heaven and earth is surely a safe foundation upon which to rest our religious life. Not to do so must be denominated foolish.

II. Jesus the Master Teacher (Verses 28, 29)

Multitudes Astonished.—Matthew says that when Jesus had "finished these words" the multitudes were astonished. The words he had just finished were the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5-7. The same features characterized all his teachings, and his hearers were astonished more than once. On another occasion, quite a long time before this, the same thing is recorded about his teaching. (Mark 1: 21-28.) In this sermon he went more into detail to contrast his sayings with those made of old—a thing which amazed those used to hearing the scribes refer to sayings of others as proof of correctness. The authority of Christ's words is just as binding upon Christians as upon those trying to become Christians; for, our religious structure is not finished till life ends.

As Having Authority.—The matter for astonishment was the manner of his language, and the clearness of his words; something very different from what they were accustomed to hear from their scribes.

They were looked upon as expert in explaining the law, and very naturally appealed to Moses, the prophets, and the traditions handed down by their rabbis. Jesus very positively asserted his own authority in the words, "I say." They could not help being astonished at such assumption of authority and such matchless teaching. They did not realize what we now know—that is, they were listening to the Master Teacher of all ages.

III. The Proficiency of Apollos' Teaching (Acts 18: 24, 25a)

"An Alexandrian."—Apollos as a teacher occupies a unique place in the New Testament church. The things specially interesting about him, Luke gives in our lesson text. By lineage he was a Jew, but was born in Alexandria. This great city was a seaport at the mouth of the Nile River. It was a noted commercial city and a center of great learning. Alexander the Great, founder of the city, gave the Jews a quarter in it, and a large population of Jews resided there. The advantages presented in such a city enabled one with the natural ability possessed by Apollos to prepare for great work.

"An Eloquent Man."—Eloquence in the ordinary understanding of the word is a natural gift, but by proper training it may be cultivated to become much more efficient. The opportunities in Alexandria for education probably accounts in large measure for Apollos' proficiency in the use of his natural talents. The margin says "learned," instead of "eloquent"; hence, it is possible that Luke meant that he was a man of remarkable learning, rather than simply eloquent. He may, however, have possessed both qualifications in an unusual degree.

"Mighty in the Scriptures."—Luke is definite regarding the religious training of Apollos. "Mighty in the scriptures" at least means that his knowledge of the law and the prophets was generally correct; the New Testament not being written at that time, the reference must have been to the Old Testament writings. This attainment was then of much merit, since all books were in manuscript form and difficult to obtain. The lack of this worthy attainment is painfully evident now, even among professed Christians, when printed copies of the Scriptures are sown broadcast. Many members in the church of Christ are shamefully negligent on this part of the Lord's teaching.

"Taught Accurately."—The record further describes Apollos as having been "instructed in the way of the Lord." Knowing the teaching of the law and the prophets, he had doubtless been carefully instructed as to their fulfillment in Jesus and his kingdom. This was especially important for one who was to preach the things concerning Christ. This line of evidence, vital to Christ's claims, is little understood by many members of the church. Apollos was also "fervent in spirit"—stimulated with righteous zeal for the truth. Such disciples are always workers instead of idlers in God's vineyard.

IV. Apollos' Mistake Corrected (Verses 25b, 26)

What It Was.—This case shows that one may be generally right and earnestly working, yet be wrong in a point vital to the very results he is trying to produce. The only error charged to him was a lack

of knowledge—he knew “only the baptism of John.” Since this error was corrected, we know that any having the same idea of John’s baptism that Apollos had also need to be corrected. We must not conclude that there was anything wrong about John’s baptism when administered by him. He was sent of God, and his baptism was to manifest Christ to Israel. (John 1: 6, 32.) Those John baptized were required to believe on Christ when he came. Before his ascension to heaven, Jesus commanded men to be baptized “into” the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28: 19.) John never baptized into these three names—in fact, Christ had not begun his ministry when John began baptizing. After Christ commanded baptism in his own name, John’s was no longer valid. Hence, obedience to it was invalid.

Why the Mistake?—It seems strange that one so well instructed should make this mistake, yet we must accept the fact as stated. It may be accounted for by supposing that Apollos was baptized with John’s baptism when it was valid, and living in Alexandria so far away from Palestine, was not in close touch with the scenes in the early days of the church. Not knowing of Christ’s command to baptize by his authority into the three names, and knowing further that his own was valid for the reason already mentioned, he continued to administer the baptism he had received.

The Correction.—Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, had been associated with Paul in Corinth and came with him to Ephesus, where they remained while Paul went on to Antioch. From him of course they learned the exact truth concerning Christ’s commands. When they heard Apollos they recognized his mistake and corrected it. Apparently they did this privately, which is indicated by the expression, “they took him unto them.” This is no insignificant comment on Paul’s not permitting women to make public speeches (1 Cor. 14: 34), by showing that Priscilla assisted her husband in setting Apollos right, but it was in private. That Apollos’ view of baptism was incorrect is plain from the words, “expounded to him the way of God more accurately.” When Paul came to Ephesus later, he found twelve who had received John’s baptism. These, upon Paul’s instruction, were baptized into the name of the Lord. (Acts 19: 1-7.) As Apollos had been teaching there, it is perfectly safe to assume that these twelve had accepted John’s baptism under his teaching. From this record one thing is evident, which must be accepted, or reject the record: John’s baptism has never been valid since the apostles began to administer that commanded by Christ. If any one has submitted to it, he should be baptized by authority of Christ. Paul is authority for that.

V. Apollos Teaches in Achaia (Verses 27, 28)

“Helped Them Much.”—When Apollos decided to go to Greece the brethren encouraged him, and wrote letters to the brethren there to receive him. They knew his great ability, and having been corrected in his one serious mistake in doctrine, they were certain that he would accomplish much good. This, the record says he did. Blessed are the saints who have such preachers come among them! Men who teach the way of the Lord accurately, and are willing promptly to correct

any mistakes that they may be more accurate, will honor the church wherever they go.

"Confuted the Jews."—His knowing the Jewish Scriptures, and the way of God through Christ, enabled him to teach so accurately that the Judaizing opponents of all classes were not able to meet him. Those of even fair ability and equipped with the exact truth will not have much trouble in defending the claims of Jesus. This story shows that the preaching of the exact truth will usually bring some kind of opposition. True gospel teachers will not be stopped by it.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. One of the first lessons to learn in becoming an efficient Bible teacher is the difference between human and divine wisdom; the former as finite, the latter as infinite. Solomon said: "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." (Prov. 28: 26.) Jesus is the only safe foundation; those who obey him build safely. (1 Cor. 3: 11.)

2. The world has had many great teachers along many lines, but none worthy to be compared with Jesus, the great Master Teacher. The accuracy with which he weighed every problem presented and the self-evident solution he offered are without parallel in the history of the word. Both in matter and manner he is the preëminent example. No teacher ever succeeds so well as when trying earnestly to imitate him.

3. General Bible knowledge, eloquence, learning, and fervency of spirit will not compensate for being mistaken about a matter Jesus makes necessary to salvation. Those who imagine that piety will condone a mistake about baptism are wrong. The case of Apollos is proof.

4. It is of no practical importance to learn of mistakes unless we are willing to correct them. When Apollos was teaching and practicing an error, he promptly changed when it was pointed out. So did the twelve at Ephesus. So should all others.

5. Wherever Christians go, there they must defend the truth and live in harmony with it.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What shows teaching to be a universal necessity?
Why are Christians likely to be the best teachers?
What must a Christian teach?
What great statements did Jesus make on teaching?
How are teaching and preaching related?
In what things may teachers vary?
What Bible distinctions are made concerning teachers?

I

What great truth is presented in this text?
Why is it necessary to be taught of God?
What shows we must hear Christ?
What searching question did Jesus ask?
What unmistakable truth expressed by Paul and James?
What illustration does Jesus use?
What is his application?
Why is it so necessary to hear Jesus' words?

II

What is referred to by "these words"?
What effect did his teaching generally have?
For whom are his words authority?
How did his teaching differ from the scribes?

III

Describe Alexandria.

What is meant by Apollos being "eloquent"?

What is meant by being "mighty in the scriptures"?

What is true of many church members?

What is said of Apollos' religious training?

What is meant by "instructed in the way of the Lord"?

IV

What mistake is charged to Apollos?

How did John baptize?

When did his baptism cease to be valid?

What made it invalid after that?

Account for Apollos' mistake.

What is known of Priscilla and Aquila?

What is indicated in "took him unto them"?

Who baptized the twelve at Ephesus with John's baptism?

V

Where did Apollos go from Ephesus?

How did the brethren recommend him?

Describe his work in the new field.

Practical Thoughts

What important lesson should every teacher learn?

What shows Jesus to be the Master Teacher?

Of what is the case of Apollos proof?

What lesson should we learn from Apollos and the twelve?

What must Christians do wherever they go?

Lesson XI—December 16, 1934

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

1 Cor. 11: 23-34.

23 For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread;

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.

27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body.

30 For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep.

31 But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another.

34 If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."* (1 Cor. 11: 26.)

TIME.—Probably spring of A.D. 57.

PLACE.—Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Paul and the Corinthian brethren.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 26: 20-28.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 10.	M.	.....	The Supper a Memorial (1 Cor. 11: 23-26)
December 11.	T.	.....	Proper Observance of the Supper (1 Cor. 11: 27-34)
December 12.	W.	.....	Jesus the Bread of Life (John 6: 50-59)
December 13.	T.	.....	Communion with Christ (1 Cor. 10: 16-22)
December 14.	F.	.....	The Passover Instituted (Ex. 12: 1-10)
December 15.	S.	.....	Jesus' First Passover (Luke 2: 41-51)
December 16.	S.	.....	The Lord's Supper Instituted (Matt. 26: 20-28)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Lord's Supper Described (Verses 23-25a).
 - II. The Purpose in Observing the Supper (Verses 25b, 26).
 - III. Proper Manner in Its Observance (Verses 27-29).
 - IV. Results of Improper Observance (Verses 30-32).
 - V. General Instructions (Verses 33, 34).
- Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

When Given?—Matthew, Mark, and Luke definitely fix the institution of the Lord's Supper as having occurred at the time they were eating the last passover supper. Paul adds that it was in the night in which he was betrayed. (1 Cor. 11: 23.) John's remarks about giving Judas the sop show he is referring to the same time, though he does not mention the Lord's Supper. (John 13: 21-30; Matt. 26: 20-25.) He gives the discourse and prayer that followed. (Chapters 14-17). These are omitted by the other writers.

Why Given Then?—As this duty was to be performed by his disciples in his kingdom (Luke 22: 30), it was unnecessary to give instructions regarding it till the close of his public ministry. Like the command to baptize in his name, it was given in advance of the time when it could be done. We are often told to do things that are not applicable till a certain time in the future. As it was to be a memorial service in the church, the time of observing the last legal Passover was an appropriate occasion to give authority for another memorial. This is more evident when we read from Paul that Christ is "our passover." (1 Cor. 5: 7.)

Who Were Present?—Only apostles were present when the supper was made a duty. Being a service designed especially for those in the kingdom, it was appropriate that none but disciples be present. It was simply showing both by word and act what should be done in this service, and giving authority to the apostles to deliver it to congregations as established. For this purpose it was entirely unnecessary that any other disciples than the apostles should be present. The explanations and limitations expressed show that it was not taken by the apostles that night as it was when the time came for its observance in the manner required. Since it was to "proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11: 26), it could not be observed as intended till after his death.

When Appropriate?—Not before his death, as shown in the preceding paragraph. As it was to proclaim his death "till he come"—return—it was not appropriate till his departure; hence, could not have been observed as he directed till after his ascension. It was also to be "in" his kingdom. This puts the day of Pentecost as the first time it was possible to eat the Lord's Supper in the manner required by the Scriptures. As the Jewish kingdom legally ended at his crucifixion next day (Col. 2: 14), it was in force when Jesus instructed his apostles concerning the Supper. His kingdom was established later, (Heb. 10: 9; Matt. 21: 37-43).

LESSON NOTES

I. The Lord's Supper Described (Verses 23-25a)

Occasion for Paul's Advice.—The Corinthian congregation had evidently been disturbed by false teaching after Paul had left them. They had written to him for information on different questions (1 Cor. 7: 1), and his discussion of the Lord's Supper was his reply to their query on that subject. Division had sprung up among them and split the membership into contending parties. Paul had been informed of this contention by the house of Chloe (1 Cor. 1: 11), and told them he was forced to believe at least a part of the report (1 Cor. 11: 16). This party spirit had manifested itself in their assemblies. Preceding the Lord's Supper they apparently had a common meal—called a "love-feast"—which all the members were supposed to eat together in brotherly love. Such a meal was not a divine requirement, but was innocent as a social event when properly eaten. Their party spirit had evidently been carried into this social meal, and so affected them that they were not able to eat the Lord's Supper in the proper manner. No wonder the apostle could say to them: "In this I praise you not."

Paul's Authority.—Paul assured them that what he had taught them when he was with them was what he had received from the Lord. As an apostle he had delivered his messages by inspiration, not from of the Lord's will regarding the supper could have come in two ways: what he had learned from men. (Gal. 1: 11, 12.) His knowledge The Spirit could have given him directly the words used by Jesus when the supper was given, or the spirit could have endorsed to him what those said who personally heard Jesus speak the words.

Facts Stated.—From Matthew, Mark, and Luke it appears that the Lord's Supper was instituted just at the close of the passover meal. It may be that some of them were still eating when Jesus took the bread and told them to eat it as an emblem of his body. In mentioning the cup Paul and Luke both say it was "after supper." (Luke 22: 20.) This shows that the Lord's Supper was no part of the passover meal, though given immediately after it. The bread used was doubtless some of the unleavened kind that had been prepared for the paschal supper. "Blessed" and "had given thanks" are used to mean the same thing, for the writers employ both in describing what Jesus did. (Matt. 26: 26, 27; Mark 14: 22; Luke 22: 19, 20; 1 Cor. 10: 16; 11: 24.) *Eucharist* is the Greek word that means to give thanks. As this word is used regarding the supper, some call the supper the Eucharist. There is no occasion for calling the supper after the thanksgiving part of the service, when inspiration calls it the "Lord's Supper," "table of the Lord" and the "communion." (1 Cor. 11: 20; 12: 21, 16.) It is better to speak as the Bible speaks. "This is my body" and "this is my blood" (Matt. 26: 28) mean that these elements represent his body and blood. As he had not died when he used these words, they could not be taken literally. Then he calls the contents of the cup "the fruit of the vine." (Mark 10: 25.)

II. The Purpose in Observing the Supper (Verses 25b, 26)

"In Remembrance of Me."—As the Jews were required to keep the Passover yearly as a memorial of their first-born being saved through

the blood of lambs (Exod. 12: 12-14, 23-27), so Christ requires his disciples to observe the supper he gave as a memorial of his death through which all may be saved. The Passover was kept yearly (by direct command); it saved the first-born; Christ's supper is observed weekly; his death saves all who will render obedience to his law. The words of Jesus, "as often as," do not mean that we may partake of his supper just when we please, provided we do it "in remembrance" of him. Such a construction is absurd, and would leave the matter of its observance in hopeless confusion. It means that each time we observe the supper, we proclaim his death. As Jesus did not say definitely when to eat the supper, we are left to find from apostolic teaching or example what to do. Acts 20: 7 shows the disciples met on the first day of the week for that purpose. Since neither Scripture statement nor apostolic example gives a less frequent observance, we are met with the duty every time the day returns. The weekly observance is the only logical conclusion from all the Scripture statements. All exceptions to general laws must be stated by the laws themselves. Otherwise, the law holds at the time and place specified. If the time were left to personal opinion, some might put off its observance for years, and thus defeat the very purpose of the supper. That unfortunately is often done, but always to the discredit of the Christian, and the dishonor of the Lord.

Proclaim Christ's Death.—The memorial feature of the supper is for the participant's own benefit; proclaiming the death of Christ is for the benefit of others. The supper becomes a kind of pictorial sermon on Christ's death. This great gospel fact should never be forgotten by saints, or cease to be preached to sinners. Here are two weighty reasons for its regular observance. Those failing in this fail to add their testimony to this vital fact of Christianity—a fact upon which their own salvation depends. This is a neglect of duty wholly inconsistent with either true piety or genuine gratitude. Since the Lord's table is in his kingdom (Luke 22: 30), and the supper is to proclaim his death "till he come," the supper will not be appropriate after his return. This is certain proof that his kingdom is now in existence, else the Lord's Supper could not now be observed by any one.

III. Proper Manner in Its Observance (Verses 27-29)

"Unworthy Manner."—The way the King James Version of this verse is often misunderstood is a striking example of the careless, not to say ignorant, way the Scriptures are sometimes read. It says eat and drink "unworthily," not "unworthy." The former refers to the manner of eating and drinking, the latter to the unworthiness of the participant. One might be "unworthy" in fact, and yet eat and drink in a "worthy manner"; another might be morally worthy, and yet fail to eat in the manner the text requires. If one is unworthy, he should lose no time in making himself worthy. This, common sense and faith in the gospel require. But Paul here, as the Revised gives it, is condemning those eating and drinking in an unworthy manner. Such the apostle says will be "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord"—probably meaning they will profane a sacred service, bring dishonor or reproach upon the death of Christ.

Discerning the Body.—Paul's own comment on eating in an unworthy

manner is that such individual discerns not the body.) (Verse 29.) The record shows that the Corinthians, influenced by their party spirit, were eating it as a common meal, irreverently, or without any serious effort to bring their minds into harmony with the great facts it was to symbolize. Such failure to comprehend the true import of the symbols rendered their attempts little short of mockery—at least, pure formality. This lack of understanding its memorial nature when eating and drinking brought them under condemnation, which like any other sin not repented of, would lead to final condemnation. To avoid this possibility, the apostle said for each man to “prove himself,” and then eat and drink. The King James says, “examine himself.” This has been misunderstood in two ways. First, that one should examine himself to see if he is worthy. While that is doubtless a good thing to do, yet, if necessary, it should be done far enough in advance to get worthy before time for the supper. But that is not what Paul says here. The examination pertains to the matter of seeing that we discern the body, or that we are ready to partake in a worthy manner. Second, that we should not examine any one else. That is true so far as our own responsibility to God is concerned, but it does not mean we are not allowed to tell who have a right to the supper, or where they have to be to enjoy this right. This phase should not be used in a way to leave the impression that any one who desires can partake of the supper. (Only those in Christ's kingdom are entitled to it; this truth should not be suppressed to gain somebody's good will.)

IV. Results of Improper Observance (Verses 30-32)

(*Weak, Sickly, and Asleep.*)—Such abuses as he mentioned in verse 21 would, if tolerated in a sacred meal, naturally indicate greater excesses on other occasions. Such conduct could easily lead to physical weakness, disease, and death. Paul told them that many cases of the first two were attributable to that cause, and the death of a goodly number to the same cause. (It could have been that these results came in part as the Lord's chastening to warn them so they might reform.)

Final Condemnation.—However these results came upon them, they might have been generally prevented by properly discerning themselves. This would have not only prevented the profaning of the Lord's Supper, but would have stopped such excesses in common things. This naturally would have been better for health, and rendered unnecessary any judgments of God in the form of chastening for their correction. (No chastening seemeth pleasant, yet to those who accept it in the proper manner, it yieldeth the “fruit of righteousness.” (Heb. 12: 5-12.) It is far better to have such judgments and to be saved than to not have them and be lost. Unless we are warned by the disastrous results that follow disobedience to God and repent we will be finally lost. Profaning the death of Christ by an improper observance of the Lord's Supper is not a matter of little consequence. Wilful neglect to observe it is not less serious.

V. General Instructions (Verses 33, 34)

(*“Wait One for Another.”*)—The general idea of these verses is easily seen; the exact application of “wait one for another” is not

so clear. That Paul meant for them to drop their party spirit and rivalry, and observe the supper in brotherly love is plainly evident. Anything that would prevent that should be abandoned promptly. This would require their coming together at the same time, but Paul would hardly advise having no set time for the supper, and just wait till some would struggle in at irregular intervals. It is certain the Greek word here means "receive" as well as "wait." Some contend for the former meaning. With that meaning the thought would be: When you come together *receive* one another, as the very nature of the supper requires, in brotherly love. If *wait* be the correct idea, it may refer to the "love-feast"—social meal preceding the Lord's Supper—where there should be manifest the same brotherly feeling. In such meal the rich and poor should share alike, and those too hungry to wait and share in it should satisfy their excessive hunger at home. This would leave all in proper mind to observe the Lord's Supper when they met for that. Whatever view be taken it shows clearly that the Lord's Supper is not a common meal to satisfy physical hunger.

"*And the Rest.*"—There were other things they had doubtless written him about, or other irregularities that needed correction. But being lesser matters, Paul promised to adjust them when he came to them.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. If the division that existed in the congregation at Corinth was so sinful as to merit a severe apostolic rebuke, surely denominational divisions that affect the whole church cannot be scriptural. If the party spirit in a local church destroyed the possibility of eating the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner, then a party spirit cannot be good in other church matters.

2. An earnest, whole-hearted Christian will want to remember his Lord as often as he can, not as rarely as he can. He will also be anxious to bring the value of Christ's death before others. There is little that is complimentary to be said for members of the church who are neglectful in these matters.

3. In the observance of the Lord's Supper the mental attitude must harmonize with the significance of the acts performed. The Scriptures require correct acts performed in a worthy manner.

4. Sooner or later the full price must be paid for evil. Righteousness cannot be disregarded with impunity.

5. Incidentals that might hinder our progress in God's service should be changed or modified so as to be helpful.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Describe the Lord's instituting the supper.
What writers record the event?

How does John's record compare with the others?
Why not given till the close of his personal ministry?
What statement does Paul make of Christ?
Who were present when the Supper was given?
What is the difference between that time and later observances?
When could it first be observed as Jesus said?

I

Why did Paul write them about the Supper?
 How had division affected them?
 What social meal did they likely have?
 How did Paul assert his authority?
 How did he learn what Jesus had said on the Supper?
 When did Jesus give the disciples the bread and wine?
 What kind of bread was used?
 Why is the Supper sometimes called the "Eucharist"?
 What is meant by "this is my body"?

II

How does the Lord's Supper compare with the Passover?
 What is meant by "as often as"?
 How may we learn when to observe it?
 What must be true of exceptions to laws?
 What two classes are benefited by the Supper?
 What is true if one fails in this duty through neglect?
 Why will the Supper not be appropriate when Jesus returns?

III

What is the difference in the versions here?
 How is the King James misunderstood?
 What will we be if we eat and drink in an unworthy manner?

What is Paul's comment on "unworthy manner"?
 What does he say each one should do?
 How has "examine himself" been misunderstood?

IV

What results had followed their practice?
 What produced these results?
 How might they have been prevented?
 What is true of chastening?

V

What is the general thought of these verses?
 What two meanings are given the Greek word here?
 What is taught if "receive" is the proper translation?
 What is taught if "wait" be correct?
 What is Paul's final statement on the subject?

Practical Thoughts

What bearing does Paul's teaching have on denominationalism?
 What will earnest Christians want to do?
 What two things are necessary in observing the Supper?
 What must eventually happen regarding evil?
 What should be our attitude toward incidents?

Lesson XII—December 23, 1934

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

(CHRISTMAS LESSON)

Luke 2: 8-19; Eph. 6: 1-4.

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.

- 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
- 2 Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise).
- 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.
- 4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased."* (Luke 2: 14.)

TIME.—B.C. 4 for Luke; A.D. 61 for Ephesians.

PLACES.—Near and in Bethlehem; Corinth.

PERSONS.—The angel, the shepherds, Jesus, and his parents; Paul and the Ephesian saints.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Deut. 4: 9-14.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 17.	M.	Birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 8-19)
December 18.	T.	The Christian Home (Eph. 6: 1-9)
December 19.	W.	Marriage Instituted (Gen. 2: 18-25)
December 20.	T.	Duties of Parents to Children (Ps. 78: 1-8)
December 21.	F.	Duties of Children to Parents (Prov. 1: 7-19)
December 22.	S.	Husbands and Wives (Eph. 5: 22-33)
December 23.	S.	The Bible in the Home (Deut. 4: 9-14)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. An Angel Announces Christ's Birth (Verses 8-12).
- II. The Heavenly Host Praise God (Verses 13, 14).
- III. The Shepherds Visit Bethlehem (Verses 15-17).
- IV. Effects of the Shepherd's Story (Verses 18, 19).
- V. A Model Christian Home (Eph. 6: 1-4).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

What Is Meant?—That a "Christian home" is one where some pretense, at least, is made to indorse Christ is probably the idea of most people; but what is required to constitute a Christian home exactly as the Scriptures teach is another matter. Because things pass under the name Christian is no proof that they are sustained by God's word. Unless we have Christ's authority for what we claim to do in his name our efforts are vain. Since a Christian is one in Christ—one who has obeyed the commands of Christ—a Christian home is one in which the members of the family are Christians. A good Christian home is one where the teachings of Christianity are believed and practiced. In such homes any members of the family not Christians will be subject to the rule of Christian parents. When any of these things are lacking the home fails to have in full what the New Testament describes as a Christian home.

General Importance.—There are many human relationships in the world; some are worth while, some useless, and some detrimental or dangerous. The oldest and most universal is the home. It furnishes and primarily prepares the material for all other societies. The extent to which people make good members of all other worthy institutions depends largely on how they were brought up in the home.

As the kind of seed sown determines the kind of plants, and the principle involved regulates the practice, so the kind of homes in which people are reared does much in shaping their destiny in whatever association they may be. Nothing is more vital in preparing one to become a blessing to the world than the influence of a true Christian home.

Its Benefit to the Church.—As is true of other institutions, the home must furnish the material to become members of the church. No institution is more vitally affected by Christian homes than the church. The value of such homes to the church is inestimable. In them children are taught proper respect for rightful authority. With this principle firmly fixed, children will respect all rightful authority of both God and man. Obedience to parents will lay the foundation for obedience to the state and nation, when the age of responsibility arrives. If all homes were Christian in the true sense, crime would be almost banished. But best of all, the ranks of the church are recruited in the main from this class of citizens. They enter it naturally because the spirit of obedience pervades the Christian home. Those so reared have many advantages on their side.

LESSON NOTES

I. An Angel Announces Christ's Birth (Verses 8-12)

Christ's Earthly Home.—As Christianity is a system of religion founded by Christ it is evident that a Christian home—one with Christ in it—could not exist till his church or kingdom began on Pentecost. Moral principles, however, have always existed. The religion introduced by Moses was binding on the Jews when Christ was born; for, Paul declares that God's Son was "born under the law." (Gal. 4: 4.) It would be inconceivable that God would cause his Son to be born and reared in a home lacking in morals, or respect for the law in force. Only skeptics would ever think of charging Christ's parents with being guilty of irregularities in either morals or religion. The certainty of Christ's birth as a miraculous event has a decided effect in making him the real ruler in a Christian home.

The Messenger.—The circumstances under which the announcement was made stamps the message as being true. The quiet solitude of night in the field, with the flocks at rest, left the shepherds in a favorable mental state to hear the world's greatest announcement up to that time. An angel of the Lord brought the news. If there were any disposition to doubt the angel's words, the glory of the Lord shining around them, and the "heavenly host" praising God would dispel it. The words spoken by the angel and the host could not have been misunderstood by men in their right minds. Then the angel gave a sign by which they would know his words were true.

"Abiding in the Field."—The statement that the shepherds were abiding in the field and keeping watch by night is thought by some to show that the birth of Christ did not occur in December but in the spring when the weather was mild, and the grass sufficient to keep the flocks in the field continually. This objection to December 25 as the date is plausible, and it may be correct. All we know certainly is that the divine record does not give us the exact day Christ was

born. This information is not necessary, else the Holy Spirit would have directed some New Testament writer to give it.

"Good Tidings."—Truer words could not have been spoken; the world's greatest joy was involved in the tidings he brought to the shepherds. He said the Christ had been born that day in the city of David. Christ from the Greek, and Messiah from the Hebrew, both mean "anointed." To announce the birth of Christ was to say their Messiah had come. No message could have meant more to Jewish hearts at that time. The sign of truthfulness was that the shepherds would find a babe in swaddling clothes in a manger. This was such an unusual situation that it was proof of divine knowledge. A strange place to find the newborn world's Redeemer.

II. The Heavenly Host Praise God (Verses 13, 14)

Who Were They?—The birth of the world's Redeemer was too important an event not to be properly heralded. To the angel's announcement there was added the praise of a "multitude of the heavenly host." The word for host in this text means "an army." The word "Sabaoth" (Rom. 9: 29; Isa. 28: 22; and other texts) has the same idea. In the Jewish kingdom the Israelites were the armies of the Lord in a temporal sense, but here angelic beings in the heavenly realm are called the host—spiritual armies of the Lord. The army of the Lord is here announcing peace among men. This indicates that the multitudes about God's throne (Rev. 5: 11, 12) praise him for bringing his Son into the world.

"Peace Among Men."—That host asked for glory to God and peace to men. The latter is a means of accomplishing the former. Though salvation is offered to all men, and through it the peace of God, yet it is not true that God will be pleased with all men, for some will not obey him. The Revised Version in our text has doubtless given about the correct thought of the expression. There is through Christ peace among them in whom God is well pleased—that is, among those who are obedient to Christ. Not peace to the world, but to those in Christ. Paul said: "And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him." (Heb. 11: 6.) Genuine peace can come only to hearts filled with faith in, and love for, Christ. He came that men might have it. This text applies to his followers, not to the world in general, though it is evident his influence has blessed the world far beyond what most people imagine. Surely God would not be pleased with those who refuse to honor his Son.

III. The Shepherds Visit Bethlehem (Verses 15-17)

The Shepherds Visit Bethlehem.—The text says the "angels went away from them into heaven." The plural number here is justified by including the heavenly host with the angel that made the announcement. It was generally understood among the Jews that the Messiah was to be of the house of David, and be born in Bethlehem. (Micah 5: 2; John 7: 42.) When the angel mentioned the city of David, they knew he meant Bethlehem. They also recognized what the angel said as being that "which the Lord hath made known"; hence, their prompt decision to go and see what had been told them.

They Saw the Babe.—With haste they came to Bethlehem and found the royal family just as the angel said, with the babe lying in the

manger. It was proof to them, and no less to us, that the angel was in fact God's messenger and his words were true. Having their faith confirmed by finding facts to verify the angel's words, they made known what things had been told them. How strangely in conflict with man's idea of things to see the founder of a world empire lying in a manger. Truly God "chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise." (1 Cor. 1: 27.) Those born earthly kings have no such humble homes in which to be prepared for royal duties.

IV. Effects of the Shepherds' Story (Verses 18, 19)

Created Wonder.—The incidents related by the shepherds would create wonder at any time; but to a people expecting a Messiah to redeem them from subjection to another nation, and restore their ancient national glory, every remarkable event looking in that direction would have been heard with deep interest. They were amazed and wondered if the babe in the manger really could be the promised one. If so, they would have considered their redemption as very near.

Mary Pondered Them.—None could have more concern about the child than Mary. In addition to the natural motherly instinct, the hope of giving Israel a Savior was entrancing. She carefully considered the angel's words, weighing them and comparing them with the facts of his birth, and what the angel Gabriel had told her. (Luke 1: 26-38.) The foregoing is the interesting story of the birth of him who was to make common homes Christian homes.

V. A Model Christian Home (Eph. 6: 1-4)

* *"Obey Your Parents."*—The duties of husbands and wives to each other, a vital phase of a Christian home, the apostle discussed in the preceding chapter. Assuming the parents to be in accord with his instruction to them, he presents in our text the duties of children and parents. The command to children to obey parents is modified by the words "in the Lord." This expression is not to be limited to Christian parents, though they are included, for some children do not have Christian parents, and some are orphans. This law is necessarily universal, but has some limitations. Paul says, "for this is right." It is not only right, but it must be that way or serious results must follow. The necessary condition is that children are not required to obey parents in doing what is wrong. "In the Lord" means as the Lord directs, or as is befitting those in the Lord. Plainly stated, as the Lord commands. Honoring parents, the apostle states, was the first commandment with a promise attached. (Exod. 20: 12.) He means a direct, personal promise. This shows the great value of this commandment. As a rule, other things being equal, obedient children will live longer than the wicked ones. It will therefore be of material benefit to children to obey parents. This primary obedience will prepare them for obedience to the state, and best of all make them disposed to obey God.

"Provoke Not Your Children."—According to his usual custom of giving full instruction, Paul tells parents of their duty to their children. In this command he evidently forbids parents to be cruel in their treatment of their children. Such treatment reveals a bad state of heart, does parents harm, hardens and discourages children.

In fact, it defeats the very purpose in view when correction is necessary. The proper management of children for their best good requires discretion, and taxes the wisdom of the best parents. It is the home's biggest work, and affects most seriously all phases of human society. Only genuinely Christian homes furnish the suitable atmosphere for this far-reaching and difficult undertaking.

"Nurture Them."—This expression is not especially different from "bring them up," as the King James gives it. It includes the whole system of training for the entire period while children are under the control of parents. This means that parents should not cease in their efforts to instruct the mind and safeguard the morals. This involves the necessity of exercising judgment to adapt efforts to meet the demands as they arise with changing conditions.

"Chastening."—The Revised substitutes this for the word "nurture" in the King James. The Greek word means "the whole training and education of children." This includes not only mental, moral, and religious training, but corrections and chastisements. The same word is so translated in the King James in Heb. 12: 5-8. One of the essential things in rearing children is to correct their mistakes. Sometimes this requires punishments. It is mistaken kindness and misplaced parental love to tolerate wrongs in children, rather than to resort to chastisement. To tolerate disobedience in the home spreads the infection into the whole human system. Such seed sown by parents in receptive heart-soil bears an ultimate harvest of criminals ready for jails, penitentiaries, and electric chairs. In the main such sad results can be charged to the inefficient parental government at home. Where such state exists, that home is certainly far below what the Bible requires of a true Christian one. Any disposition of parents to defeat their purpose by harsh treatment would be checked by the further instruction to admonish them in accordance with the teaching of the Lord. With great profit two thoughts may be kept before the child's mind continually: His responsibility to obey parents as a matter of right; proper respect for God as the highest duty of man.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. Good homes have always been the solid foundation upon which the peace and prosperity of nations rested. That which is so universally true could not be less true with God's people. Christian homes, in the scriptural sense of that term, cannot be overestimated, when considering the welfare of the church. The possibilities here opened to Christian parents are unlimited; responsibilities are grave.

2. The appearance and words of the angels gave assurance that Jesus was the rightful heir to David's throne. His matchless life, resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven are only added proofs that the heavenly host were right in praising God for his birth. The founder of Christianity was unquestionably divine.

3. Wisely the shepherds hastened to see Jesus when told of his birth. More wisely, and far more important it is for those who are informed of his salvation to hasten into his kingdom, where they may have his favor and blessings.

4. The shepherds' report produced wonder. The amazing wonder now is, how Christ has made salvation possible on such easy terms.

5. The most practical thing is to purify the fountain at its source. With genuinely Christian homes, nations will thrive, and the church of our Lord will prosper. Men should praise God for the privilege.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the places.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What is the popular notion of a "Christian home"?
What is required to make a scriptural "Christian home"?
How is the home related to other human associations?
How does the home benefit the church?
What basic principle should children be taught?
What will obedience to parents do for them?
Where do most members of the church come from?

I

When did Christian homes first exist?
What was true of former ages?
What kind of home had Christ?
Describe the angel's announcement.
What other assurance was given that his words were true?
What is the argument on "abiding in the field"?
What do we know about the correct date of his birth?
What two names of Christ are equivalent?

II

What is meant by "heavenly host"?
What other word means the same?

What did this angelic host say?
With whom is God well pleased?
To whom does this expression apply?

III

Account for the plural of the word angel.
Why did they decide to go to Bethlehem?
Why did they go so promptly?
What did they find on arrival?
What strange conflict is presented here?

IV

Why did the story create such wonder?
What is said of Mary?
What is meant by "pondering them in her heart"?

V

What does our text present?
What is meant by the words "in the Lord"?
What limitations are given on obeying parents?
What Old Testament command does Paul refer to?
What does he forbid?
What is meant by "nurture them"?
What is meant by "chastening" them?
What is the final instruction?

Practical Thoughts

How do Christian homes affect the welfare of the church?
What added proofs have we that Jesus is divine?
What should we hasten to do?
What is amazingly wonderful?
What is the practical thing to do?

Lesson XIII—December 30, 1934

TESTS OF A CHRISTIAN

1 John 5: 1-12.

1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

2 Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

4 For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith.

5 And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood.

7 And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

8 For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son.

11 And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."* (1 John 5: 1.)

TIME.—Probably near the end of the first century A.D.

PLACE.—Supposed to be Ephesus.

PERSONS.—John and Christians generally.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 15: 12-17.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 24.	M.	Tests of a Christian (1 John 5: 1-10)
December 25.	T.	Test of Faith (John 5: 19-24)
December 26.	W.	Test of Love (1 John 4: 11-21)
December 27.	T.	Test of Conduct (1 Peter 1: 13-21)
December 28.	F.	Test of Assurance (Rom. 8: 10-17)
December 29.	S.	Test of Self-examination (2 Cor. 13: 1-10)
December 30.	S.	Test of Fruit Bearing (John 15: 12-17)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Test of Love for God's Children (Verses 1-3).
- II. Overcoming the World Tests Our Faith (Verses 4, 5).
- III. A Threefold Testimony (Verses 6-9).
- IV. The Vital Necessity of Believing God's Witness (Verse 10).
- V. Those in Christ Have Eternal Life (Verses 11, 12).

Practical Thoughts.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Why Tests Necessary.—The general design of testing persons or things is to determine whether they are as represented, or to learn whether they will serve a certain purpose or not. If the purpose is good, we call it trial in the case of persons, test in the case of things. If the design is evil, the test is limited to people, and it is called temptation. When Satan tempts people, he tests their power of resistance against evil. As we do not know the strength of materials till tested, so we do not know the ability of people to meet trials successfully till real ones appear. In fact, no one knows his own power of resistance against evil till forced to meet it squarely. A noted Bible example is the overconfident apostle Peter, who very boldly assured Jesus that he would not forsake him, though all others did. Only a few hours were necessary to show how much he had overestimated his own strength.

LESSON NOTES

I. Test of Love for God's Children (Verses 1-3)

Believers Begotten of God.—The Revised Version has simplified one phase of the teaching on faith by using the word "begotten" instead of "born." It is the natural word to use when the reference is to the Father. The Greek word may be translated by either of these words; the one to be employed in any case depends upon the language of the text or context. "Born of God," though not in strict accord with the figure used, would not be objectionable, if we understand the text to mean *perfect* faith—that which is made perfect by obedience. (James 2: 21-24.) But, if we mean the simple act of believing before we obey Christ's commands, then begotten is the term that expresses the exact truth. Faith comes by hearing the words of Christ (Rom. 10: 17); we are begotten "through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4: 15). It is therefore strictly correct to say the believer is begotten of God—he believes what God says.

II. Overcoming the World Tests Our Faith (Verses 4, 5)

"Whatsoever Is Begotten."—The neuter "whatsoever" is doubtless used to indicate all classes—male and female, old and young, Jew and Gentile. Whoever overcomes the world does so because of having been begotten of God—has been made a believer. The cardinal truth in this victorious faith is that Jesus is the Son of God. It furnishes the motive for a full and complete victory against the devices of the devil. His main and persistent determination is to prevent people's rendering strict obedience to God's word. Supreme confidence in God as "a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Heb. 11: 16) is necessary, if we are to successfully resist his alluring and deceptive schemes. Faith is said to accomplish the victory because it prompts to the action necessary to win. Only children of God are in a position to achieve such victory over Satan.

III. A Threefold Testimony (Verses 6-9)

How Jesus Came.—As faith is necessary to overcome the world, John very appropriately gives the evidence that he is God's Son by showing how he came. This proves that we have a solid foundation for the reality of what we are required to believe. This is a necessity, if our faith is to be maintained. By coming John refers to his coming into his position as Savior and King, not his natural birth.

Water and Blood.—That these words refer to his baptism and death does not admit of doubt—in fact, there is nothing else to which they can refer, and commentators generally are agreed that this is the correct application of the words. At his baptism, he was proclaimed from heaven as God's Son (Matt. 3: 17); his death sustains the same claim, because it is confirmed by his resurrection. His baptism is mentioned first, perhaps, because it came first. The Spirit came upon him at his baptism, and he was raised by the power of the Spirit (1 Pet. 3: 18), for which reasons probably the Spirit is mentioned as another witness that agrees with that of the water and the blood. As the "Spirit is the truth," his miraculous testimony to Jesus is the final and all-convincing evidence. As these three witnesses agree, the proof is not limited to any one of them, but to all

combined. Those rejecting the Spirit's words, refusing to be baptized, or neglecting to observe the Lord's Supper, by which his death is declared, fail in indorsing the testimony that Jesus is God's Son.

IV. The Vital Necessity of Believing God's Witness (Verse 10)

Believer Has the Witness.—The words, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him," are a plain statement of a fact that could not be otherwise. As man believes with the heart (Rom. 10: 1), and faith—belief—comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10: 17), it is utterly impossible to believe any Bible proposition without receiving in the heart what his word says on the subject. This is the clear teaching of Jesus in the parable of the sower, where he represents the word as being received in an honest and good heart and kept there. (Luke 8: 15.) Since the witness—testimony—is the record of facts contained in the Bible, the believer actually does have that witness in his heart; there is no other place to have it. Having the recorded facts in his mind, he can meditate upon them, and continually have the assurance that what he believes is correct. The Spirit speaks expressly (1 Tim. 4: 1) and what he has said, as recorded in the Bible, constitutes his witness which men must receive in the heart, if they become believers.

V. Those in Christ Have Eternal Life (Verses 11, 12)

What God's Witness Is.—In verse 9 the apostle said that God had borne witness of his Son. In this verse he tells what that witness is. He says that God "gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." He evidently means that God offers us eternal life, but we must come into Christ to receive it. If it is received through Christ, then nothing else would be proper, or show the right respect for his death for mankind. The words, "in his Son," cannot be taken literally. The only possible way to understand them is that we come under his approval. This is accomplished by coming into the church, which he purchased with his blood. Then to have this eternal life, we have to be in his spiritual body, which is the church. (Eph. 1: 22, 23.) This fact is completely sustained by Paul when he says that reconciliation for both (Jews and Gentiles) was "in one body." (Eph. 2: 16.) The church contains the "fulness of him that filleth all and all." (Eph. 1: 23.) Those who enter the church put the stamp of their approval upon the fact that Christ did not die in vain, when he shed his blood to establish it; those who refuse to enter the church virtually charge Jesus with folly in giving his life to start a worthless institution. There is no middle ground here, and the Lord's requirements test the sincerity of our faith.

PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

1. To one who appreciates the high honor of being a child of God, with deep love for the salvation of souls, the commandments of God are not grievous or burdensome. It is only the half-hearted Christian that complains about the exacting nature of church life. Service is pleasant for those who really love.

2. Even in worldly affairs, great honors are as crowns to the victors. The greatest possible victory is to overcome the world through

our faith in Christ our Leader. That he can lead us to victory we must believe, or else deny his divine Sonship. There is great joy in following one in whom we have complete confidence, and one who has ability to bring us to success.

3. God has graciously given sufficient evidence to prove the Messiahship of Jesus. In matters of eternal moment we cannot afford to be wrong, or take chances regarding our destiny. We cannot enjoy the benefits of Christ's redemption unless we enlist in his company—become a member of his church.

4. God has created us with hearts capable of believing testimony; he has also furnished us with the incontestable evidence that Jesus is his divine Son. We are, therefore, capable of hearing, accepting, and deciding in ourselves that what we believe is the truth.

5. Certain benefits adhere in certain places or conditions. Spiritual life is in Christ; we must come into him to obtain it.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON

Give the subject.
Repeat the Golden Text.
Give the time.
Locate the place.
Name the persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What is the design of testing?
What words are used to describe it?
Who is a noted example of overconfidence?
How has God proved or tested men?
Describe the different tests of Abraham.
How does Satan test us?
What is the general value of tests?

I

What change is made by the Revised Version here?
How may the Greek word be translated?
If translated "born," how should faith be understood?
How are people "begotten"?
What is the evidence of God's love for us?
What is taught in our text here?
What is the proof of our love for brethren?

II

Why is the word "whatsoever" used?
What does the devil do persistently?
What is necessary if we gain a victory over him?
What is meant by overcome the world?
What reasons sustain this view?
What must be understood about this victory?
When will Satan have little chance to overcome us?

III

What does John show in this section?
What "coming" is meant?
What is meant by "water" and "blood"?
Why is the Spirit mentioned as a witness?
What can be said of those who fail to obey?
How does God's witness compare with that of men?

IV

How is one made a believer?
What is meant by the witness "in him"?
Where is the Spirit's testimony found?
What is meant by the expression "make him a liar"?
If we believe God's words, what are we forced to do?

V

What is God's witness?
What must be the meaning of "in his Son"?
When are we in Christ?
How does Paul sustain this fact?
What do we do when we enter the church?
What further statement does John make?

Practical Thoughts

Who complains at God's commands as grievous?
What gives joy in following a leader?
When can we enjoy the benefits of Christ's leadership?
How can we have the witness within ourselves?
What must we do to obtain eternal life?