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PREFACE

In the following pages is presented to those interested in Bible study the fourteenth volume of the Annual Lesson Commentary, being the fourth prepared by this writer. If it proves helpful to those who use it by enabling them to obtain a better knowledge of the personal duties and responsibilities that rest upon them respecting God, Christ, and the church, the author will feel well repaid for the efforts required to produce it.

Those who have used the previous volumes will notice a few changes in the arrangement of this one. The "Introductory Study" has been divided into three uniform paragraphs—"Chronology," "Lesson Links," and "Lesson Settings." It will be apparent at once what is supposed to be contained in each one. Another division of the lesson proper—"Topics for Discussion"—has been added. It is suggested that these different topics be assigned to different students a week in advance for a brief discussion before the class. It will also be noted that fewer questions are put in this volume than in the previous ones. These questions are only intended to be suggestive of others which the teacher should ask in his own words. The intention has been to so arrange the subject matter that both teacher and students would be encouraged to discuss the lesson facts in their own words.

The "Lesson Outline" is not only designed to aid in understanding the text, but to make the lesson useful as a basis for religious talks at other times than the regular class hour.

With thanks to God for his favors that permitted the task of preparing the commentary to be completed, it is submitted to those who love the truth.

JOHN T. HINDS.

LESSONS FOR 1935

FIRST QUARTER

Life and Letters of Peter

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---------------------------------|
| I. January | 6.—Peter's Conversion and Call..... | John 1: 35-42; Mark 1: 14-18 |
| II. " | 13.—Peter's Great Confession..... | Luke 9: 18-26; 1 Pet. 2: 5, 6 |
| III. " | 20.—Peter's Lesson in Humble Service..... | John 13: 1-17; 1 Pet. 5: 5 |
| IV. " | 27.—Peter's Denial..... | Mark 14: 27-31, 54, 66-72 |
| V. February | 3.—Peter's Restoration..... | John 21: 11-19 |
| VI. " | 10.—Peter Preaches at Pentecost..... | Acts 2: 22-28, 36-41 |
| VII. " | 17.—Peter Teaches Good Citizenship (Temperance Lesson)..... | 1 Pet. 2: 11-17; 4: 1-5 |
| VIII. " | 24.—Peter Heals a Lame Man..... | Acts 3: 1-10; 4: 8-12 |
| IX. March | 3.—Peter Unmasks Falsehood and Hypocrisy..... | Acts 5: 1-6; 8: 18-24 |
| X. " | 10.—Peter Preaches to Gentiles..... | Acts 10: 34-48 |
| XI. " | 17.—Peter Delivered from Prison..... | Acts 12: 5-17 |
| XII. " | 24.—Peter Describes the Christian Life..... | 1 Pet. 3: 8-18 |
| XIII. " | 31.—Review: Lessons from the Life and Letters of Peter..... | 1 Pet. 5: 6-11; 2 Pet. 3: 14-18 |

SECOND QUARTER

Some Great Christian Teachings

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|----------|--|--|
| I. April | 7.—The Heavenly Father..... | John 14: 8-24 |
| II. " | 14.—Christ the Savior..... | John 3: 14-17; Rom. 5: 6-10; Phil. 2: 5-11 |
| III. " | 21.—The Future Life (Easter Lesson)..... | Luke 24: 1-12; John 14: 1-6 |
| IV. " | 28.—The Holy Scriptures..... | Ps. 19: 7-14; 2 Tim. 3: 14-17 |
| V. May | 5.—Sin, Repentance and Faith..... | Luke 15: 11-24 |
| VI. " | 12.—The Christian Church..... | Acts 2: 41-45; Eph. 4: 1-7, 11-16 |
| VII. " | 19.—Baptism..... | Matt. 28: 19, 20; Acts 8: 26-39 |
| VIII. " | 26.—The Lord's Supper..... | Matt. 26: 17-30 |
| IX. June | 2.—Our Day of Worship..... | Ps. 100; John 4: 20-24; Col. 3: 15-17 |
| X. " | 9.—The Holy Spirit (Pentecost Lesson)..... | John 16: 7-11; Rom. 8: 10-17, 26, 27 |
| XI. " | 16.—Christian Stewardship..... | Deut. 8: 11-18; 2 Cor. 9: 6-8 |
| XII. " | 23.—Christian Missions..... | Acts 1: 6-8; 13: 1-12 |
| XIII. " | 30.—Liberty under Law (Temperance Lesson)..... | Rom. 14: 13-21; 1 Cor. 8: 9-13 |

THIRD QUARTER

Representative Men and Women of the Bible

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|---------------|--|----------------------------------|
| I. July | 7.—Moses (Leader and Lawgiver)..... | Ex. 24: 3-8, 12-18 |
| II. " | 14.—Naomi (A Woman of Faith and Courage)..... | Ruth 1: 14-22; 4: 14-17 |
| III. " | 21.—David (The Great-Hearted)..... | 1 Sam. 26: 5-12; 2 Sam. 1: 23-27 |
| IV. " | 28.—Amos (Prophet of Social Justice)..... | Amos 7: 7-17 |
| V. August | 4.—Josiah (A Religious Reformer)..... | 2 Kings 23: 1-5, 21-23 |
| VI. " | 11.—Daniel (Temperance and Health)..... | Dan. 1: 8-20 |
| VII. " | 18.—Martha (A Home Maker)..... | Luke 10: 38-42; John 11: 17-28 |
| VIII. " | 25.—Barnabas (A Consecrated Man of Means)..... | Acts 4: 36, 37; 11: 19-30 |
| IX. September | 1.—Paul (Worker with Hand and Brain)..... | Acts 20: 33-35; Phil. 4: 4-13 |
| X. " | 8.—Lydia and Priscilla (Christian Women in Industrial Life)..... | Acts 16: 11-15; 18: 1-3, 24-28 |
| XI. " | 15.—Timothy (A Christian Worker in Training)..... | 2 Tim. 1: 1-14 |
| XII. " | 22.—James (A Great Christian Leader)..... | James 1: 1-17 |
| XIII. " | 29.—John (The Minister and His People)..... | 3 John |

FOURTH QUARTER

Later Prophets and Leaders of Judah (From Isaiah to Malachi)

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|--------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| I. October | 6.—Isaiah Portrays the Suffering Servant..... | Isa. 53: 1-12 |
| II. " | 13.—The Story of Jeremiah..... | Jer. 1: 6-10; 26: 8-15 |
| III. " | 20.—The Message of Jeremiah..... | Jer. 7: 1-11, 21-23 |
| IV. " | 27.—Belshazzar's Feast (International Temperance Lesson)..... | Dan. 5: 17-28 |
| V. November | 3.—Judah Taken Captive..... | 2 Kings 25: 1-12 |
| VI. " | 10.—Ezekiel Teaches Personal Responsibility..... | Ezek. 33: 7-16 |
| VII. " | 17.—The Return from Captivity..... | Ezra 1: 1-6; Ps. 126: 1-6 |
| VIII. " | 24.—The Message of Haggai and Zechariah..... | Haggai 1: 2-8; 2: 8, 9; Zech. 4: 6-10 |
| IX. December | 1.—Ezra's Mission to Jerusalem..... | Ezra 7: 6-10; 8: 21-23, 31, 32 |
| X. " | 8.—Nehemiah Rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem..... | Neh. 4: 6-9, 15-21 |
| XI. " | 15.—Ezra Teaching the Law of God..... | Ezra 7: 10; Neh. 8: 1-3, 5, 6, 8-12 |
| XII. " | 22.—Malachi Foretells a New Day..... | Mal. 3: 1-12 |
| XIII. " | 29.—Review: Significance of the Exile and the Restoration..... | Mal. 3: 17, 18; 4: 1-6 |

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), John 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), Phil. 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), Judges 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. 17: 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.
 Casarea (Kaisareia, Caesar), Acts 8: 40. City on coast of Palestine.
 Casarea 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 Casarea.
 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; Judges 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), Judges 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.
 Euraquilo, Acts 27: 14. Compounded from two words meaning east and north.
 Eutychus (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), Judges 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.
 Hazeal (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 (hero like), 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.
 Issachar (there is a reward), Gen. 30: 18. 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 Kerioth), 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 (wearied), 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.
- Lycania (landing of Lycanon, 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.
- Lysra, 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.
- Mammon (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.
- Mekhizedek (king of righteousness), Gen. 14: 18-20. King and priest of God; type of Christ as priest.
- Melita (premeditate), Acts 28: 1. An island in the Mediterranean Sea.
- Mercury (herald of the gods), Acts 14: 12. The god of commerce and bargains.
- Meshach (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.
- 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.
- Naphthali (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.
- Nazarite (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.
 Nymphs (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.
 Philatus (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.
 Rehoboam (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 eldest 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), Judges 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 eldest 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.
 Trogyllium, 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

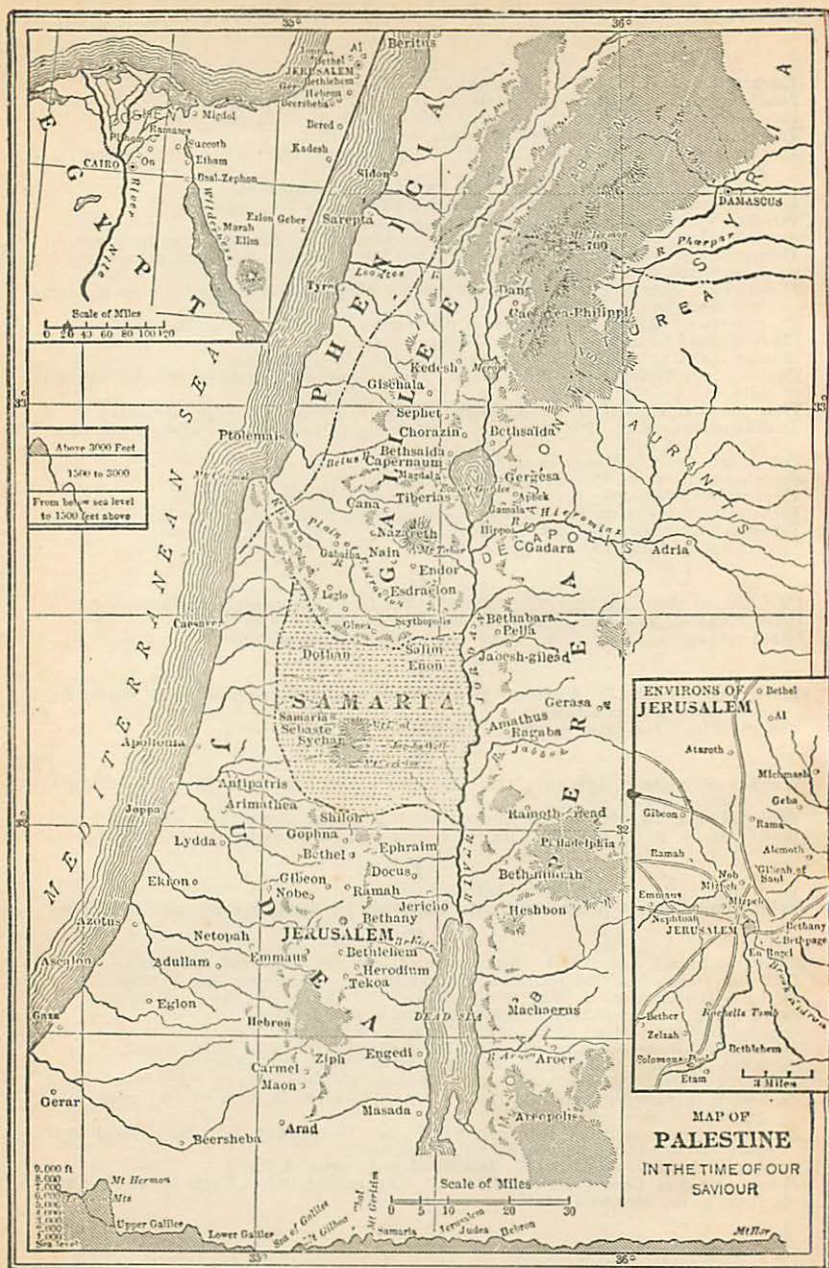
- Watches of Night, 1 Sam. 11: 11. The Jews divided the night into military watches instead of hours.
 Wave Offering, Ex. 29: 34. An offering which accompanied the peace offerings.
 Way, Acts 19: 9. A term used for the Gospel or Plan of Salvation.

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.
 Zeruiah (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

LIFE AND LETTERS OF PETER

AIM: To help the student to become familiar with the eventful life of Peter and his contribution to the spread of Christianity, and to lead the learner to sustained loyalty to Jesus Christ.

Lesson I—January 6, 1935

PETER'S CONVERSION AND CALL

John 1: 35-42; Mark 1: 14-18.

35 Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples;

36 And he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), where abidest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day: it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ).

42 He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter).

14 Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.

16 And passing along by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishers.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

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

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." (Mark 1: 17.)

TIME.—A.D. 27.

PLACES.—Bethabara or Bethany and Capernaum.

PERSONS.—Jesus and Peter.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isaiah 6: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 31.	M.	-----	Peter's Conversion (John 1: 35-42)
January 1.	T.	-----	Peter's Call (Mark 1: 14-18)
January 2.	W.	-----	Peter's First Campaign (Matt. 10: 5-15)
January 3.	T.	-----	A Call to Bring Good Tidings (Isa. 52: 7-12)
January 4.	F.	-----	A Call to Give Warning (Ez. 3: 16-21)
January 5.	S.	-----	A Call to Denounce Sin (Amos 7: 10-15)
January 6.	S.	-----	"Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6: 1-8)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. John Declares Jesus the "Lamb of God" (Verses 35, 36).

- II. The Two Disciples Follow Jesus (Verses 37-39).
 - III. Simon Peter Brought to Jesus (Verses 40-42).
 - IV. Jesus Preaches the Gospel of God (Mark 1: 14, 15).
 - V. Andrew and Peter Called (Verses 16-18).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Family and Occupation.—Our lessons in this quarter deal with the Christian character and apostolic labors of Simon Peter. Any recorded event that will enable us to better understand his place and work in the Lord's kingdom should be carefully considered. Apparently commonplace incidents are often of much value in getting a proper estimate of human conduct. That Peter ranks among the world's greatest characters will be admitted by all who have a fair knowledge of his career. Bible characters are noted for their works rather than relationships or family ties. A little more is known of such matters in Peter's case than most others. His father was named Jonah or John. (Matt. 16: 17; John 1: 42.) That he was married is clear for the fact that Jesus healed his wife's mother. (Mark 1: 29-31.) His home was in Bethsaida, a village on the northwest coast of Lake Galilee. (John 1: 44.) Apparently he lived in the same house with his brother, Andrew. As an occupation they were fishermen, an humble but honorable calling.

Weakness and Strength.—In the life of Peter we have an outstanding example of the weakness and strength that struggle for mastery in the conduct of Christians. In the one, he shows how dangerous it is to falter in the service of God; in the other, how glorious will be the reward in "receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Pet. 1: 9.) His thrice denial of the Lord is the darkest blot on his character, yet the strain under which it occurred was enough to try human weakness to the limit. Many have dishonored Jesus, under circumstances far less trying. Realizing his mistake, he was deeply sorry and genuinely penitent; he "wept bitterly." We should strive to imitate his repentance, but avoid his mistakes. In both ways his example will have a wholesome effect, and point us to higher and better things.

LESSON NOTES

I. John Declares Jesus the "Lamb of God" (Verses 35, 36)

When Spoken?—Our text says that "on the morrow" John was standing with two of his disciples. Verse 29 of this chapter says that "on the morrow" John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said: "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." These verses refer to different occasions, when the same truth was uttered by John. The first was spoken on the morrow after a deputation of priests and Levites from Jerusalem had come to "Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing" to inquire who John was. (John 1: 19-28.) On that occasion he also explained how he knew that Jesus was the Lamb of God. On the following day John made the statement in our text.

The Two Disciples.—In verse 40 we learn that one of the two disciples who heard John's testimony to Jesus was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. The other is not named, but is generally supposed to be the apostle John himself. That he did sometimes refer to himself in an impersonal way is evident from John 21: 20-24. The fact that he was later always named among the apostles is strong proof that he was among those called early to be individual disciples. Since John the Baptist was to prepare a people for the Lord (Luke 1: 17), the selection of Jesus' disciples from those baptized by John is just what we would naturally expect. We know that was true in the case of Andrew. Why not true of all the apostles?

"The Lamb of God."—John's hearers were perfectly familiar with the idea of slain lambs and sin offering; these had been a part of Jewish worship for centuries. But calling a man the "Lamb of God" did not harmonize with their conception of a proper sacrifice. God's command to Abraham to offer Isaac had been cancelled before it was executed. The typical significance of that incident was a sealed mystery to their minds. Even Isaiah's vivid prophetic description of his death had to be explained by his real death upon the cross.

II. The Two Disciples Follow Jesus (Verses 37-39)

Their Object.—The circumstances are sufficient to suggest the object they had in view in following Jesus. Their expectation of a temporal kingdom forbid their understanding the true meaning of the words "Lamb of God." This is evident from Peter's words, some two years later, when he promptly rejected Christ's prediction of his approaching death. (Matt. 16: 22, 23.) Being John's disciples and with him at that time, they probably heard his reply to the priests and Levites two days before. He referred to one in their midst far greater than himself. Their confidence in John as their teacher naturally made them wish to hear one John said was his superior. Evidently their object was to hear the great teacher.

"What Seek Ye?"—When Jesus observed them following him, he asked what they sought. They probably realized their weakness when in his divine presence, and did not answer his question directly. By asking where he abode they may have wished to indicate their desire to hear him under circumstances convenient to himself. In addressing him as Rabbi, which means Teacher, they showed how they considered him, and their purpose in following him. If he was greater than John, they wished to be his learners.

Invited to Come.—Jesus never turned away those wanting to hear him. Inviting them to his abode implied that their desire to hear him would be gratified. There is no record of the lessons they received. John says they abode with him that day, it being about the tenth hour. By the Roman method of reckoning they remained with him from 10 A.M. till the day ended. If John had in mind the Jewish method, then from 4 P.M. till the close of the day. With either count there was ample time to learn much from the greatest Teacher.

III. Simon Peter Brought to Jesus (Verses 40-42)

"His Own Brother."—Andrew was one of the two who followed Jesus to his abiding place. Like all faithful disciples, he was anxious

for others to hear the same lessons he had learned. Very naturally he thought first of his own brother, Simon Peter, who was near enough to be brought to Jesus. The gospel of Christ is for the whole world. One who really appreciates the worth of salvation will not be content with having it preached only to his own family or community. The invitation to all is, "Come, and ye shall see." The gospel feast is too great to be eaten alone, when others are starving for the bread of life, and should be asked to come.

The Messiah.—Andrew's interview with Jesus convinced him that the Messiah had come. Like others, his ideas of the Messiah's mission would have to change as the truth was gradually revealed, but that did not alter the fact that he then accepted Jesus as the Messiah. Regardless of any misconceptions they had, the Jews understood that the Messiah was to be a great prophet like Moses. (Acts 3: 22.)

The New Name.—Divine power makes no mistakes in foretelling future events. Knowing the boldness with which Simon would prosecute his work, when his apostolic labors would begin under the Spirit's direction, Jesus anticipated the fact and gave him a new name to indicate it. Cephas and its Greek translation, Peter, both mean a "rock." In spite of any weakness displayed, or any mistakes he might make, Jesus was foretelling the steadfastness with which Simon would proclaim his gospel. The evident fulfillment of this prediction is proof that Jesus was a true prophet.

IV. Jesus Preaches the Gospel of God (Mark 1: 14, 15)

Returns to Galilee.—An indefinite period of considerable length elapsed between the temptation (verses 12, 13) and the departure of Jesus into Galilee. In this time he had made his first disciples, performed his first miracle, made a short visit to Galilee, returned to the Passover, and spent some time in Judea, where he gained more disciples. His Judean ministry is recorded in John 3: 22-4: 3. This departure from Judea occurred after John was imprisoned. He probably decided to return to Galilee, because it promised to be a more fruitful field in which to labor. He doubtless wanted to avoid the growing opposition among the Pharisaic element in Judea. As he was increasing the number of his disciples, the opposition was also increasing.

Kingdom at Hand.—Jesus preached the gospel of God and the kingdom at hand. The former meant God's promise of salvation to a lost world; the latter told the means by which it could be accomplished. By the "time is fulfilled" he meant that the season for immediate preparation and the beginning of the kingdom had arrived. The preparatory work, which began with the preaching of John the Baptist, was being continued by Jesus himself; the actual beginning was near—something less than three years away. John preached the kingdom "at hand" before Jesus was baptized. Of course, Jesus did not establish his kingdom before he began his ministry. Then, when John preached the kingdom "at hand," it was near, but not established. Jesus preached it "at hand" exactly as did John. If it was not established when John thus preached it, then it was not established when Jesus so preached it. Under the first commission, about a year before his death, Jesus required his apostles to preach the kingdom "at hand." (Matt. 10: 7.) It was then still future.

Repent and Believe.—Both these words express a duty necessary to salvation, but are distinctly different from each other. The order of words in a sentence does not always indicate the order of events. Repentance toward God in whom they already believed would prepare them to receive the testimony that would produce faith in Christ. (See Acts 20: 21.) Repentance is a change of mind, a determination to do or cease doing certain things. Repentance follows faith when both apply to the same object. A determination to cease sinning and obey Christ comes after faith in him, though it might come after repentance toward God by Jews who believe in God, but reject Christ.

V. Andrew and Peter Called (Verses 16-18)

"They Were Fishers."—Capernaum, where Jesus dwelled, and Bethsaida, the home of Andrew and Peter, were both on the northwest shore of Lake Galilee. This lake is about twelve miles long, seven miles wide, and is said to abound in fish. It was especially suited for the business occupation of Andrew and Peter, James and John, all of whom were called to follow Jesus and given places as his apostles. Their work was commonplace, but honorable. Selecting apostles from the ordinary walks of life shows that God is not dependent upon human wisdom or worldly rank in accomplishing his purposes. Paul said that "God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame things that are strong." (1 Cor. 1: 27.)

"Fishers of Men."—Because their occupation was commonplace is no proof that they were lacking in ordinary ability, either natural or acquired. The record of their work shows the contrary without considering their inspiration. With reference to their work, and with much propriety, Jesus told them they were to become "fishers of men." It was a forceful way of saying they were called to a similar business, but of a much higher order. From supplying the needs of the physical body with perishable food, they were to turn to the nobler work of furnishing spiritual food to the soul. Nothing could have impressed them more than to express their new labors in the language of their old occupation. Their old experiences in difficulties, dangers, and skillful management of fishing equipment went far in preparing them for similar circumstances in their higher calling. Fishing for men is the highest calling known to man; its success surpasses in value any and all other gains.

"They Followed Him."—The promptness with which they obeyed his command is a remarkable example of obedience. They had been his personal disciples from an early period in his ministry; from this time they were to be continuously in his service. The necessity of giving up their old occupation, and turning over their nets to others, did not deter them from promptly making the change. Those who understand Christ's mission in the world, and appreciate his work, gladly enter his service. Peter became prominent in the history of the church, often appearing in the record. With a few general references, Andrew disappears from the record, along with several others of the apostolic company, who, doubtless, through many tribulations, completed with honor their labors as "fishers of men."

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. "The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" is one of the Bible's most profound statements. Its earnest consideration should fill our hearts with gratitude and praise.

2. The invitation extended to the two disciples to come to his abode, Jesus has made world-wide by saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

3. Those deeply sensible of their own salvation will strive to bring their kindred and neighbors to Christ. No other course is consistent, if we consider the value of a soul.

4. The preaching of Jesus is our greatest example—always both true and appropriate. All preachers of his gospel should earnestly try to follow in both particulars.

5. No one should allow any worldly business, however important it appears, to interfere with his prompt obedience to the call to follow Jesus. Higher obligations are entitled to first consideration.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Locate and describe the Sea of Galilee, giving size, shape, depth, and source of supply.

2. Name the twelve apostles, and tell all the places their names are recorded.

3. Describe the first commission under which the apostles were sent to labor for Jesus. (Matt. 10: 5-23.)

4. Give the different references that Jesus made to John the Baptist, and explain John's work.

5. Name and locate the different places that John is said to have baptized. Use Jerusalem as a base from which to locate points.

6. Describe fully the circumstances and things that transpired when John baptized Jesus. Suggest a reason why John first objected to the request.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, and persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Describe Peter's family and occupation.
In what ways was Peter our example?

I

What is the application of the expression "on the morrow"?
What disciples went to Jesus' abode?
Why could the disciples not then understand Christ as a "Lamb"?

II

What was the disciples' object in following Jesus?
How did they reply to Jesus' question?
How long did they remain with Jesus?

III

What should those who obey Christ try to do?

What effect did the interview with Christ have on Andrew?
What names were given Simon? What was their meaning?

IV

How much time between this and the third division of this lesson?
Who preached the "kingdom at hand"?
Which is correct, repent and believe, or believe and repent?

V

What was Peter's occupation?
How is the apostolic work described?
What command did Jesus give them?

Thoughts for Meditation

What should fill our hearts with gratitude?
What deserves first consideration?
What will consistency require Christians to do?

Lesson II—January 13, 1935

PETER'S GREAT CONFESSION

Luke 9: 18-26; 1 Pet. 2: 5, 6.

18 And it came to pass, as he was praying apart, the disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Who do the multitudes say that I am?

19 And they answering said, John the Baptist; but others say, Elijah; and others, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

20 And he said unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

21 But he charged them, and commanded them to tell this to no man;

22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.

23 And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25 For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?

26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in his own glory, and the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels.

5 Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

6 Because it is contained in scripture,

Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious:

And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."* (Matt. 16: 16.)

TIME.—A.D. 29.

PLACE.—Near Cesarea Philippi.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his apostles with Peter.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 34: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 7.	M.	Peter's Confession (Luke 9: 18-26)
January 8.	T.	Peter's Testimony (1 Pet. 2: 1-10)
January 9.	W.	Nathanael's Confession (John 1: 43-51)
January 10.	T.	Martha's Confession (John 11: 21-27)
January 11.	F.	A Centurion's Confession (Matt. 27: 50-56)
January 12.	S.	The Good Confession (1 Tim. 6: 11-16)
January 13.	S.	"Let us exalt his name" (Psalm 34: 1-8)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. Peter Confesses Jesus "The Christ of God" (Verses 18-20).

II. Jesus Announces His Own Death (Verses 21, 22).

III. Conditions of Acceptable Discipleship (Verse 23).

IV. The Divine Estimate of a Human Soul (Verses 24-26).

V. Peter Confirms His Confession (1 Pet. 2: 5, 6).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—In our last lesson we learned that Peter, Andrew his brother, and others, became individual disciples of Jesus between his temptation and the Passover in the spring of A.D. 27. Peter's call to leave his fishing business on Lake Galilee and become a constant follower of Jesus occurred perhaps nearly a year later. The incidents of this lesson were in the summer of A.D. 29, about nine months before the crucifixion, April, A.D. 30.

Lesson Links.—It is neither practical nor necessary to mention many of even the great events that happened during the two years that elapsed between this and last lesson. They were crowded with incidents the details of which are absorbingly interesting. A few of the more important must suffice. After Jesus had made many disciples, he selected the twelve to be his apostles and sent them out under the first commission. (Matt. 10: 1-4.) The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5: 7) was, doubtless, delivered before they began under that commission. They had heard that great group of parables recorded in Matt. 13: 1-58, and had seen many of his great miracles, including the stilling of the sea (Mark 4: 37-41), feeding the multitudes (Mark 6: 30-44), and walking upon the water (Mark 6: 45-52).

Lesson Settings.—Every story or event is best understood when we know something of the surrounding circumstances. From John 6: 4 it appears that Jesus did not attend the third Passover; the reasons being that since his appearance at the second the Jews sought to kill him. (John 5: 1, 18.) Capernaum was his headquarters, but he made tours into outside districts. One was into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. (Matt. 15: 21.) From this he returned through the borders of Decapolis and across the lake from the east to his home city. Another was into the villages near Cesarea Philippi. While on the way to these villages the words of our text were spoken. This story of Peter's confession is also told in Matthew 16: 13-20; Mark 8: 27-30.

LESSON NOTES

I. Peter Confesses Jesus "The Christ of God" (Verses 18-20)

Cesarea Philippi.—This town, now known as Banias, is located some thirty miles northeast of Lake Galilee. It was named in honor of Tiberius Caesar and Herod Philip. It should not be confused with Cesarea on the Mediterranean coast southwest of the lake. When near this place, "as he was praying apart" with his disciples, the words of our lesson were spoken.

First Question and Answer.—First the Lord asked his apostles regarding the opinions of himself held by the people generally. This is clear from Luke's use of the word "multitudes." It was useless to ask what the priests and Pharisees thought of him; their seeking opportunities to kill him was known to the disciples. Neither was Jesus seeking information, for he knew the sentiments of the multitudes as well as that of the Jewish rulers. He was preparing their mind for another question, which would show the truth in contrast with the opinions of men. Their reply showed the diversity in the views of men. Some said he was John the Baptist raised from the dead. This was Herod's view (Matt. 14: 2), and probably those under his influence. Others said he was Elijah. This view was probably

based upon the statement of the prophet Malachi (4: 5), that Elijah was to come. Still others thought he might be Jeremiah or one of the old prophets. (Matt. 16: 14.) This view, doubtless, had reference to the promise of a prophet that God said he would raise up. (Acts 3: 22, 23.) While none of these opinions may have conceded that he was the Messiah, yet they all implied that he was more than an ordinary man by supposing his presence on earth was due to a resurrection of the dead.

Second Question and Answer.—An epoch had arrived in his ministry when a new element of teaching was to be introduced. Coming events would bring the severest trials to their faith. It was time for a better understanding of the cost of discipleship. With searching directness, he asked: "But who say ye that I am?" No evasion was possible. With characteristic impulsiveness, Peter replied. The question was addressed to all of them, not to Peter alone. That they all shared in the belief expressed seems clear from the fact that the honor of binding and loosing was later bestowed upon all of them. (Matt. 18: 18; John 20: 23.) The special honor upon Peter was in recognition of his first making the confession. (Matt. 16: 17-19.)

"The Christ of God."—In contrast with the opinions of the multitudes, Peter asserts as a fact that Jesus is "The Christ of God." As Christ, the anointed one, or Messiah, he was the rightful heir to David's throne; therefore, entitled to become their king. This was all that could be expected from the human side. As the "Christ of God," or "Son of the living God" (Matt. 16: 16), he was the Savior of men, the divine Lamb that could take away the sin of the world. Nothing more could be necessary; nothing more was needed in the confession.

II. Jesus Announces His Own Death (Verses 21, 22)

Tell No Man.—The words he "charged them, and commanded them" show that he emphatically required that they should not make the great truth confessed an item of their preaching. Their ideas at that time regarding his work and the nature of his kingdom were too indistinct for such preaching. When this great truth had been confirmed by his death would be time enough to make it the theme of their preaching to the world. They still needed much instruction.

Facts Stated.—Matthew says "from that time"—Peter's confession—Jesus began to show unto his disciples that he must suffer. This is his first announcement of that sad but necessary fact. However disagreeable the idea, the nature of sin made such a sacrifice a necessity. This is the general teaching of the scriptures. The Lord's prediction regarding it, compared with its fulfillment, is unmistakable proof of his divinity. The details are too accurately stated to admit of doubt. It was to be in Jerusalem (Matt. 16: 21) he was to suffer many things, be rejected by the elders, chief priests and scribes, killed and raised the third day. Since his claims to be the Christ of God would finally depend on this prediction being fulfilled, their preaching this great truth should await this crowning proof. Evidence decisively shows the things happened just as he foretold.

III. Conditions of Acceptable Discipleship (Verse 23)

"If Any Man Would."—When Peter confessed him as the "Christ of God," Jesus pronounced a blessing upon him; when he objected to Jesus' prediction of his own death, he charged him with using Satan's words. (Matt. 16: 23.) His words also assured them that they would share in persecutions and sufferings. With the apostles this was true, even to martyrdom. Suffering for the truth is a common Christian experience (2 Tim. 3: 12), which we must be willing to endure. Jesus said: "And ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." (John 5: 40.) "He that will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22: 17.)

Conditions Named.—Three are named; one negative, two positive. Self-denial does not apply to the proper enjoyment of any legitimate pleasure; it requires the rejection of everything improper and sinful. Fleshly desires and worldly relationships must not be allowed to interfere with plain duty. Family ties are sacred, but must not prevent faithful service to Christ. See his words in (Matt. 10: 37, 38. Though God's Son, Jesus, completed his work through sufferings (Heb. 5: 8, 9), we, his professed followers, must not falter at burdens, or we will be lost. They come "daily"—are found all along the way.

IV. The Divine Estimate of a Human Soul (Verses 24-26)

The Case Stated.—"Whosoever would save his life shall lose it" is the way Jesus states the case. This statement could not be true unless the word "life" is used in two different senses. It means that one who uses all his efforts in preserving and saving his physical life will lose his spiritual life. The reverse is equally true. Those who lose physical life in the Lord's service will save their spiritual life. The spiritual life that may be lost is an eternal union with God after the judgment. It refers to the spiritual part of our nature, which is sometimes called the "soul." (Matt. 10: 28.)

Comparative Values.—Jesus illustrates by the law of profit and loss. What is the profit in gaining the whole world, if one loses his eternal life? The answer to this question is, *absolutely none*. He did not ask what profit there would be in this life, if one gained the whole world. The immense greatness of such gain is just the thing which drives men frantic in their struggles to obtain as much of this world as they can. The Lord's question is, How will the case stand after this life is over? Man will not need, neither can he use, material gains after death. It is manifest folly to give all our time and efforts to obtain things which we must give up when exchanging worlds. Matthew and Mark add the question: "What shall a man give in exchange for his life?" Again the answer is, *absolutely nothing*. In the scale of actual values the whole material world is not equal to the soul of man; with the comparatively small amount any one can gain, his case is hopeless, if he had to purchase eternal life.

A Final Motive.—To warn them against being overcome by the bitter persecutions and terrible sufferings they were sure to face, Jesus told them he would finally deny them, if they were ashamed of him and his words in this world. This sobering truth was not for them alone; it is a basic part of Christian teaching, applicable to us all. This warning is especially applicable in this age of loose

religious teaching and practice. Being ashamed to obey or to preach what Jesus said is a common sin, usually ignored, but a condemning one according to Christ's own words. The time is when he comes.

V. Peter Confirms His Confession (1 Pet. 2: 5, 6)

"Living Stones."—After about thirty years of apostolic labor under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Peter confirms his former confession of Jesus by saying that saints, "as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." He further declares that the object in thus becoming a spiritual house is "to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices." He had in mind the church as a spiritual temple of which the Jewish temple was a type. As the Jews offered animal sacrifices at their material temple, so in the church we are to present our "bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God," which Paul says is our spiritual service. (Rom. 12: 1.) As stones in God's temple, Christians are "living," not simply because physically alive, but spiritually active—continually so.

"A Spiritual House."—The wording of the text shows sufficiently the nature of God's house, but does not definitely tell what it is. The natural assumption is that Peter refers to the church; the definite proof sustains this assumption. Paul says the house of God is "the church of the living God." (1 Tim. 3: 15.) He addresses the congregation at Corinth as "the church of God" (1 Cor. 1: 2), and then tells them "ye are a temple of God." (1 Cor. 3: 16.)

The Foundation.—Peter quotes Isaiah 28: 16 to show that Christ fulfilled that prophecy in becoming the "chief corner stone" in the house of God. Paul refers to the same prophecy for the same purpose. (Eph. 2: 20.) Both Isaiah and Paul say this corner stone is in the foundation. Considered in relationship to apostles and prophets, who are also represented as in the foundation, Christ is called "the chief corner stone." With a slight change of figure, only Christ's relationship to the church being in view, Paul says he is the foundation, and declares that, in that sense, there can be no other. (1 Cor. 3: 11.) In response to Peter's confession, Jesus said: "Upon this rock I will build my church." The Greek word for "rock" here is *petra*, not *petros*, which he applied to Peter. *Petros* means a piece or fragment of rock, a stone; *petra* means a ledge of rock, a place suitable for a foundation. It refers to the truth Peter had confessed that Jesus is the Christ. Upon that truth Jesus founded his church. With Paul's figure, Christ is called the foundation, because it is his divinity that is contained in that truth. Christ is the foundation; his disciples are "living stones" built upon that foundation. A precious relationship that will bring no shame.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. The multitudes may have various opinions of Jesus, but a proper study of all the evidences will convince the honest-hearted that Peter was right in confessing him "the Christ of God."

2. Jesus tried to protect his apostles against shipwreck of their faith by warning them of dangers and difficulties in advance. Many lose the battle because they lack this vital information.

3. Jesus taught the disciples that success was possible, but came

only through determined personal efforts. Self-denial and cross-bearing cannot be avoided, if we walk the heavenly way.

4. Regardless of any degree of wickedness, or how long continued, every one will realize at death that the human soul is more valuable than the whole world.

5. Only stones in the house of God will be kept for the eternal temple. This reward will be received only by the power of God and our faithfulness. (1 Pet. 1: 5; Rev. 2: 11.)

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give other instances when Peter's confession was repeated in substance. (John 18: 33-38, and margin of Acts 8: 37.)

2. Show the necessity of our making this same confession. (Rom. 10: 10; 1 John 1: 9.)

3. Discuss the necessity of all confessions being true and honest. (Matt. 15: 7-9; 1 Pet. 3: 10-12.)

4. Show that something more than a confession is necessary. (Matt. 7: 21; Luke 6: 46; Matt. 23: 1-3.)

5. Give proof texts, with proper explanation, to show what other things are necessary to salvation.

6. Point out the rewards that are promised to those confessing Christ. Show the value of each. (Matt. 10: 32; 1 John 1: 9.) Show wherein they surpass temporal rewards.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What are the chronological facts?
Give events in the interval between lessons.
Point out the exact place of this lesson.

I

Describe the city of Caesarea Philippi.
What question and answers given first in this section?
To whom was the Lord's second question addressed?

II

Why did Jesus now begin to announce his death?
Why refuse to let the apostles preach it?
Give the full statement about his death.

III

What state of mind is necessary to following Christ?

What conditions does Jesus lay down as necessary?
When will we have these conditions?

IV

How does Jesus use the word "life" in this passage?
How does he illustrate the value of the soul?
Why will earthly gain fail us?
What final warning is given?

V

What does Peter confirm in this text?
What does he mean by the "house of God"?
What is meant by the words, "this rock"?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat numbers one and two.
Repeat numbers three to five.

Lesson III—January 20, 1935

PETER'S LESSON IN HUMBLE SERVICE

John 13: 1-17; 1 Pet. 5: 5.

1 Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,

3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God,

4 Riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself.

5 Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 So he cometh to Simon Peter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.

5 Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"All of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another."* (1 Pet. 5: 5.)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—An upper room in Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his apostles.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Luke 14: 7-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 14.	M.	.....	The Model of Humble Service (John 13: 1-11)
January 15.	T.	.....	The Duty of Humble Service (John 13: 12-17)
January 16.	W.	.....	The Spirit of Humble Service (Matt. 18: 1-6)
January 17.	T.	.....	The Cost of Humble Service (Phil. 2: 1-11)
January 18.	F.	.....	The Phases of Humble Service (1 Pet. 5: 5-11)
January 19.	S.	.....	The Primacy of Humble Service (Matt. 20: 20-28)
January 20.	S.	.....	"Friend, go up higher" (Luke 14: 7-11)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. The Lord's Love; a Disciple's Treachery (Verses 1, 2).

II. Humility Exemplified by Jesus (Verses 3-5).

III. Peter's Mistake Corrected (Verses 6-11).

IV. Foot Washing an Example of Humility (Verses 12-17).

V. Peter's Exhortation to Humility (1 Pet. 5: 5).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Accepted chronology places the events of last lesson in the summer of A.D. 29. As the time of this lesson was in crucifixion week, there was an interval of about nine months between them. More than half of Christ's recorded work was done in this period. As the end came nearer, the more bitterly opposition faced him, and the more intense were his labors.

Interval Between Lessons.—One of the most interesting events in this period was the transfiguration (Matt. 17: 1-9), which occurred six days after Peter's confession. Peter, James, and John were permitted to witness this "Majestic Glory," when Jesus was a second time confessed by the Father as his Son. (2 Pet. 1: 16-18.) He returned to Galilee and made a second prediction of his coming death. (Luke 9: 43-45.) He attended the feast of Tabernacles in October and the Feast of Dedication in December. (John 7: 2-11; 10: 22-24.) On account of the Jews attempting to kill him, he went east of the Jordan. (John 10: 39-42.) He returned to Bethany early in A.D. 30, and raised Lazarus. (John 11: 1-46.) Again escaping the vengeance of the Pharisees and chief priests, he retired to Ephraim for a short time. (John 11: 47-54.) His last journey to Jerusalem brought him to Bethany six days before the Passover. (John 12: 1.) The triumphal entry into the city occurred Sunday morning, the first day of the Passover week.

Lesson Settings.—Jesus spent the first part of the Passover week in the temple enclosure, uttering parables, answering questions, and giving his disciples further instruction. The city was busily engaged in making preparations for what they probably considered their greatest feast. The Jewish rulers were secretly planning to have Jesus killed. At the proper time, by his command, the disciples prepared the last supper in the upper room of a house of some friend. In that sacred season, amidst the solemn surroundings of their national memorial, Jesus gave this great lesson on humility.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Lord's Love; a Disciple's Treachery (Verses 1, 2)

Hour to Depart.—A careful reading of John's record (chapters thirteen to eighteen) will show that the arrest of Jesus was the same night they left the room, where he washed the disciples' feet. Matthew, Mark, and Luke clearly represent Jesus as being arrested after the Passover supper. John's statement, "Before the feast of the passover," is in apparent conflict. We know that an inspired record cannot be in conflict. There must be some reasonable ways to harmonize apparent discrepancies, even though we are unable to find them. Much depends on noting just what the text says. What does John say was "before the feast of the passover"? The words indicate this: Either Jesus, realizing from the supper about to be taken that

his hour to depart was at hand, wanted to give his disciples final evidences of his love; or, having loved his disciples all during the period before the Passover, continued still to love them in the trying ordeal he had to face.

"Unto the End."—The words, "he loved them unto the end," are, at least, a strong suggestion that the foregoing explanation is the correct view. To love them till the end implies a love that continued from some earlier period up to that time. The facts show that this love covered his whole ministry before the Passover made him realize the hour had come to depart. There is the best of reasons for John's making this statement. The "traitor's kiss," the disciples' forsaking him (Matt. 26: 56), the injustice of his trial and condemnation, the sting of mockery and the torture of crucifixion would have been too much for anything but divine, unquenchable love. John wanted us to know that all of these things combined could not destroy his love. Some commentators think the Greek for "unto the end" may be translated to the uttermost, meaning that in his death Jesus gave the final and uttermost proof of his love. As a fact, this is true regardless of this text.

Light and Darkness.—As shadows by contrast make the light seem more bright, so the mention of the treachery of Judas makes the Lord's undying love seem more precious. With exquisite skill did John contrast infinite love and diabolical injustice. In all such cases the human agent is but an instrument in the hands of the devil for accomplishing his evil designs. Satan had already put it into Judas' heart to betray him. When Jesus designated Judas as the betrayer, Satan then influenced him to carry out his resolve at once, and he left the supper room. (John 13: 27.)

II. Humility Exemplified by Jesus (Verses 3-5)

Divine Condescension.—Jesus knew perfectly his honor as God's Son, and the power he had manifested during his ministry; he also knew that "all authority" would soon be exercised by himself as reigning king at the Father's right hand, yet he graciously assumed the role of a servant to his own servants, a most remarkable exemplification of humility. It was a concrete demonstration of Paul's words that, though "existing in the form of God," he was "made in the likeness of men" and took "the form of a servant." (Phil. 2: 6-8.)

The Divine Purpose.—Our Lord did not act without design; substantial reasons prompted his every deed. Three may be assigned to indicate his purpose in washing the disciples' feet: 1. As humility is a Christian trait of vital importance, the lesson taught would be needed by the church in all ages. 2. Their conception of the church as a temporal kingdom would incline them to seek and contend for places of honor. This danger to the church needed condemnation. 3. Because of their misconception of the nature of the kingdom, a spirit of rivalry had already started among them. According to Luke 22: 24-27, they carried their contentions regarding who among them would be first to the supper table. Their disputes were directly rebuked by both the words and acts of Jesus.

Act Described.—Washing feet as practiced in that age was a matter of great simplicity; a simple reading of the text is all one needs

to understand it. When we know what Jesus intended to teach in that instance, we should be content to let the subject rest.

III. Peter's Mistake Corrected (Verses 6-11)

Peter's Objection.—The text indicates that Jesus had washed the feet of others before coming to Peter. To him such condescension on the part of one he considered the Christ of God seemed wholly inappropriate. He showed his feelings by asking, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" Jesus replied that Peter's lack of understanding the divine purpose would be cared for later when a full explanation would be given. With the lesson intended still withheld, Peter saw no reason for changing his view that such service should not be permitted; hence, he positively objected, saying: "Thou shalt never wash my feet."

Christ's Reply.—Equally positive were the words of Jesus, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." These words can hardly be limited to the thought that Peter could have no place in the apostleship, but rather that he could not be a disciple. Refusing to have his feet washed as a courtesy was an indifferent matter, to be decided by circumstances; but refusing to submit to divine authority and learn the lesson of humility involved the principle of acceptable service. Informed that submission was vitally necessary, Peter impulsively swung to the opposite extreme and asked to have his head and hands washed also.

Jesus' Second Reply.—The disciples had probably bathed before coming to the Passover supper. If so, only the feet that had been soiled in the coming needed washing. This fact was, doubtless, the reason Jesus told Peter that his head and hands did not need washing. Peter was wrong, therefore, in asking to have it done. Then Jesus said, "Ye are clean, but not all." He explained that he referred to the one that would betray him. All in their little company were spiritually clean except Judas, whose heart had been filled with wickedness by Satan. These words, without doing violence to the lesson intended, can be applied more generally. Those who have been washed—cleansed from past sins—do not need that cleansing again, but only pardon for errors as children of God. Only the part that is soiled needs washing. Forgiveness for these sins comes through repentance, confession, and prayer. (Acts 8: 22; 1 John 1: 9 to 2: 2.)

IV. Foot Washing an Example of Humility (Verses 12-17)

The Lord's Question.—After the foot washing had been finished, Jesus sat down and said to them, "Know ye what I have done to you?" His question was not designed to bring a reply. He had already said (verse 7) that they did not know. His question simply reminded them that they did not know, and prepared their minds for a better appreciation of his explanation. The apparent incongruity of a lord washing his own servants' feet made the lesson all the more impressive. The reason for such condescension is that the law of service is applicable to all alike. If the master must respect this law, so must his servants.

"An Example."—Jesus' own explanation was that he had given them an example. This should be accepted as final regarding his pur-

pose in washing their feet. He said plainly, "If I then . . . have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." As it was a common practice then, they would have frequent opportunity to obey his instruction literally. However, to limit the lesson in his example to the one item of washing feet is to pervert his teaching. To do "as" he had done means to apply his example to any act of service to others. Failing in this, the Lord's lesson is lost.

A Scriptural Practice.—Speaking disrespectfully about washing feet shows little respect for the example of Jesus. Ridiculing the practice does not explain anything, or answer any arguments. The fact is evident that, if an occasion for it should come, a Christian would be disobeying Christ in refusing to do it. Christ was not creating a new custom when he washed feet, but was using one centuries old to convey a great lesson. It was a purely individual and social practice. It is no evidence that Christ was attempting to change the custom. Making it a "church ordinance" finds no support from anything said by Christ or any of his apostles. He used it as an example on the night the Lord's Supper was instituted, but that did not make it a church duty. The Lord's Supper was shown to be a congregational matter, both by example and apostolic teaching, after the church was established. (Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 11: 17-34.) We find neither to show that washing feet should be done in a church capacity. One apostolic reference classes it with good deeds. (1 Tim. 5: 10.)

V. Peter's Exhortation to Humility (1 Pet. 5: 5)

Duty of the Younger.—In preceding verses Peter exhorts elders to tend the flock of God, exercising the oversight according to the will of God. He also urged them to be ensamples to the flock, and reminded them of the crown of life which Christ, the chief Shepherd, would give at his appearing. Then he exhorts the younger "likewise"—for a like reason—to be "subject to the elder." Verse 2 shows that Peter uses the word "elder" to mean those who have the oversight of the congregation. The word "younger," then, may be used in contrast with "official" elders rather than with the aged. If so, it would mean all the others as being required to submit to the elders; called "younger" because they are in subjection to the "elder" who rule. Proper respect for the aged by the young, however, is a Bible requirement of great importance.

Girded with Humility.—As the girdle held the loose outer garments close to the body, so humility will keep other Christian graces in their proper place for best service. To those in authority there is great temptation to become proud, selfish and domineering. The shepherds of God's flocks—the elders—should not be so; they cannot be so and imitate Christ the chief Shepherd. The words shepherds and pastors are a translation of the same Greek term; hence, refer to the elders of the congregation, not to the preacher. Scripturally the preacher is not "the pastor"; in fact, he is not "a" pastor unless he has been appointed one of the elders. For those who rule and those who serve, humility reveals Christ within.

Reasons Assigned.—Peter says that "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." The apostle James says substantially the same thing. (James 4: 10.) Ultimate and glorious exaltation and a crown of life are sufficient reasons for humble service to Christ.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Christ's love for his disciples did not waver when required to die for their salvation. His love for us is still unfailing.
2. Dignified condescension in serving others is the mark of true greatness, entitling one to the highest honor.
3. Neither honesty nor love will protect against mistakes. Honest mistakes need correction just as do other kinds.
4. Perfect examples are the ideals toward which we should strive regardless of all faults that may appear in our imitations.
5. Any vital truth learned should be passed to others, both by words and examples. Available opportunities should be used.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give the full story regarding the treachery and betrayal by Judas. Quote and tell where the texts are found.
2. Give other facts in Christ's life, exclusive of his death, that you regard as proof of his love.
3. Give the story in other examples of humility. (2 Kings 22: 1-20; 2 Chron. 32: 20-26; Isa. 38: 1-8.)
4. Discuss other mistakes made by Peter. (Matt. 16: 21-23; Gal. 2: 11-14.)
5. Point out the good traits in Peter's character.
6. Give Solomon's teaching on humility. (Prov. 16: 19; 15: 33; 22: 4; 29: 23.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give subject, Golden Text, time, place, and persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Explain the lesson chronology.
What were the leading events between the lessons?
Describe the scene of the lesson.

I

What is the proper application of verse 1?
What is meant by the words "unto the end"?
What contrast did John present?

II

Why was the example of Christ's humility so remarkable?
What reasons may be assigned for the foot washing?
What is important in the incident?

III

Why did Peter object to having his feet washed?
What did Christ mean by his reply?
What is meant by "Ye are clean, but not all"?

IV

Why did the Lord ask the question in verse 12?
To what does the Lord's example apply?
Why is washing feet not a "church ordinance"?

V

How are the terms "elder" and "younger" used in this text?
How will humility affect other Christian graces?
What reasons for being humble?

Thoughts for Meditation

What shows the greatness of divine love?
How should all mistakes be treated?

Lesson IV—January 27, 1935

PETER'S DENIAL

Mark 14: 27-31, 54, 66-72.

27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended: for it is written I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad.

28 Howbeit, after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.

29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.

30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that thou to-day, *even* this night, before the cock crow twice, shalt deny me thrice.

31 But he spake exceeding vehemently, If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner also said they all.

54 And Peter had followed him afar off, even within, into the court of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers, and warming himself in the light of the fire.

66 And as Peter was beneath in the court, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest;

67 And seeing Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and saith, Thou also wast with the Nazarene, *even* Jesus.

68 But he denied, saying, I neither know, nor understand what thou sayest: and he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

69 And the maid saw him, and began again to say to them that stood by, This is one of them.

70 But he again denied it. And after a little while again they that stood by said to Peter, Of a truth thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean.

71 But he began to curse, and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

72 And straightway the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word, how that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."* (1 Cor. 10: 12.)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, in the high priest's palace.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 51: 1-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 21.	M.	Peter Confident (Mark 14: 27-31)
January 22.	T.	Peter Cautioned (Luke 22: 31-40)
January 23.	W.	Peter Confused (Mark 14: 46-54)
January 24.	T.	Peter's Denial (Mark 14: 66-72)
January 25.	F.	Weakness of the Strong (1 Sam. 17: 41-49)
January 26.	S.	Avoiding Temptation (Prov. 4: 10-19)
January 27.	S.	"Cleanse me from my sin" (Psalm 51: 1-9)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Desertion of the Disciple Predicted (Verses 27, 28).
 - II. Peter's Denial Predicted (Verses 29-31).
 - III. Peter Follows Afar Off (Verse 54).
 - IV. Peter's First Denial (Verses 66-68).
 - V. Second and Third Denials (Verses 69-72).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The time between last lesson and this is a matter of hours instead of days, weeks or years. The Passover supper was eaten in the early part of the night; the foot washing occurred during that supper. Christ's arrest and arraignment happened during the same night. Consequently before daylight Peter found himself in court of the high priest subject to the scrutinizing gaze of some who were confident he was one of Christ's disciples. This was the exact time when the main feature of this lesson occurred.

Interval Between Lessons.—Mark 14: 26 compared with John 18: 1 shows that they left the room after Jesus had spoken the words contained in the fourteenth and eighteenth chapters of John. The words in the first two sections, which are introductory to the main part of our lesson, were probably spoken while at the supper table; or, if any later, before they were on the way to the garden. This night, crowded with the most solemn and heart-touching incidents, was to bring the severest test that had yet come to the faith of the disciples. His long, thrice-repeated prayer did not protect them against danger of faltering. His arrest without resistance, after refusing the proffered defense of Peter, was the final blow that scattered them as sheep without a shepherd. No night had ever been filled with more foreboding gloom.

Lesson Settings.—When the disciples realized that Jesus was really being taken by his enemies, their fear overcame them, and they all left him and fled. (Matt. 26: 56.) It was before day when he was taken first before Annas who was father-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest. (John 18: 12-24.) Next he was brought before the high priest and the whole council (Sanhedrin) was assembled. (Mark 14: 53.) They mocked him, spit in his face, beat him, and doubtless used any other form of insult that would show their intense hatred. (Matt. 26: 67; Mark 14: 65.) Peter and another disciple, supposed to be John, entered into the court where was soon to occur the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Desertion of the Disciples Predicted (Verses 27, 28)

The Occasion.—Jesus had just announced that one within the circle of the twelve would betray him. This fact deeply touched the Lord; for John says "he was troubled in spirit." (John 13: 21.) The pointing out Judas as the guilty one and his leaving the room served to impress them with the significance of the prediction. Announcing the betrayal by Judas furnished an appropriate occasion for mentioning the less serious, though cowardly act, of all of them in deserting him. This suggestion probably seemed entirely impossible to them, and the more so as Jesus said it would occur that night.

"For It Is Written."—As proof of his words, Jesus appealed to Zech. 13: 7, which says: "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." With their conception of the nature of the kingdom he would establish, they could not understand what he really meant by the shepherd being smitten. His death was an impossibility according to their view of the Messiah's work. This prediction, like that about the betrayal by Judas, would be fully understood

when fulfilled by the facts mentioned. Their fulfillment, as Jesus indicated, would enable them to know that he was what he claimed for himself—that he was the expected one. (John 13: 19.) The truth of his predictions were to have a marvelous demonstration in a few hours.

The Promise to Them.—Jesus indicated clearly what he meant by the shepherd being smitten by saying that after his resurrection he would meet them in Galilee. Seeing him arrested without resistance, they left him and fled, just as he had said. After his appearing to them on various occasions after the resurrection, they returned to Galilee. There he met them and gave them their commission under which they were to teach all nations by preaching the gospel to all. (Mark 16: 7-16; Matt. 28: 16-20.)

II. Peter's Denial Predicted (Verses 29-31)

Extravagant Zeal.—The ardent enthusiasm of Simon Peter here finds its greatest manifestation. Judas might betray the Lord, all others might desert him, but Peter was positive in his own heart that he would never show such cowardice. He, like many others, overestimated his power of resistance when facing bitter struggles. Peter's declaration of undying loyalty led Jesus to ask: "Wilt thou lay down thy life for me?" Since Peter had asserted he would, the question of Jesus was given to emphasize his mistaken zeal, by a repetition of his promise. Peter promptly replied that he was "ready to go both to prison and to death." (Luke 22: 33.)

Denial Declared.—In the most striking manner, and in clear contrast with Peter's confident assertion that he would never desert Jesus, he was told plainly that he would turn coward that very night. He was assured that the cock would not crow twice till he had denied Jesus thrice. Under different circumstances such a charge might have led to a prompt confession of his mistake; but the tenseness of the occasion seemed rather to increase his courage so that nothing less than facing the ordeal itself would bring to him the needed sense of remorse and shame. Mark places the three denials before the cock should crow the second time; Luke and John mention only one crowing and place the denials before that. There is no conflict; Mark's record goes a little more into detail. Luke and John probably refer only to the regular cockcrow about 3 A.M. If Mark refers to another time of crowing—perhaps midnight—he would mean only that the three denials would come between these two periods. Or, if one cock crew some little time before the general crowing began, the denials could have come between these two. Either is a satisfactory explanation.

Peter's Reaction.—The Lord's words stimulated Peter to make a more vehement denial that even death would cause him to deny Jesus. The others may have really felt the same, regardless of Peter's assertions; or his boldness may have stimulated them to voice their agreement with his words. At any rate, Mark tells us they all said the same thing. Just what they would have done under similar circumstances as faced Peter, we have no means of knowing. The record of his fall makes the rest of this lesson.

III. Peter Follows Afar Off (Verse 54)

Time Indicated.—Only a few hours intervened between the prediction of Peter's denial and his appearance at the court of the high priest. The former probably occurred at the Passover supper; the latter after Jesus' arrest in the garden. The arrest came very soon after he had closed his third agonizing prayer.

Peter Reproved.—Peter, with his usual self-confidence, had refused to entertain the idea that he would forsake Jesus. When the soldiers laid hands on him, the disciples must have felt the moment had come for decisive action, and asked if they should smite with the sword. (Luke 22: 49.) Probably before the Lord had time to reply, Peter put the thought into action by drawing his sword and cutting off the right ear of one Malchus, a servant of the high priest. (John 18: 10.) Jesus commanded him to put up his sword, saying that all "that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matt. 26: 52.) This means that he would not allow carnal weapons to be used in his defense, which was an indirect way of saying he did not propose to establish a temporal kingdom. This disappointing truth, and the fact that he was submitting to arrest without resistance, probably filled them with fear, and they all left him and fled.

"Afar Off."—Peter and another disciple (supposed to be John) must have soon recovered a degree of self-control, for they followed him. While love and anxiety made Peter want to see what the outcome would be, his fear made him remain far enough behind not to be recognized as one of Jesus' disciples. This was not an unnatural condition. Love and fear often struggle for the mastery in the human heart.

IV. Peter's First Denial (Verses 66-68)

"In the Court."—Their general plan was to build houses around an open space called a court. Between this and the street was another open space called the porch, from which the door opened into the street. John says that another "disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court." (John 18: 15.) Peter stopped outside the door till the other disciple went out, spoke to the gatekeeper, and brought him into the court. A fire had been made, and the servants and officers were warming themselves. Peter stood with them, warming himself, and waiting to "see the end." (Matt. 26: 59.)

Peter Recognized.—A maid of the high priest entering the court saw Peter standing among the officers. In the dim light of the fire she was able to recognize him. Just how she knew him to be one of Christ's disciples is not known, but she was correct in her claim. Looking steadfastly (Luke 22: 56) upon him, she said: "Thou also wast with the Nazarene, even Jesus." Luke's statement (22: 56), "This man also was with him," indicates that the maid not only charged Peter directly with being his disciple, but also repeated her charge to the officers and servants that stood about the fire. This probably caused them all to intently gaze upon him with the effect that he decided to deny her charge. With his Master inside on trial, and his own arrest possible if he admitted his relationship, fear gained a temporary victory, and his denial followed. None of the writers has told us how that other disciple, if he was John, who was also in the court,

passed through that trying period. We know, however, that the trial was too much for Peter's impulsive nature.

His Denial.—The denial was prompt and positive. He said, "I neither know, nor understand what thou sayest." According to the translation in the margin, he emphasized his claim of ignorance on the subject by asking, "What sayest thou?" With this strong denial, and the consciousness that it was not true, he probably was not able to endure the gazes of those about him. John says that those about him also asked him: "Art thou also one of his disciples?" (John 18: 25.) This Peter denied also. Then "he went out into the porch; and the cock crew." In his disturbed state this may not have brought a recollection of Jesus' prediction, but not so with the next crowing.

V. Second and Third Denials (Verses 69-72)

Another Charge.—Luke says that "after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou also art one of them." Again Peter denied, saying, "Man, I am not." (Luke 22: 58.) Our text says the maid again began to say to them that stood by, "This is one of them." Probably what occurred was this: Some man in the porch, where Peter had gone when leaving the court, asked him if he were one of Jesus' disciples. When Peter denied it, the maid again repeated her charge that he really was one of them. This had the effect of convincing those in the porch that his denial was untrue. This brought from Peter a repetition of his denial. Both statements are considered as one denial.

The Charge Renewed.—Mark says that "after a little while again they that stood by said to Peter, Of a truth thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilæan." Luke adds that the little while mentioned by Mark was "the space of about one hour," and that another "confidently affirmed" that he was one of Jesus' disciples. Both assign the reason that he was a Galilæan, and Matthew adds: "For thy speech maketh thee known." His speech pointed him out as a Galilæan, and led to the probability that he was a disciple of Jesus. Other things were necessary, of course, to definitely show that Peter was one of the Galilæans that were his disciples. John adds that one of the servants present was a kinsman of the one whose ear Peter cut off, who said: "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" (John 18: 26.)

Final Denial.—Then Peter denied with oaths that he knew anything about Jesus, whereupon the cock crew the second time. Then Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, and he "called to mind" the words of Jesus' prediction, and went out and "wept bitterly." (Luke 22: 62.) Charity drops the veil of silence on the scene.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. We cannot appreciate the full measure of Christ's love for mankind till we remember it was not affected by the betrayal of one disciple, the denial of another, and the desertion of all. Love that will not obey in spite of difficulties cannot save us.

2. Ardent zeal, self-confidence, and optimism are very fine things, when properly controlled; but danger lurks in underestimating the devices of the devil, and our own weakness.

3. Attempting to follow Christ at such a distance that our relationship to him cannot be discovered, is denying him in our works, which is very little better than denying him in words.

4. The danger when wrong is begun is its rapid multiplication. To hide one sin often requires several more, and sometimes others far more serious in their effects.

5. Circumstantial facts often prove that which is stoutly denied. With our lips we may confess the Lord, but with our works we may deny him—belie our own words—an abominable thing. (Tit. 1: 16.)

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give a brief review of Christ's last discourse before his death, noting leading thoughts. (John 14: 16.)

2. Give the leading features of the Lord's prayer as found recorded in John 17.

3. Quote and discuss the following passages, where the ideas of shepherd and sheep are also found: Ezek. 34: 1-10; John 10: 1-16.

4. Describe fully all that transpired between their leaving the supper room and the arrest of Jesus.

5. Suggest any reasons that appear relevant why Jesus offered no resistance to arrest, and refused any defense by the sword.

6. Describe the part taken by Pilate in Jesus' trial as found recorded in Matthew's report. (Matt. 27: 11-26.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.

Give Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What are the chronological facts?

State events in interval between lessons.

Give the Lesson Settings.

I

What probably suggested this prediction?

What scriptural proof did Jesus offer for his prediction?

How was his promise to them fulfilled?

II

Why did Jesus ask Peter if he would die for him?

How explain the records on the cock-crowing?

What was Peter's reaction to the Lord's prediction?

III

What was the time between prediction and fulfillment?

Describe Peter's action that caused his reproof.

What principles often struggle for mastery?

IV

Describe the plan of Oriental houses.

What was said by the maid who recognized Peter?

What denial did Peter make?

V

What is the probable order of events in the second charge and denial?

Who renewed this charge?

Describe Peter's final denial.

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat number one.

Repeat numbers two and three.

Repeat numbers four and five.

Lesson V—February 3, 1935

PETER'S RESTORATION

John 21: 11-19.

11 Simon Peter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

15 So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

19 Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.” (John 21: 17.)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Sea of Tiberias or Sea of Galilee.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Pet. 3: 1-12.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

January 28.	M.	.....	Peter's Restoration (John 21: 11-19)
January 29.	T.	.....	Manassah's Sin and Restoration (2 Chron. 33: 10-17)
January 30.	W.	.....	Israel's National Restoration (Ezek. 11: 14-21)
January 31.	T.	.....	Israel's Spiritual Restoration (Rom. 11: 25-32)
February 1.	F.	.....	Restoration through Chastening (Heb. 12: 4-13)
February 2.	S.	.....	Restoration through Love (Gal. 6: 1-10)
February 3.	S.	.....	“Kept by the power of God” (1 Pet. 1: 3-12)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Jesus Manifests Himself to Certain Disciples (Verses 11-14).
- II. Peter Asserts His Love for Jesus (Verse 15).
- III. Peter Reasserts His Love Twice (Verses 16, 17).
- IV. Jesus Predicts Peter's Death (Verses 18, 19).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The period between this and the last lesson extends over a few weeks. It can be fixed approximately, but not exactly. Since Jesus remained on earth forty days after his resurrection (Acts

1: 3), it could hardly be that long. The ascension occurred from the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem, and the incidents of this lesson transpired in Galilee. The return to Jerusalem puts this lesson before the forty days ended, but probably near its close. Just how near, we have no means of knowing.

Lesson Links.—The trial of Jesus, which was in progress at the time of our last lesson, was completed and his crucifixion began at 9 A.M. next morning. (Mark 15: 25.) His death and burial occurred before sundown of the same day, Friday. Early Sunday morning he was raised, and appeared to several of his followers during the day and to ten of the apostles at night. (John 20: 19-24.) A week later he appeared to them again when all the eleven were present. (John 20: 26-29.) The suicide of Judas probably occurred the day of the crucifixion. When Jesus predicted they would be scattered as sheep without a shepherd, he promised to meet them on a mountain in Galilee after the resurrection. Just when he made this journey to Galilee is not known, but it was before the time of this lesson, the incidents of which occurred there. After the trying ordeal of his condemnation and crucifixion, and the happy meetings that followed soon thereafter, the disciples decided to return to their old occupation. (John 21: 3.) This action is not surprising when we remember that Jesus had disappointed their hopes in not establishing a temporal kingdom; and, after the resurrection, was making no apparent move to establish any kind. Besides this, it carried out his prediction that they would be scattered. As the case then stood, their decision was reasonable.

Lesson Settings.—When Jesus appeared upon the scene the disciples were just completing a night's fishing without any success. It was about dawn, and they were rowing back to the shore. Jesus hailed them before they reached the landing. When they said they had caught nothing, he told them to put down their net on the right side. Realizing it was the Lord, they hastened to the land, where our lesson story begins.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jesus Manifests Himself to Certain Disciples (Verses 11-14)

Who and Where?—From the first two verses of this chapter we have definite information concerning both place and persons. John 6: 1 shows that Tiberias is another name for the Sea of Galilee. It is also called Gennesaret. (Matt. 14: 34.) Its Old Testament name is Chinneroth. (Josh. 12: 3.) The disciples present were Peter, Thomas, James and John, and two who are unnamed—seven in all. It was probably the same place where they had heard much of the Lord's teaching before his crucifixion.

A Miraculous Catch.—After a night's fruitless toil they were slowly moving back toward land. Jesus stood upon the shore to meet them, having already started a fire and partly prepared food for them, as verse 9 indicates. When they were in hailing distance, he asked if they had caught anything, and told them to cast the net on the right side and they would find. The net was immediately filled, and John told Peter it was the Lord. His conclusion was the natural thing. Only divine foreknowledge would know just where to place a net to make a catch. With a night of failure and returning from their

fishing places, the enormous catch at the exact place named could not have been a matter of chance. Their past knowledge of Christ's miraculous power led John to say the stranger who hailed them was the Lord. We may wonder why they did not recognize his voice at once; this may have been prevented by him like the case of the two on the way to Emmaus. (Luke 24: 16.)

Peter's Impulsiveness.—Peter again manifested his characteristic impulsiveness by casting himself into the sea and reaching the land first, leaving the others to bring the boat and net. As they were only about one hundred yards from shore, the water may have been shallow enough to make swimming unnecessary. Putting on his coat is favorable to that idea.

"Break Your Fast."—The time of day shows that the Revised Version is correct in calling the meal breakfast instead of dinner. Their unusual success by obeying his command, and the increasing light by which they probably were then able to see him clearly, made it unnecessary to ask who he was. Jesus told them to bring the fish they had caught. They counted and found that they had one hundred and fifty-three "great fishes." Jesus then asked them to partake of the food already provided. Whether this meal was provided in a miraculous manner or the common way is not stated; but, when we remember his feeding the thousands by miracle, we need not reject the idea that this meal was also prepared miraculously.

"The Third Time."—John says that this was the third time Jesus was manifested to his disciples after his resurrection. If all the appearances recorded by all the writers are counted, this is the seventh. Mark says he appeared first to Mary Magdalene. (Mark 16: 9.) John records this appearance also. (John 20: 14-17.) John must have meant by the third time that on three occasions he manifested himself in a miraculous way to the greater part of the disciples. These three appearances are recorded by John. (John 20: 19, 26, and our lesson text.) To the apostles he revealed himself three times in a miraculous way.

II. Peter Asserts His Love for Jesus (Verse 15)

Jesus' Question.—On the night of the betrayal, at the Passover supper, Peter asserted his willingness to follow Jesus in spite of imprisonment or death. Jesus answered his assertion with the question: "Wilt thou lay down thy life for me?" He then assured Peter that his denial would come that night. (John 13: 38.) In the discourse following the prediction of Peter's denial, Jesus told the disciples what was unmistakable proof of genuine love. He said: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." (John 14: 21.) He also said: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (Verse 15.) Some sixty years later John said: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." (1 John 5: 3.) After the morning meal on the lake shore, Jesus' question gave Peter another chance to assert his love. No one can keep the Lord's commandments and deny him. The Lord's question required a virtual confession from Peter.

Peter's Reply.—Peter, doubtless, still felt deep remorse on account of his disgraceful denial, and was afraid to be too confident in his assertions. Knowing Jesus' power to read human hearts, he said:

"Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." He modestly affirmed his love, but with the explanation that Jesus knew without asking. The Greek word for love in Christ's question is not the same that Peter used in his reply. Thayer's Lexicon says the former "properly denoted a love founded in admiration, veneration, esteem"; the latter "denotes an inclination prompted by sense and emotion." The word Christ used is the more dignified term, and, therefore, more suitable for expressing God's love to man and man's love to God. Peter, in using the commoner one, may have desired to indicate that he loved Jesus with all the emotions of his human nature, but hesitated to claim the higher kind, which he had failed to manifest in the critical test. His reply manifests sincerity and humility—traits equally important in God's service.

"More Than These."—An age-old disagreement has prevailed among Biblical critics respecting what Jesus meant when he said: "Lovest thou me 'more than these'?" One class contends that he meant, "more than these other disciples love me." The other class thinks he was asking Peter if he loved him "more than he loved his nets and fishing business." That is, more than all matters of earthly gain. Grammatically considered, neither view does any violence to the text. Those who advocate the first view think Jesus' question has reference to Peter's boast that, though all others might forsake the Lord, he would not. Equivalent to saying: "Since you once claimed you loved me more than these, do you now say the same?" The other class say that the question, with that meaning, asks an impossible thing of Peter, seeing he could not know how much the others loved the Lord; therefore, he meant to ask Peter if he loved him better than his occupation, and would not leave him to return to it, as he had done after the resurrection. This seems the more probable view of the words. In either case, however, the Lord was putting Peter on record respecting the genuineness of his love.

III. Peter Reasserts His Love Twice (Verses 16, 17)

Question and Answer.—Jesus a second time asked Peter if he loved him. To this Peter replied in the exact words used in his first reply. Just why Jesus saw fit to repeat his question is not known certainly, though some suppose he wanted to give Peter a chance to make a threefold confession, as he had denied the Lord three times. We know that by repetition truths are often impressed more strongly. In this case it surely had the effect of making Peter and the other disciples understand the necessity of faithfulness to the end. Doubtless Peter expressed the true feeling of his heart in his first reply. If so, he could not improve upon repeating his own words.

Third Question.—Jesus asked the same question a third time, but changed to the same Greek word for love which Peter used in his replies. We do not know why Jesus made this change of words, but it is possible he wanted to test Peter's purpose to serve him according to the meaning of the word he used. Perhaps it amounts to this: "Are you sure you really love me in the sense of the word you use? Will you continuously give me the proof of your love up to the full measure of your natural faculties? Do you love me with all your heart? Will you ever suffer that love to cease?" Peter was grieved

at Jesus' insistence, and replied that, as Jesus knew all things, he must know of his love.

Commands to Peter.—Following each reply made by Peter, Jesus gave a command. When Jesus predicted Peter's denials, he said he had made supplication for him that his faith fail not. He then said: "And do thou, when once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren." (Luke 22: 32.) Now that Peter had passed through the ordeal without making shipwreck of his faith, and had earnestly confessed his love, Jesus gave him the command: "Feed my lambs." After his second confession of love, Jesus said: "Feed my sheep." Probably nothing more is signified by the words lambs and sheep than that he was to feed both old and young—another way of saying all. After the third confession, Jesus again said: "Feed my sheep." In the first two commands, Jesus uses the ordinary Greek word for "feed"; in the third he uses the word that means to "shepherd," or care for sheep. It includes the feeding, but means much more. Jesus represented the church as a sheepfold, and himself as the "good shepherd." (John 10: 7-16.) Congregations are also represented as flocks, and elders as shepherds. (Acts 20: 17, 28.) The word "feed" in this text, and in verse 17 of our lesson, means "to shepherd."

IV. Jesus Predicts Peter's Death (Verses 18, 19)

A Contrast.—The original for "young" literally means "younger." The meaning is, when you were young in comparison with what you will be when the time to depart comes; in your younger life you chose your own way, when old others will decide what you must do. In his fishing business he could gird his coat about him and cast himself into the sea, if he chose; when girded and led to death, he would do as others wished. If his love could fail again, this prospect of a martyr's death would be the test to show it.

Manner of Death.—John says Jesus meant to signify "what manner of death" should come to Peter in glorifying God. Jesus' words clearly indicate that he would meet some kind of violent death. Stretching forth his hands may mean that he was to be crucified—in his death follow the example of his Lord. But the tradition that he requested to be nailed to the cross head down, because unworthy to be crucified like Jesus, should be received as a tradition, not the history of a true fact. Traditions may be beautifully impressive when they have no foundation in fact.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Those in the service of the Lord should not "be weary in well-doing," for the reaping will come in due season. However discouraging the prospects may be, when the Lord tells us where to cast the net, we should promptly obey, leaving the results to him.

2. Promises, confessions, and extravagant assurances mean nothing if they are followed by denials. No service is acceptable to God that does not come from the heart; the temporary emotion of love that falters or fails in temptation, God rejects.

3. Love and service are inseparably connected. Like faith and works, the latter is our only proof that the former has any existence. Not every one that says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. If you love me, feed the sheep, is Jesus' teaching.

4. In following Jesus we may not meet the extreme suffering that came to the apostles, but certain it is that through tribulations we will enter the kingdom of heaven. If such experiences destroy our love, we are not worthy to be saved.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Name all the appearances of Jesus to his disciples after his resurrection.
2. Name and describe all the occasions when Jesus fed people by exercising his miraculous power.
3. Discuss the subject of love as found in John 13-15.
4. Discuss love from the passages on the subject found in 1 John 3-5.
5. Compare the relationship of faith and works (James 2) and that of love and obedience.
6. Tell how long Christ remained on the cross, and give the leading things that happened during that time.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
What are the Lesson Links?
Give the Lesson Settings.

I

Describe this appearance of Jesus to the disciples.
What evidence is there that this was a miraculous catch?
Describe the landing of all.
How explain the expression "the third time"?

II

How does Peter's conduct here compare with the night of the betrayal?
What distinction of words is found in this text?

How explain the words, "more than these"?

III

How many times does Peter assert his love?
Why did Jesus ask so many times?
What commands did he give Peter?
What distinction is made in them?

IV

What did Jesus mean by the word "younger"?
What is indicated by the words of Jesus?
What tradition concerning Peter's death do we have?
What confidence should we have in traditions?

Thoughts for Meditation

Give the substance of these thoughts.

Lesson VI—February 10, 1935

PETER PREACHES AT PENTECOST

Acts 2: 22-28, 36-41.

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know;

23 Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay:

24 Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

25 For David saith concerning him,

I beheld the Lord always before my face;

For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

- 26 Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
 Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope:
 27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades,
 Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.
 28 Thou madest known unto me the ways of life;
 Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance.

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?

38 And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.

40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2: 38.)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—The apostles and their audiences.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Philippians 2: 5-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 4.	M.	-----	Peter Preaches Christ (Acts 2: 22-28)
February 5.	T.	-----	Peter Preaches Repentance (Acts 2: 36-41)
February 6.	W.	-----	John Preaches Repentance (Matt. 3: 7-12)
February 7.	T.	-----	Jesus Preaches Repentance (Matt. 4: 12-17)
February 8.	F.	-----	A Nation Called to Repent (Jonah 3: 1-10)
February 9.	S.	-----	A Church Called to Repent (Rev. 2: 1-7)
February 10.	S.	-----	"Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2: 5-11)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Resurrection of Jesus Declared (Verses 22-24).
 - II. David's Prediction of Christ's Resurrection (Verses 25-28).
 - III. Sermon Conclusion and Its Effect (Verses 36, 37).
 - IV. Commands and Promises (Verses 38-40).
 - V. Results Stated (Verse 41).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Some days must have elapsed between the time of our last lesson and the Lord's ascension—enough at least for their return from Galilee to Jerusalem. Leviticus 23: 15, 16 shows that Pentecost came on the first day of the week, fifty days after the time the sheaf of first fruits was waved. As Christ's body remained in the tomb over the Sabbath, the usual method is to count the fifty days,

beginning with the day of his resurrection. According to this, his remaining with them forty days (Acts 1: 3) left a period of ten days between the ascension and Pentecost.

Lesson Links.—In obedience to Jesus' command to tarry in the city till clothed with power, they returned to Jerusalem, and were continually in the temple enclosure praising God. (Luke 24: 50-52.) The night of his arrest Jesus had promised them the Spirit to enable them to remit and retain sin (John 20: 22, 23); this promise he repeated just before his ascension, and explained that they would receive this power by a baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1: 5, 8.) At this juncture, while they were looking at him, he was taken up and disappeared in a cloud. As they continued their steadfast gaze, two heavenly messengers, in white apparel, stood beside them and announced his return in like manner as he went away. (Acts 1: 10.) Some time during the ten days—exact time unknown—occurred the selection of Matthias to fill the place left vacant by Judas. During this time of waiting the Lord's pleasure in sending the Spirit, they "continued stedfastly in prayer" (Acts 1: 14), than which nothing could have been more appropriate.

Lesson Settings.—Acts 2: 1, compared with Acts 1: 26, shows that the twelve apostles "were all together in one place," when the time came to receive the promised power. The words that Pentecost "was now come," according to the margin, "was being fulfilled," mean that the day had well started when the scenes to be described began to occur. Verse 15 shows that it was about the third hour, 9 A.M. The prophet said the word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2: 3); Jesus said the preaching of repentance and remission in his name was to begin there. (Luke 24: 47.) The time having arrived, the right persons—the apostles—were at the right place. The circumstances for the first public proclamation of Christ's gospel were settings of divine arrangement, and most favorable for such glorious results as followed that day; an occasion fraught with the greatest consequences to the human family—the beginning of the church, that divine institution in which salvation may be secured.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Resurrection of Jesus Declared (Verses 22-24)

Miracle Explained.—The apostles' speaking "with other tongues" naturally created amazement, and perplexed the hearers. Some inquired how it could be; others charged them with being drunk. This necessitated some explanation to prepare them for the sermon. Of course, Peter knew that the logic of his sermon would condemn the charge of intoxication with all reasonable hearers, and dismissed the charge with a simple statement that it was too early to expect general drunkenness. He quoted from Joel 2: 28-32 to show that in the last days the Spirit was to be poured out in such measures as to enable the recipients to do such miracles as the one they then saw. His explanation in substance was: Why reject our message, when we are doing just what your own prophet said should come to pass? The final results show that his explanation was effective with many.

God's Approval Asserted.—Peter first frankly states the case by announcing to them "Jesus of Nazareth," whose divinity he purposed

to discuss. Their remembrance of the exciting incidents of his trial and crucifixion, which they had approved, made the matter a clear-cut issue. If he was approved by God in whom they believed, they were sinners in approving of his condemnation. If they were sinners in bringing about his death, they were no less so in still rejecting one whom God approved. God had given this approval, Peter said, by the "mighty works and wonders and signs" which he did through Jesus. That God did approve him is an irresistible conclusion, if the miracles were really performed. God would not grant miraculous power to sustain a falsehood. As the miracles had been done in their midst, which they knew, and could not be disproved by them, they were, in fact, witnesses to their own condemnation. With their knowledge of Christ's miracles, reason, as well as honesty, required that they should admit him to be the promised Messiah.

Other Items of Proof.—Christ was not delivered to be crucified because of a lack of power to prevent it (Matt. 26: 53, 54), but in accordance with God's purpose and foreknowledge. Without this permission they could not have accomplished their wicked designs. Though permitted by the Father, Peter charged it had been done by "the hands of lawless men." This included the Jews who plotted his death as well as the Roman officials who executed the plot. The charge of murdering the Son of God, which he hurled into their faces, implied the innocence of Christ. Peter next told them that God had thwarted their iniquitous designs by raising Jesus from the dead—the crowning proof of his divinity. Of this fact the testimony of his disciples, with forty days to gain the evidence, was unmistakable proof. No greater defense, in so few words, was ever made than this opening statement in the world's most momentous sermon.

II. David's Prediction of Christ's Resurrection (Verses 25-28)

The Application.—Peter said it was not possible that Christ should be held in death, and then expressly stated that the words he would quote from David referred to Christ. After making the quotation, he mentions the promise made to David that God would set one upon his throne, and says this referred to "the resurrection of the Christ." (Verse 31.) According to both David and Peter, Christ did not sit on David's throne till after his resurrection. Certainly, then, Christ's kingdom did not begin before the resurrection. The words of the prophecy represent Christ as speaking. He kept the Father constantly in view, and the Father's approval was continually upon him; hence, his joy and gladness.

The Evidence Furnished.—The prophecy shows the necessity of a resurrection. The promise that God would not leave his "soul unto Hades," nor allow his body to corrupt in the grave, enabled him to "dwell in hope"; that is, of the resurrection. Nothing but a resurrection could prevent his soul remaining in Hades; only a resurrection soon after death could prevent corruption. That Jesus had been crucified and buried was a matter of common knowledge that would be conceded by all, both friends and foes; that a resurrection of the promised Messiah was a necessity Peter had just shown from one of their best-beloved prophets. That Jesus had been raised was clearly sustained "by many proofs" during a period of forty days. The conclusion was irresistible that he was in truth both Lord and Christ.

The Spirit Immortal.—The use Peter makes of this prophecy incidentally settles a question of much importance; namely, the spirit of man—here called the “soul”—does not corrupt or cease to exist when the body dies. Hades, a Greek word meaning “the unseen state,” is the place to which spirits go when the body goes to the tomb. (Luke 16: 19-31.) This could not be unless the spirit continues to exist after the death of the body. The case of Lazarus and the rich man shows definitely that the spirits of both bad and good, though in different apartments of the Hadean world, are conscious. Christ’s life after the resurrection shows that his spirit did not cease.

Reward Stated.—The prophecy represents Christ as saying God had shown him the ways of life, and would fill him with gladness with his countenance; that is, in his presence. This probably refers to the joy that Paul says was set before Jesus, and which was received when he returned to the Father’s right hand. (Heb. 12: 2.)

III. Sermon Conclusion and Its Effect (Verses 36, 37)

“Know Assuredly.”—Before stating his conclusion, Peter quoted from David a statement which his hearers would admit referred to the Messiah. Since David, according to their own view, had not ascended to heaven, the language could not refer to him. As it did not refer to David himself, the Messiah must be meant; with the evidence of Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, there could be no reason why it did not refer to him. In its usual acceptation the word “know” refers to information received through the physical senses—absolute knowledge; here it is used in the sense of relative knowledge, meaning faith so strong that no lingering doubt is left. To know “assuredly” really means to believe it so fully that mentally you see it as a fact before you, and so speak of it. With the evidence presented they knew that the conclusion had to be true.

Lord and Christ.—From the facts, those known to themselves and those presented by the apostles, they were convinced that Jesus was the Christ—the Messiah. If the Messiah, then he must also be the rightful ruler or Lord. The conclusion stated by Peter was the only logical one. An honest consideration forced its acceptance.

Its Effects.—The statement that “they were pricked in their heart” means they believed the conclusion; otherwise they would have scorned the words and turned from the preacher. On the contrary, they asked what they should do. Their obedience that followed the same day is proof that their question was an earnest request.

IV. Commands and Promises (Verses 38-40)

Repentance and Baptism.—In replying to their question, Peter followed the only course open to him—took them just where they were and answered accordingly. They were already believers; hence, he told them to repent and be baptized, the next duties following. The commission under which Peter was preaching said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mark 16: 16.) Peter required them to obey these commands “in the name of Jesus Christ”—by his authority—“unto the remission of your sins”; that is, that they might be saved just as Jesus promised. He could not have promised salvation before baptism without disobeying the Lord’s instruction.

"Gift of the Holy Spirit."—This gift could not have been the baptism in the Spirit, for the apostles alone received that before the sermon began (Acts 2: 1-4); this was promised after repentance and baptism. Those obeying these commands can leave the rest to the Lord. It is safe to say that all spiritual blessings are in Christ (2 Cor. 1: 20), and enjoyed by those baptized into Christ (Rom. 6: 3). All such blessings are a gift of the Spirit. If Peter meant something else, this is still true.

To Others.—The promise in verse 39 included the descendants of the Jews and the Gentiles. All would enjoy the same blessings in Christ, though the promise here, it seems probable, refers to the promise to Abraham that "all nations" would be blessed through his seed. (Gen. 12: 3; Gal. 3: 27-29.)

"Save Yourselves."—They were exhorted to save themselves from that "crooked generation," which involved their final salvation. This they could secure only by coming into Christ, and remaining in his service till the end. (Matt. 24: 13; Rev. 2: 10.) Man can save himself, but only by doing what Jesus requires. With this done, he still looks to God for the blessing.

V. Results Stated (Verse 41)

"Received His Word."—It is not definitely stated that they repented, but this is implied in the expression that they "received his word," and the further fact that those who did receive it "were baptized," which the text plainly states. Those who question the possibility of three thousand being immersed (the only act that is baptism) in one day are really trifling with the text. It is equivalent to saying a thing could not have been done, which the Bible says was done. This is a dangerous procedure. We may not understand how a thing was done, but we must not deny what the text says.

The Number.—"About three thousand souls" were added unto them, is the way Luke states the result of the day's work. It was unquestionably the greatest ingathering in one day that ever occurred in the history of the church. Though in striking contrast with the other cases of conversion reported, the terms of admission into the church will always be found the same, when all the facts are duly considered. This shows that we all must do just what was required of them; if we believe, we must repent and be baptized for remission of sins.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Peter's sermon on Pentecost is a remarkable example of the clear and appropriate statement of facts, which it was necessary for his hearers to understand. With them misunderstanding was impossible.

2. With matchless skill the apostles quoted from the law and the prophets, because their Jewish hearers accepted them as the word of God. Nothing is more effective than turning one's own witness against him. It is more effective than direct affirmative statements.

3. The belief that Jesus is the Christ necessitates also believing that he has all authority, and is, therefore, our Lord. Seated at the right hand of God, he is now reigning.

4. Enjoying the promised blessings depends upon obeying the com-

mands that God has imposed as conditions. This truth has been made so plain in God's word that none can misunderstand it.

5. The gospel is God's power to save, but it is not effective in any case unless one believes and obeys it. (Rom. 1: 16; 2 Thess. 1: 7, 8.) We can obey commands only by doing exactly what they say.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the details in full regarding the selection of Matthias for the apostleship, giving the qualifications required.
2. Describe the Feast of Pentecost, called Feast of Weeks in the Old Testament. (Lev. 23: 15-21; Num. 28: 26-31; Deut. 16: 9-12.)
3. Name and give the exact number of different peoples who heard the apostles preach on Pentecost, showing how all could be Jews.
4. Give a brief discussion of repentance, as found recorded in other texts of scripture.
5. Quote passages you think prove that baptism is an immersion. Show how they prove it.
6. Discuss the design of baptism, giving other passages that show that baptism is necessary to salvation.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.

Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.

Describe the ascension.

What other events occurred during the ten days?

Give the Lesson Settings.

I

What explanation did Peter give of the speaking in tongues?

What frank statement did he make first?

How did God give approval?

What other proofs did he offer?

II

How did Peter apply David's prophecy?

How did the prophecy prove the resurrection?

What important question is settled in this prophecy?

What reward did Christ receive?

III

What is meant by "know assuredly"?

What is meant by the conclusion, "both Lord and Christ"?

What effect did it have on many?

IV

What course was pursued by Peter in his reply?

What is meant by "in the name of Jesus Christ"?

When were they to receive the "gift of the Holy Spirit"?

Who is included in the promise?

What promise was it?

V

State the results.

Thoughts for Meditation

Give the substance of the Thoughts for Meditation.

Lesson VII—February 17, 1935

PETER TEACHES GOOD CITIZENSHIP

(TEMPERANCE LESSON)

1 Pet. 2: 11-17; 4: 1-5.

11 Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12 Having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13 Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme;

14 Or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well.

15 For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

16 As free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bond-servants of God.

17 Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

1 Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 That ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3 For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries:

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law."* (Rom. 13: 10.)

TIME.—Peter wrote about A.D. 63.

PLACE.—The place of writing probably Babylon.

PERSONS.—Peter and all Christians.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 35: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 11. M.-----The Good Citizen and His Conduct (1 Pet. 2: 11-17)

February 12. T.-----The Good Citizen and His Character (1 Pet. 4: 1-5)

February 13. W.-----The Good Citizen and His Counsel (Titus 2: 1-15)

February 14. T.-----The Good Citizen and His Community (Rom. 13: 8-14)

February 15. F.-----The Good Citizen and His Church (Eph. 2: 13-22)

February 16. S.-----The Good Citizen and His Country (Rom. 13: 1-7)

February 17. S.-----"The Lord will reign forever" (Psalm 146: 1-10)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Peter Pleads for Seemly Behavior (Verses 11, 12).
- II. Peter Commands Obedience to Civil Authority (Verses 13-17).
- III. Peter Presents Christ as Our Example (1 Pet. 4: 1, 2).
- IV. Christianity Requires Righteous Living (Verses 3-5).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—According to the corrected chronology Jesus was crucified in A.D. 30. It is not possible to fix with absolute certainty just when Peter wrote his two epistles. The general facts bearing upon the subject, according to competent critics, indicate that Peter's death was in 64 or 65 A.D., and that his letters were written not very long before that time. If so, about 34 years intervened between this and our last lesson. The exact time of writing the epistles, though interesting to know, does not affect the value of their contents.

Lesson Links.—A few of the more interesting events in Peter's apostolic labors are to be studied in lessons that follow. Doubtless only a few have been recorded, as compared with what really transpired. In the church history in Acts no mention is made of Peter

after the council at Jerusalem, recorded in chapter fifteen. Gal. 2: 11 shows that later he was with Paul in Antioch, and 1 Cor. 1: 12 seems to clearly imply that he had been at Corinth. Where he spent much of the time during his thirty-four years in preaching the gospel of Christ is unknown. The tradition that he spent the last twenty-five in Rome as a bishop of that congregation is generally rejected as being impossible. That he was martyred in Rome is another tradition that may or may not be true. If he did die there, it is not improbable that his two letters were written there; if his death occurred elsewhere, the place of writing cannot be determined.

Lesson Settings.—The learned have disagreed as much regarding those to whom Peter wrote as they have regarding where his letters were written, or where he died. Some think he wrote to Jewish Christians scattered through the districts mentioned. (1 Pet. 1: 1.) Others think it was to Gentiles, or at least included them. Whether he addressed either or both classes literally scattered in the countries named, or addressed all Christians as spiritual sojourners in this world, is immaterial; the lessons presented are of general application. They are for all "that have obtained a like precious faith." (2 Pet. 1: 1.) This makes them applicable to the church anywhere and everywhere, when like conditions prevail.

LESSON NOTES

I. Peter Pleads for Seemly Behavior (Verses 11, 12)

"Sojourners and Pilgrims."—Peter here, like Paul in Heb. 11: 13, compares the Christian's journey from earth to heaven to the pilgrimage made from one country to another. Paul uses the term "strangers" and Peter that of "sojourners" to indicate we have no continual abiding place in this world. This abiding place we call home. The natural desire to reach home causes us to have only a passing interest in the country through which we travel. Christians, who fully realize that temporal life is but a brief journey toward their permanent home, will center their interest upon "things eternal in the heavens." What travelers do by natural instinct, Christians should do because prompted by the higher motive of reaching an eternal home.

"Fleshly Lusts."—The home to be received after our pilgrimage here is offered on condition that we "abstain from fleshly lusts." By this expression the apostle means the gratification of any and all sinful desires of the flesh. Paul names a number under the general head, "works of the flesh." (Gal. 5: 19-21.) Peter says these lusts "war against the soul"—will bring it into captivity to sin, and to ultimate condemnation; Paul says those who practice such things "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The indulgence of fleshly lusts has ruined homes already reached; failure to abstain from such lusts will close the door of the heavenly home before we reach it.

"Your Good Works."—Having presented the matter negatively, telling what should not be done, Peter next urges them to have their "behavior seemly among the Gentiles." By "Gentiles" he referred to the unconverted heathen among whom they lived, and by whom their conduct would be observed. With strict fidelity to their Master,

Christians then would sometimes have to reject heathen customs and violate human law. This would occasion their being spoken of as evildoers. To prevent, as far as possible, bad results from such a condition, it was necessary that their conduct be appropriate and becoming their profession; such as would honor Christ and the church, and prevent unnecessary persecution. This seemly behavior the apostle explains with the words, "by your good works."

"Day of Visitation."—Peter's words show that proper Christian behavior is designed, not only to help the Christian himself, but to have some good effect on those hostile to Christianity. Competent Bible students disagree as to what is meant by the "day of visitation." It is contended, and with much plausibility, that it referred then to trials in the form of persecutions or punishments that might result from necessary clashes with heathenism. If so, the apostle means that their patience, fortitude, and forbearance should be so manifest to their persecutors, that some of them might be led to glorify God. The spirit of this fine instruction, however, should not be limited to the times of bitter persecutions; Christians need it wherever they may be. Environments change; human nature does not.

II. Peter Commands Obedience to Civil Authority (Verses 13-17)

Ordinances of Men.—"Ordinance" and its cognate verb, "ordain," are used to translate several Greek words with slightly different shades of meaning. The general idea is something *set in order or appointed*. The word used in our text literally means creature or creation. The thought is that offices under civil law are institutions created by man for the orderly enforcement of its statutes. The officer is honored, not as a man, but as an official, because God endorses the principle of civil law. Paul says that those rejecting such authority resist the "ordinance of God." (Rom. 13: 2.) This rule finds forceful demonstration in an incident in Paul's own experience. (Acts 23: 2-5.) A wicked ruler may deserve a stinging rebuke; the dignity of his office demands universal respect.

Exceptions Implied.—Peter shows the serious importance of his charge by saying "every" ordinance of man, expressing no exceptions to the law. When exceptions are given elsewhere, they must be understood—were not stated. Peter's statement (verse 15), that it is God's will that we do well, implies that we must reject any human law that requires wrongdoing. The general condemnation of wrong cannot be cancelled by the silence of some special text; neither can the higher laws of God be set aside by the lower ones of human creation. One of the most noted examples of rejecting a human law, in conflict with a divine, is the apostle Peter himself, when his disobedience led him to prison. (Acts 4: 13-21; 5: 19, 28-32.) Another in ancient times was the prophet Daniel. (Dan. 6: 4-11.)

Some Specifications.—The rule of Christian conduct here required applies to all humanly created offices, though Peter mentions only kings and governors. At the time he wrote Nero was the supreme ruler of Rome, with the title of emperor. Others, and perhaps those to whom Peter was writing, used the title king, also a common designation of chief rulers. Christians were then, and are now, required to honor with obedience the supreme ruler of their country, and all

governors sent by him for detailed enforcement of its laws. This includes all from the highest to the lowest.

Free, Yet Bound.—Peter declared it to be the will of God that ignorant and foolish men be put to silence by "well-doing." Christians are free religiously—not subject to sin or Satan—but are bond servants to God. Their spiritual liberty should not be made a "cloak of wickedness"—an apology for violating human laws. Being in bondage to God, whose approval of civil law is certain, means that such violation is a sin against God, as well as criminal in the import of the law itself. Probably the occasion for this injunction by Peter was the well-known fact that Jews boasted of their freedom under God's law (John 8: 33), and were continually clashing with their Roman rulers. Rightly using their freedom meant to be true to God's laws, one of which was obedience to civil rulers. Doing this they would fear God, love the church, and appropriately honor the king.

III. Peter Presents Christ as Our Example (1 Pet. 4: 1, 2)

"The Same Mind."—More or less sufferings naturally come with life's affairs. The warfare that Christians must wage against sin will usually bring additional sufferings, or make them more severe, provided it is carried on as the Lord directs. We cannot evade persecutions entirely (2 Tim. 3: 12), but we can prepare ourselves to endure them. (2 Tim. 2: 3.) This is a reasonable requirement of even carnal warfare; certainly not less so in the spiritual. Having the mind of Christ is our best protection and surest road to victory.

"Ceased from Sin."—The expression, "ceased from sin," is not easily applied with certainty. It is true naturally that bodily sufferings, in proportion to severity, stop the practice of sin. It is also true that Christ's death ended the sufferings that man's sin could inflict upon him. The words clearly refer to Christians; for verse 2 shows that the ceasing from sin is designed to prevent our living the rest of our time in the flesh "to the lusts of men." Our sufferings which will end at death, if rightly endured, will free us from the solicitations of sin—end its influence against us. It is also a truth of much practical importance that one who clothes himself with Christ's mind so completely that he will endure death, if necessary, before he will yield to sin, will be free from the influence of lesser temptations to sin. On this particular fact the example of Christ shines with its greatest brilliancy.

Practical Results.—Having Christ's mind will give us the victory over sin; enable us to live the rest of our time, not in the flesh to the lusts of men, but according to the will of God. No sufferings arising from political persecutions, or from any other source, will prevent us from bringing to a successful end the issues of life. Safely entrenched behind gospel truth, encouraged by the example of the captain of our salvation, we will be able to meet all enemy attacks with success. Of this fact Paul gives us the most positive assurance in 1 Cor. 10: 13.

IV. Christianity Requires Righteous Living (Verses 3-5)

A Reasonable Demand.—Referring to Christian duties, under the figure of sacrifices, Paul declares them to be our spiritual or reason-

able service. (Rom. 12: 1.) In our lesson text Peter teaches that the sins of the unconverted state should be wholly abandoned. This requirement he presents as a reasonable demand by saying the time past "may suffice" for such evils. The implication is that such sins should never have been practiced; but, since they were, that should be all the time given to them. A return to them after conversion is contrary to reason, and irreconcilable with the motives for becoming Christians.

The Sins Mentioned.—Peter enforces his demand for righteous living by naming some of the more revolting kind of sins of which the Gentiles were guilty. *Lasciviousness* refers to any kind of acts of a base or filthy nature, including impure and indecent language. The Greek word is in the plural number, and indicates all kinds of acts or manners suggestive of impurity. *Lasciviousness* is the outward manifestation of an impure heart; *lusts*, mentioned next, refers to impure desires and thoughts that dwell in the heart. *Winebibbings* mean excesses in the use of wine, more generally expressed by the common word, drunkenness. *Revellings* mean feasting and dancing accompanied with lascivious songs. *Carousings* were probably different kinds of drinking feasts. *Abominable idolatries* included all the shameful practices used in worshiping their idols. The mention of such sins carries its own condemnation.

Final Result.—Their old comrades in sin would naturally be surprised when observing their changed conduct. Those wholly given over to sin would speak evil of the righteous. The apostle wanted the saints not to be terrified or discouraged by such opposition. For their encouragement, he assured them that sinners must meet God in judgment to be properly rewarded for their unrighteousness.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Pursuing the course marked out by the apostle requires the exercise of great care, determination, and persistence. Destinations are not reached by standing still; great results are accomplished when the proper price is paid in unwavering endeavor.

2. No one is a good citizen in human governments or the divine one, who rejects the principle of rightful authority. Those who do so deliberately are, in principle, presumed guilty of violating the whole law; that is, they would do so, if occasion presented.

3. Liberties are blessings when not abused. Restraints and prohibitions are often far better than liberties. Even things right in themselves are frequently subject to limitations; things wrong in nature are not to be allowed in the church or out.

4. The Bible announces the most solemn fact in these words: "We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5: 10.)

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Using other passages, show the conflict that rages between the flesh and the spirit. Show that the flesh must be controlled.

2. Name and explain the pieces of armor that must be used by Christians as soldiers. (Eph. 6: 10-20; 2 Cor. 10: 1-6.)

3. Discuss Paul's instruction on the Christian's relationship to civil governments as found in Rom. 13: 1-7.

4. Point out the important things in which Christ is our outstanding example. Mention as many as possible.

5. Discuss the expression "Jews and Gentiles," showing exactly who are included in the two words.

6. Describe the judgment scene, as presented in the following passages: Matt. 25: 31-46; Rev. 20: 11-15.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What are the chronological facts?
What are the Lesson Links?
To whom are the Lesson Truths applicable?

I

How does Peter represent the Christian life?

What effects are ascribed to fleshly lusts?
Why was it necessary for them to practice "good works"?

What did Peter mean by the "day of visitation"?

II

Explain the words "ordinance" and "ordinance."

What incident shows the necessity of respecting civil authority?

When should Christians disobey civil law?

Give proof.

In what ways are Christians both free and bound?

III

What is a common experience in Christian living?

How may the expression "ceased from sin" be applied?

What practical results will follow having Christ's mind?

What is our best protection against sin?

IV

How does Paul represent Christian duties?

What is Peter's argument in the words "may suffice"?

Name and explain the sins mentioned in this section.

What encouragement did Peter give?

Thoughts for Meditation

Give the substance of the Thoughts for Meditation.

Lesson VIII—February 24, 1935

PETER HEALS A LAME MAN

Acts 3: 1-10; 4: 8-12.

1 Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

2 And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive alms.

4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them.

6 But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength.

8 And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

10 And they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders,

9 If we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* in him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner.

12 And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee."* (Acts 3: 6.)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Peter, John, the lame man, multitude, and Jewish council.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 35: 1-6.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 18.	M.	.....	Peter Heals a Lame Man (Acts 3: 1-10)
February 19.	T.	.....	Jesus the Healer (Acts 4: 5-12)
February 20.	W.	.....	Healing in Jesus' Name (Acts 9: 31-35)
February 21.	T.	.....	Asking in Jesus' Name (John 14: 10-15)
February 22.	F.	.....	The Prayer of Faith (James 5: 13-20)
February 23.	S.	.....	The Great Physician (Mark 1: 29-39)
February 24.	S.	.....	"Strengthen ye the weak" (Isa. 35: 1-6)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. A Lame Man Appeals for Help (Verses 1-3).
 - II. Peter Answers the Appeal (Verses 4-6).
 - III. The Lame Man Cured (Verses 7-10).
 - IV. Peter's Explanation of the Miracle (Acts 4: 8-10).
 - V. Salvation Only in the Name of Christ (Verses 11, 12).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—This lesson brings us back to the stirring events that occurred soon after the establishment of the church. How much time elapsed between this lesson and Pentecost, we have no means of knowing. But for two incidental statements we might conclude it was immediately after that memorable day. Acts 2: 43 says that "many wonders and signs were done through the apostles," and Acts 2: 47 says that the Lord added to them "day by day." These expressions imply some extended time, which may have been several days or weeks.

Lesson Links.—As this lesson returns to the early days of the church, the "lesson links" naturally apply to things between it and the day of Pentecost. Doubtless many interesting things happened, which inspiration has not revealed, and which our curiosity would make us glad to know. As the purpose of miracles was to confirm the truth (Mark 16: 20; Acts 14: 3), the "many" wonders and signs that were done in that period imply that the word was being vigorously preached. The whole number of the disciples after the inci-

dents of this lesson was about five thousand. (Acts 4: 4.) How many of that number are included in those who were added daily (Acts 2: 47) is not known. The days immediately following the establishment of the church, no less than the beginning day, furnish a fine illustration of Christ's teaching in the parable of the mustard seed—a phenomenal growth from a very small beginning. (Matt. 13: 31, 32.) For some reason known to himself, or to the Holy Spirit guiding him, Luke chose to make the healing of the lame man the second miracle of specific record.

Lesson Settings.—As nothing had yet occurred to change their Jewish conception that the Lord's commission meant to preach the gospel to Jews and proselytes in all nations, they were still confining their efforts to Jerusalem, the place Jesus told them to begin. As it was on Pentecost, we find the incidents of this lesson occurring at the temple, the natural gathering place for those whom the apostles expected to reach. In the events of Pentecost all the apostles had a part; on this occasion the work was done by Peter and John. The record begins with their entering the temple court, and closes with Peter's defense before the Jewish Sanhedrin next day, after spending the night in prison, and their release with a solemn charge to preach no more in the name of Jesus. This charge Peter boldly declared would not prevent their telling what they had seen and heard. (Acts 4: 17-20.) With this they were dismissed and returned to their own company.

LESSON NOTES

I. A Lame Man Appeals for Help (Verses 1-3)

The Occasion.—There is nothing remarkable in the fact that Peter and John were about to enter the outer court of the temple, when the occasion for this miracle was presented. All within the sacred enclosure had been the house of God to the Jews for centuries. There Jesus had done much of his teaching; and there, after his ascension, the apostles had returned to be "continually in the temple." (Luke 24: 53.) The sermon on Pentecost had been preached in that court, to which place they were resorting daily after that. (Acts 2: 46.) We should not forget the fact that going "into" the temple only meant to enter the outer court. Into the temple building proper only the priests were allowed to enter. (Heb. 9: 6, 7.)

"The Ninth Hour."—The text says they were going in at the ninth hour—"the hour of prayer," or 3 P.M. Some understand that the third hour, 9 A.M., was also a daily "hour of prayer." The reasons assigned are these: There was a daily sacrifice, morning and evening. (Ex. 29: 39-41.) The incense was to be offered both morning and evening. (Ex. 30: 7, 8.) Peter began his sermon about the third hour (Acts 2: 15), when there were multitudes in the court. It is presumed they were there for the morning service. It is also thought that the "hour of prayer" was the time of offering the incense. If so, while the priests were in the temple building offering the incense, the people were in the court outside offering prayer. (Luke 1: 10.) Prayer being a Christian duty, there was nothing wrong in the apostles' praying at the usual Jewish hour for it; but they probably entered the temple grounds to preach the gospel of Christ, as they had been doing since Pentecost.

V. Salvation Only in the Name of Christ (Verses 11, 12)

Rejected Stone.—Peter expressly avowed responsibility for the man's cure, and said it was accomplished by the power of Christ. He then declared that in their securing the death of Christ they had fulfilled one of their own prophecies. (Psalm 18: 22.) Like one looking for the corner stone and stumbling over it without seeing it, so they were vainly looking for the promised Messiah, but through criminal blindness were rejecting the very one for whom they were looking. In this their inconsistent conduct was plainly absurd.

No Other Name.—Leaving the figurative language with its stinging rebuke, Peter lays down a fundamental truth in the most unmistakable terms. After asserting the divinity of Christ, proved by his resurrection, he next declared a fact most distasteful to his hearers; namely, that, if saved at all, it must be in the name of that very one they had caused to be crucified. "In the name" means, not only by his authority, but by receiving all that is secured by his work. Plainly stated, the words meant that they had to come into Christ—into his church—to be saved. Absolutely no other name under heaven among men in which there is salvation. This positive pronouncement shows that no church of human origin—one that Christ did not found—has any salvation in it; and, conversely, that all saved people are in the one Christ founded. No other view can be harmonized with Christ's authority as man's Redeemer. Those who accept the inspiration of the apostle Peter must concede this fact as the truth.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Refusing to accept a truth vital to salvation, which in private they admitted to be a fact, is a brand of hypocrisy presented by the Jewish rulers. It is no less abominable now than it was then.

2. No difference how much we are able to do in the Lord's service, we should confess it was by the Lord's power. Only by the right use of means he provides can we do anything.

3. The Lord's work, miraculous or through natural law, carries its own demonstration. To act, speak, and hear is sufficient proof of the resurrection of one known to have died. Such proof is clear to all.

4. When only one cause can account for a given effect, the presence of the effect is proof of the cause. To reject the cause presented by the Bible in any case is to reject inspiration.

5. To say there are many ways to be saved, when the Bible says one, is unbelief. (Matt. 7: 13, 14.) "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," says Jesus.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give a brief discussion of the items of worship in which the Jerusalem church "continued stedfastly." (Acts 2: 42.)

2. Discuss the practice of almsgiving as taught in the New Testament and practiced by the Jerusalem church.

3. Briefly state the leading point in Peter's sermon delivered in Solomon's porch. (Acts 3: 11-21.)

4. State and explain the main facts mentioned in the prophecy Moses made regarding a prophet like himself. (Acts 3: 22-26.)

5. Describe the Jewish Sanhedrin in reference to its functions, membership, and authority.

6. Discuss the report Peter and John made to their own company when they were dismissed. (Acts 4: 23-31.) Analyze the prayer offered, and show its appropriateness.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
What lessons are joined by Lesson Links?
Repeat the links.
Give the Lesson Settings.

I

Explain the occasion of the miracle.
What is meant by the "hour of prayer"?
What is the advantage of a miracle at that place?

II

Why did Peter say, "Look on us"?
What had the cripple expected?
What contrast is presented in Peter's reply?

III

What is the contrast between real miracles and pretended ones?
What is proved by his "walking, and leaping"?
How did the miracle affect those who saw it?

IV

Why was an explanation necessary?
What question was asked by the Sanhedrin?
What is meant by "filled with the Holy Spirit"?

V

How did the Jewish rulers fulfill this prophecy?
What is meant by "in the name"?
What is shown by this positive pronouncement?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson IX—March 3, 1935

PETER UNMASKS FALSEHOOD AND HYPOCRISY

Acts 5: 1-6; 8: 18-24.

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,
2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

4 While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it.

6 And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him.

18 Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee.

23 For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.

24 And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another." (Eph. 4: 25.)

TIME.—Probably between A.D. 30 and 34.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Peter, other Christians, Ananias with Sapphira his wife.

DEVOTIONAL READINGS.—Psalm 139: 17-24.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

February 25.	M.	-----	Peter Unmasks Falsehood (Acts 5: 1-6)
February 26.	T.	-----	Peter Unmasks Hypocrisy (Acts 8: 18-24)
February 27.	W.	-----	Jesus Unmasks Hypocrisy (Matt. 23: 23-28)
February 28.	T.	-----	Telling a Lie (1 Kings 13: 11-22)
March 1.	F.	-----	Telling the Truth (1 Sam. 3: 15-21)
March 2.	S.	-----	Living Honestly (Eph. 4: 25-32)
March 3.	S.	-----	"Search me, O God" (Psalm 139: 17-24)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Deception of Ananias and Sapphira (Verses 1, 2).
 - II. Peter Exposes the Falsehood (Verses 3, 4).
 - III. The Death of Ananias (Verses 5, 6).
 - IV. Peter Reveals the Wickedness of Simon (Acts 8: 18-21).
 - V. Law of Pardon for Erring Christians (Verses 22-24).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—There is no connected chain of chronology in the book of Acts. The time of leading events can be fixed with approximate accuracy by incidental statements in the record, and by a comparison with Roman history. The care for the poor and the apostles' preaching is mentioned in such manner as to indicate that some little time elapsed between this and our last lesson. (Acts 4: 32, 33.) Between the event in the first three divisions of this lesson and that in the last two, there is another period of probably two or more years; or, in all, about five years from Pentecost.

Lesson Links.—When Peter and John were released by the Sanhedrin, they reported to their company, after which earnest prayer was offered, asking God to grant them boldness to preach the word, and to confirm it by signs. The prayer was answered. (Acts 4: 32.) The liberality in caring for the poor, which began soon after the church was established (Acts 2: 44, 45), was continued with great success. (Acts 4: 34, 35.) The phenomenal success of the church after the death of Ananias and Sapphira aroused bitter opposition, which resulted in the apostles being imprisoned. (Acts 5: 17-42.) The increase in membership made the care of the poor too burdensome for the personal oversight of the apostles. Seven servants, sometimes referred to as deacons, were appointed to look after that work. One of these, Stephen, who later was noted for his able defense of the gospel, so incurred the enmity of his opposers that he was stoned to death, receiving the honor of being the first martyr for the truth.

After Stephen's death, Philip, also one of the seven, went to Samaria and preached the gospel with great success. That was the place where the second event in our lesson occurred.

Lesson Settings.—The care of the poor manifested by the disciples was in such marked contrast to the neglect of the heathen for theirs, that it furnished just the situation to be abused by the wicked. It suggested just the kind of sin recorded in our first lesson story. The bestowment of many miraculous gifts, made necessary by the original proclamation of the gospel, was another thing favorable for bringing to light the sin revealed in the second lesson story.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Deception of Ananias and Sapphira (Verses 1, 2)

Reason for Report.—In the preceding record Luke more than once referred to the unprecedented liberality of the disciples, by mentioning the fact that they had made distributions "according as any one had need." He made special mention of the case of Barnabas (Acts 4: 36, 37), doubtless because of the fact that he probably gave for the poor all he received for the possession sold, and also because he later gained much prominence as one able to encourage the saints to "cleave unto the Lord." (Acts 11: 23.) The mention of the noted case of liberality suggested the propriety of recording one equally remarkable for its corruption, of which their general liberality was the occasion.

"A Certain Man."—This "certain man" was named Ananias, and his wife Sapphira. All we know of this unfortunate couple is recorded in this paragraph. As their lives closed most disastrously, any possibly commendable features that might have marked their previous days, if recorded, would not have changed their destiny, or removed the shame and disgrace that attached to their names. This may be the reason Luke did not choose to give us any further facts regarding that unhappy pair. What he tells us brings a most solemn warning against misrepresentation in word or deed.

The Case Stated.—Ananias sold a possession (verse 3 says it was land), kept back for his own use part of the price, and laid the other part at the apostles' feet, as others were doing. The statement that Sapphira was "privy to it" means that she not only knew what her husband was doing, but consented to it, or helped devise the scheme. In this she was, of course, a party to the plan, and in all criminal features equally guilty with him. This fact justifies the meting out to her the same drastic punishment that her husband received. This is evident by the circumstance that, when called to face the apostle, she repeated the same falsehood told by Ananias. (Verse 9.)

II. Peter Exposes the Falsehood (Verses 3, 4)

Peter's Question.—Ananias was conscious of the wickedness in his own heart; Peter by inspiration knew it without having to ask for proof of it. Upon the fact assumed true, Peter based his question as to why Ananias had lied. This laid bare the real situation, and the record indicates that Ananias was unable to offer any excuse or defense. This was equivalent to conceding guilt. In his brief question, Peter states three important facts: 1. He states that Satan had

filled Ananias' heart. This is a common fact, always true when men sin. God does not tempt men to sin (James 1: 13), but they sin when enticed and drawn away through their own lust. Satan is the originator of sin, and the father of lies. (John 8: 44.) When any one sins, whatever the nature of the sin may be, he is directly or indirectly under Satanic influence. Just as Satan prompted Judas to betray the Lord, so he influenced Ananias to lie about his gift. 2. It was Ananias who did the lying. The evil influences of the devil are hard to resist, but it can be done. Those who yield to him are responsible for their deeds, and guilty of the crime. Man can be enticed, but his yielding makes the sin his own. 3. In this case Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit. This is clear when we remember that his trying to deceive an inspired apostle was, in fact, trying to deceive the Holy Spirit by which the apostle was directed.

Nature of the Sin.—Further questions by Peter show that the sin was not in keeping part of the price for himself, but in lying about the amount he brought to the apostles, claiming he brought it all. This is clear from Peter's question to Sapphira, when she came in later. (Verses 9, 10.) While he kept the land, it was his own to use as he pleased; when sold, the price was still his. But when he claimed to give it all to the Lord, it was no longer his. Secretly keeping back part was robbing the church and lying to God. The whole matter of Christian giving is put on the free-will basis, as one purposes in his heart, with the added comment that God "loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9: 7.) Like obeying the gospel, giving must come "from the heart." (Rom. 6: 17.) Dishonesty in one case is no less so in the other.

The Sin Declared.—Peter placed responsibility squarely on Ananias by asking, "How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart?" The motive is not hard to discover. Like many others, he wanted the honor of liberality and distinguished service to God, but was not willing to pay the necessary price in honest offerings. Peter then affirmed that Ananias had "not lied unto men, but unto God." This elliptical expression means that he had lied, not *only* to men, but *also* to God. He was really trying to deceive God, when apparently only trying to deceive men.

III. The Death of Ananias (Verses 5, 6)

"Gave Up the Ghost."—This expression, found in the Revised New Testament text only here and Acts 12: 23, translates a single Greek word. In both places it refers to the death of a wicked man, and seems to indicate nothing more than the fact that he died. The word "ghost," meaning guest, was probably at one time a reasonable translation of the word for spirit; the spirit being viewed as a guest dwelling in man's body. The word "spirit," all but universally used now, is clearly much better. The Greek word used in this text is defined by Thayer, *to expire, to breathe out one's life*. He "expired" is the translation given by both Adam Clarke and J. W. McGarvey. On hearing the charge that Peter made against him, Ananias ceased to breathe—died.

The Cause.—As an apostle, Peter could have been directed by the Spirit to announce the impending death of Ananias, just as Paul announced the punishment that came upon Elymas. (Acts 13: 10-12.)

Apparently it was caused by direct divine power without Peter's will being exercised at all. The responsibility for it rested with God. This drastic punishment was justified by two considerations: 1. God, as the Creator of all things and the supreme Ruler of the world, must be conceded the right to remove any object, when his divine wisdom decides it is best. 2. The future welfare of the church demanded a punishment for that sin which would not be forgotten. If Ananias' deception had succeeded without proper rebuke, it would have shown the Spirit of God could be deceived. This would have discredited the apostolic work, and brought the church to ruin. The fact that liars now, in the church or out, may escape such summary punishment as came to Ananias does not mean that they will fare any better than he at the judgment. Man's only hope is to be warned by his fate, and not be guilty of the same crime.

Immediate Effects.—Great fear came upon those that heard of his death. Evidently that was exactly what God designed to be the effect. It is unfortunate that all who read the story are not still made to fear the power of a righteous God, into whose hands we all must ultimately fall. The prompt burial of Ananias and Sapphira, without any of the usual evidences of mourning, is in striking contrast with the burial of the righteous Stephen (Acts 8: 2), as well as with our modern custom of trying to give religious burials to those who die in their sins.

IV. Peter Reveals the Wickedness of Simon (Acts 8: 18-21)

The Occasion.—In the original proclamation of the gospel the truth was of necessity confirmed by miracles. As the kingdom spread, more spiritually endowed workers were required; hence, Peter and John were sent to Samaria to impart such endowments after Philip's successful work in making disciples there. Philip could perform miracles (Acts 8: 7), but could not impart gifts to others, else there would have been no occasion for sending the apostles for that purpose. Seeing the apostles impart the Spirit by laying their hands upon some of them, Simon's old desire to do astonishing things prompted him to seek the same power the apostles had. His desire was so strong he offered to buy the power with money.

Simon's Motive.—There is nothing in the record to show that Simon was not sincere when, after seeing the miracles done by Philip, he believed and was baptized. (Acts 8: 13.) If he had been hypocritical in obedience, either Peter, or Luke, who wrote many years later, would probably have mentioned the fact. His sincerity in becoming a Christian would not prevent his making a mistake later. Whether his motive was good or bad, he entertained a sinful thought in supposing that a divine gift could be purchased with money.

"Neither Part Nor Lot."—Not being an apostle, he would have had no part in imparting the Spirit, even if his heart had been right; more certainly none when it was not right. The expression, "this matter," shows Peter had reference to imparting the Spirit. Even his ordinary gospel rights were temporarily cancelled, while harboring his wicked desire, but were subject to renewal as Peter soon tells him.

V. Law of Pardon for Erring Christians (Verses 22-24)

Repent and Pray.—To unconverted sinners Peter said repent and be baptized (Acts 2: 38); repent and turn. (Acts 3: 19.) If Simon had been an alien sinner, Peter's answer would, doubtless, have been of like import, including all past sins. Repentance and prayer for a specific sin is the natural law for sinners in the family of God. Being the exact thing that logically should be required of erring Christians only adds to the general features of the case to show that Simon was such a character.

"Bond of Iniquity."—Peter had already told Simon his heart was not right before God. That was the truth, while he was wanting to buy the gift of God with money, but does not prove it had never been right. In like manner he was "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity" at that time, but nothing to show that he had never been out of that state. All sinners—in the church and out—are under condemnation for sins till pardoned, but those who obey the gospel have been pardoned for all alien sins. The record nowhere intimates that Simon's condition was not that of the ordinary erring Christian. His request for Peter to pray for him indicates his desire to obtain pardon. Regarding his future as a Christian the divine record leaves no hint.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. No difference how attractive a road may be, if it leads to destruction, it is a dangerous one to travel. Trying to turn some good thing to the accomplishment of base ends is abominable to God.

2. If men are successful in concealing their sins from fellow beings, there is no permanent gain; they must yet pass in review before God. Allowing Satan to influence us does not relieve us of responsibility.

3. Delayed punishment does not change the guilt of the sinner. Jehovah does not forget, and will properly reward both good and bad. Abundant examples are found in the records—in God's word.

4. Entering the family of God—the church—means to be saved, to become children of God. It is a fine thing to enter this vital relationship, but necessary to be faithful to it or be lost.

5. Erring members in all kinds of relationships may be reinstated, but only through the proper laws. Children are born into the family but once, but may often have to repent and pray for pardon of wrongs.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Repeat the story of the life of Barnabas, giving all the New Testament passages that mention him.

2. Give the story of the imprisonment of the apostles after the death of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5: 17-24.)

3. Discuss their appearance before the Sanhedrin next morning, giving their charge and Peter's reply. (Acts 5: 25-32.)

4. Discuss the events leading up to and causing Stephen to make his address to the people. (Acts 6: 8-15.)

5. Give the conclusion of his speech and describe his death. (Acts 7: 51-60.)

6. Discuss Philip's work in Samaria before the visit of Peter and John. (Acts 8: 4-13.) State the reasons why the work was begun in Samaria at that time.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What are the chronological facts?
Give the Lesson Links.
To what class did Stephen and Philip belong?
Give the Lesson Settings.

I

What probably caused Luke to report the sin of Ananias?
How much do we know about Ananias and his wife?
How justify the same punishment for Sapphira?

II

Why did Peter ask the question as recorded?
What three important facts are in his question?
What was the exact nature of the sin?

How did Peter fix the responsibility on Ananias?

III

What is meant by the words, "gave up the ghost"?
How justify placing the responsibility upon God?
What were the immediate effects of the deaths?

IV

How was the original proclamation of the gospel confirmed?
What of Simon's motives throughout the story?
What is meant by "neither part nor lot"?

V

Why did Peter tell him to repent and pray?
When was his heart not right?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson X—March 10, 1935

PETER PREACHES TO GENTILES

Acts 10: 34-48.

34 And Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.

36 The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)—

37 That saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

38 Even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree.

40 Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest,

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead.

43 To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him."
(Acts 10: 34, 35.)

TIME.—About A.D. 40.

PLACES.—Cesarea and Joppa.

PERSONS.—Peter, Cornelius, and others.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 67: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 4.	M.	.....	Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10: 34-43)
March 5.	T.	.....	The Holy Spirit and Cornelius (Acts 10: 44-48)
March 6.	W.	.....	Jesus and a Roman (Matt. 8: 5-13)
March 7.	T.	.....	Jesus and a Greek (Mark 7: 24-30)
March 8.	F.	.....	Jesus and the Samaritans (John 4: 39-42)
March 9.	S.	.....	Jesus and All the World (Mark 16: 14-20)
March 10.	S.	.....	"Let all the peoples praise thee" (Psalm 67: 1-7)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. "God Is No Respector of Persons" (Verses 34, 35).
 - II. The Gospel of Peace Through Jesus Christ (Verses 36-38).
 - III. Testimony of Apostles to Jesus (Verses 39-43).
 - IV. The Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit (Verses 44-46).
 - V. Gentiles Commanded to Be Baptized (Verses 47, 48).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—According to the words of Jesus, the preaching of his gospel was to begin in Jerusalem. (Luke 24: 47.) The apostles made it clear in their teaching later that it was to be preached first to the Jews, then later to the Gentiles. (Acts 3: 26; 13: 46; Rom. 1: 16.) How long the Gentiles were to wait before the offer came to them is not stated, but we know that Cornelius and his family were the first uncircumcised to enter the church. It is important to know the Gentiles were admitted into the church, but not necessary to know just when. It is supposed by some to be about seven years. If this probable date be about correct, then some two or three years intervened between this lesson and the last event of the preceding one.

Lesson Links.—The death of Stephen, and Paul's conversion, occurring soon thereafter, were probably about two years after the church was established. Three years after his conversion, Paul returned to Jerusalem (Gal. 1: 18), and after fifteen days left for Tarsus. (Acts 9: 26, 30.) The visit of Peter and John to Samaria, last two divisions of our last lesson, probably occurred before Paul came to Jerusalem. The admission of Gentiles into the church, the matter presented in this lesson, likely occurred while Paul was in Tarsus. The conversion of Paul was the leading event that happened between the death of Ananias, first part of last lesson, and the time of this lesson. Paul's conversion is told by Luke in the ninth chapter of Acts. Whether it occurred before or after Philip's work in Samaria is not certain.

Lesson Settings.—In the person of Cornelius we have a remarkable character. His high moral standard was unsurpassed then or now. His religious conduct was all that could be expected of any one to whom a full gospel had not yet come. As none of the New Testament had then been written, some means had to be provided by which he could come in contact with a preacher and learn what to do. Divine power intervened in a miraculous way. An angel appeared to him, telling him just where he could get the preacher, who would tell him words by which he could be saved. (Acts 11: 14.) By other miracles the preacher was shown that he should go to a Gentile's house. That the most good might be done, Cornelius invited his kinsmen and friends also to hear the preaching. Thus prepared, they awaited the preacher's arrival. (See Acts 10: 1-33.)

LESSON NOTES

I. "God Is No Respector of Persons" (Verses 34, 35)

Peter's Conviction.—The narrow, exclusive view of the Jews, based upon being God's special people for centuries, left no place in their minds to accept Gentiles as their equal in the favor of God. It required extraordinary evidence to remove their prejudice. True, Isaiah had pictured "all nations" flowing into the house of God (Isa. 2: 2), and Jesus had said plainly for the apostles to teach "all nations" (Matt. 28: 19); but, to the Jewish mind, this meant that they must come by way of adoption into the Jewish national family. This fundamental error had to be overcome; in the providence of God the circumstances connected with admitting Cornelius into the church furnished the incontestable proof needed. The instruction of the angel to Cornelius, and the vision to Peter on the housetop, and the direct guidance of the Spirit led Peter to declare it was "of a truth"; that is, certainly true, that "God is no respecter of persons."

"He That Feareth."—While Peter was thoroughly convinced that people of every nation could be saved, he was careful to show that not every one will be saved. The gospel that offers salvation to all carries the terms upon which it may be secured, and without which it cannot save. Only those who "fear" the Lord may obtain it. The wicked fear the Lord in the sense that they *dread* the just punishment they know they must receive. (Isa. 2: 19, 21.) The righteous fear God because of their love for his mercy and respect for his power. (Prov. 14: 26.) Such fear leads to knowledge, wisdom, and a departure from evil. (Prov. 1: 7; 15: 33; 16: 6.) Without this wholesome fear men will not be led into Christ's kingdom. Such fear Cornelius had.

"Worketh Righteousness."—A commonplace, but true, definition of righteousness is, *doing right*. All God's commandments are declared to be righteousness. (Psalm 119: 172.) Moses said: "And it shall be righteousness unto us, if we observe to do all this commandment." (Deut. 6: 25.) Working righteousness, then, means obeying God's commandments. Fearing God and obeying him has been the indispensable law of acceptance with God in every age. There has never been any exception to it; in fact, there can be no exception, since God is "no respecter of persons."

II. The Gospel of Peace Through Jesus Christ (Verses 36-38)

"Lord of All."—The fact that Jesus is "Lord of all" was declared by Peter, doubtless, to confirm his statement that "God is no respecter of persons." If the Lord of the Jews, equally so of the Gentiles, who must likewise obey him. This thought is also confirmed by Paul, when he shows that the peace that comes through Jesus Christ reconciles both Jews and Gentiles "unto God in one body," which is the church. (Eph. 2: 16; 1: 22, 23.) It was first sent to the children of Israel, but, with the acceptance of Cornelius, was extended to the Gentiles.

"Ye Yourselves Know."—The word preached—the "good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ"—Peter said they knew. Beginning after the baptism of John, it had been published throughout Judea and Galilee. The public ministry of Jesus after his own baptism lasted about three and one-half years. His general teaching and miracles during this time had become known to both Jews and Gentiles in the countries named. Peter was safe in saying that those present knew of him in a general way, even if they had never seen or heard him. This general knowledge of his ministry, however, had to change into belief in him, followed by obedience, to secure the peace he offered.

Power and Work.—What knowledge they had of Christ's ministry resulted from the manifestation of his power in the works which he did. A careful and honest consideration of his power and work would make them believers; hence, Peter was asking them to consider the proof thus given of his divinity. He said that God had "anointed him with the Holy Spirit." This occurred immediately after his baptism. Endowed with this power he "went about doing good"; that is, as Peter explained it, "healing all that were oppressed of the devil." One kind of miracle is mentioned; but that, if real, was a guarantee that others were also real. The works of Jesus, though ample proof of his claims being true, were disbelieved by those too prejudiced to give them candid consideration.

III. Testimony of Apostles to Jesus (Verses 39-43)

Witnesses.—Assuming the general facts respecting Jesus to be known. Peter next offered the personal testimony of the apostles to prove that those facts are true. He said, "We are witnesses of all the things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem." In explaining who was eligible to become an apostle in the place of Judas, he said that one must be chosen of those who were with Jesus from John's baptism till the ascension. (Acts 1: 21, 22.) This was necessary to fully qualify one as a witness of the resurrection. This long association before his death and forty days after the resurrection rendered their personal testimony true beyond reasonable doubt. This was the testimony he expected to make his hearers believers. He was not disappointed. Incidentally it shows what he later affirmed to be the fact, that the Gentiles were made believers through hearing him preach the gospel. (Acts 15: 7.)

Christ Raised.—While the words of the angel prepared Cornelius to accept without question what Peter said, yet the facts that were to produce the faith had to be presented, else faith could not have come by hearing. The miracles mentioned were sufficient to show Jesus had divine power, but other prophets had performed miracles, too.

The certainty that Jesus was actually the Messiah depended upon the resurrection as final proof. If the resurrection was a fact, Jesus is the Messiah, and "Lord of all."

Proof of Resurrection.—Peter presented as proof that Jesus had been raised the fact that, after his resurrection, he had manifested himself to witnesses chosen for that purpose. Association through the years of his ministry made them thoroughly familiar with him, adding materially to the reliability of their later testimony. The many meetings with them during the forty days after the resurrection, in which he ate and drank with them, made them fully competent as witnesses, and removed all doubt from their testimony. Peter's final proof was that the prophets had borne testimony that remission of sins came through his name. For an example, see Isa. 53: 5, 6, 11.

IV. The Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit (Verses 44-46)

Fell on Them.—The Spirit fell on the Gentiles soon after Peter began his speech. (Acts 11: 15.) It was not the same gift of the Spirit promised on Pentecost (Acts 2: 38), for that was to be received after repentance and baptism. It was not miraculous; that received by the Gentiles was. Neither was it the same that was received by the Samaritans (Acts 8: 14-19), for that was imparted through the apostles' laying hands upon them. The words, "the Holy Spirit fell on" them, shows it was similar to that received by the apostles. (Acts 2: 1-4.) Besides, Peter says that it "fell on them, even as on us at the beginning." (Acts 11: 15.)

Why Upon Gentiles?—The Spirit's falling upon Gentiles astonished the six Jewish brethren who came with Peter. (Acts 11: 12.) This would have occasioned no surprise if all sinners are saved by a direct outpouring of the Spirit—a popular view among denominational churches; for, according to the angel's words, the very object of that meeting was the salvation of Gentiles. It did not fall upon the apostles at Pentecost to save them. They had been Christ's disciples for a long time prior to that, and were already "clean" through his words. (John 15: 3.) It was to qualify them for their apostolic labors. (John 14: 26; 16: 13, 14.) Other miracles had convinced Peter he should make no distinction between Jews and Gentiles; the Spirit falling upon the Gentiles convinced him, and the six brethren, that they should be received into the church. That is precisely what Paul says was revealed to the apostles by the Spirit. (Eph. 3: 5, 6.)

Spoke in Tongues.—Since it was to convince the apostles that Gentiles had a right to be saved, the miracle was wrought upon the Gentiles. Speaking in tongues was proof that it was the Spirit's work. It did not save the Gentiles, but did show that they had the privilege of being saved. This fact being settled once for all, no Gentile has since received such gift of the Spirit. A repetition could only teach the same truth, which is entirely unnecessary.

V. Gentiles Commanded to Be Baptized (Verses 47, 48)

Peter's Question.—The miracle wrought upon the Gentiles in their speaking with tongues had shown their right to enter the church. This fact is further sustained by Peter's making their reception of this power of the Spirit the reason why none should object to their

baptism. Having already shown the necessity of faith in Jesus as a condition of pardon, he asks if any could forbid water—refuse to allow those Gentiles to be baptized. If the Jewish brethren present had any doubt up to that time, it was evidently removed, as no objection was offered.

"In the Name."—The common scriptural application of this expression is that of doing things "by the authority of Christ"; that is, in harmony with what he says. The simple pronouncing the name of Christ for doing what he does not authorize is nothing more than formality and sham. (Acts 19: 13-16.) Christ's authority for baptizing is in the commission, words spoken to be binding till the end of the world. (Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16.) By that law baptism is by the authority of Christ, and brings us "into" the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit—into a sacred relationship to the three divine Beings. This cannot mean anything else than that baptism is necessary to salvation (Mark 16: 16), and for the remission of sins, as explained by Peter on Pentecost. (Acts 2: 38.) God being "no respecter of persons," all must submit to it.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Cornelius said they were in the sight of God, and ready to hear "all things" that had been commanded of the Lord. (Acts 10: 33.) No greater preparation of heart to receive truth can be made.

2. No difference how many worthy traits of character may be manifested by any one, his salvation depends upon his accepting Jesus Christ as his Lord. He cannot be saved and ignore Christ.

3. No one was a witness of the resurrection of Christ who did not have personal knowledge of relevant facts. Others can believe the testimony of competent witnesses. We are believers, not witnesses.

4. Claiming to have powers of which we are not able to give any evidence is reckless assumption; claiming powers not designed for us betrays ignorance of Bible teaching. We should be ashamed of both.

5. A duty placed upon both Jews and Gentiles through inspired apostles should be accepted without question. Offering salvation on different terms than expressed by Jesus is inexcusable perversion.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give a brief review of the eunuch's conversion, with special reference to the circumstances of his baptism. (Acts 8: 26-40.)

2. Discuss the journey of Paul to Damascus, carefully comparing the different records of it. (Acts 9: 1-9; 22: 6-11; 26: 12-18.)

3. Discuss the meeting of Paul and Ananias in Damascus, giving the details in full.

4. Discuss Paul's movements from his conversion till his return to Jerusalem. (Acts 9: 23-30; Gal. 1: 15-18.)

5. Tell the story in full of Peter's stay in Joppa, showing the occasion for his going there. (Acts 9: 36-43.)

6. Discuss the character of Cornelius, noting his business standing, moral qualities, and religious attainments. Show how all these are related to the question of salvation.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time,
places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What are the chronological facts?
What are the Lesson Links?
What are the Lesson Settings?

I

What view of the Gentiles did the Jews have?
How did the Jewish Christians then understand "teach all nations"?
What is meant by "fearing God"?
What is meant by "worketh righteousness"?

II

Why did Peter say Christ is "Lord of all"?
What did he mean by saying, "Ye yourselves know"?
What result will follow a careful consideration of Christ's work?

III

What testimony did Peter offer as proof of facts stated?
Who were eligible for a place in the apostleship?
Why was proof of the resurrection necessary?
What did he offer as proof?

IV

What is shown by the expression, "Fell on all them"?
What was it that astonished the six brethren?
Why was the Spirit given to the Gentiles?
What results followed?

V

What fact is sustained by Peter's question?
What is here meant by "in the name"?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson XI—March 17, 1935

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON

Acts 12: 5-17.

5 Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison.

7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out and followed; and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision.

10 And when they were past the first and the second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying.

13 And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rhoda.

14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his angel.

16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him.*” (Acts 12: 5.)

TIME.—A.D. 44.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Herod, Peter, James, and the church.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 34: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 11.	M.	.....	Peter's Deliverance (Acts 12: 5-17)
March 12.	T.	.....	Israel's Deliverance (Exod. 14: 21-31)
March 13.	W.	.....	Elisha's Deliverance (2 Kings 6: 11-18)
March 14.	T.	.....	Daniel's Deliverance (Dan. 6: 16-23)
March 15.	F.	.....	Paul's Deliverance (2 Cor. 1: 3-11)
March 16.	S.	.....	Deliverance by Christ (Mark 4: 35-41)
March 17.	S.	.....	“He answered, and delivered me” (Psalm 34: 1-8)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Imprisonment Described (Verses 5, 6).
 - II. Delivered by an Angel (Verses 7-10).
 - III. Peter Realizes His Freedom (Verses 11, 12).
 - IV. Peter Reveals Himself to the Disciples (Verses 13-16).
 - V. Peter Tells of His Deliverance (Verse 17).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—From Acts 12: 1-23 it appears evident that Peter's imprisonment was only a short time before the death of Herod. This was Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, and his death is usually placed in A.D. 44. As stated in our last lesson, we cannot fix definitely when Peter preached to Cornelius; hence, it is not possible to know exactly how much time intervened between that lesson and this. If the conversion of Cornelius occurred some seven years after Pentecost according to standard chronology, A.D. 41, then the interval between lessons was some three years. But the corrected chronology, used in this commentary, which places Christ's birth four years earlier, would probably change the lesson interval for both this and our last lesson. However, approximate accuracy is all that is necessary in dates.

Lesson Links.—Luke again mentions the persecution that arose when Stephen was stoned to death, and tells that some of those scattered abroad preached the gospel in Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. At first their preaching was to Jews only. After the Gentiles were admitted into the church, others preached to Greeks also. When the success of the work in Antioch was known to the church in Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas there to encourage the disciples that the church might be firmly established. He was naturally and spiritually fitted for such work. It was probably as much as five years before when Paul had returned to Tarsus, his home city. The growing work in Antioch made it wise to have a helper, and Barnabas brought Paul there for that purpose. They remained with the church a whole year,

during which time the disciples were first called "Christians." Paul and Barnabas were then sent to Judea with relief for the brethren who were famine sufferers. About that time occurred the events of this lesson. For these details, see Acts 11: 19 to 12: 1.

Lesson Settings.—The Herod family of rulers were noted for unusual wickedness. Herod the Great had the children of Bethlehem murdered; Herod Antipas, his son, had John the Baptist beheaded; and the grandson, Herod Agrippa, killed the apostle James. Seeing this pleased the Jews, he seized Peter also; but the Feast of the Passover, a week of religious solemnities, came at that time and caused him to delay carrying out his intention till the feast ended. That he might not be thwarted in his evil designs he had Peter imprisoned, which is the subject of this lesson. (Acts 12: 1-4.)

LESSON NOTES

I. The Imprisonment Described (Verses 5, 6)

Earnest Prayer.—When circumstances threaten dire calamity, true Christians turn to God as their real source of comfort or deliverance. Prayer is the natural way of showing the heart's desire. James says, "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." (James 5: 16.) Just how much it avails must be left for divine wisdom and providence to decide. The murder of James was proof that Herod really intended to have Peter killed also, unless some means should be provided for his release. This explains why they so earnestly and continually prayed for him. We are not informed just what requests they made in his behalf; but, being an age when truth was vindicated by miracles as needed, a prayer for God to release him by miracle would not have been out of place. Such a prayer, of course, should have been made subject to God's will. In their distress, under the circumstances, they might have supposed his deliverance an impossibility. In that case they probably were praying for his faith not to fail in the ordeal he would have to meet. Such prayers by the saints, doubtless, were common when individuals were often given the choice between death and denial.

Chained.—In all ages and among all peoples noted criminals, and those condemned to die, have been kept with special care to prevent escape. As Peter's death at the end of the feast had already been determined by Herod, he was kept in the usually secure manner that prevented either escape or deliverance by friends. In normal cases the prison cell would safely hold those condemned, but he was made doubly secure by being chained between two soldiers even while he slept. It is supposed that an arm was fastened by chain to one of a soldier on each side. In that condition not a move could be made without the soldiers knowing it, if awake; or without waking them, if asleep.

Guards at the Door.—Keeping guards at the door of the prison, when one has been condemned to die, is also a custom that has come down to our day. For this duty four quaternions of soldiers had been set apart for duty. A "quaternion" was four; the whole number was sixteen, enough to safely guard the prison both day and night. So far as human interference was concerned, Peter was safely in Herod's hands. His wicked heart probably did not consider the possibility of

a divine interference—the mistake made by all who leave God out of their calculations.

II. Delivered by an Angel (Verses 7-10)

"Chains Fell Off."—Chains, prison bars, and guards are all useless in the presence of divine power. They may hold men, but not the Maker of the universe. This truth had other demonstrations in the resurrection of our Lord (Matt. 28: 1-10), and the deliverance of Paul and Silas from the Philippian jail. (Acts 16: 25-30.) The miraculous features in all these cases are too evident not to be recognized. An angel of the Lord passing the guards and closed door stood by Peter. How he entered is not known, because incomprehensible to finite minds. It is similar to the two occasions when Jesus mysteriously appeared to his disciples in a room when the doors were closed. (John 20: 19, 26.) As the guards did not see Jesus when he arose, so these guards did not see the angel enter the prison cell. A light shined in the cell without waking the soldiers. The angel aroused Peter from sleep, telling him to rise up quickly. The chains fell from his hands, and the soldiers remained asleep as Peter and the angel departed.

"Follow Me."—Such were the words of command from the angel to Peter, when ready to leave the prison. This command, however, was not given till things impossible to human power had been done, and the proper time had come. When the chains were loosed he told Peter to gird himself; an expression that meant to put on his day garments. Then he commanded him to bind on his sandals, put on his upper coat and follow. All this being quickly done, he was ready to follow the angel to liberty. All this he did without being really conscious that he was leaving the prison. It seemed real, yet in his bewilderment he thought it was a dream; such an unexpected way of gaining freedom did not appear likely in his waking hours.

"And They Went Out."—As they went out they passed the first and second guard without their knowing it. This statement about two guards indicates that they were stationed at different places; probably one outside the cell entrance, the other outside the door to the building in which the cell was placed. This was also an additional precaution against the escape of prisoners. When they reached the gate of the enclosure leading to the street, it opened of its own accord; that is, the same divine power that removed the chains from Peter's hands without waking the soldiers at his side, caused the gate to open without any disturbance. Having done for Peter that which he could not do for himself, the angel departed, leaving Peter to use his own judgment in protecting himself from imprisonment again.

III. Peter Realizes His Freedom (Verses 11, 12)

"Was Come to Himself."—The delivery from prison was accomplished so quickly, quietly, and unexpectedly that Peter did not realize the real fact till left alone in the street. His conclusion, when he was come to himself, that God had sent an angel to deliver him was the only natural one. By this he meant it was by divine power; for he well knew that the disciples could not deliver him, if they should

try, and others would not. Knowing himself out of prison, he knew "of a truth"—was absolutely certain—it was through God's power.

Expectation of the Jews.—Forced to conclude that his deliverance was through miraculous aid, he knew that it was done to prevent his execution by Herod, and incidentally prevent the Jews from realizing their expectation. The Jewish enemies of the disciples, fully aware of the death of James, had good reason to expect Peter's execution immediately after the feast. All this was known to Peter, and he accounted his miraculous deliverance as God's plan to defeat both Herod and the Jews.

Peter's Decision.—After fully realizing the true situation, and considering what course to pursue, he decided to inform the disciples at once regarding his freedom. Many of the saints had met at the home of Mary, mother of John Mark, and were praying. Throughout his imprisonment Peter had, doubtless, been encouraged with the assurance that he was the subject of earnest prayer among the brethren, but probably knew nothing of this assembly at Mary's home. He knew that it would bring joy to their anguished hearts to learn of his deliverance. The house of Mary was probably one he could reach the most quickly, and one from which the news would be most certainly delivered to others safely.

IV. Peter Reveals Himself to the Disciples (Verses 13-16)

Appears at the Gate.—This was probably the gate leading to the street, and kept closed for fear of the Jews. When he knocked, he was recognized by a maid named Rhoda, who came to the gate. She was so overjoyed that she left Peter standing outside, while she hastened to tell those within that he was at the gate. Their refusal to believe what she said, charging her with madness, indicates that they were not expecting his deliverance. It also lends color to the supposition that they were not praying for his release, but rather that his faith would not fail him when facing death. Regardless of any views they entertained, they certainly considered his really being at the gate an improbability.

"His Angel."—The maid confidently affirmed that what she said was true. Still disbelieving it, they said, "It is his angel." This statement is not surprising when we remember that the apostles reached a like conclusion on two occasions before this. (Matt. 14: 26; Luke 24: 37.) The word "angel" means a messenger—a being that does the will of another—and may be either human or divine. God's angels are said to be "ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." (Heb. 1: 14.) They could have alluded to the popular notion that each has a guardian angel that is capable of appearing in his stead; but, since Peter ascribed his deliverance to an angel of God, it seems more plausible to think that they supposed some divine being had appeared in behalf of Peter to inform them concerning him. Such an idea would not appear unreasonable to those accustomed to seeing things accomplished by miracles.

Amazed, but Convinced.—When their excitement was subsided enough to allow them to open the gate, they saw that Peter really was there. They were still amazed, but happily convinced. It would probably be impossible to describe the real gladness that Peter's pres-

ence brought to that little company of praying disciples. Luke has left that to our imagination.

V. Peter Tells of His Deliverance (Verse 17)

Beckons for Silence.—Though safely out of prison, he was still not safe from the hands of Herod. Any unusual excitement might have been the signal for investigation, and resulted in his arrest. When the angel left him, Peter was then dependent upon his own acts for his immediate safety. Beckoning the brethren to silence, and doubtless in subdued tones, he related the marvelous incidents of his deliverance by an angel of God. Perhaps no story was ever told to more interested listeners.

Departs.—To remain in the midst of such exciting scenes as would transpire next morning, when his escape from the jail was known to the guards, and reported to Herod, would have meant his certain arrest and hurried execution. This danger, of course, he could not risk. His safety lay only in departure. Instructing them to inform James and the brethren generally of his deliverance, he immediately departed for some unknown place, where his presence would be concealed from Herod's officers. Herod's cruelty is seen in the fact that he pretended to believe the guards allowed Peter to escape, and with intense madness had them put to death.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. No difference how carefully wicked men scheme and plan to carry out their evil designs, they are doomed to failure sooner or later. Some successes may delay the final failure, but it remains certain. A just reward will come at the judgment, if not before.

2. It is always safe to follow, when God's divine messengers command and lead the way. No difference how improbable the promised results may appear, or how formidable the circumstances may be, prompt obedience is the only safe course.

3. A careful consideration of our blessings will lead to the confession that, regardless of all we can do, they come through means that God supplies.

4. The human weakness of exaggerating difficulties often warps our judgment regarding what can be done in the service of God. Our fear of men exceeds our confidence in God.

5. Unfaltering trust in the love, mercy, and power of God does not mean that we are not to use all the means at our disposal to bring about the desired result. We are to work together with God.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give the leading things that are recorded in the life of the apostle James that Herod killed. (Acts 12: 2.)

2. Discuss the different occasions when Peter was imprisoned and how he was liberated.

3. Describe the death of Herod. (Acts 12: 20-23.)

4. Describe the part that Peter took in the council at Jerusalem regarding the Gentiles. (Acts 15: 7-11.)

5. Give the speech made by James (Acts 15: 13-22), showing the arguments made.

6. Briefly review the important things done by Peter since his reception of the Spirit on Pentecost.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

What commands did he give Peter?
Describe their passing out.

Introductory Study

What are the chronological facts?
What are the Lesson Links?
What are the Lesson Settings?

I

Why do Christians always turn to God in seasons of distress?
What request were they making in Peter's behalf?
Why was Peter kept with such care for security?
How many guards were used?

II

What other similar circumstances are recorded?
Describe the angel's actions.

III

What is meant by "was come to himself"?
What conclusion did he reach?
What was prevented by his deliverance?
What did Peter do after realizing he was free?

IV

How did those within receive the announcement that he was there?
What did they mean by saying, "It is his angel"?

V

Why did he beckon for silence?
Why did he depart at once?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson XII—March 24, 1935

PETER DESCRIBES THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

1 Pet. 3: 8-18.

8 Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded;

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10 For,

He that would love life,
And see good days,
Let him refrain his tongue from evil,
And his lips that they speak no guile;
And let him turn away from evil,
And do good;

11

Let him seek peace, and pursue it.
For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,
And his ears unto their supplication;

12

But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good?

14 But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye: and fear not their fear, neither be troubled;

15 But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear:

16 Having a good conscience: that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ.

17 For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing.

18 Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord." (1 Pet. 3: 15.)

TIME.—About A.D. 63.

PLACE.—Probably Babylon.

PERSONS.—Peter and all Other Christians.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—2 Pet. 1: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 18.	M.	.....	The Christian Life (1 Pet. 3: 8-18)
March 19.	T.	.....	The Life of Faith (1 John 5: 1-5)
March 20.	W.	.....	The Life of Love (Mark 12: 28-34)
March 21.	T.	.....	The Life of Brotherly Kindness (Gal. 6: 1-10)
March 22.	F.	.....	The Life of Patience (James 5: 7-11)
March 23.	S.	.....	The Life of Hope (1 Pet. 1: 3-9)
March 24.	S.	.....	"Not idle nor unfruitful" (2 Pet. 1: 1-8)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. An Exhortation to Brotherly Love (Verses 8, 9).
 - II. Reasons for the Conduct Advised (Verses 10-13).
 - III. The Way to Have a Good Conscience (Verses 14-16).
 - IV. Christ Our Example in Sufferings (Verses 17, 18).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Again, as in Lesson VII, our scripture text is taken from Peter's own writings. The date of his death, like that of his epistles, cannot be fixed exactly, though 65 A.D. is probably about the time. That his second letter was written a short time before his death is implied in his own words: "Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly." (2 Pet. 1: 14.) This is further confirmed by the fact that he refers to Paul's epistles in such manner as to indicate that he had seen most, if not all, of them. (2 Pet. 3: 16.) Some of these were written while Paul was in prison in Rome A.D. 61-63. From these facts it is certain that at least twenty years elapsed between the last lesson and this one.

Lesson Links.—The last reference to Peter in the book of Acts is a record of the part he took in the council at Jerusalem. (Acts 15: 7-14.) Between his release from prison (our last lesson) and this council was a period of about six years. During this time we have no record of his labors. The death of Herod soon after his release probably removed some of the danger to his public service. Whatever the situation, we are sure he was not idle; his zeal and boldness would not permit that. In this period also occurred the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13: 1 to 14: 28), estimated to have lasted at least two years. After the council at Jerusalem, Paul records a visit of Peter to Antioch (Gal. 2: 11-14), after which we have another period of silence respecting his labors of some twelve or more years. In the latter part of Acts, Luke follows the career of Paul exclusively. The remainder of Peter's life story is gathered from the two brief letters which he himself wrote.

Lesson Settings.—As a rule, those most competent to advise have themselves had experience in the things considered. This may be a reason why the New Testament books were not written till long after

the church was established. The writers were then able to speak, not only by inspiration, but from a rich experience in the things common to all servants of God. They could also write to individuals and congregations who, by actual experiences, would learn their weaknesses and better understand their needs. This was Peter's lot as a writer. His letters were both written when the end was rapidly approaching, with the general appeal to "give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure." (2 Pet. 1: 10.)

LESSON NOTES

I. An Exhortation to Brotherly Love (Verses 8, 9)

"Likeminded."—Having just given advice to Christian husbands and wives, Peter turns to the general affairs that affect members of the church in their relationship to each other; things necessary to brethren in the same body. "All" of one mind means that every member of the church needs this advice. "One mind," which is equal to "the same mind," as expressed by Paul (1 Cor. 1: 10), does not mean that all members of the church must have the same opinion about every detail. Many things are indifferent, about which opinions may vary without harm. But in the great facts revealed and duties required there is no place for disagreement. All can have the same mind in making the church the matter of first importance in their lives. This will prevent useless friction, and enable all to love as brethren in spite of differences of opinions respecting indifferent matters.

"Humbleminded."—Unity of purpose will lead to other desirable traits, all of which are included under the general law of brotherly love. The Greek word for "compassionate" is the one from which our word "sympathy" is derived. It means literally to *feel with*; or, to enter into hearty fellowship with brethren in whatever befalls them, either good or bad. In one word it tells us to "rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep." (Rom. 12: 15.) Tender-hearted is much the same as compassionate, but probably expresses more strongly the yearning we have to aid and comfort the distressed. In all our associations with brethren, to be humble-minded, will lead to courteous treatment of others, and carefulness to avoid injustice in all cases. Peter here shows that proper conduct comes from a proper mental attitude. We serve God with the mind. (Rom. 7: 25.)

Revenge Forbidden.—The words, "not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling," state just what will be the case, if we are spiritually-minded as verse eight requires. With such a mind we will be ready to obey the Savior's command: "Bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." (Luke 6: 28.) This command has its most perfect manifestation in him who spake it. To this manner of life, every Christian is called, that he may receive God's blessing. This priceless reward should be effective with every one.

II. Reasons for the Conduct Advised (Verses 10-13)

"Good Days."—The apostle enforces his instruction with a citation from David. (Psalm 34: 12-16.) The text gives reasons for righteous living. With some changes in wording, Peter applies it to his own appeal for proper Christian conduct. All people desire for life to

bring them "good days"—prosperous and happy times. No one can escape all trouble, but the best possible, when all things are considered, will come to the one who will follow this method of living. Refusing to speak evil or hypocritical words against others will save possible regret and prevent many difficulties. Turning from evil deeds, striving to do good and pursuing peace, even when it seems to be fleeing from you, will bring peace of mind, and save friendships that might be lost. Our best days, when judged by temporal considerations, will be found in following divine directions.

The Lord's Favor.—Another reason for living righteously is that it will secure the favor of the Lord, which is confessedly a consideration of the utmost importance. His eyes are "upon the righteous." This means that his approval rests upon all who walk in his ways. His ears are ready to hear their prayers, and answer their requests in all things that are in keeping with his divine wisdom. It would not be best for us to have other prayers answered. No one can afford to travel life's way without God's approbation. This is certainly evident when we consider the other side of the question. "The face of the Lord is upon them that do evil." The face of the Lord could be "upon" one with approval or disapproval; but the contrast here shows it means his disapproval. Then in the Psalm, whence Peter takes the quotation, it says, "The face of Jehovah is *against* them that do evil." He knows their ways and condemns them; from him they can inherit no blessing.

The Favor of Men.—As a rule right living gives one more favor among men, even wicked men. In spite of misunderstandings and harsh criticisms, such a life is best, if only this world is considered. If evil befall us, the harm that men can do is only temporary; they cannot prevent our inheriting the blessing of eternal salvation. This feature is of inestimable value, and makes right living the only profitable way that is really worth while.

III. The Way to Have a Good Conscience (Verses 14-16)

Blessed in Doing Good.—Having shown that no earthly harm can prevent our inheriting an eternal blessing, if we are zealous of that which is good, the apostle next shows how to meet the sufferings that may come. Being fully assured that God's blessings are upon those who suffer unjustly (Matt. 5: 10-12), we need not be affected by the fear that evil men strive to produce in us. The righteous will not be unduly troubled if they make Jehovah the one they fear. (Isa. 8: 12, 13.) The reverence that Christians should always have for Jehovah should make them constantly fear that they may displease him with evil deeds. Such a fear is wholesome, and will prevent our fearing that men may make us miss the heavenly reward.

Sanctify Christ as Lord.—The simple meaning of "sanctify"—to set apart—is the best application in this instance. The idea that it means to be made *sinless* is here shown to be absurd. The command is for Christians to "sanctify" Christ, yet he never committed any sin from which to be sanctified. (Heb. 4: 15.) If Christ had committed sin, it would be impossible for Christians to sanctify him in such sense. Christians can set apart a place in their hearts for Christ to dwell as their Lord. From that place he can direct them in their struggles

in righteous living. Only in this way can Christians successfully overcome difficulties and sufferings that fall to their lot.

A Reason for Hope.—One who understands the inimitable teaching and matchless life of Jesus so well that he gives him a permanent place in his heart will be able to give a reason for the hope cherished. A Christian not able to do this loses much, both in satisfaction and usefulness. He falls far below the high plane upon which the Lord wants him to walk. The word "reason" here translates the Greek word from which we derive our word "apology." In the New Testament it means *defense*, not *excuse*, as it is now properly used. Christians should never be satisfied till able to make a reasonable defense of what they believe and practice.

A Good Conscience.—There will be two great benefits in maintaining a "good manner of life in Christ." 1. We will have the joy that a good conscience gives. Conscious of his approval, because in accord with his teaching, brings comfort and satisfaction, chief rewards in this life for righteous living. 2. We may be able to influence others for their good. Returning good for evil, or living far above that which evil people charge against us, sometimes puts to shame those who revile us. They might even turn to a favorable consideration of the gospel, and some might be saved. When such results follow, we are helping to accomplish the great purpose of Christ's sufferings and death—the salvation of men.

IV. Christ Our Example in Suffering (Verses 17, 18)

The Better Plan.—When a thing is possible, certain or unavoidable, then the only reasonable course is to provide to meet it. Preparation to meet it in a way to bring the most good to all concerned is the sensible thing to do. Peter has conceded the possibility of sufferings and mistreatment by advising that we try to turn such to good account with a good manner of life. He has also shown why we should not allow such to swerve us from the way of righteousness. Now he shows what is better for us, in the event that sufferings do come. If in God's providence evil is allowed to come, then we cannot escape it. We can see to it, however, that we do not have to suffer for our own evil-doing. Jesus promised a blessing when people speak evil of us "falsely." If the evil they speak against us is true, then we are not entitled to any blessing. In the preceding chapter Peter states the case thus: "For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." (1 Pet. 2: 20.) It is certainly better to have acceptance with God than to be unworthy of any praise. In this instance Peter is his own best commentator.

Christ Suffered.—The suffering of Christ here referred to is that upon the cross. That indescribable torture came about by sin. He suffered "for sins" is what the apostle says; not his own, but the sins of men. He was spotlessly righteous; he died to save the unrighteous, to bring sinners to God. If Christ died to pay the price of man's redemption—make salvation possible—we should be willing to suffer, if necessary, in trying to lead our fellow sinners to that salvation. When the twelve apostles were striving about who would be greatest in the kingdom, Jesus told them that a servant is not above his lord—

a statement of fact universally true. Then Christians should not be above imitating Christ. Meeting sufferings is the common lot of humanity; Christians are not excused.

"In the Flesh."—Peter again becomes his own interpreter. Here he says Christ was "put to death in the flesh"; in 1 Pet. 4: 1 he says that "Christ suffered in the flesh." He means that Christ was willing to suffer the pains of death to redeem sinners. He says for us to "arm" ourselves with the same mind; a willingness to die for the gospel, if necessary. Of course, this requires courage and unwavering faith. The reward though will be more than full compensation. Christ died in the flesh, but he was "made alive in the spirit." We can rejoice in spiritual life—eternal life—at last, regardless of all sufferings while in the flesh. Christ led the way through sufferings; we may follow.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Loving our neighbors as ourselves is one of the two great commands upon which all others rest. (Matt. 22: 35-40.) Loving brethren in Christ comes under that general law, and is doubtless our greatest manifestation of it. (Gal. 6: 10.)

2. Gaining the favor of God, doing good to others, and bringing to ourselves the most profitable life, are three of the best reasons that can be assigned for a righteous life. One who will not be influenced by them cannot be saved by gospel truth.

3. Conscience is a matter of education. It always approves what it has been made to accept as right. If wrongly educated, it will approve what is wrong. When one is correctly informed what God's word teaches, conscience will then condemn disobedience. No one has a good conscience who fails to heed its dictates; he is dishonest.

4. We may often fail for the time to attain to the high standard of a perfect example, but we should not be satisfied with anything less than a perfect one.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the subject of Christian adorning, from both a physical and spiritual viewpoint. (1 Pet. 3: 1-6; 1 Tim. 2: 8, 9.)

2. Explain the proper use of the tongue, using other passages than the one in our lesson text.

3. Show from other proof texts what part the mind plays in the service of God.

4. Point out the different kinds of conscience that are mentioned in the New Testament, showing which are approved.

5. Describe the salvation of Noah and his family, and explain why Peter referred to it. (1 Pet. 3: 20-22.)

6. State briefly Peter's instruction on Christian sufferings as found in 1 Peter 4: 14-19.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.

Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What are the chronological facts?

What are the Lesson Links?

What are the Lesson Settings?

I

What is meant by "one mind"?

What is Paul's expression on the subject?

What is the literal meaning of "humble-minded"?

To what is it applicable?

What results will follow, if the mind is right?

II

What quotation did Peter make, and why?
 How will right living produce "good days"?
 How does God view both bad and good?
 How does the Psalm read concerning the evil?
 In what way can evil men not harm us?

III

What did Jesus say about blessings for the good?

What did Isaiah say on the subject of fear?
 How can Christians sanctify Christ in their hearts?
 What is meant by "reason" for the hope?
 What benefits are in a good conscience?

IV

What is meant by "It is better"?
 Why refer to Christ's sufferings?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson XIII—March 31, 1935

REVIEW: LESSONS FROM THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF PETER

1 Pet. 5: 6-11; 2 Pet. 3: 14-18.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time;

7 Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you.

8 Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom withstand steadfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you.

11 To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight.

15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you:

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

17 Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness.

18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" (2 Pet. 3: 18.)

TIME.—First Peter written about A.D. 63; Second Peter about A.D. 64.

PLACE.—Probably Babylon.

PERSONS.—Peter and all other Christians.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 55: 6-13.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

March 25.	M.	Peter Urges Devotion (1 Pet. 5: 6-11)
March 26.	T.	Peter Urges Growth (2 Pet. 3: 12-18)
March 27.	W.	Peter Confesses Christ (Luke 9: 18-26)
March 28.	T.	Peter's Fall and Rise (Mark 14: 66-72)
March 29.	F.	Peter Preaches to Jews (Acts 2: 36-42)
March 30.	S.	Peter Preaches to Gentiles (Acts 15: 6-11)
March 31.	S.	"Seek ye the Lord" (Isa. 55: 6-13)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Humility Leads to Exaltation (Verses 6, 7).
 - II. Vigilance Necessary in Resisting the Adversary (Verses 8, 9).
 - III. God's Help in Perfecting Service Promised (Verses 10, 11).
 - IV. Benefits of God's Long-suffering (2 Pet. 3: 14-16).
 - V. Final Warning Against Error (Verses 17, 18).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The date of Peter's birth, as well as his age when called as a disciple of the Lord, is not known. As his death is variously estimated from A.D. 64-68, it is evident that his time of service in the Lord's kingdom was not far from thirty-five years. His letters, as we have already learned, were written near the end of his life. The dates of the various events, in which he was prominent, have been learned with approximate accuracy in the lessons covering them.

Lesson Links.—In the four gospel records we are told that Peter was a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. He was in Judea when he first became a disciple of Jesus, soon after the temptation. After this he returned to his fishing business, from which later Jesus called him to become his constant follower. As most of Jesus' mighty works and teaching occurred after this time, Peter had personal knowledge of them—a necessary requirement of being an apostle. (Acts 1: 21, 22.) He, with James and John, was with the Lord on special occasions. As in the case of the transfiguration, so with other events, he was an eyewitness of the things he records. (2 Pet. 1: 16.) He went through the terrifying experiences of Christ's arrest, trial, and crucifixion, when his faith wavered and the darkest blot was placed upon his character. Most of the time for the first twenty years of the church's history he stood in the forefront as its defender. His sermons on Pentecost and at the house of Cornelius being among the most valuable parts of the divine record. They not only deal with the vital matter of how to be saved, but are models of logic and appropriateness. For some providential reason, unknown to us, the record is silent concerning his labors for several years. Through his letters we are assured that his career was triumphantly completed with faithful service in the church till the end.

Lesson Settings.—Concerning this phase of our inquiry, nothing more need be said than that, in his letters, we have the mature thoughts of one with long experience in the things discussed. That, with his inspiration, makes his advice worthy of our most serious consideration. May we all give it the respectful hearing that it deserves!

LESSON NOTES

I. Humility Leads to Exaltation (Verses 6, 7)

"Therefore."—Genuine humility is a most admirable trait that finds approval with all good people. It is, therefore, a worth-while attainment, if only the esteem of men be considered. Its greatest

value, however, is in the fact that it gives us the favor of God. The word "therefore" refers to the preceding verse in which Peter gives two reasons why we should gird ourselves with humility. One is that "God resisteth the proud"; the other is that he "giveth grace to the humble." To do the former merits his disapproval; to do the latter brings us under his gracious favor, a blessing of which none can afford to be deprived. As the case stands, each one must decide for himself how he will appear to the heavenly Father.

"Mighty Hand of God."—This expression means the mighty power by which God does the things he purposes. (Ex. 6: 1; 13: 3.) Here it means his sovereign power to exalt the humble and debase the proud. In his most stinging denunciation of the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, Jesus gave utterance to this same truth, as follows: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted." (Matt. 23: 12.) Paul refers to Christ as our greatest example of being exalted because of humility. He humbled himself to the extent of "becoming obedient to death" on the cross. For which reason God exalted him to his own right hand, to be a Prince and Savior, to whom all must bow and confess him as Christ—God's anointed, and Lord—Ruler or King. (Phil. 2: 7-11; Acts 2: 33; 5: 31; 1 Pet. 3: 22.) If we are unwilling to humble ourselves under God's gracious providences, he will humiliate us under his judgments. Temporary earthly exaltations will not prevent such humiliation at the final judgment. Likewise any humiliations received in Christ's service here will not affect our exaltation at the judgment. As God's mighty power brought Israel out of Egypt, so his power will reward all "in due time," and that according to what each deserves. (2 Cor. 5: 10.)

"He Careth for You."—In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that his disciples should not be disturbed with anxiety about temporal things; that the Father knew their needs, and had made proper provision for them. He did not mean that we would be relieved of all responsibility in using the means at hand, but that we should not be disturbed with useless anxiety. Such anxiety does no good, but much harm. With honest efforts on our part, and unflinching trust in God, we should leave the final outcome to the provisions he has made for us. Paul has expressed the proper attitude to assume; namely, that all things will work for good to those who love the Lord, and are called "according to his purpose"—those who render faithful obedience to his word. (Rom. 8: 28.) Regardless of all earthly disappointments, this will be the final result.

II. Vigilance Necessary in Resisting the Adversary (Verses 8, 9)

Sober and Watchful.—The word "sober," though often applied to those not under the influence of intoxicating liquors, has the more general meaning of having all the faculties under proper control. The Greek word here is used in the New Testament, according to Thayer, only to mean, *be calm and collected in spirit, to be dispassionate, circumspect.* With such mental poise, one can always use his full strength in meeting opposition. People intoxicated in mind are exposed to all kinds of delusions, one of the devil's most effective devices against gospel truth. Watchfulness involves the idea of wakefulness; never to be napping or dead asleep to dangers. Unless we are both

sober and watchful our faith will become so weak that we shall not "be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one."

The Devil's Devices.—Peter says plainly that our adversary is the devil. Whatever the means or instruments that may be used, back of it all is the devil as instigator. Paul says we have to stand against the "wiles" of the devil. (Eph. 6: 11.) The Greek is *methodia*, meaning plan or method; used only in references to Satan's schemes and devices. Being plural it indicates he uses any method that will win. With subtlety he beguiles our senses and warps our judgment; as a pretended angel of light (2 Cor. 11: 14) he deceives us with falsehoods respecting the Bible and worship; he tries to destroy our fidelity to God by opposition and persecution. Peter mentions the latter, representing the devil, as a roaring lion, seeking to devour us; ready at every unguarded moment to bring us under his power. Being deceiver, without principle or honor, his schemes are presented in the most plausible and attractive manner. Only sober judgment and untiring vigilance will make us able to withstand such an adversary.

Steadfast in Faith.—To sober, watchful efforts against evil, we must add steadfastness in faith. Once our faith in God and Christ begins to waver, the battle is practically lost. From no such Christian will the devil flee, for he meets no resistance. In such cases the devil loses no opportunity to discredit the Bible, or ridicule the church. Those through whom this work is done are servants of the devil; and those who falter in the faith through such influences are being led by the devil. He designs to destroy the church through the fear and trembling of cold-hearted members. To encourage those addressed, Peter assured them that they did not stand alone in resisting the devil. Other brethren throughout the world were suffering through persecution. The same is still true. Many then won the victory; we can and should do the same.

III. God's Help in Perfecting Service Promised (Verses 10, 11)

Called to Glory.—As a final encouragement to steadfastness, Peter mentions two additional facts: 1. That the call to "eternal glory in Christ" comes from God; a sufficient guarantee that it is both good and dependable. 2. That in attaining it we are assured of God's assistance; a guarantee of success, if we are steadfast. This call is through the gospel (2 Thess. 2: 14), and leads first into the church (Eph. 3: 6), where both Jews and Gentiles are reconciled to God. (Eph. 2: 16.) As the church was purchased with Christ's blood (Acts 20: 28), only those within are protected by his blood, and through the services of the church draw nigh to God. The church is the divine road through which we attain to that eternal glory.

A Completed Work.—God not only calls us to attain eternal glory, but furnishes the means by which to accomplish the work. Failure is impossible except through our lack of appropriating the divine help offered. Those addressed by Peter were suffering by reason of persecutions. This was to last "a little while," after which God would enable them to be firmly established. A consciousness of God's approval, and an unconquerable determination to save themselves, would bring them through all trials successfully, and with more power to resist the adversary. The Greek word for "perfect" means literally to mend, repair, restore. God's ways, if faithfully followed, would

enable them to repair any harm done by the devil, and make them stronger in striving for eternal glory. All of which is just as true with us in the trials we must meet.

"To Him."—When their struggles were all ended and the victory won, they would want to praise God as the real source of their success. The same will be true with us; for we contend against the same adversary, though our trials may be different from theirs.

IV. Benefits of God's Long-suffering (2 Pet. 3: 14-16)

"Give Diligence."—Peter had just referred to the fact that they were looking for "new heavens and a new earth" when the Lord comes, and asked, "what manner of persons" they should be in view of that fact. Then he put his exhortation in the form of a command, justified by the fact that they were expecting the things mentioned to come to pass, and told them to be diligent—sustain a persistent effort—to be found acceptable when the Lord should come. He meant they could meet the Lord in peace, because with diligence they could appear spotless and blameless. The same command applies to us who are now nearly two thousand years nearer the time of his coming.

"Long-suffering Is Salvation."—The benevolent purpose in God's allowing men to live in spite of their sins is that they may by his goodness be led to repentance and be saved. This is the plain teaching of verse 9 of this chapter. God's long-suffering gives the time, but sinners must repent or be lost.

Paul's Testimony.—As Paul also had received miraculous wisdom, his testimony was equal in value with that of Peter. As Paul had written some of those addressed by Peter, it added some force to Peter's command for them to know there was no disagreement among the apostles on the subjects in hand. In Romans 2: 4 Paul mentions the subject of forbearance and long-suffering. In his epistles generally he discusses the coming of Christ and the judgment. The difficult passages mentioned do not pertain to the terms of salvation. The ignorant and unstable do wrest—torture—the scriptures, but sincere servants of Christ strive to learn the exact truth in his word. The Bible suffers at the hands of ignorant and unstable men, who accomplish their own destruction, but is not responsible for the false teaching they try to force from it.

V. Final Warning Against Error (Verses 17, 18)

"Beware."—Again the apostle reminds the brethren that they knew these things beforehand. He was then rehearsing what had probably been told them by those who had preached to them. The certainty of having to meet the Lord in judgment, and the value of the eternal glory they were expecting to receive, made it imperative that they not lose in the struggle. As Satan still sought to devour them, they needed constantly to beware lest they be caught with his errors, and fall from their steadfastness. Such warning was nonsense, unless the danger existed. If they could not be lost, Satan was foolishly wasting time and effort.

"Grace and Knowledge."—There are two great advantages in heeding this command to grow in grace and knowledge. More knowledge of his word makes us know more of his grace. "It is written" becomes our best means of defense against evil. With growth come joy and

satisfaction unknown to half-hearted Christians. We now bid Peter farewell, but trust that with him we may meet the Lord in peace when he comes.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Our eternal safety and happiness depend upon three things: Recognizing our own weakness, the constant danger of Satan's devices, and the safety of strict obedience to God's commands.

2. It is too late to become sober and wake up after the misfortune has already overtaken us. Only foolish men fail to provide for that which must inevitably come. Repentance then is vain.

3. No one need fear that the devil can prevent his final salvation, if he accepts the provision God has made, and remains "stedfast," unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

4. Like Paul we should be confident "that he who began a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1: 6.) The miracles in establishing Christianity are sufficient evidence that the promise of eternal glory will be fulfilled.

5. No one should take advantage of God's merciful long-suffering to protract his sins, or procrastinate in obeying the gospel. In view of the fact that all desire to be saved, such course is not just or honest.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss 1 Pet. 1: 3-6, noting carefully each subject mentioned and show how they are related to each other.

2. Discuss 1 Pet. 1: 22-25, pointing out the different things attributed to the word of the Lord.

3. Discuss 1 Pet. 2: 5-8, explaining the figure of speech used, and how its different parts are applied.

4. Discuss briefly the different items of instruction found in 1 Pet. 4: 15-18.

5. Discuss the Christian's calling and election as presented by Peter in 2 Pet. 1: 8-11.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.

Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

What are the chronological facts?

Give important events before the crucifixion.

What do we know of his labors after Pentecost?

What special value in his letters being written so late?

I

With whom does humility find approval?

What is meant by "mighty hand" of God?

What is taught on Christ's exaltation?

What was Jesus' teaching on God's care?

II

What does "sober" mean in this text?

What is involved in "watchfulness"?

How do the scriptures describe the devil and his schemes?

Why is it necessary to be steadfast in faith?

III

What additional facts to encourage does Peter state?

Through what means can eternal glory be received?

What will bring all through trials successfully?

IV

What command does Peter give?

What benevolent purpose in God's long-suffering?

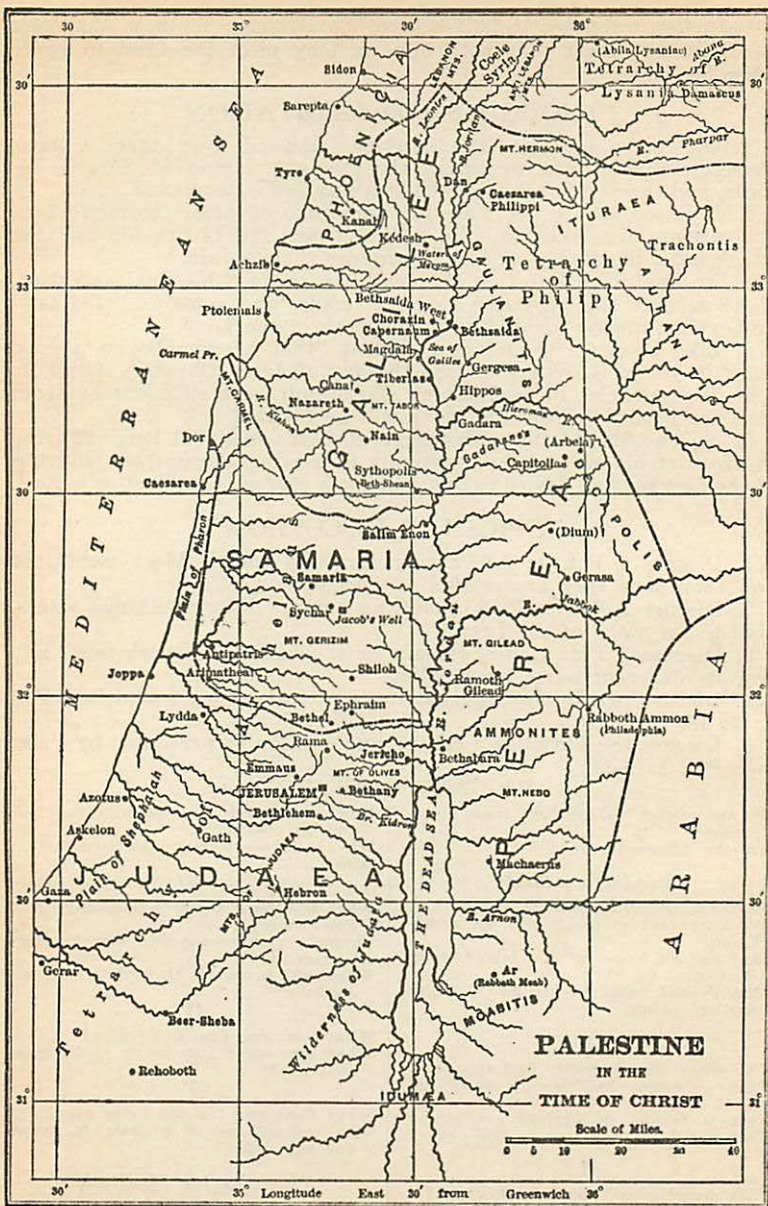
V

What final warning did Peter give?

What advantages in growth, in grace, and knowledge?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.



SECOND QUARTER

SOME GREAT CHRISTIAN TEACHING

AIM: *To help the student to understand and appreciate some of the great teachings of the Christian faith, and to apply these teachings to the life of today.*

Lesson I—April 7, 1935

THE HEAVENLY FATHER

John 14: 8-24.

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?

10 Believeest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works.

11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do.

15 If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever,

17 Even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me: because I live, ye shall live also.

20 In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.

22 Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him, Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him."* (Psalm 103: 13.)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Upper room in Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 3: 3-6; 4: 20-24.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 1.	M.	.....The Heavenly Father (John 14: 8-24)
April 2.	T.	.....The Chastening Father (Heb. 12: 5-11)
April 3.	W.	.....The Forgiving Father (Psalm 103: 1-13)

April 4.	T.	.....	The Omnipotent Father (Isa. 40: 27-31)
April 5.	F.	.....	The Providing Father (Matt. 6: 24-34)
April 6.	S.	.....	The Regenerating Father (John 3: 1-6)
April 7.	S.	.....	The Seeking Father (John 4: 20-26)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Jesus Reveals the Father (Verses 8-11).
 - II. Apostolic Works Also Reveal the Father (Verses 12-14).
 - III. Spiritual Endowments Reveal the Father (Verses 15-20).
 - IV. Obedience Brings the Father's Blessing (Verses 21-24).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Regarding the heavenly Father who is eternal, there is no such thing as chronology. His dealings with his creature, man, can be arranged with relative correctness as to time from the records found in the Bible. Our lesson text is from the gospel of John, the date of which is usually placed near the close of the first Christian century, not long before the death of the apostle. Internal evidence indicates that Matthew, Mark, and Luke were written before 70 A.D. This shows that John wrote his gospel probably thirty years later, or close to 90 A.D.

Lesson Links.—As this is the first lesson of this quarter, there are, to speak with exactness, no lesson links to cover the interval between lessons; but there are some introductory facts equally valuable in preparing us to properly appreciate our relationship to a divine Father. As man's existence is self-evident, the Bible account of his creation is the only satisfactory solution of the problem of his origin. This unquestionably makes his responsibility to his Creator the matter of first importance. That the Creator would have a fatherly interest in that made in his own image does not admit of doubt. In the relationship of Father, though disapproving wrongdoing, and chastising the disobedient, yet he would provide the best for his own children. His omniscience—infinite knowledge—guarantees that the provisions made for man are right and best; his omnipotence—infinite power—assures us that his purposes will be accomplished and his plans executed. It is this all-wise, all-powerful, loving, infinite Father that is the subject of this lesson.

Lesson Settings.—The text of this lesson was spoken on the night before the Lord's crucifixion. It is part of his last address to his apostles before that terrible event, and was delivered in the upper room after the Passover supper when only the apostles were present. His early departure made it an opportune occasion for him to impress upon them the necessity of depending upon the Father's mercy, help, and providence. Unless sustained by such reliance, they would have been poorly prepared for the severe trials that were sure to come.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jesus Reveals the Father (Verses 8-11)

Philip's Request.—Jesus had just told them of his departure to prepare a place for them, and that he was the way, truth, and life.

Then he said, if they had known him—properly understood his nature, purpose, and work—they would have known the Father also. This led Philip to request that the Father be shown to them. If they had fully appreciated the unity of nature existing between Jesus and God, they would have known the Father through the Son; they would have recognized the divine wisdom and power of God when they saw them manifested in the Son. A literal manifestation of the real person of the Father could have served no good purpose, even if it had been possible for them to endure it. The Jews at Mount Sinai had seen a most wonderful display of divine majesty, yet it did not protect them against disobedience.

Jesus' Reply.—Jesus mildly rebuked Philip's lack of understanding with a question that implied he should have known the Father from his long association with the Son. Philip knew Jesus as an individual, and had seen many manifestations of his miraculous power, but this could be easily understood as just a higher degree of power than that possessed by the prophets of old. His conception of a material kingdom, which would in a way revive their old one, prevented his fully understanding Jesus as God's incarnate Son. Philip would have quickly admitted, of course, that the miracles of Jesus were proof of God's power with him; in like manner, if he had fully comprehended Jesus as the Son, he would have seen in him all the manifestations of the Father that was necessary. It was a mystery to Philip how the common relationship of father and son could be applied to Jesus and God. The fact is still inexplicable, but the words and works of Jesus show the fact to be real.

Jesus' Question.—Ignoring the request to show them the Father, Jesus asked Philip if he believed that he was in the Father and the Father in him. Probably Philip understood Jesus to mean nothing more than to ask if he was acting in accord with the Father's will and by the Father's power. If he believed that, he would know that God would not grant Jesus miraculous power to confirm a falsehood. His assertion was, therefore, proof that he was God's Son. The assertion that the very words spoken were from God was evidently intended to add force to the claim that God was his Father.

The Final Proof.—In verse 11 Jesus required them to believe that he was "in the Father" on his statement of it, or else to believe what he said from the works he did. The Greek word for "believe" here is in the plural number, showing that he commanded all of them to believe. This indicates that Philip was only expressing the thought entertained by them all. His works could have been done only through the power granted by the Father. This they knew, and should have known that such miraculous manifestations were all the showing of the Father that was necessary. Paul declares that the "invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made." (Rom. 1: 20.) The invisible God is revealed through the manifestation of his power in the things he has done; a proof that infidelity has never yet overthrown.

II. Apostolic Works Also Reveal the Father (Verses 12-14)

"He That Believeeth."—Having just required them all to believe that he was in the Father, Jesus next assures them that the one who did

believe on him would be able to do greater works than he had done. Their doing these greater works depended on their believing, which shows that miraculous power could not be exercised by unbelievers, or by those who might lose their faith. (Matt. 14: 28-31.) The present tense of the word believe indicates continuous belief. This implies that it might fail; Peter's case, referred to above, is proof that it did fail sometimes. As the miracles of Jesus were proof of divine power, so would theirs be; hence, an additional way of revealing the Father.

"Greater Works."—This would be impossible if Jesus meant miracles of like kind with his own. None could be greater than the raising of Lazarus and the feeding of thousands with a few loaves and fishes. He must have meant that their miracles would be more extensive than his had been—reach more territory—or that their works would produce greater spiritual and moral revolutions. Both were true, in fact, for Jesus had made comparatively few disciples in three and a half years; they made three thousand in one day. His work was limited to the land of the Jews almost exclusively; theirs went to every nation in the lifetime of the apostles. (Col. 1: 23.)

Prayer to Be Answered.—They knew that the exercise of miraculous power could be only by the Father's will. The answer to their prayers would be the proof of God's care and protection. These answers were to be received because they asked in Jesus' name. This was also evidence of the unity of Father and Son; or, a further proof that Jesus in his works had actually manifested the Father.

III. Spiritual Endowments Reveal the Father (Verses 15-20)

"Another Comforter."—As unaided human minds were unable to do the work committed to the apostles, Jesus promised this divine help in the person of the Spirit of truth that would abide in them after he went away. The Greek word translated "comforter" literally means *one called to another's side* for the purpose of some kind of aid. The particular kind of aid depends on the general idea of the text. As other expressions that refer to this promise clearly show, it means a "guide" or "helper" in doing the work assigned them. (John 14: 26; 15: 26; 16: 13-15.) It is true that the apostles would be greatly "comforted" by the Spirit's work, but that was rather a result of his aiding and guiding them in their work. Plainly expressed, he was to do for them in Jesus' absence what he did for them when present. This divine guidance would confirm their conviction that he was really "in the Father."

"Whom the World Cannot Receive."—The Holy Spirit as a miraculous guide, the sense of the promise in this text, was not promised to the world, but to the apostles. The world did not then, neither does it now, receive the Spirit in that measure. When the promise made the apostles that night was fulfilled on Pentecost, the record shows that none but the apostles did receive it. To apply this promise to Christians generally is a clear perversion of the text. Christians receive much comfort from the teachings of the Spirit through the apostles, but do not receive the Spirit as they did. Even the miraculous power of the Spirit received by Cornelius (Acts 10: 44-46) came in a like manner—"fell upon" them—yet it was not for the same purpose. It did not bring to his remembrance what Jesus had said

and guide him into all truth, as it did the apostles; these things he learned from the apostles. (Acts 11: 14.) Cornelius received this power to show his right to enter the church. (Eph. 3: 5, 6.) There is no proof that the same power remained with Cornelius; the Spirit abode in the apostles. Jesus told them he would not leave them "desolate"—orphans—without a fatherly care. The same Spirit that was abiding *with* them because it was in him (John 3: 34), would, after his departure, abide *in* them. He warned them that even their prayers would not be answered unless they kept his commandments.

"In That Day."—The world had seen Jesus in the flesh, but in a little while they would be permitted to see him in that form no more. When the apostles received their higher conceptions of spiritual relationships, they would be able to see him spiritually throughout their apostolic service. In spirit they would be able to see him again as they saw him naturally in his own miracles. By the eye of faith, in their own miracles, they would see him as truly as when they heard him speak the words of power. This would renew again their conviction that he was "in the Father"—another revelation of the Father. "In that day," doubtless, refers to Pentecost, when the promised guide came to them, and their labors under his aid began. These were a continuous revelation of the Father.

IV. Obedience Brings the Father's Blessing (Verses 21-24)

Christ's Commandments.—Here Jesus lays down the evidence, or true test, of genuine love. This is a general truth, applicable to the apostles in their labor as here expressed by Jesus, and also applicable to all others. He assured them that one who manifested his love by keeping his commandments would be loved by both himself and the Father. In their labors under the Spirit's direction they had many opportunities to see Jesus again manifested through the miracles they were able to perform. Though Christians now cannot see those miracles repeated, they can joyously see the same manifestation through their faith in the words spoken by the Spirit. But, like the apostles, we must prove our love true by obedience to Christ's commands.

Judas' Question.—John explains that this was not the Judas who betrayed him. He had probably already left the room. (John 13: 30.) He is referred to by Luke as the son of James. (Luke 6: 16.) The statement that the world would see him no more was bewildering to them, because they thought only of a temporal kingdom. They wondered what change he could make that the very world he was to rule could not see him.

Jesus' Reply.—He did not give Judas any direct answer, for he knew it would not be long till that would all be plain through the Spirit's revelations to them. Till that time it was useless to offer explanations that they could not fully understand. The Spirit's leadings would gradually supplant their Jewish errors with gospel facts. The history shows that some of their Jewish notions were so deep-rooted that many years were required to prepare them for the changes made necessary by a spiritual kingdom. Jesus wisely repeated his promise that both he and the Father would be with the one who loved him. By a positive and negative statement he declared that, if one's love was genuine, he would keep his commandments. This declaration he assured them was not simply his, but the Father's also.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. All things beyond the limits of man's natural faculties must, if understood, be described through the medium of things that we can see. We can only think of God through the attributes of man. Heaven and the intermediate state of the righteous are seen through the most happy states and conditions known here.

2. If the apostles, in doing their great works, were required to maintain a live, active faith, nothing less will be required of us in our humbler sphere of activity. To lose faith is to lose the soul.

3. Even supernatural guidance did not excuse them from personal responsibility. What they were mentally or physically able to do was left to them. To us the truth is revealed; it is our business to obey. This principle runs through the entire Bible.

4. In God's plans each class occupies its place and does its own work. Claiming the power of the apostles is little better than claiming to be apostles; both are false claims.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the knowledge and wisdom of the heavenly Father. (Psalm 147: 5; Prov. 3: 19; Dan. 2: 20; Psalm 139: 1-11; Matt. 6: 8.)

2. Give circumstances to illustrate the Father's divine power; such circumstances as could only be by divine power.

3. Discuss the reasons David assigned for desiring to bless Jehovah. (Psalm 103: 1-5.)

4. How does the Bible describe the loving kindness of Jehovah? (Psalm 103: 10-14; 1 Pet. 3: 20; 2 Pet. 3: 9.)

5. How does Isaiah describe God's watchfulness over both bad and good? (Isa. 40: 27-31.)

6. Give Paul's reasonings upon the necessity of God's chastisements. (Heb. 12: 5-11.) Show how his reasonings harmonize with the general topic of this lesson.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Give the Lesson Settings.

I

What request was made by Philip?
What led him to make it?
How did Jesus reply?
Why did he fail to understand what Jesus meant?
What question did Jesus ask?
What is indicated by the plural of the word "believe"?

II

What assurance did Jesus give them?

What did he mean by "greater works"?
What statement did he make on prayer?

III

Why say "another" comforter?
What does the original word for "comforter" mean?
What is shown to be the meaning here?
To whom was this promise of the "comforter" made?
What is meant by "in that day"?

IV

What does Jesus say is the proof of our love for him?
What Judas was this?
What kind of reply did Jesus make?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson II—April 14, 1935

CHRIST THE SAVIOR

John 3: 14-17; Rom. 5: 6-10; Phil. 2: 5-11.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;

15 That whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

17 For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him.

6 For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him.

10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

5 Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped,

7 But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men;

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name;

10 That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth,

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3: 16.)

TIME.—A.D. 28 to 54.

PLACES.—Perea, Rome, and Philippi.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Paul, and all Christians.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 53: 4-9.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 8.	M.	.....	The Saving Christ (John 3: 14-21)
April 9.	T.	.....	The Justifying Christ (Rom. 5: 6-10)
April 10.	W.	.....	The Humble Christ (Phil. 2: 5-11)
April 11.	T.	.....	The Inspiring Christ (2 Tim. 1: 6-14)
April 12.	F.	.....	The Healing Christ (Acts 3: 1-10)
April 13.	S.	.....	The Seeking Christ (Luke 15: 1-7)
April 14.	S.	.....	The Suffering Christ (Isa. 53: 1-9)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. Christ the Gift of God's Matchless Love (John 3: 14-17).

II. Christ Died for Sinners (Rom. 5: 6-8).

III. Final Salvation Through Christ (Rom. 5: 9, 10).

- IV. Christ Our Great Example (Phil. 2: 5-8).
 V. Christ's Glorious Exaltation (Phil. 2: 9-11).
 Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The first division of this lesson takes us back from the Feast of the Passover, A.D. 30, when Jesus was crucified, to the first Passover after his baptism, A.D. 27, making three years' interval between the Lord's two lessons. The second and third divisions are from Paul's letter to the church at Rome, and probably were written in A.D. 57, making a period of thirty years between these divisions and the first one. The last two are from Paul's Philippian letter, and were written probably in A.D. 62, five years after the second and third, and thirty-five years after the first.

Lesson Links.—To give the links between our last lesson and the first division of this one would be to trace backward the entire public ministry of Jesus. To connect our last four divisions with our last lesson would require a review of most of Paul's missionary labors. The important events in neither could be even briefly sketched in the space allowed here. It is enough to say that Jesus' personal ministry furnishes ample proof that he was worthy to become the Father's priceless gift in saving the world. Paul's general teaching and personal life are sufficient proof that the apostles, and Christians in their day, fully accepted Christ as the only mediator between God and man, and his blood as the only meritorious cause of man's redemption. The details that are so vividly presented in the various accounts given of Christ's life and the apostolic labors leave no doubt as to the vital position occupied by him as the world's Savior.

Lesson Settings.—The words of Jesus in our lesson text were spoken in Jerusalem at the time of his conversation with Nicodemus. (John 3: 1-21.) This was the occasion of his visit to the Passover, the first one in his public ministry. (John 2: 23-25.) Paul's words, taken from the Roman letter, were written in Corinth; those in Philippians were written while in prison in Rome. Jerusalem, Corinth, and Rome were widely separated places, and the times of the different texts are far apart, but they harmonize perfectly in proof of the subject.

LESSON NOTES

I. Christ the Gift of God's Matchless Love (John 3: 14-17)

A Typical Event.—The circumstance of physical healing through the brazen serpent, recorded in Num. 21: 4-9, must be accepted as having typical significance. The application that Jesus makes of it in this text fixes that matter, and also shows his endorsement of the Old Testament scriptures. He does the same thing in his reference to Jonah and the whale (Matt. 12: 40) to illustrate his own resurrection. On two other occasions he refers to his crucifixion as a lifting up. (John 8: 28; 12: 32, 33.) As the only one who had come from heaven (verse 13), he alone could give the proper explanation of "heavenly things." His applications of Jewish scriptures must, therefore, be accepted. The people bitten by the fiery serpents had to look at a brass imitation of one to be healed. The looking was their part; the healing was God's part. The former is necessary to the latter. Men,

dying with sin, have to turn to Christ, who, "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8: 3), was lifted upon the cross to obtain for man remission of sins (Matt. 26: 28). The turning to Christ is man's part; the remission of sins is God's part. The former is necessary to secure the latter.

God's Love.—That supreme love was necessary to effect man's salvation is an undoubted truth. The indefinite particle *so* is explained to include all that was necessary for God to give Jesus, his only begotten Son, a sacrifice for sin. Further than this, Jesus does not attempt to explain the depth of God's love; evidently man is incapable of understanding more. The purpose of this manifestation of love is definitely expressed. It was to enable men to be saved. No wonder John, in writing later, should exclaim: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God." (1 John 3: 1.)

"Whosoever Believeth."—Receiving eternal life is made to depend upon believing on Christ. This cannot be justly construed to mean that the mental act of accepting the truth that Jesus is the Christ is all that is necessary; or, that one is saved by belief only. Neither repentance, confession, nor baptism is mentioned in this verse, yet salvation is made to depend on each of them. (Luke 13: 3; Rom. 10: 9, 10; Mark 16:16.) When belief stands alone in the text, if it is acceptable, it is "perfect" faith. James shows that faith is made perfect by works. (James 2: 20-23.) Since one gets credit for his faith when he obeys, faith standing alone implies all acts of obedience that are made necessary to salvation. The Revised Version says (verse 15) that the believer "may in him have eternal life." That means that the one who believes that Jesus is the Christ must come "into" him to be saved. Paul plainly says we are baptized "into Christ." (Rom. 6: 3.) Besides all this, the word *believeth* is present tense, which indicates he must continue to believe. Ultimate salvation depends upon our not making shipwreck of the faith. Those who believe what Jesus and Paul say must be baptized into Christ. The purpose of Christ's coming was to save men, not to judge or condemn them, though those who reject him must of necessity be condemned finally.

II. Christ Died for Sinners (Rom. 5: 6-8)

"In Due Season."—The statement that Christ died "in due season" means that his death occurred at the precise time that God had determined would be best for the world. It means that God's plans are carried out systematically just as divinely purposed. When the proper time came in the scheme of human redemption, Christ died. After four thousand years of vain efforts, man was no nearer the solution of the problem of his destiny than when he was driven out of the garden. Still unable, after all these centuries, to save himself was, and is, an unanswerable argument that man must accept the sufficient Savior that God has sent. Any effort to evade this conclusion deserves condemnation.

Greatness of Divine Love.—Perhaps our truest conception of God's power is realized when it is contrasted with man's weakness; so the purity of his motives and justice of his acts are best understood when contrasted with man's weakness and sins. God's love for man is infinitely above man's love for his fellow man. Paul here draws an

illustration from the conduct of men. Some one might be found ready to die for a genuinely good man; hardly would one be willing to die for merely a just man; but Christ died for the ungodly, thereby giving us an exhibition of love unknown among men.

"Commendeth His Own Love."—The supremely unselfish character of God's love is its matchless commendation. The unity of purpose of Father and Son in saving men makes the commendation equally applicable to the love of both. Human wisdom cannot distinguish between the love that prompted God to give his Son and the love that prompted that Son to die for sinners. He died in our behalf; died that we might live, spiritually here, eternally hereafter.

III. Final Salvation Through Christ (Rom. 5: 9, 10)

Saved from Wrath.—The distinction between primary salvation—pardon of sins—and ultimate salvation at the judgment is made very clear in the scriptural records. Peter's words (Acts 2: 38) are an example of the former; Paul's words (Phil. 2: 12) illustrate the latter. That Christ has made propitiation for the sins of both classes is the plain declaration of John. (1 John 2: 2.) In our text Paul reasons that our justification through his blood is a guarantee that our ultimate salvation is certain to be secured through him; or, that the ultimate purpose of his death cannot fail. If we are now enjoying justification through his blood, "much more" is it certain that our delivery from God's wrath will be accomplished by him; meaning that eternal punishment will be averted.

Another Argument.—Another similar argument is based on the fact of the reconciliation, with a repetition of the idea that Christ died for his enemies. If enemies were reconciled through Christ's death, it is more sure that those who become friends by obedience (John 15: 14) will be saved finally through him. This argument is based on the known fact that fathers are more solicitous for their children than they are for their enemies. Paul further states that through Christ's death "we were reconciled." The love of God and Christ for sinners forbids our saying *they* were reconciled to man; they needed no such change, *sinners* do. This is the exact state of the case as Paul presents it in 2 Cor. 5: 18-20.

"By His Life."—Reconciled through his blood required his death, but his resurrection to life was necessary to consummate the entire scheme of redemption. Without it, Paul reasons, there could be no resurrection for us, and, consequently, no final salvation. (1 Cor. 15: 12-18.) Besides the necessity of his resurrection to complete the plan of salvation, he is represented as our advocate who makes intercession for us at God's right hand. (1 John 2: 1; Heb. 7: 25.) The word "advocate" here is from the same Greek word translated "comforter" in John 14: 16, and it means that Christ will plead our case at the bar of heaven.

IV. Christ Our Great Example (Phil. 2: 5-8)

"Have This Mind."—Those who do not have the mind-willingness to do a thing are failures from the start. The Jews finished the walls of Jerusalem because they had a "mind to work." (Neh. 4: 6.) Paul says we serve the law of God "with the mind." (Rom. 7: 25.) Jesus

said: "And ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." (John 5: 40.) The final invitation is: "He that will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22: 17.) A stubborn will cannot fail to keep sinners from losing the salvation offered through Christ.

Things Sacrificed.—To accomplish the work of saving men, Jesus had to come to the earth. To do so, he had to forsake his divine glories for the time of his stay here. These, of course, cannot be comprehended by human minds, but there is much satisfaction in meditating on Paul's description of them. That he was "in the form of God" is the plain statement of the text. How much that means we do not know. Being equal with God is variously understood by scholars. Elsewhere Paul declares him to have been in the "image of the invisible God." (Col. 1: 15-17.) He was in the creation with God, and in some way must have the same nature. Whatever divine prerogatives he possessed with the Father were not allowed to prevent his becoming the mediator between God and man.

Humility.—He not only left his heavenly glory, but, in human form, brought himself to man's level in the realm of temptations. (Heb. 2: 17, 18.) He not only took the form of man, but the place of a bond servant, and died the most shameful death. Such a depth of humility from such a height of glory had never been seen before, nor can it ever occur again.

V. Christ's Glorious Exaltation (Verses 9-11)

"Wherefore."—Christ's humility, exemplified in his sacrifices and sufferings, is given as the reason for his glorious exaltation. This principle was taught by Jesus in the words, "And he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 14: 11.) His life and death show that he faultlessly practiced his own teaching. Otherwise his teaching would have been laughed to scorn. The same consistent practice is necessary in our case. (James 4: 10; 1 Pet. 5: 6.)

To What Exalted?—"To the name which is above every name," says the text. Verse 10 shows that "Jesus" is that name. It means Savior, expressive of a position and honor that are not given to any other of God's creatures. Man could not become his own savior; none of the angelic beings were worthy of such honor. (Heb. 1: 4, 5.) God's only Son was able to meet the demands necessary to this glorious distinction.

All Must Bow.—This exaltation carries the right to rule. To Jesus every knee must bow, every tongue must confess. This includes all intelligent creatures in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. The last expression doubtless means the intermediate state, called Hades. Paul expresses the same thought in Eph. 1: 20, 21, saying that the authority of Jesus is above all. Peter says that "angels and authorities" are now made subject to him. (1 Pet. 3: 22.) Submission to Christ's authority will glorify God who sent him. We must confess him here or be lost; waiting till the judgment will be too late, as the wicked will realize when banished from God's presence.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Regarding the death of Christ, Adam Clarke said: "It would have been inconsistent with the wisdom of God to have appointed a

sacrifice *greater* in itself, or *less* in its merits, than what the urgent necessities of the case required."

2. No difference how faithful service we may render to Christ, we can never show too strongly our gratitude for his unselfish love.

3. Our eternal safety rests upon leaving our case in the hands of our advocate at God's right hand. He who has power to save us from our sins has wisdom enough to direct our paths in the way to life.

4. If Christ had not been willing to make the sacrifice, man could not be saved; in like manner, if man is not willing to obey Christ, he cannot be saved. He is the author of salvation to them that believe and obey. (Mark 16: 16; Heb. 5: 9.)

5. The way to show our love for Christ is to humbly and gladly obey his commands. Only in this way can we know we have the life that is in him. (1 John 2: 3-5.)

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give a brief review of Christ's conversation with Nicodemus. (John 3: 1-13.) What position did Nicodemus occupy?

2. Give a full description of the incident concerning the fiery serpents. (Num. 21: 4-9.)

3. Discuss Christ's movements immediately after the conversation with Nicodemus. (John 3: 22-30.)

4. Discuss Paul's argument on reconciliation as found in Eph. 2: 13-16. On the "one body" compare Eph. 1: 22, 23.

5. Discuss Isa. 53: 7-9, and show what use was made of his language by a New Testament preacher.

6. Show from Matt. 21: 33-43 why God rejected the Jews, no longer allowing them to remain his people.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What typical illustration did Jesus use?
What points in it are typical?
How much is contained in the word "so"?
How else does John describe God's love?
Show that Jesus did not mean salvation by faith alone.

II

What is meant by "in due season"?
What shows man's inability to save himself?

What illustration does Paul use?
What is the greatest commendation of God's love?

III

What distinction is made regarding salvation?
What is Paul's argument here?
What is meant by being saved "by his life"?

IV

What exhortation does Paul give?
Describe the sacrifices Christ made.
Describe his humility.

V

To what was Christ exalted?
How extensive is his authority?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson III—April 21, 1935

THE FUTURE LIFE

Luke 24: 1-12; John 14: 1-6.

1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, while they were perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel:

5 And as they were affrighted and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

7 Saying that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And they remembered his words,

9 And returned from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest.

10 Now they were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James: and the other women with them told these things unto the apostles.

11 And these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved them.

12 But Peter arose, and ran unto the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths by themselves; and he departed to his home, wondering at that which was come to pass.

1 Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

4 And whither I go, ye know the way.

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live."* (John 11: 25.)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 23: 1-5.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 15.	M.	-----	The Future Life (John 14: 1-6)
April 16.	T.	-----	The Master of Life (Luke 24: 1-12)
April 17.	W.	-----	The Judge of Life (Matt. 25: 31-46)
April 18.	T.	-----	The Assurance of Life (1 Cor. 15: 12-23)
April 19.	F.	-----	The Victory of Life (1 Cor. 15: 50-58)
April 20.	S.	-----	The Hope of Life (1 Thess. 4: 13-18)
April 21.	S.	-----	The Shepherd of Life (Psalm 23: 1-6)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. Women Visit the Tomb at Dawn (Verses 1-3).

II. First Announcement of the Resurrection (Verses 4-7).

III. The Resurrection Reported to the Eleven (Verses 8-12).

IV. Mansions in the Father's House Promised (John 14: 1-3).

V. Jesus the Way, Truth, and Life (Verses 4-6).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The future life—entrance into the prepared mansions—will begin after the return of Christ and the judgment. As Jesus said that no one but the Father knew the day or hour of his coming (Matt. 24: 33-36), no definite length of time can be fixed that will end with the resurrection and his return. Our chronological notes refer only to the time when the incidents described in the texts occurred. Those recorded by Luke began early on the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection. The words recorded by John were spoken by Jesus Thursday night, a few hours before his arrest. The last two divisions of our lesson were spoken at the same time. This shows that these two divisions were spoken three days before the first three from Luke's record.

Lesson Links.—During this interval occurred some of the greatest events in the history of the world; incidents vital to the claims of Christ as the promised Messiah and King, and equally vital to the salvation of mankind. His agonizing prayers in Gethsemane, his arrest, unfair trial, unjust condemnation and cruel death, are all events that human words cannot adequately describe. They followed each other in such rapid succession that doubtless all who saw them knew not what to say or do. About all one can do is to simply state the facts as recorded, and leave each to his imagination to picture to himself, if he can, the significance of those events involving the salvation of a lost world.

Lesson Settings.—As the death of Jesus occurred about 3 P.M. (Matt. 27: 45-50), his burial was hurried to prevent his body remaining on the cross on the Sabbath. (John 19: 31.) Joseph and Nicodemus brought a large amount of spices and perfumes to anoint the body. (John 19: 38-40.) The women disciples saw where the tomb was, and returned to prepare spices and ointments, but evidently the coming of the Sabbath prevented their taking them to the tomb that day. (Luke 23: 55, 56.) Early the first day of the week was as soon as they could come without violating the Sabbath law. The first division of the lesson describes their visit to the tomb.

LESSON NOTES

I. Women Visit the Tomb at Dawn (Verses 1-3)

Their Purpose.—The Jewish mind was so fixed on the idea of a temporal kingdom that even the disciples could not accept at face value the Savior's promise of his resurrection on the third day. Their purpose evidently was to show proper respect to Jesus by anointing his body, according to their custom. Probably it was God's providence that ordered their coming that they might be witnesses of things vital to the proof that he was raised. The future life—the topic of this lesson—depended upon his resurrection, as Paul argues at length in 1 Cor. 15: 3-20. If a fact, it still had to be proved by competent witnesses in possession of relevant testimony. The appearance of the

women at the tomb about sunrise would be one link in the chain of circumstances leading to the evidence required. Their being the first at the tomb, and finding it empty on the very day he said he would arise, would make it necessary that the absence of the body be accounted for some way. Their direct testimony that the body was not in the tomb could not be impeached. The fact that they came to anoint the body, expecting to find it in the tomb, shows that they stated facts with no intention to deceive. That the tomb was empty at the right time for his promised resurrection is unquestionable.

"The Stone Rolled Away."—Luke states the simple fact that the women found the stone rolled away when they arrived. Mark says it was great, and that the women were reasoning among themselves on the way as to how they would get the stone removed. (Mark 16: 3, 4.) This is another proof that they were not expecting Jesus to arise. Finding the stone already moved, their conclusion probably was the same as that expressed by Mary Magdalene in telling Peter and John the tomb was empty. She said: "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him." (John 20: 2.) As they viewed the matter, there was nothing to prompt them to misrepresent any facts. They were disappointed that the body of their great Teacher was not there, but not disturbed enough to prevent their seeing the situation as it was. Their testimony as to the disappearance of the body must be accepted as the exact truth.

The Number.—John mentions only Mary Magdalene as being at the tomb, but describes her actions in detail. (John 20: 1-18.) He does not deny that others were there, or say Mary Magdalene only. Mark mentions Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, as the women who brought the spices to anoint the body. (Mark 16: 1.) Matthew names the two Marys, but says nothing about the anointing. Luke mentions these two, also Joanna and other women. (Verse 10.) There could not have been less than five altogether, but more, so far as the text is concerned. In any event, there were enough to conform to the proverbial rule of "two or three" witnesses in establishing facts.

II. First Announcement of the Resurrection (Verses 4-7)

By Angels.—The women were amazed and perplexed at finding the body gone. Apparently they were discussing the matter among themselves, when a heavenly messenger made to them the first announcement that Jesus had been raised, as he had said. Mary Magdalene was probably one of the first to see the tomb was empty, but, in her haste to take word to the apostles, had left the tomb before the announcement was made. (John 20: 1, 2.) Matthew refers to the one who made the announcement as "an angel of the Lord." (Matt. 28: 2-5.) Mark refers to him as "a young man." (Mark 16: 5.) Luke mentions that there were two, and calls them "men." (Verse 4.) Matthew and Mark probably refer to the one who made the announcement, saying nothing about the presence of the other. The sum of the testimony is this: There were two heavenly messengers, called "angels," that had the general appearance of men, arrayed in dazzling garments, and one of them made the announcement.

The Angels' Question.—The angels' question, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" was inexplicable to the women till the resurrection was declared. They knew that in a tomb was not the place to seek for those alive in the flesh. The question referred to the body of Jesus, for that was what had been placed in the tomb, and what the women were expecting to find. Jesus' soul or spirit had gone to Hades, while his body remained in the tomb. (Acts 2: 30, 31.) James says the "body apart from the spirit is dead" (James 2: 26), not that the spirit is dead, either in or out of the body. That the spirit does not die as the body does is clear from Jesus' statement that Jehovah is "not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him." (Luke 20: 37, 38.) Before making this statement Jesus said that Moses had called the Lord "the God of Abraham," thus proving the possibility of the resurrection. Since the body of Abraham had been dead for centuries when Moses made the statement, and God is not the God of the dead, then Abraham's spirit was alive. This is exactly what Jesus teaches in the story of Lazarus and the rich man. (Luke 16: 23-31.) According to the application Jesus made of Moses' words, those who deny the spirit lives after the body dies logically are forced to deny the possibility of the resurrection. This would also destroy all hope of a future life.

Paul's Illustration.—Paul illustrates the *how* of the resurrection by nature's law regarding grain. (1 Cor. 15: 35-38.) The shell or body of the grain dies, but not the germ of life in it. If that died, there would be no springing up—resurrection—of the grain. If man's spirit goes out of existence when the body dies (the position of all materialists), then man's identity is lost, and a resurrection is out of the question. God might create an entirely different man, but he would deserve neither rewards nor punishments due the man who ceased to exist. The only logical thing for those who advocate the nonexistence of the spirit after death is to take their place with the ancient Sadducees and deny the resurrection. But this blots out the possibility of a future life, and must be rejected.

"The Third Day."—Jesus had promised to rise on the third day. If the resurrection had not occurred on that day, he would have been discredited both as God's Son and a prophet. His resurrection had to be "according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. 15: 3.) Paul meant that the resurrection had to occur as Jesus predicted. That prediction had probably been written before Paul's words just quoted. At any rate, it became a part of the scriptures.

III. The Resurrection Reported to the Eleven (Verses 8-12)

"Remembered His Words."—The angels' words reminded them of what Jesus had promised. Being convinced that the promise had been fulfilled, they left the tomb to carry the glad news to the sorrowing disciples. Of course, they did not realize then how much the resurrection meant, but they could sincerely rejoice in the restoration of their beloved Teacher. The angels directed them to take the message to the disciples (Mark 16: 7), which their joy would have prompted them to do anyway.

"They Disbelieved."—The women were convinced by the angels' presence and words; the apostles had neither. Under the influence of a wrong conception of the kingdom, their natural impulse was to

reject the women's story as "idle talk." As Jesus had not redeemed Israel (Luke 24: 21) in the manner they expected, their hope was for the time destroyed. Their first thought was that the women had in some way become so excited as to lose their reason. Their disbelief under the circumstances was complimentary rather than otherwise. It shows that they were not to be carried away with reports that lacked proper evidence as proof. It certainly shows the Bible writers were not trying to propagate a known falsehood. If so, they probably would have had the apostles believe the report without question.

Peter at the Tomb.—From John 20: 1-10 we learn that another disciple—supposed to be John—was with Peter at the tomb. As already suggested, Mary Magdalene had probably left the tomb before the angels announced the resurrection to the other women. They had left before Peter and John arrived. After viewing the tomb, they returned to their homes. After that, Jesus revealed himself to Mary. (John 20: 19-24.)

IV. Mansions in the Father's House Promised (John 14: 1-3)

"Believe Also in Me."—Jesus had just told them that he would leave them in a little while, and go where they could not come then. (John 13: 33.) Lest they might become too discouraged by trouble and sorrow he urged them to believe in him as they had believed in the Father; that is, he wanted them to be so assured by his works that they would trust his promises just as they claimed to trust God. The belief of his resurrection and a future home with the Father would enable them to meet all troubles successfully.

"The Father's House."—Mansions in the Father's house meant that the saved will abide with God in eternity. He assured them that, if this was not true, he would have plainly said so. He further consoled them with the promise that he would return for them that they might dwell with him. How much that promise means to God's children can never be known fully till we all meet at the judgment to receive our due reward. (1 John 3: 2, 3.) There is unbounded satisfaction in knowing that Jesus will make the proper preparation.

V. Jesus the Way, Truth, and Life (Verses 4-6)

"Ye Know the Way."—Referring to his departure to prepare their final home, he said: "Ye know the way." Evidently he did not mean that they understood perfectly then all about man's salvation; the facts show they did not. But his works and life had been such as to unmistakably connect him with the Father; hence, his departure was a return to the Father. Thomas, however, thought he referred to a journey to some place unknown to them. This brought a further explanation, but no direct reference to Thomas' misunderstanding.

Only Through Christ.—By declaring himself the way, truth, and life, Jesus meant that those, who would have a place in the mansions he would prepare, must walk in the way he directed—do his commands, accept what he said as truth. That nothing else would do is perfectly clear from his words: "No one cometh unto the Father, but by me." If this means anything, it shows that sinners must enter the church, which Christ purchased with his blood (Acts 20: 28), to be worthy of the home he has gone to prepare. No weak sentiment-

talism must be allowed to deny that basic truth upon which the future life depends.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. When we view difficulties from a human standpoint, they often appear impossible; and with human power alone may be, but divine power is able to do what divine wisdom decides should be done. The women found the stone already rolled away.

2. An ignorance of God's truth often leads people to do many unreasonable as well as unscriptural things. If the women had understood and believed he would arise, they would not have looked in the tomb expecting to find him.

3. Jesus does expect us to believe without evidence. He asked the disciples then to believe for the works' sake. It is stubbornness to refuse to consider evidence, or disbelieve when proof is ample.

4. Man's spiritual nature, above the animals, is proof that there will be a future existence. This eternal life, according to the words of Jesus, will be in mansions in God's house.

5. When Jesus says no man can come to the Father except through him, it is rebellion against divine authority to say his words are untrue.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss Paul's argument on the resurrection in 1 Cor. 15: 12-17.
2. Discuss Paul's statements on the resurrection as found in 1 Thess. 4: 13-18. What classes are described in this text?
3. Discuss the different features of the resurrection as given in Rev. 20: 11-15.
4. Discuss the details of the visit of Mary Magdalene to the tomb. (John 20: 1-10.)
5. Describe in full the details of the Lord's appearance to Mary. (John 20: 11-18.)
6. Discuss the first meeting of Jesus with the apostles. (John 20: 19-25.) Give a full description.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

Why did the disciples fail to believe Jesus would rise?
Why prepare to anoint his body?
Why did they come to the tomb so early in the morning?
What statements are made respecting the stone?
What was their first conclusion?
What women were at the tomb?

II

Describe the beings by whom the announcement was made.
Show how all the statements are true.

What question did the angels ask?

Give Paul's illustration on the resurrection.

Why necessary that Jesus arise on the third day?

III

What is meant by "remembered his words"?

Why did the disciples disbelieve the women?

IV

What did Jesus mean by saying, "Believe also in me"?

How much is included in the promise of "mansions"?

V

What did he mean by the words, "Ye know the way"?

How is he the truth, way, and life?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these meditations.

Lesson IV—April 28, 1935

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Psalm 19: 7-14; 2 Tim. 3: 14-17.

- 7 The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul:
The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple.
- 8 The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.
- 9 The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever:
The ordinances of Jehovah are true, and righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb.
- 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned:
In keeping them there is great reward.
- 12 Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults.
- 13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins;
Let them not have dominion over me:
Then shall I be upright,
And I shall be clear from great transgression.
- 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in thy sight,
O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer.
- 14 But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;
- 15 And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
- 16 Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness:
- 17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Oh how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.*” (Psalm 119: 97.)

TIME.—David lived from 1092 B.C. to 1023 B.C.; it is supposed that he wrote this Psalm, but the exact date cannot be determined. Paul wrote Second Timothy about A.D. 66.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Rome.

PERSONS.—David and Paul.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 119: 105-112.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 22.	M.	.....	The Inspiration of the Bible (2 Tim. 3: 14-17)
April 23.	T.	.....	The Worth of the Bible (Psalm 19: 7-14)
April 24.	W.	.....	The Reading of the Bible (Neh. 8: 1-8)
April 25.	T.	.....	The Study of the Bible (Acts 17: 10-15)
April 26.	F.	.....	The Understanding of the Bible (Luke 24: 25-32)
April 27.	S.	.....	The Theme of the Bible (Heb. 1: 1-4)
April 28.	S.	.....	The Guidance of the Bible (Psalm 119: 105-112)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Perfection of Jehovah's Law (Verses 7-9).
 - II. The Great Value of Jehovah's Law (Verses 10, 11).
 - III. David Prays to Be Delivered from Evil (Verses 12-14).
 - IV. The Scriptures Make Men Wise (2 Tim. 3: 14, 15).
 - V. The Scriptures a Complete Guide (Verses 16, 17).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Our first lesson text is from Psalms, which is a collection of poetical instruction. David is supposed to be the author of about seventy of them, of which the nineteenth is one. These were probably written between 1050 and 1000 B.C. The exact date of the nineteenth is not known. Our second text is from Paul's second letter to Timothy. It is certain from 2 Tim. 4: 6-8 that this book was written while Paul was a prisoner, and just a short time before his execution as a martyr for the truth. This makes it certain that it was his second imprisonment at Rome, and places the date as A.D. 67 or 68. This puts about eleven centuries between the writing of these two texts.

Lesson Links.—During the long interval just mentioned, most of the Bible record was made. The five books of Moses—Genesis to Deuteronomy—of course, were written some five centuries before David's day; but the books recording Israel's history as a kingdom, their prophecies and poetry, came in this period. Their apostasies, Babylonian captivity and restoration, and four centuries without a ruling king, are outstanding facts of their history during this time. As Second Timothy is the last known epistle of Paul, we know that all his other letters, with all the other New Testament books except some or all of John's writings, were written before the words used in this lesson. In this latter part of the long period between the lesson texts, we have the life of Christ, establishment of the church, and some thirty-five years of its history.

Lesson Settings.—David, as a king, was a natural leader of men; but he was also in the first rank as a poet and musician. When he viewed the material heavens (Psalm 19: 1-6), he saw the handiwork of God, and back of it all God's natural law *impressed* upon all inanimate objects. Comprehending this harmonious system of natural law as from God, his mind turned to God's revealed law as *expressed* to his intelligent creatures for their guidance in their higher relationships. Such a grasp of cause and effect naturally led to the words of our text. Paul, a prisoner for the gospel, sitting in the shadows of death itself, was especially fitted to speak of the perfection of God's word, and the consolation it brings to faithful saints.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Perfection of Jehovah's Law (Verses 7-9)

Jehovah's Law.—Jehovah, not man, is the author of the law that David describes; for that reason he could confidently affirm that it is perfect. As a fountain cannot rise above its source, so man's laws cannot be more dependable than their authors. Men are not free from mistakes and faults; their laws must of necessity be defective, regardless of all good intentions.

Application of Words.—The principle here stated by David is applicable to all of God's laws, in all covenants, at all times. He was not discussing some specific law that was then binding upon God's people, though his words would apply to any that was then binding. But God's laws preceding David's day, and all of his laws since that time, carry the stamp of perfection, because of their author. David was dealing with a characteristic of all God's laws. A perfect God

giving an imperfect law is an obvious contradiction. Of course, David did not mean that any one of God's laws was perfect for every purpose; this would be equally contrary to reason. Each was, or is, perfect for the object in view. The Mosaic law was imperfect so far as absolute remission of sins is concerned (Heb. 10: 1-3), but perfect as a "tutor" to bring the Jews to Christ. (Gal. 3: 24.)

Characteristics of God's Laws.—The basic characteristic of all God's laws, as just indicated, is that they are perfectly designed to accomplish the purpose in view. Therefore, they are *perfect* in themselves. The testimony—probably referring more particularly to promises and prophecies—is *sure*; that is, all that God promises can be depended upon with the same certainty as though it were already fulfilled. The precepts are *right*. They are right in themselves, and lead to right conduct. The commandment, anything he requires man to do, is *pure*. Any and all God's commandments lead to pure conduct, and in themselves are free from any taint of corruption. The ordinances of God are *true*. The sum of all this is that God's law in any age, in all of its features, is of just the exact character that will make man's life the most happy in time and eternity.

Effect of God's Laws.—The general effect of obeying God's laws is that it will restore the soul, bring it into harmony with God's will, by eliminating all faults. It will make "wise the simple"—those with a single or determined purpose—to know God's will. It will bring rejoicing to the heart, because it adds the promise of great rewards for service rendered. The law being free from any defects, it will give the true light upon all phases of duty, and accurately show the destiny of the faithful. We are sure David was right in saying the "fear of Jehovah is *clean, enduring for ever.*"

II. The Great Value of Jehovah's Law (Verses 10, 11)

Better Than Gold.—Gold is considered the most valuable of all precious metals; hence, man's great desire to obtain all of it that is possible. This makes one of the best material substances to illustrate the value of God's word. In Psalm 119: 127 David said that he loved God's commandments "above gold, yea, above fine gold." That is, gold in its refined state, its most valuable form. In the same chapter, verse 72, he said: "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." Money in any amount can purchase only things that may be used in this life; obedience to God's commandments will give an eternal reward. David's estimate was correct; God's words are better than all fine gold combined.

Sweeter Than Honey.—Honey has always been considered the standard by which all sweets are to be compared. Probably it is most delightfully sweet just when it is taken from the comb, which doubtless explains David's expression, "droppings of the honeycomb." He meant that God's word brought his heart more joy than the best honey could satisfy his taste for pure sweets. Better comparisons could not be found to show the value in God's commandments, when they are honestly obeyed. Regardless of David's personal sins, his reasoning is correct, and doubtless represented the sincere desire of his heart. His conclusion is a legitimate deduction from his reasonings; namely, that in keeping God's commandments "there is great reward." Com-

mon sense cannot endorse the idea of rejecting or neglecting such laws.

III. David Prays to Be Delivered from Evil (Verses 12-14)

"Hidden Faults."—David asked, "Who can discern his errors?" That is, who can understand his mistakes and sins, either as to their dangerous nature or disastrous results? The answer is, no one who has not been properly instructed in God's teaching. It not only points out sin, but warns against it. Paul said: "Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Rom. 7: 7.) Such knowledge is necessary to protect us, for we are continually exposed to temptations. The most dangerous sins are "hidden faults," which, because they are hidden from men, are most easily committed. We should realize that all hidden things must be brought into judgment before God (Eccles. 12: 14), and hiding them from men is not protection at last.

Presumptuous Sins.—David's prayer to be kept back from "presumptuous sins" is most worthy of imitation, because of the deadly nature of such sins. The margin gives "proud" instead of presumptuous, which is the literal meaning of the original word. It carries the idea of impudence or arrogancy (Isa. 13: 11), a lack of piety (Psalm 119: 21). Such sins are defined through Moses as doing things with "a high hand," and despising the commandments of God. (Num. 15: 30, 31, R. V.) This definition is endorsed by Paul (Heb. 10: 26-28), where he calls it sinning "wilfully." Both Paul and Moses say that kind of sin is fatal. Those who, with knowledge of God's will, defiantly despise his words, have put themselves beyond the reach of truth. They cannot be renewed to repentance (Heb. 6: 4-6); hence, cannot be saved. If such a spirit does not get dominion over us, we may be upright and free from the "great transgression"—committing sins from which we cannot be brought to repentance.

Heart and Mouth.—From sin in general, David turns to the heart as the fountain from which all sins flow, and the mouth as the medium for committing one of the most dangerous. The tongue, James tells us, is the member of the body most difficult to control. (James 3: 2-12.) A little flame starts a great conflagration, so the tongue, a little member, starts great revolutions and endless troubles. Ability to control the tongue is of the greatest importance. David closes his praise of God's word with a burst of thanksgiving to Jehovah as his rock, strength, and redeemer.

IV. The Scriptures Make Men Wise (2 Tim. 3: 14, 15)

Things Learned.—Even the truth learned is of no practical value unless the learner abides in it by practicing what it teaches. Paul had just said that evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But Christians should abide in the truth, growing in grace. (2 Pet. 3: 18.) Probably the most forcible passage on this subject of learning from God's word is the following from Moses: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest

up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes." (Deut. 6: 6-8.) Paul reminded Timothy that he had received this gospel truth from him, an apostle, and with evidence to assure him of its truth.

"*Sacred Scriptures.*"—Timothy learned the gospel truth before any of the New Testament was written; hence, the sacred scriptures he had known from childhood were the writings of the Old Testament. His knowledge of the Jewish scriptures was evidently due to the fact that his mother was a Jewess, and pious. This probably explains the fact that she accepted the gospel early, at least before Timothy, as is indicated in 2 Tim. 1: 5. This knowledge of the prophecies that foretold of the coming Messiah prepared pious Jews, when honest consideration was given the testimony to Jesus as the Christ, to become believers. Paul said such knowledge would make wise unto salvation through faith "which is in Christ Jesus."

V. The Scriptures a Complete Guide (Verses 16, 17)

"*Every Scripture.*"—Bible students should note the difference in translation here between the King James and the Revised Version. The former says all scripture is inspired of God; the latter says every scripture inspired of God is profitable. Taking the word "scripture" in its literal sense of something written, it is not true that all scripture is inspired of God; much writing is evil in its nature. If by the scriptures we mean the Bible—a popular use of the term—then all scripture is inspired of God. The Revised Version, doubtless, gives the correct idea of the passage, and a translation not subject to the criticism just mentioned.

Profitable.—Inspired scriptures are useful, beneficial, and enable men to be successful in the service of God. Paul mentions four particulars in which they are profitable. For *teaching*. This would include instruction respecting all duties, to both saints and sinners. All either need to know to be a success in their religious exercises can be found in the scriptures. For *reproof*. This means that man will find his sins and faults described and condemned in clear terms. For *correction*. This will include the specific commands by which his sins may be stopped and his mistakes corrected. For *instruction which is in righteousness*. The original word for instruction carries the idea of training, which involves not only instruction, but also discipline. Here it evidently means such instruction and discipline as will lead to greater development in righteousness.

The Object.—The object is to make men desirous of serving God, completely furnished for every good work. This means that the plan of salvation has been thoroughly revealed, and the individual requirements necessary to be saved clearly expressed. A curse is pronounced upon men or angels that dare to preach anything else. (Gal. 1: 6-10.)

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. However wise and effective human laws may be, they lack the element of perfection; they cannot save the soul. None are eternally safe who do not take God's word as the standard of all conduct.

2. Human estimates are often wrong. We consider things most important that are temporal, and perish with their using. True wisdom places most value upon things eternal that are imperishable.

3. We should realize that pure water cannot come from an impure source. We should keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it come the issues vital to life and salvation. From the "abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matt. 12: 34.)

4. Wise Christian parents begin religious instruction with their children as soon as instruction of any kind can be given. Tender plants must have the most careful culture, if they make the best growth.

5. The best work is done by those who know how. It takes proper instruction to be properly prepared. The man of God has the wealth of divine wisdom in the Bible, but it must be studied. (2 Tim. 2: 15.)

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the instruction that Moses gave the people before his death, as found in Deut. 8: 1-20.

2. Discuss the different items in the instruction that Jehovah gave Joshua just before entering the land of Canaan. (Josh. 1: 5-9.)

3. Describe the circumstances connected with Ezra's reading the book of the law of Moses. (Neh. 1-8.)

4. Discuss the question of adding to and taking from the word of God. Find passages in both Old and New Testaments as proof.

5. Discuss the necessity of obedience to God's word, using other proof texts than those referred to in this lesson.

6. Discuss the standard of man's judgment in the last day. (Psalm 96: 13; John 12: 48; Rev. 20: 12.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

Why could David confidently affirm the law's perfection?
How extensively can David's words be applied?
How harmonize Hebrews 10: 1-3 with this idea?
Repeat the characteristics of God's laws.
What effects does David mention?

II

Why did David use gold as an illustration?
What other references does he make to gold?
Explain the comparison with honey.

III

What question did David ask?
What statement does Paul make on the knowledge of sin?
What are the ideas in the word "pre-sumptuous"?
What did Moses and Paul say on this subject?
What is the teaching of James on the tongue?

IV

How should Christians differ from evil men?
What did Moses say on teaching and learning God's word?

V

How do the translations differ on this verse?
In what ways are the scriptures profitable?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson V—May 5, 1935

SIN, REPENTANCE, AND FAITH

Luke 15: 11-24.

- 11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:
 12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.
 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living.
 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want.
 15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.
 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.
 17 But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger!
 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight:
 19 I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.
 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.
 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son.
 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:
 23 And bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry:
 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
 (1 John 1: 9.)

TIME.—Jesus spoke the parable of the prodigal son about three months before his crucifixion, A.D. 30.

PLACE.—The parable was spoken in Perea.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his apostles, publicans and sinners, scribes and Pharisees.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 51: 1-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

April 29.	M.	-----	The Beginning of Sin (Gen. 3: 1-8)
April 30.	T.	-----	The Folly of Sin (Luke 15: 11-24)
May 1.	W.	-----	The Universality of Sin (Rom. 3: 9-20)
May 2.	T.	-----	The Depravity of Sin (Isa. 1: 10-17)
May 3.	F.	-----	The Repentance of Sin (Acts 2: 37-42)
May 4.	S.	-----	The Forgiveness of Sin (Mark 2: 1-12)
May 5.	S.	-----	The Confession of Sin (Psalm 51: 1-10)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Prodigal Leaves His Father's House (Verses 11-13).
 - II. The Prodigal Reduced to Want (Verses 14-16).
 - III. The Prodigal "Came to Himself" (Verse 17).
 - IV. The Prodigal's Repentance (Verses 18, 19).
 - V. The Prodigal Returns to His Father's House (Verses 20-24).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Jesus attended the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem late in December, A.D. 29. After the feast he retired to Perea, east of the Jordan, where this parable was spoken, being one of the group recorded in Luke 15-17. This was near the first of A.D. 30, and about three months before his crucifixion.

Lesson Links.—Our lesson links this time refer to the logical relationship of the subjects included in this lesson, rather than events that transpired between it and last lesson. The tragic story of how sin originated, and what it did for the world, is briefly related in Gen. 3: 1-24. The disastrous consequences that it has brought to this world are clear to all from the sad and unfortunate experiences that come to all sooner or later. That some remedy had to be provided for sin's disaster is evident, or else the whole human family was doomed. The provisions made include, among other things, the two duties of faith and repentance. If there had been no sin, there could have been no need for repentance from it. The former logically requires the latter. Repentance from sin, by its very nature, prevents the disaster that otherwise would certainly come. As repentance presupposes the existence of sin, if that is the subject under consideration, so it also presupposes a knowledge of that sin, and a belief that it does exist. Without a conviction that one has sinned, and a belief that dangerous consequences will follow, there would be nothing to prompt the repentance from it. The three parts of our subject are, therefore, interlocked in their relationship to each other, and logically stand in the order given.

Lesson Settings.—After the Feast of Dedication the Jews sought to stone Jesus, and he sought quiet and protection in a section east of the Jordan. (John 10: 39, 40.) After raising Lazarus, they again tried to have him killed, and he retired to Ephraim. (John 11: 47-54.) Between these two events, when temporarily protected from their wrath, he spoke the group of parables of which our lesson is one. At that time he was laboring with the deep realization that he must soon become subject to the demands of their bitterest hatred.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Prodigal Leaves His Father's House (Verses 11-13)

The Occasion.—In this chapter there are three parables all referring to something lost and found. They must, therefore, teach the same general lesson, which their contents indicate as God's mercy to sinners. They were spoken as a rebuke to the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, who were murmuring because Jesus associated with and taught publicans and sinners. (Verses 1, 2.)

The Application.—A parable and its application should be kept distinct, for the reason that they are not alike in every particular, though there may be many points of similarity. Some think the two sons represent Jews and Gentiles, the bitter feeling of the elder son against the younger indicating the hatred of the Jews for the Gentiles. This view is in conflict with the reason for speaking the parable as shown in the first two verses. The question of receiving the Gentiles into the church had not been raised at the time the parable was spoken. Another view is that it represents the backsliding Christian returning

to fellowship again. This is more plausible, since both were sons in the father's household. While the principle of the lesson applies to such returns to God, it seems more natural to give it a wider application, and let it indicate the willingness of God to receive all penitent sinners coming to him, whatever their former state may have been. It must be admitted that such is true in fact, and no violence can be done the text to allow it that broad application.

Asked for His Portion.—It should be noted that the father did not drive the son away, or ask him to leave; he went of his own accord. So do all who turn from God's teaching to the ways of sin. Asking for his portion shows his desire to do as he pleased, because he was confident he was able to manage his own affairs without his father's help. This is much the same feeling entertained by those wanting to go in the ways of sin; they feel they can get along without God's assistance. The elder son was nominally religious; the younger was clearly irreligious. The irreligious never feel their need of God. Their road is certain to lead to disaster. "Riotous living"—the literal translation being *living unsavingly*—means he was a reckless and profligate spender. Verse thirty indicates that he was an immoral spender also. Those who declare themselves independent of God are often moral spendthrifts.

II. The Prodigal Reduced to Want (Verses 14-16)

"Spent All."—Profligate living will dissipate large fortunes in an incredibly short time; small amounts are gone quickly. The spendthrift in money and morals soon finds himself without money, morals, or reputation for good. This most distressing natural state is a fitting illustration of the spiritual want of those who depart from God. In their reckless use of temporal means, they lose not only their wealth, but their honor and God's favor. Such dire want is a most distressing condition. The famine coming when he had spent all he had made his situation still worse.

Joined a Citizen.—Those in desperate straits resort to desperate means. He joined himself to a citizen of the country to get relief. This is similar to the sinner who, finding his resources about exhausted and himself slipping downward, will plunge into greater sins in a vain effort to regain his vanishing pleasures. When the sense of self-respect has gone, and one joins himself completely to Satan, nothing but ruin awaits him. This will be true whether the sinner is one who has lost the purity of childhood, but has never been a Christian, or has apostatized from his place in God's family. The only hope in either case is for one to come to himself before the spirit of defiance against God gets into his heart. With that, he is beyond the power of the gospel to bring him to repentance.

No Relief.—Forced to ask help from a citizen, he was sent to feed swine. Swine being unclean animals according to the law, there was no more disgusting task that could have been required of a Jew. Besides this, he was reduced to extreme hunger, and no one was ready to give him anything to eat. His hunger was such that he longingly desired to eat the husks that the swine did eat. His condition surely is a vivid picture of the degradation and despair to which a life out of harmony with God's law will lead men. That such an one is lost while in that state is beyond question.

III. The Prodigal "Came to Himself" (Verse 17)

When?—He did not fully realize his deplorable condition till poverty and threatened starvation forced him to see that his course meant absolute ruin. Neither do sinners realize the danger of sins till they are led to see that they must inevitably lead to disaster. He had no trouble whatever in contrasting the blessings in his father's house, once enjoyed, with his present hunger and want. Just a bit of common sense would enable him to see and admit that some change had to be made quickly. That his former state was infinitely better than his present was a necessary conclusion. It is the exact conclusion that all sinners must reach when they view with candor the difference between a state of sin and a former state of righteousness.

How?—Some things are matters of personal knowledge; others are in the realm of faith. The prodigal knew perfectly what his condition was, and the probable results, unless a change was effected. He also knew just as well what his situation was in his father's house. This was all a matter of personal experience. He needed no outside influence, spiritual or otherwise, to make him understand all that. All this was sufficient to show the necessity of a change of conduct. Likewise the sinner can see the natural evils that will follow sinful practices, if he persists in them; he can also see how much more desirable is a good moral life. Honesty and good sense are all that is required for that purpose. The responsibility here rests on man.

What?—What was involved in the prodigal coming to himself? Primarily, of course, he realized the necessity of changing his condition. This resulted from comparing his present state with something better. That better state was returning to his father's approval and protection. From his knowledge of his father's love and mercy, he believed he would be received. It was his faith that prompted his resolve to return. The sinner has unlimited evidences of the heavenly Father's love and mercy; he has his direct promise in his word that sinners may return, are invited to return, and are entreated to return. With this faith in God's promise to forgive, he determines to return; without this faith, the determination would not be made. This natural order of action cannot be changed, because human nature requires it that way.

IV. The Prodigal's Repentance (Verses 18, 19)

"I Will."—The text does not say that the prodigal repented, but the facts show that he did. The expression, "I will," is a brief, clear, and exact definition of repentance. The Greek word means a "change of mind," which clearly refers to or implies a change of conduct. It therefore refers to an exercise of the will power; in strictness, a *determination* to do or cease to do something. Whether the thing determined is right or wrong depends on the nature of the thing; the exercise of the mind is just the same in either case. Strictly speaking, then, repentance is just as correctly applied to things right as those wrong; otherwise it could not be said that God repents. (Jer. 18: 1-10.) As applied to sinners, it usually refers to a decision to stop sin.

What Produces Repentance?—The prodigal "came to himself" before he determined to return to his father. This realization of his deplorable condition, and his faith in his father's love and mercy, led to the

determination. In like manner there are two things that lead a sinner to repentance. One is "godly sorrow." (2 Cor. 7: 10.) This is produced by our belief that our sins are offensive to God, and this from our knowledge of what God says. The other is the "goodness of God." (Rom. 2: 4.) This we believe from what his word tells us God has done for us and will do for us. The two direct causes that produce repentance are effects of reading God's word, our faith in his promises. A positive proof that faith precedes repentance when both refer to the same matter.

What Result Follows.—The popular statement, "quit your meanness," is not repentance; it is one of the results that follow genuine repentance. Whatever change of conduct is required by the nature of the thing one changes his mind about is the result of repentance, and follows it as effect follows cause in all cases.

V. The Prodigal Returns to His Father's House (Verses 20-24)

Arose and Came.—The coming to his father's house was just as necessary as the determination to do so which preceded it; in fact, a determination that did not produce that result would have been worthless. So a repentance that does not produce a reformation in conduct, and bring the individual into the church, is of no value; will not lead to pardon of sins, or a restoration of fellowship, if one is a backslider. For the alien sinner this coming means to confess Christ and be baptized (Rom. 10: 10; Mark 16: 16); for the backslider it means he must confess his sins and pray for pardon (1 John 1: 9; Acts 8: 22).

The Father Met Him.—The father's willingness to have the lost boy return is indicated by his running to meet him as he drew near. We cannot see the heavenly Father with our natural eyes, but we are assured by his word that he wants us to return to him, and that his love is toward us in every effort we make to reach the church, which is his house. (1 Tim. 3: 15.)

The Confession.—The prodigal determined to return to his father and frankly confess the true facts. He knew he had sinned, and there could be no gain in denying it, or trying to deceive his father. The only sensible and right thing to do was to confess it. The father was not glad his son had sinned, but he was glad he was willing to confess his sin, and reform. God knows the sins of men, and he is displeased with them, but he is pleased with the fact that men repent and come to him. Sins should be admitted, not apologized for.

The Reception.—The prodigal was received into the home, given the best robe, and a feast made to celebrate his return. The sinner that repents and comes to God is assured of God's gracious approval, the pardon of sins, rejoicing in heaven (Luke 15: 7), and joy in his own heart—blessings that no one can afford not to have.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Trying to do the impossible is doomed to failure from the start. Jeremiah said: "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10: 23.) Without God's help man cannot reach heaven.
2. The bad results from sinful practices cannot be removed by en-

gaging in more and greater evils. The only way to avoid a bad destination is to leave the road that leads to it.

3. Real facts in one's life are often most startling when honestly considered. A candid review of conduct in the light of what God's word says will bring genuinely sincere people to repentance.

4. Godly sorrow leads to repentance, which produces reformation and joy; the sorrow of the world leads to regret, remorse, and despair. Wise people do the former; foolish people do the latter.

5. Those who believe in God and his promises, repent of their sins and come to him, will surely be received. Jesus said: "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6: 37.) It should be remembered that men go into sin of their own accord; they must come to God in the same way.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the origin of sin as found in the following passages: Gen. 3: 1-6; John 8: 42-44.

2. Give Isaiah's description of the sinful condition of the Israelites in his day. (Isa. 1: 1-9.)

3. Discuss the general terms upon which God promised the Jews that his favor would be with them. (Isa. 1: 18-20.)

4. Point out the reasons why so many Israelites were not permitted to enter the land of Canaan. (Heb. 3: 7 to 4: 11.)

5. Give in detail Jeremiah's discussion on the necessity of repentance. (Jer. 18: 5-12.)

6. Show the necessity of repentance from passages of scripture found in the book of Acts.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.

Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.

How are the Lesson Links applied in this lesson?

Show how the different features of the lesson are related.

Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What parables are found in this chapter?

What was the occasion for their utterance?

What different applications have been offered?

What request did the prodigal make?

What is meant by "riotous living"?

II

Describe the result of his conduct.

What is indicated in his joining himself to a citizen?

Describe the final result of his course.

III

When did he come to himself?

How did he come to that condition?

What was involved in his coming to himself?

How does all this show the order of faith and repentance?

IV

Define the term "repentance."

What produces repentance?

What result follows it?

V

What did the prodigal do after repenting?

How did the father treat him?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson VI—May 12, 1935

THE CHURCH

Acts 2: 41-45; Eph. 4: 1-7, 11-16.

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.

1 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

7 But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

11 And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error;

15 But speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ;

16 From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another."* (Rom. 12: 5.)

TIME.—For Acts about A.D. 30; for Ephesians about A.D. 63.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Ephesus.

PERSONS.—Holy Spirit, Luke, Paul, and all Christians.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Eph. 2: 11-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 6.	M.	-----	The Foundation of the Church (Matt. 16: 13-20)
May 7.	T.	-----	The Power of the Church (Acts 2: 41-47)
May 8.	W.	-----	The Head of the Church (Eph. 1: 15-23)
May 9.	T.	-----	The Unity of the Church (Eph. 4: 1-7)
May 10.	F.	-----	The Work of the Church (Rom. 12: 4-8)
May 11.	S.	-----	The Growth of the Church (Mark 4: 26-32)
May 12.	S.	-----	The Ideal of the Church (Eph. 2: 11-22)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. The Church Established in Jerusalem (Acts 2: 41-45).

II. Unity of the Church (Eph. 4: 1-3).

- III. The Unity of the Church Explained (Verses 4-7).
IV. Organization of the Church (Verse 11).
V. Purpose of Spiritual Gifts in the Church (Verses 12-16).
Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The first scripture text of this lesson refers to the early days of the congregation established in Jerusalem. This occurred on the first Pentecost after the crucifixion of Christ, A.D. 30. The language was written by Luke something more than thirty years after the time mentioned. The text from Ephesians was written probably about A.D. 61, which was not far from the time Luke wrote Acts. Both statements were made after many congregations had been established, and had learned by experience the many difficulties that confront them in carrying on the Lord's work.

Lesson Links.—Preceding the actual beginning of the church, there was a period of more than three years of preparatory work. This was begun by John the Baptist and carried on by Christ personally, and through chosen servants, called apostles. Such work is always necessary in the establishment of new institutions. Sentiment has to be created in favor of the change, and workers provided to extend and maintain it. This is always more difficult when the new order has to be set up in opposition to an old. The new covenant was distinct from the old, but was to be made with the same people. This required abolishing the old before the new could become effective. (Heb. 8: 8-13; 10: 1-10.) Only two or three days before his death Jesus told them that by securing his crucifixion the Jews would forfeit their right to be God's people, and the kingdom would pass to another nation. (Matt. 21: 33-43.) Many things regarding the nature of the church, its work and worship, were gradually revealed as occasion required in the lifetime of the apostles. The lessons from Paul come in that class.

Lesson Settings.—Jesus had commanded the apostles to remain in Jerusalem till they received spiritual endowment from heaven. This he had explained would be the Holy Spirit in the baptismal form to be a guide. This promise was fulfilled on Pentecost, and the preaching and great ingathering had already occurred. The small company of disciples had been increased by about three thousand. The promised work having been thus successfully begun, the church as an institution started, the matters of a real, working congregation were before the inspired apostles at the time fixed by this lesson.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Church Established in Jerusalem (Acts 2: 41-45)

The Disciples.—The word "disciple," meaning a learner, was the usual designation of those who followed Jesus during his personal ministry. (John 4: 2; Matt. 10: 1, 2.) They learned of him and followed him as individuals, not as a religious body or organization. The word "church," from a Greek term that means *called out*, is applied to the followers of Christ, because they are members of a religious institution that is separate and distinct from all other in-

stitutions. Once the English word church (Acts 7: 38) refers to the Israelites in the wilderness, because they were God's assembly; but in all other examples in the New Testament it refers either to the church as an institution, or to congregations of it. Matt. 16: 18 and 1 Cor. 1: 1 are examples of the two applications of the word. The church is also called Christ's body, and he is called the head. (Col. 1: 18, 24.) Of course, it did not begin as his body till he became the head. This did not occur till after his ascension to heaven. (Eph. 1: 19-23.)

"Added Unto Them."—When the apostles received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, in the manner Jesus had promised (Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 5-8), the disciples of Christ became his spiritual body, the church; as an institution, its independent existence began. Until other congregations were formed that was the church, as the body of Christ, and as a congregation also. As his individual disciples who had been following personally, they became his body or church; those converted that day were added to them. The "them" to whom the converts were added that day became Christ's body—church—when the Spirit came; hence, to be "added to them," meant they became members of the church. They heard the word preached, were pierced in the heart (were made believers), were required to repent and be baptized for remission of sins. They obeyed the commands. From that day to this there has been no other way offered to gospel subjects by which they may be saved. From verse 47 we learn that the same work went on from day to day.

The Worship.—The four items of worship in which that congregation continued steadfastly were the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. These four by direct statement or implication give us all the features of the worship of the public assembly, and involve also the items of private devotions. The complimentary thing here is that Luke says they were *steadfast* in these items of worship. What a blessing to the church, if modern congregations would imitate the Jerusalem congregation in that matter! Our neglect along that line is shamefully evident.

Miracles and Charity.—Luke tells us that many miracles were wrought by the apostles, and that great fear came upon the church. The difficulties confronting the new institution, and the danger of persecution, made caring for the poor of the church a grave matter. They met the situation with unusually liberal contributions to a common fund to be distributed as any had need. It was a voluntary matter, as Acts 5: 1-6 shows, but also a wonderful example of liberality, and should inspire present-day saints to greater efforts in that line.

II. Unity of the Church (Eph. 4: 1-3)

"Walk Worthily."—One of the most important things to consider and remember about the church is that it is a divine institution. It did not originate by men meeting in conventions, passing resolutions, and writing a constitution and laws to be submitted to the people for their ratification; that is the way human kingdoms begin, but not a divine one. The apostles authorized to do the work began to move in their "official" capacity when the Holy Spirit miraculously took charge of their minds. The New Testament, which was the result of their inspiration, is the divine law by which congregations can carry on their work. The church, as an institution, is perfect, and members

should always be mindful of that fact and walk worthily of it. The calling is too high to allow unworthy conduct.

Necessary Traits.—Walking worthily of membership in the only perfect institution on earth requires that we recognize our own needs and weaknesses, and also the rights and privileges of fellow members. The traits mentioned by Paul in this verse are lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, and love. Proper exercise of these characteristics will make us the best possible servants of Christ, and bring the most honor to the church. There could be no greater motives to induce one to the cultivation of these traits.

"Unity of the Spirit."—As the Lord established one church, all members are of necessity in a common bond, and should live in peace in that relationship. This bond of peace is a unity required by the Spirit of God; that is, Christians are required to walk as the Holy Spirit teaches. As the teaching applies to all alike, obedience to it will bring that unity which is necessary in the one body. No other course will do it. The apostle said they should give diligence—labor earnestly—to maintain that unity. As the church is universal, receiving into its fold people of all nations, as well as those in the same nation with their peculiarities, the work of maintaining the unity of the Spirit is one of the most important and most difficult problems that congregations have to solve. It requires wise and tactful handling, and almost continuous consideration.

III. The Unity of the Church Explained (Verses 4-7)

Theory and Practice.—In considering the church as an institution, or congregations as a manifestation of it, we should always remember the possible conflict between theory and practice. When the church is considered as a divine institution, the laws of induction and the terms of acceptable service must be accepted as faultless. Any weakness or sin respecting church activities must be charged to members, not to the church itself. This fact will be conceded by all who are disposed to be fair with both God and man.

"One Body."—The statement of the text that "there is one body" is a simple, direct, and final proof that the Lord established one church; for Paul in this same letter declares that the church is the body. (Eph. 1: 22, 23.) As the Lord established just one, men have no right to establish others and claim they are the Lord's. Neither do they have any divine right to try to divide the Lord's church into denominations. The Lord's church is one, and cannot be divided; such efforts result in starting human churches. As Christ's church is a body, of which he is the head (Col. 1: 18), it cannot be divided into separate denominational churches any more than the human body can be divided into several separate living bodies. One is physically impossible, the other spiritually so.

Other Reasons.—The body apart from the spirit is dead. (James 2: 26.) The church is also called the temple of God, and the Spirit is said to dwell in it. (1 Cor. 3: 16.) Our text says there is one Spirit. Just as there could not be two bodies with one head, so there cannot be two bodies with one spirit. One Holy Spirit forces the conclusion that there is one body or church. There are many congregations, but they must all be a part of the same one body, with Christ as head; hence, the necessity that the members maintain the bond of unity

among themselves. All members of the one body have the same hope and calling. As a body, it is the family of God. (1 Tim. 3: 15.) The one true God is our Father. All who enter have the same faith and baptism. The oneness of the church could not be more definitely established. Each class of members is graciously given the exact power to fulfill its mission. Just as in the human body, this preserves unity in the church body.

IV. Organization of the Church (Verse 11)

"Gave Gifts."—Verses 9-11 are confessedly somewhat difficult to explain. Either one or the other of the two following views may be accepted as the general thought: 1. The gifts that he gave to men may mean that he gave the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and other classes of workers as "gifts" to the church for the accomplishing of certain works; to function as parts of the body. 2. He gave to these different classes of members in his body the necessary spiritual qualifications to accomplish the work designed. According to the former he gave some to be apostles; according to the latter, he gave miraculous power to the apostles for their work. The latter seems the more probable view.

The Classes Mentioned.—This text seems clearly to refer to the church as an institution, rather than to local congregations, for apostles and prophets belonged to the church in general, not to any local congregation. Evangelists, pastors, and teachers, with spiritual gifts for their work then, did a work that affected the universal church, though such work without inspiration could and doubtless did affect directly the congregational work. As their spiritual gifts is the matter discussed in the text, it applies to the general church, because it pertained to things applicable anywhere.

V. Purpose of Spiritual Gifts in the Church (Verses 12-16)

Completing the Work.—The growth and development of the church depended upon the completion of divine instruction. None were capable of giving this without supernatural power. The apostles headed the list of such workers. (1 Cor. 12: 28.) Perfecting saints meant to give them a perfect system of instruction. (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.)

How Long?—That is, how long would such gifted people be required in the church on earth? "Till" the unity of faith could be reached through a completed system of divine instruction; till the church had reached a "full grown man" state, with instruction enough to meet all necessary requirements. The apostles and other specially gifted classes are in the church through their authoritative teaching now just as when they were on earth delivering their messages personally. Christ is no less head of the church because he is in heaven. The apostles are still in the church, though not on earth in person.

Object of the Gifts?—To give such instruction as would lead Christians out of the "babes in Christ" state, and protect them against being carried away by every delusive doctrine that crafty men may present. This shows it means a perfect state of the church—perfect instruction—not perfection in heaven. There will be no crafty men and wiles of error there. The church being thus richly supplied with

instruction by its gifted classes can build up itself in love; like a human body, each part supplies the strength and power needed.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Since Jesus said his death and resurrection were necessary that repentance and remission of sins in his name should begin to be preached from Jerusalem (Luke 24: 46, 47), the church did not begin till these commands were preached there. This was on Pentecost. (Acts 2: 38.)

2. The only possible way for members of the church to maintain the unity of the Spirit is for each to walk as the Bible directs. When that is done, there will be unity, and peace will be preserved.

3. There is unity among members of the physical body, for all are directed by the same head and animated by the same spirit. Contention among the physical members is impossible; among the members of Christ's spiritual body it is absurd.

4. In the physical body God set the members in as it pleased him (1 Cor. 12: 18); he did the same with the different classes of members in the church. The members in each body are to do their own work.

5. Just as the human body grows and develops through the exercise of its members, so does the church. No member of the church can turn his work over to other members. The eye cannot hear, nor the ear see.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the establishment of the church as presented by Jesus in Matt. 16: 13-20.

2. Discuss the establishment of the church as presented by Paul in the following passages: Eph. 2: 13-16; Col. 2: 13-15.

3. Discuss the relationship of Christ to the church as Paul presents it in Eph. 5: 22-32.

4. Discuss the church from the viewpoint in 1 Cor. 3: 10-17.

5. Discuss the church as it is presented by Peter in 1 Pet. 2: 5-10. Give the different descriptive terms he uses.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.

Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.

Repeat the Lesson Links.

Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What was the usual designation of Christ's followers at first?

How did they stand related to him during his lifetime?

What does the word "church" mean?

How is it applied in the New Testament?

What is meant by "added unto them"?

What items of worship are mentioned?

What is said of miracles and charity?

II

What should we especially remember about the church?

What necessary Christian traits are mentioned?

What is meant by "unity of the Spirit"?

III

How does Paul explain the unity of the church in these verses?

What other reasons for this unity?

IV

What did Paul mean by the expression "gave gifts unto men"?

What classes of gifted persons are mentioned?

V

What was the purpose of these gifts?

How long did they continue to appear in the church?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson VII—May 19, 1935

BAPTISM

Matt. 28: 19, 20; Acts 8: 26-39.

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.

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.—"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." (Matt. 28: 19.)

TIME.—For Matthew A.D. 30; for Acts A.D. 33 to 37.

PLACES.—Jerusalem, and road from Jerusalem to Gaza.

PERSONS.—Jesus, his disciples, Philip, and the eunuch.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rom. 6: 1-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

May 13.	M.	Baptism Commanded (Matt. 28: 18-20)
May 14.	T.	Baptism of the Ethiopian (Acts 8: 26-39)
May 15.	W.	Baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3: 13-17)
May 16.	T.	Baptism of Three Thousand (Acts 2: 37-42)
May 17.	F.	Baptism of the Gentiles (Acts 10: 44-48)
May 18.	S.	Baptism of the Jailer (Acts 16: 25-34)
May 19.	S.	The Meaning of Baptism (Rom. 6: 1-11)

LESSON OUTLINE.

Introductory Study.

I. Christ Commands Baptism (Matt. 28: 19, 20).

II. Philip Sent to Meet the Eunuch (Acts 8: 26-29).

III. Isaiah's Prophecy Concerning Christ (Verses 30-34).

IV. Philip Preaches Jesus (Verse 35).

V. The Eunuch Baptized (Verses 36-39).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The language of Jesus in our text is called the Great Commission, and was spoken some time during the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension. Just how long before the ascension cannot be fixed, but probably at the time he met the disciples on the mountain in Galilee, as he promised them he would do. (Matt. 26: 32.) It was long enough before the ascension for him to return from Galilee to Jerusalem, for the ascension was from the Mount of Olives. The baptism of the eunuch occurred probably about three years after the establishment of the church.

Lesson Links.—From Luke's record of the commission, we know that its terms were not to be preached till the apostles received the Spirit. (Luke 24: 46-49.) We know, therefore, that no one obeyed this command of Jesus on baptism till the day of Pentecost, when the apostles received the Spirit according to Jesus' promise. After that day people were added to the church daily (Acts 2: 47), at least for a time, and we know great numbers were added on one occasion later (Acts 4: 4). Since thousands of baptisms had been performed in the few years immediately following the establishment of the church, we know that the service had become well known wherever the gospel had been preached. It was not questioned as a divine duty by any who were convinced that Jesus was the Christ. The apostles did not have to argue the necessity of baptism. Once their hearers accepted Jesus, it was only necessary to tell them what Jesus had said on baptism. There was no reason to doubt it or delay obedience. The promptness with which the eunuch was baptized, when he learned of Jesus, is ample proof of this fact.

Lesson Settings.—Driven out of Jerusalem by persecution at the time of Stephen's death, the disciples carried the gospel message to other places. Philip had gone to Samaria and succeeded in making many converts. Without assigning any reason, so far as the record indicates, an angel directed him to leave that work. Providence so timed his leaving that he would meet the Ethiopian eunuch on the road as he was returning from Jerusalem to his home. The incidents of this meeting are found in the text of our lesson.

LESSON NOTES

I. Christ Commands Baptism (Matt. 28: 19, 20)

"All Authority."—Jesus prefaced his command to teach and baptize with the statement that "all authority" in heaven and on earth had been given to him. After his resurrection, he was remaining with his disciples for a short time for special instruction regarding his kingdom (Acts 1: 3), after which he ascended to begin the exercise of that universal authority (Eph. 1: 22, 23). Since the Father bestowed this authority upon Christ, those refusing to obey his command to be baptized reject the authority of both God and Christ. No

command has ever been spoken that has greater authority back of it.

A Universal Law.—Of course, all laws are applicable only to those intelligent enough to render obedience. Those not old enough to have that amount of intelligence are not subjects. This is a self-evident truth. As the gospel is to be preached to all nations, so all must obey it. Mark 16: 15, 16 shows that this duty falls to each one individually. As surely as the gospel should be preached to each one, and each one should believe it, so each one should be baptized to be saved. Jesus' words on this point may be rejected, but not misunderstood by any one who reads them with "an honest and good heart."

"Into the Name."—Baptized "into the name" of Christ (Acts 19: 5), and baptized "into Christ" (Gal. 3: 27), are two ways of saying the same thing. They both mean that the baptized is brought into spiritual unity with Christ; or, into the spiritual institution he has established; plainly expressed, into the church of which he is the head. Our text says, "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This means that baptism brings us into spiritual relationship to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The King James Version says "in the name." This means that baptism is by the authority of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This would not change the fact that it brings us "into Christ." (Rom. 6: 3.) Either version sustains the truth that baptism is in order to receive pardon, remission of sins, or to be saved. If the apostles failed to so teach it, they disobeyed their Lord, and are unworthy of our confidence. The facts show they taught it just as Jesus told them.

"All Things."—Jesus further required that those who were baptized should be taught whatever things were necessary for their Christian growth. This was a gradual development that came about by each saved person learning his duty as a member of the church. Jesus' promise to be with them "always, even unto the end of the world," meant that what they taught by the Spirit's direction would be endorsed by him and binding till the end of the world. No change, therefore, can be made in apostolic teaching. (Gal. 1: 6-10.)

II. Philip Sent to Meet the Eunuch (Acts 8: 26-29)

Sent by an Angel.—Before the New Testament record was made, the apostles and other teachers were miraculously directed as necessary. Peter and John had been sent to Samaria to bestow spiritual gifts upon some of them, which enabled the newly established work there to protect itself. After this was done, Philip was sent to another field of labor. The angel directed him to go toward the south to a section of country called "desert," through which ran the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. This command was in perfect agreement with that given the apostles by Jesus when he said "go"; and also with the fact that the salvation of men depends upon believing and obeying the gospel. The fact that a providential miracle sent the preacher to meet the man does not change this plan of saving men.

"He Arose and Went."—If Philip had failed to go when commanded, or failed to preach the gospel when he met the man, he would have disobeyed both the angel and the Lord. If the eunuch had failed to obey when he heard, he would have been condemned by the Lord. That is precisely the condition of sinners now who refuse to obey the teaching on God's word. Philip was an angel-sent preacher; his

preaching must be true. The eunuch's high position in governmental affairs did not excuse him from personal obedience. The gospel is for "all nations," and for every responsible individual.

A Worshiper.—The eunuch had been to Jerusalem to worship. This shows that he was either a Jew or a proselyte to the Jewish system. As the Jews had been scattered among other nations, it is possible he was one, and by some chance, not explained, had gained a place of prominence in the Ethiopian government. If he was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, he would have gone to Jerusalem to worship anyway. In either event, his case is the conversion of a religious man. When a religion is wrong, or has been set aside as was the Jewish law (Col. 2: 14), then people should be converted from it to the gospel of Christ.

The Spirit's Command.—As the chariot approached Philip, the Spirit said, "Join thyself to this chariot." The miraculous incidents connected with the case are now complete. The preacher has been sent to the right point and told to seek a place in the chariot; the preacher and sinner are face to face; the rest is left to the power of the gospel. That is still the way that sinners are saved. The written record of all the facts makes miracles now unnecessary.

III. Isaiah's Prophecy Concerning Christ (Verses 30-34)

"Understandest Thou?"—Philip ran to the chariot and heard the man reading from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. He inquired if he understood what he was reading. As the scripture he was reading refers to Christ's death, Philip knew by his answer just where he stood in relationship to Christ. If a Christian, of course he would understand the passage; if not a Christian, he would not. The eunuch's asking how he could without some one to guide him showed he knew nothing of Jesus. Then Philip knew, of course, just how to proceed.

The Eunuch's Question.—The eunuch evidently concluded that Philip had some information he needed, so he invited him into the chariot. He then asked if the prophet, in the passage, referred to himself or to some other man. This furnished just the occasion for Philip to preach to him Jesus, and point out the actual fulfillment of Isaiah's words. The remainder of the story is just the same as if it had occurred but yesterday, with any true gospel preacher telling the story of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection, and the law of pardon by which sinners may be saved.

IV. Philip Preaches Jesus (Verse 35)

"From This Scripture."—The passage from Isaiah shows that the person in mind was to submit to death without complaint or efforts at defense; that he was on that point to be as dumb as the lamb is naturally. It was an easy matter for Philip to show that Christ's death in its details fit the prophecy exactly; hence, he could say, as Paul did later (1 Cor. 15: 3), that he died "according to the scriptures." This was very convincing to one who believed the prophets. Though not stated by Luke, it is not improbable that Philip referred to other scriptures to show Jesus was of the right tribe and right family to be the expected Messiah. Altogether the proof was decisive.

Preached Jesus.—Preaching Jesus, of course, included giving the evidence of his divinity just mentioned, but it also meant to preach the commands he gave and the promises he made. In Samaria Philip "proclaimed to them the Christ" (verse 5), and they "believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (verse 12). Preaching Christ to the eunuch was the same as preaching Christ to the Samaritans. Philip must have preached to him the things "concerning the kingdom of God," and he believed them just as did the Samaritans. In no other way can we account for his prompt obedience to the command that Jesus gave on baptism. It is impossible for men to obey commands they never heard of, nor do they obey commands which they do not believe necessary or for their good.

V. The Eunuch Baptized (Verses 36-39)

The Eunuch's Question.—When they came to a "certain water," the eunuch asked, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" This question definitely settles the fact that Philip, in preaching Jesus, had preached the command of Jesus on baptism. Baptism is a New Testament command. Jesus asked the chief priests if the baptism of John was from heaven or from men. (Matt. 21: 25-27.) They said they did not know. If it had been a part of their law, they would have answered promptly that it was from heaven. It was not a part of their law. Then it is strictly a New Testament command. As Christ's words on baptism had not been recorded when Philip preached to the eunuch, there was no way for him to learn of baptism except through Philip's preaching; Jesus had promised salvation to those who would believe and be baptized. That was evidently the reason the eunuch desired to obey as soon as they reached a place where it was possible.

The Confession.—The Revised Version places the eunuch's confession in the margin with a note to indicate that some manuscripts do not contain it. By this they only mean that there is doubt whether or not Luke wrote these words at this place, not that he did not make a confession. Some confession was necessary, or Philip would not have known whether or not he was a believer. He had no authority to baptize unbelievers. The words in the margin express most probably about what was said, regardless of whether Luke wrote them or not. The fact that he was baptized is evidence that he in some way assured Philip that he did believe. Any form of confession that will do that is sufficient.

Into and Out of.—That section was "desert" in the sense of being sparsely settled, but not waterless; for they came to "a certain water." This plain statement must not be denied. To say there was not sufficient water to immerse is wholly gratuitous. If any at all, how know it was not enough to immerse? If baptize means to immerse, which is the fact according to the world's scholarship, why say they did not do what the word says they did? What excuse can men have for denying the statement that both went "down into the water" and "came up out of the water"? If he was not immersed, what reason can any one assign for their going into the water? The answer is none. After baptism, the eunuch rejoiced. Why? Jesus said he should be saved. Those who imitate his example will have the same reason for rejoicing.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. A command having back of it all authority in heaven and on earth, that is for all nations, and is a part of a law that will be binding till the end of the world, certainly cannot be ignored or rejected with safety. Such is Christ's command on baptism.

2. Two miracles were performed, and both of them on the preacher. An angel directed him to a place where he could meet the man to be converted. The Spirit did not operate on the sinner's heart directly, but sent the preacher to him, and the gospel converted him.

3. The Old Testament prophecies regarding Christ's kingdom must be understood in the light of what the New Testament says. Apostolic applications of prophecies must be accepted as final.

4. Preaching Jesus does not mean only to declare him the Son of God, but also to preach any command he gave and any blessing he offered. Preaching baptism is preaching Jesus, for it is *his* command.

5. People who rejoice as saved before obeying the commands to which salvation is promised, are deceived. The eunuch rejoiced after baptism; so did the jailer (Acts 16: 34); so may we.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the baptism of Jesus, showing wherein his baptism was like ours and wherein it was different. (Matt. 3: 13-17.)

2. Discuss the baptism of the Pentecostians (Acts 2: 37-41), showing what led to it, and what they were told to do.

3. Discuss the action of baptism as Paul presents the matter in Rom. 6: 3-6; Col. 2: 12.

4. Discuss the design of baptism as Peter presents it in 1 Pet. 3: 19-21. Show the comparison he makes.

5. Discuss the baptism of the jailer and his family, showing when and where he was baptized. (Acts 16: 30-34.) Also give reasons why there were no infants baptized.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What prefatory statement did Jesus make?
What truth about laws is self-evident?
How extensive is the law on baptism?
Explain the expression "into the name."
What is meant by the expression "all things"?

II

Explain why Philip left Samaria.
Describe his journey.
How did Philip treat the angel's command?

What is meant by the eunuch being a worshiper?
What command did the Spirit give?

III

Why did Philip ask the question, "Understandest thou"?
Show the appropriateness of the eunuch's question.

IV

How could Philip use the scripture from Isaiah?
What was included in preaching Jesus?

V

What fact is settled by the eunuch's question?
Explain the Revised Version on the confession.
What is proved by the words "into" and "out of"?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson VIII—May 26, 1935

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Matt. 26: 17-30.

17 Now on the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the passover?

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Teacher saith, My time is at hand; I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

19 And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

20 Now when even was come, he was sitting at meat with the twelve disciples;

21 And as they were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord?

23 And he answered and said, He that dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born.

25 And Judas, who betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith unto him, Thou hast said.

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27 And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28 For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"This do in remembrance of me."* (1 Cor. 11: 24.)

TIME.—A.D. 30.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 6: 47-51.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 20.	M.	.....	The Passover Instituted (Ex. 12: 3-11)
May 21.	T.	.....	The Passover Revived (Ezek. 45: 21-25)
May 22.	W.	.....	The Lord's Supper Instituted (Matt. 26: 17-30)
May 23.	T.	.....	The Lord's Supper Interpreted (1 Cor. 11: 21-29)
May 24.	F.	.....	The Lord's Supper a Memorial (Luke 22: 14-23)
May 25.	S.	.....	The Lord's Supper a Communion (1 Cor. 10: 14-22)
May 26.	S.	.....	The Bread of Life (John 6: 47-51)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. The Passover Supper Prepared (Verses 17-19).

II. Jesus Predicts His Betrayal (Verses 20-22).

III. Judas Designated as the Betrayer (Verses 23-25).

IV. The Lord's Supper Instituted (Verses 26-28).

V. The Lord's Supper a New Service (Verses 29, 30).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—In this lesson, which describes the institution of the Lord's Supper, we are again with Jesus and his disciples on the night of his arrest. The incident occurred in the upper room where they had met to partake of the Jewish passover supper. This supper, according to the law (Ex. 12: 1-8), was eaten in the first month of the Jewish year, called Abib or Nisan. The lamb was killed on the fourteenth day of the month, and the supper eaten in the night following. According to their method of reckoning time, the night began the fifteenth day. The time corresponds with April 1, as we arrange the months.

Lesson Links.—There are no special events linking this lesson with the last, but there is a logical connection of the Lord's Supper with the Passover, which was a typical event of the most significant character. This fact is made definitely certain by Paul's reference to Christ as "our passover," who has been sacrificed for us. (1 Cor. 5: 7.) The Passover and Lord's Supper were both appointed as memorials of great events, one providing salvation from physical death, the other salvation from sin. The passover lamb had to be without blemish (Ex. 12: 5); Christ was without sin. The passover supper had to be eaten on a specific day of a certain month; therefore, it could not be oftener than once a year, nor less often. The Lord's Supper is definitely placed on the first day of the week (Acts 20: 7); therefore, it is to be observed weekly, for the specified day comes just that often. The typical features are in the character of the observance, not in the frequency of it.

Lesson Settings.—When Jesus and the apostles sat down to the passover supper, he told them he had desired to eat it with them before he suffered. (Luke 22: 14, 15.) This is proof that Jesus had observed the requirements of the Jewish law during his personal ministry. The law remained in force till his death (Rom. 7: 4); he neither broke it nor taught his disciples to do it. This observance of their most important memorial service is ample proof of that fact. Realizing that in just a few hours he was to become the fulfillment of the typical nature of the passover lamb, it was not only appropriate that he give it his final approval, but institute his own memorial at the same time. A most fitting occasion for the solemn appointment.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Passover Supper Prepared (Verses 17-19)

The Feast.—The Passover in its first observance was just the lamb supper eaten the night the Israelites left Egypt. It was eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. (Ex. 12: 1-14.) In their later history the following week was included in the solemn occasion, and the eating of unleavened bread required throughout the whole time. (Deut. 16: 1-8.) This seven-day period was called "the feast of the passover" and "the feast of unleavened bread." (Mark 14: 1; Luke 22: 1.) The word "passover" applied either to the supper alone, or to the entire feast. The wording of the text must be considered to determine which is meant where the term is used.

The Preparation.—It is evident that Jesus and the disciples had been observing previous Passovers, else the disciples would not have taken

it for granted that preparation should be made for that one. The preparation consisted in dressing the lamb, which had to be slain in the court of the temple (2 Chron. 35: 5, 6), preparing or securing the unleavened bread, and getting the room ready. The supper proper was eaten in private by small companies. Mark explains that the first day of unleavened bread was the day "when they sacrificed the pass-over." (Mark 14: 12.) That day was called the first day of the feast of the passover—feast of unleavened bread—not because they began to eat it that day, but because it was prepared that day, just as was the lamb. The actual eating was after sunset, which was the beginning of the next day according to their method of counting. Verse 19 says they made the preparation as Jesus appointed them. The word "cup" in Luke 22: 17 shows that the fruit of the vine was used in the passover supper.

Jesus' Foreknowledge.—It evidently was a custom among the Jewish residents of Jerusalem to furnish rooms where visitors might eat the passover supper. It is not known whether the man to whom Jesus sent the disciples was a friend or a stranger. At any rate, the foreknowledge of Jesus enabled him to know that they would be permitted to use the room. Telling them beforehand the peculiar things that would happen, by which they would know they had found the right man, is sufficient proof of his foreknowledge. (Mark 14: 13-15.)

II. Jesus Predicts His Betrayal (Verses 20-22)

"Even Was Come."—The statement, "when even was come," compared with the expression "at even" in Deut. 16: 4, 6, shows that "even" may refer to late afternoon or the early part of the night. From John 13: 30 it is evident that the passover supper was eaten at night. The nature of the event, or the language used to describe it, must be carefully noted, if we are to be sure just what is meant by "at even."

The Announcement.—The text says they were "sitting at meat," but their custom was to recline at the table while eating. The margin puts it "reclining at table." The fact stated is that the announcement was made "as they were eating." Judas had already betrayed him in the sense that he had secretly contracted to deliver him into their hands. (Verse 15.) Jesus here refers to the plans that Judas would soon carry out in fulfilling that contract. He meant, then, that one of them would deliver him to his enemies. There was no tone of doubt; you *shall* betray me, he said; not some one else, but one of you, one of the twelve. (Mark 14: 20.)

The Effect.—Such an announcement would have been saddening to them regardless of who betrayed him, but "they were exceeding sorrowful" when they learned that one of their own little company was to commit the crime. The disciples were amazed, and looked one upon another, probably asking who could be the guilty one. (John 13: 21, 22.) Then they asked him one by one, "Is it I, Lord?" The Greek expression here indicates a negative answer was expected. Equivalent to the words, "Surely I am not the one."

III. Judas Designated as the Betrayer (Verses 23-25)

A Sign.—Jesus had said that the betrayer was one of the twelve. He further narrows the circle in which the guilty one will be found

by saying, "He that dipped his hand with me in the dish." According to their custom, those conveniently located would dip their bread in the same dish. Probably three or four were using the same dish with Jesus. His words meant that the guilty one was among them. Peter beckoned the disciple nearest Jesus—probably John—to ask which one. After saying he had to be betrayed, but that it would have been better for the betrayer if he had never been born, he dipped the sop and gave it to Judas Iscariot.

Judas' Answer.—Judas knew perfectly the wickedness of his own heart, and that he had already contracted to deliver him to the chief priests, yet he asked, "It is I, Rabbi?" With feigned innocence, he puts his question in the form that expected a negative answer. The Savior's definitely pointing him out, however, revealed to him that his deception would not work. John tells us that after Jesus gave him the sop he went out straightway. (John 13: 27-30.) This means that, after the certainty that Jesus understood his wickedness was revealed to him, his heart was more fully determined to carry out his plans. Exposure hardened his heart rather than softened it. The others recognized Jesus' divine authority by calling him "Lord"; Judas only addressed him as "Rabbi," which means teacher. Jesus replied with the words, "Thou hast said," meaning, You have said the truth; that is, your question should be answered, yes.

IV. The Lord's Supper Instituted (Verses 26-28)

"Took Bread."—Jesus said to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly." (John 13: 27.) Apparently Judas then left the room. This probably suggested the announcement that the shepherd would be smitten and the sheep scattered, and the further prediction that Peter would deny him that night. After this, and while they were still at the table, Jesus gave them his own memorial supper. Since only unleavened bread was used in the passover supper, it is certain that Jesus used it when commanding his supper.

"This Is My Body."—To those unhampered by human theories these words would always be understood to mean that the bread and wine represented his body and blood. The Catholic doctrine that these elements, when blessed by a priest, are actually turned into the literal body and blood of Jesus, and are such when eaten and drunk, has not one reasonable defense. Jesus was there at the time in both flesh and blood. The bread and wine were not in fact changed; there is no reason for saying it is done since he returned to God in his glorious body. That the verb "is" is often used in the sense of *represent* is evident from numerous examples in the Bible. The following are samples: "The seven good kine are seven years." (Gen. 41: 26.) That must mean they represent seven years. "The two horns, they are the kings of Media and Persia." (Dan. 8: 20.) "The field is the world." (Matt. 13: 38.) "For these women are two covenants." (Gal. 4: 24.) "This is my body" must be understood in the same practical way; the bread represents his body. When broken it represents his broken body. Of course, the same reasoning applies to the fruit of the vine as it does to the bread. The wine therefore represents his blood.

For All Disciples.—Regarding the cup—a figurative expression that means the contents of the cup—Jesus said: "Drink ye all of it."

That meant that they were all to drink, or that the Lord's Supper is for all disciples. The passover supper was for all the Israelites, but not for the stranger to eat unless he submitted to the right of circumcision and observed the feast according to the law. (Ex. 12: 48, 49; Num. 9: 14.) As the Lord's table is in his kingdom, all citizens of that kingdom are required to eat. Under the provisions of the law, any one who was unavoidably kept from the Passover at the regular time was allowed to keep it in the second month instead of the first (Num. 9: 9-13), but was not excused; in fact, if it was a case of indifference or neglect, he was to be "cut off from his people." No provision is made by Jesus, or any apostle, for any Christian to be excused who fails through neglect.

Blessed and Gave Thanks.—The text says regarding the bread, that Jesus "blessed, and brake it." Concerning the cup, it says "gave thanks." Mark uses "blessed" and "gave thanks" just as does Matthew. Luke and Paul both use the expression give thanks. (Luke 22: 19; 1 Cor. 11: 24.) Respecting the supper, Paul says, "The cup of blessing which we bless." (1 Cor. 10: 16.) This shows that both expressions are scriptural. The meaning in saying we bless the cup is, of course, that we ask God's blessings upon it. The other means that we give God thanks for it. Both, in fact, enter into what we say in our brief prayers at the table.

"Unto Remission."—In saying that the cup represents his blood, Jesus incidentally mentions that his blood was poured out "unto remission of sins." That he meant that his blood was shed in order that sins might be remitted cannot admit of doubt. The Greek for "unto remission of sins" here is just the same as in Acts 2: 38. Jesus died that sins might be remitted; sinners repent and are baptized for exactly the same purpose, only it is their own sins they want remitted. This is in strict harmony with all the New Testament teaching on baptism.

V. The Lord's Supper a New Service (Verses 29, 30)

"As Often As."—Luke tells us that Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me." (Luke 22: 19.) Paul adds that as often as we do it we "proclaim the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11: 26.) As the first day of the week is the specified time for the Lord's Supper (Acts 20: 7), the duty comes every time the day returns. Those who fail to observe it the first day of every week neglect one of the most vital and blessed privileges in the church.

"Drink It New."—This was the last Passover for Jesus, and the supper he was instituting was not applicable till he went away; hence, he meant he would not drink real wine with them any more. But he would drink with them in a new way in the kingdom. When they partook of the supper in his kingdom, he would spiritually be with them; this, figuratively speaking, would be drinking with them in a new way. Whether the hymn sung was a part of the passover supper, or pertained to the Lord's supper, is not stated. After the two suppers and the discourse and prayer they went to the Mount of Olives into the Garden of Gethsemane. This was only an incident, and has no special significance.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. In serving the Lord, as in our own personal affairs, we have to make preparation for most everything we do. This preparation, expressed or implied, has its place in accomplishing results.

2. If Jesus as God's Son and man's Savior was obliged to obey God's law that was then in force, surely man needs to obey the gospel which is God's law now. This is too evident to require proof.

3. The best personal association and the truest teaching will not save those who listen to Satan instead of God. Judas fell.

4. Memorial services come at stated or regular intervals. The duty always comes when the day or time returns.

5. Since the Lord's Supper is to "proclaim" the Lord's death *till* he come, there can be no need for it after he returns. Since the Lord's table is in the kingdom, the kingdom must now be in existence, else there would be no place for the Lord's Supper.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss Paul's charges against the congregation at Corinth. (1 Cor. 11: 17-22.)

2. Repeat in detail the advice he gave the Corinthians on the Lord's Supper. (1 Cor. 11: 27-34.)

3. Describe Paul's journey to Troas, and his meeting with the brethren on the Lord's day. (Acts 20: 1-7.)

4. Give Paul's argument on the necessity of Christ shedding his blood for the remission of sins. (Heb. 9: 11-14.)

5. Show from Paul's reasoning how the old covenant was dedicated. (Heb. 9: 17-22.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.

Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.

Repeat the Lesson Links.

Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What was included in the first Passover?

What was included later?

What preparation had to be made?

What shows the foreknowledge of Jesus?

II

What is referred to by the expression "at even"?

When did Jesus predict his betrayal?

How did his announcement affect the disciples?

What did their question mean?

III

What sign did Jesus use to indicate the one guilty?

What did Peter request?

What kind of question did Judas ask?

What effect did Jesus' reply to Judas have?

IV

What further statements did Jesus then make to them?

What proof that Jesus used unleavened bread in his supper?

What is meant by the words, "this is my body"?

How many were to eat?

What is meant by "blessed"?

V

What is meant by "as often as" and "drink it new"?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson IX—June 2, 1935

OUR DAY OF WORSHIP

Psalm 100; John 4: 20-24; Col. 3: 15-17.

- 1 Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all ye lands.
- 2 Serve Jehovah with gladness:
Come before his presence with singing.
- 3 Know ye that Jehovah, he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and we are his;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
- 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise:
Give thanks unto him, and bless his name.
- 5 For Jehovah is good; his lovingkindness endureth for ever,
And his faithfulness unto all generations.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.

22 Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.

17 And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*” (John 4: 24.)

TIME.—The Psalms were written between 1500 B.C. and 450 B.C.; we do not know when this Psalm was written; John A.D. 28; for Colossians about A.D. 63.

PLACES.—Samaria, Rome, and Colosse.

PERSONS.—The Psalmist, Jesus, woman of Samaria, Paul, and the Colossians.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 92: 1-5, 12, 13.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

May 27.	M.	-----	A Day of Rest (Gen. 2: 1-3)
May 28.	T.	-----	A Day of Worship (Ex. 20: 8-11)
May 29.	W.	-----	A Day of Mercy (Matt. 12: 1-8)
May 30.	T.	-----	A Day of Victory (John 20: 19-23)
May 31.	F.	-----	A Day of Instruction (Acts 20: 7-12)
June 1.	S.	-----	A Day of Blessing (Rev. 1: 10-20)
June 2.	S.	-----	A Day of Praise (Psalm 92: 1-13)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. “Serve Jehovah with Gladness” (Verses 1-3).

II. The Worship in God’s House (Verses 4, 5).

- III. Jewish and Samaritan Worship Rejected (John 4: 20-22).
- IV. Christian Worship Defined (Verses 23, 24).
- V. Acceptable Worship Is by Divine Authority (Col. 3: 15-17).
Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—For the chronological facts in this lesson we must go to three different periods of time. The date of Psalm 100 is supposed to be about 515 B.C., after the Jews returned from their Babylonian captivity. (Ezra 6: 15-22.) The language taken from John was spoken by Jesus in the latter part of A.D. 27. This was soon after his baptism, and was among his first teachings. The Colossian letter from which our last text is taken was written at Rome in A.D. 61, at which time Paul was a prisoner.

Lesson Links.—This lesson on the day of worship involves the matters of time, place and spirit of procedure. As worship includes reverence, adoration, and the acts by which man's devotion is manifested, it belongs to all periods of religious services. Based upon man's nature and needs, worship has been made a permanent feature in God's service in all dispensations and under all covenants. The nature of worship always remains the same, and man's attitude as a worshiper unchanged through all ages, but the specific acts by which that attitude is manifested have varied with the peculiar nature of the covenant laws in force at the time. The Jew, through his animal sacrifices and smoking incense, acknowledged his dependence upon God; the Christian does the same through the merits of a crucified Savior, the praise of his lips and the devotions of his heart. Patriarch, Jew, and Christian, each in his own dispensation, and according to the law under which he lived, has been required to worship God.

Lesson Settings.—It is supposed that Psalm 100 was composed and sung first at the dedication of the second temple after the Jews had been allowed to return to their own land. It expressed their appreciation of being permitted to restore the temple worship. Jesus' words on acceptable worship are a part of the Savior's conversation with the woman of Samaria at the well. Paul's words were doubtless occasioned by the fact that the church at Colosse had sent a messenger to Rome to inquire about his welfare. (Col. 4: 7-9, 12; 1: 7, 8.) Paul was in prison at the time, and the Colossian brethren were anxious to know of his condition and needs.

LESSON NOTES

1. "Serve Jehovah with Gladness" (Verses 1-3)

"All Ye Lands."—As verse 4 mentions entering into God's "courts with praise," the Psalmist here probably expressed a more general idea of joy when he said, "make a joyful noise unto Jehovah." He may have had in mind the exultation that makes one feel like leaping for joy because of some great blessing. Doubtless that expressed the common feelings of the Jews when they were permitted to reestablish their worship in Jerusalem. "All ye lands" would mean that the Jews in all places were called upon to express their gratitude to

God for love and providence. This exhortation in principle is equally appropriate now to all the world.

Gladness and Singing.—The Psalmist further exhorts that all service should be rendered with gladness, and that men should come into Jehovah's presence with singing. A full appreciation of God's mercies will beget a sense of responsibility, which should make us render the most joyful service. This joy, like an overflowing stream, will break forth into singing—a most natural way of expressing our thankfulness to God. There is no more appropriate way for the heart's true feelings to be manifested; there is no better place than when we are assembled in the capacity of worshippers of God.

"Know Ye."—This expression means that all should try to understand the majesty of Jehovah, and comprehend him as God. This demands that we should recognize him as our Creator, and admit that we, therefore, owe him our service. As the text puts it, we should say, "And we are his." No one can recognize the relationship of creature and Creator without admitting man's obligation to God. The Psalmist presents the idea of God's tender care and protection by saying we are "the sheep of his pasture." Assured of his divine care, we have another reason for serving him with gladness, and coming into his presence with singing.

II. The Worship in God's House (Verses 4, 5)

"With Thanksgiving."—The sentiments expressed in the preceding section are general enough to be applicable to man in his private devotions and individual efforts in God's service. In this verse the writer said they should "enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." In this he was urging that, when they entered into the sacred temple enclosure, they should be thankful for the opportunity, and praise Jehovah for the permission. Exactly the same feeling should fill our hearts now when we enter the assembly for worship. Instead of having to be urged to enter the church, or to attend its worship, we should be thankful that Christ's blood has made such possible, and God's love permits us to do it. Faithful Christians rejoice in the worship of the church; only half-hearted Christians complain at its services being tiresome or uninteresting. Worshipers "bless his name" in the sense that they declare him blessed in their thanksgiving and praises.

Divine Attributes.—The Psalmist assigns three reasons why men should worship Jehovah: 1. He is good. Since God is absolutely good, we can worship him with full assurance that all he does for us will be right and best. 2. His loving-kindness will not fail. His mercy and compassion will always be over those who render him loving service. 3. His faithfulness will continue throughout all generations. Those living early or late in the Christian dispensation will share alike in God's faithfulness to his promises. In fact, the attribute of faithfulness has always characterized the divine Being.

III. Jewish and Samaritan Worship Rejected (John 4: 20-22)

The Places.—The Samaritans were a mixed population dwelling in northern Israel when the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon. (2 Kings 17: 24-41.) They wanted to help the Jews rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, but were refused, and afterward had a temple

built for them on Mount Gerizim by Sanballat, an enemy of the Jews. (Ezra 4: 1-5; Neh. 6: 1-4.) Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that Sanballat built the temple for the Samaritans. Abraham and Jacob both build altars at the foot of Mount Gerizim (Gen. 12: 6, 7; 33: 18-20), which accounts for the woman's statement that "our fathers worshipped in this mountain." This explains the age-old controversy between Jews and Samaritans as to whether Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem was the proper place to worship.

Jesus' Reply.—If Jesus had been disposed to settle their controversy on its merits, he would no doubt have informed her that Jerusalem, the city of David, was the proper place for the temple worship. God's temple had first been built there. But as such a controversy would soon have no interest for the true servants of God, he ignored her question and said the time was fast approaching when neither place would be necessary to true worship. He did not mean that in his kingdom men could not worship the Father in Jerusalem, or Mount Gerizim; for, as a matter of fact, the church began in Jerusalem, and the first gospel worship was offered there. But he meant that the house of God would no longer be a material structure, limiting the worship to a certain place. God now does not dwell "in houses made with hands" (Acts 7: 48-50); but in a "spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2: 5; 1 Cor. 3: 16).

Samaritan Ignorance.—Jesus did remind her of Samaritan ignorance by saying, "Ye worship that which ye know not." The Samaritans accepted five books of Moses, but rejected the Jewish history and prophecy. He assured her that, if she had had a knowledge of the prophecies, she would know how salvation must come. The important thing, therefore, was not to worry about either Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim as the place to worship, but to be ready to accept the new worship that he would introduce.

IV. Christian Worship Defined (Verses 23, 24)

When?—In its broadest sense and individual aspect, worship occurs when any act or thought of adoration springs from the heart, but our lesson evidently contemplates the subject in reference mainly to congregational activities. Most of these activities come within the limits of what is called the Lord's day. The Jews were required to observe the seventh day of the week—Saturday—as a day of absolute rest from work of a gainful character. This was called the Sabbath, a word meaning rest. This did not prevent such work as was necessary in religious service and acts of mercy. (Matt. 12: 1-8.) The Sabbath law, however, was given to the Jews only as the following texts show: Deut. 5: 1-3, 15. The last verse shows that the specific reason for giving the Jews the Sabbath law was to remind them of the rest God had given them from bondage. The law then was appropriate only to the Jews. No nation during the twenty-five centuries preceding their exodus was ever required to keep it, and no example exists of any one keeping it during that period. Gen. 2: 2 only shows that God rested on the seventh day, not that he required any one else to do so till he required it of the Jews. For various reasons we use the first day of the week as a day in which to worship (Acts 20: 7), not as a day of absolute rest.

Where?—That we must assemble to conduct public worship needs

no proof. This assembling we are forbidden to neglect. (Heb. 10: 25.) The location of the meeting place is an immaterial thing, left purely to circumstances, but what we do in service to God after we assemble is vital. Any place that "true worshippers" can assemble is the place where worship should be offered.

How?—This question is definitely answered in the text. Jesus said it should be "in spirit and truth." This terse expression cannot be improved in either form or fact. It might be enlarged by saying that true worship must be strictly honest and in exact harmony with the truth of God's word. Since "God is a Spirit," he is not limited to time or space, and may therefore be worshiped anywhere, provided it is in spirit and truth. Nothing could be more absurd than any pretense of worshiping God without doing so honestly. One might be honest and yet mistaken; hence, the necessity of worshiping in truth. This means that our worship must be in harmony with what God's word teaches. Jesus endorses what Isaiah said regarding vain worship. (Matt. 15: 7-9.) If we practice the doctrines and precepts of men, our worship is vain—will disappoint us finally. Such worship is not only vain, but is sinful. Any act of worship that is not of faith is sin. (Rom. 14: 23.)

V. Acceptable Worship Is by Divine Authority (Col. 3: 15-17)

"Peace of Christ."—In this section the apostle gives three exhortations, one of which is to let the "peace of Christ rule in your hearts." As this exhortation is for each one personally, the peace meant must be the joy and satisfaction we have because of our hope in the promises of God. This should so govern and regulate our conduct that we will continue persistent worshippers of God. We are called into this peace through the gospel. The enjoyment of such happiness can be had only in the "one body," which is the church. (Eph. 1: 22, 23.) As members of this body we are entitled to a satisfaction of which the world is ignorant, and for which we should be exceedingly thankful.

"Word of Christ."—The second exhortation is to let the "word of Christ dwell in you richly." This clearly means that such an abundance of gospel truths should dwell in our hearts that we would not only enjoy the worship of God, but would be faithful in our duties. This state can be reached only by being fully taught, and by most earnest study. (2 Tim. 2: 15.) This divine wisdom, in part at least, comes through teaching and admonishing in the song service. When psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are sung with the spirit and the understanding (1 Cor. 14: 15), they become one way to let Christ's word dwell in us richly. These songs we are told by the apostle should be sung "with grace in your hearts." The parallel text says that in singing we should make "melody with your heart." (Eph. 5: 19.) For this privilege we should also be thankful.

The Name of Christ.—Whatever we do in God's service, in word or deed, is to be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus." That means, of course, that all acts of worship should be done by his authority. It has never been right to change, pervert, or introduce other acts of worship in place of what God requires. The sad fate of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10: 1-10) is a noted example of such sins. We should be thankful for the privilege of doing things by Christ's authority.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. A careful consideration of God's love, Christ's sacrifice, and the promises of eternal life cannot fail to reach hearts that respond to justice and truth. To such hearts, the worship of God is the source of the greatest gladness.

2. Those who really want to worship God because of the deep sense of their dependence upon him will want to come into God's house—church—where that worship should be offered.

3. Since Christ abolished the Jewish law at the cross, we should not try to bring its rites and ceremonies into the gospel worship. No letter addressed to Christians commands the keeping of the Sabbath. The first day of the week is the special day for Christian worship. It is not the Sabbath, and is nowhere so called.

4. When Jesus asks for worship "in spirit and truth," no faithful Christian will be willing to offer any other kind.

5. In every age acceptable worship has been a matter of divine revelation; acceptable worshipers have been those who acted by faith—did what God's word authorized. Failures have proved disastrous.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss Isaiah's condemnation of the Jews because of their perversion of God's worship. (Isa. 1: 10-17.)

2. Discuss the church as the temple or house of God, using passages where it is called by these names.

3. Tell the story of Christ's conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well. (John 4: 1-42.)

4. What important events occurred on the first day of the week? Mention them in the order of occurrence.

5. Discuss the items of worship mentioned in Acts 2: 42.

6. Discuss the necessity of worshiping God by faith, as illustrated by Cain and Abel. (Heb. 11: 4.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What is meant by "make a joyful noise unto Jehovah"?
What is meant by "all ye lands"?
How should men enter God's courts?
What is meant by "know ye"?
What relationship to God should we admit?

II

What is meant here by God's court?
What kind of feeling should we have in entering the worshiping assembly?
What divine attributes does the Psalmist mention?

III

What offer did the Samaritans make the Jews?
What is meant by "our fathers worshipped in this mountain"?
How did Jesus reply to the woman's question?
Of what were the Samaritans ignorant?

IV

When is worship rendered to God?
Why do Christians not keep the Sabbath?
What about the place of assembly for worship?
How must worship be rendered?

V

What things are necessary to acceptable worship?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson X—June 9, 1935

THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 16: 7-11; Rom. 8: 10-17, 26, 27.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.

8 And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.

10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh:

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

15 For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.

26 And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Rom. 8: 14.)

TIME.—For John, A.D. 30; for Romans, about A.D. 57.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Rome.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples, Paul and the church at Rome.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 14: 25-31.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 3.	M.	Prophecy of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2: 28-32)
June 4.	T.	Promise of the Holy Spirit (John 16: 7-11)
June 5.	W.	Coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 1-13)
June 6.	T.	Work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8: 10-17)
June 7.	F.	Power of the Holy Spirit (John 3: 1-8)
June 8.	S.	Intercession of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8: 26-36)
June 9.	S.	Comfort of the Holy Spirit (John 14: 25-31)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. The Apostles Promised a Comforter (Verse 7).

II. The Spirit's Work in Conversion (Verses 8-11).

III. The Spirit's Influence on Christians (Rom. 8: 10-15).

IV. The Witness of the Spirit (Verses 16, 17).

V. The Spirit's Intercession for Saints (Verses 26, 27).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The first scripture in this lesson, taken from the book of John, is part of the discourse Jesus preached to the apostles the night he instituted the Lord's Supper. It was spoken in the upper room after the Passover and before leaving for the Garden of Gethsemane. Romans, from which our second text is quoted, was written at Corinth while Paul was on his third missionary journey, probably late in A.D. 57 or early in A.D. 58.

Lesson Links.—It will be of much advantage in studying the work of the Holy Spirit to remember that none of the New Testament was written for many years after the establishment of the church on Pentecost. Before the gospel truths were recorded the Lord's work was necessarily sustained by miracles. The personal ministry of Jesus, as the record shows, was continually supported by unlimited miraculous power. He possessed the Spirit without measure. (John 3: 34.) During the time he remained with the apostles they could appeal to him directly for the settlement of any questions that arose. But when he returned to the Father some other guide was necessary to direct them into the right, and to enable them to confirm any truth that they presented. Without this supernatural guidance the church could not have been established or defended. The ministry of the Holy Spirit was, therefore, the logical thing to follow the personal ministry of Jesus. This miraculous work of the Spirit is also logically followed by his ministry through the written word.

Lesson Settings.—Jesus, knowing that his death was at hand, and that the apostles would be greatly disturbed and discouraged, gave them the comforting assurance that he would not leave them "desolate" (John 14: 8), but would send the Spirit to guide them "into all the truth." (John 16: 13.) When Paul wrote the Roman letter, the apostles had been under this guidance for about a quarter of a century. Jesus told them what the Spirit *would* do for them; Paul knew what he *had* done. He was able, therefore, to explain the benefits received from the Spirit by all classes of God's saints.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Apostles Promised a Comforter (Verse 7)

"For You."—That the promise of the Holy Spirit, as a Comforter, was here made to the apostles alone is evident from the following considerations: 1. Jesus said distinctly "for you," and this idea is used several times in the discourse. The apostles only were with him at the time. 2. He told them the Spirit would bring to their remembrance all that he had said to them. (John 14: 26.) Only the apostles had been his constant followers, and would need much help in the work he gave them. 3. He said the Spirit would guide them into all truth (John 16: 13), and they alone had authority to bind his words upon all (John 20: 22, 23). They alone would need such power as promised. 4. His final promise on the subject, made just before his ascension (Acts 1: 5), was spoken to the apostles alone. 5. When the promise was fulfilled (Acts 2: 1-4), it was the apostles alone that were filled with the Spirit. Being a miraculous power, it ceased with the personal labors of the apostles; it cannot refer to any spiritual blessing that is common to all Christians.

"Expedient."—An expedient is something suitable, advantageous, or profitable. It probably appeared strange to the apostles then, as it doubtless does to many now, how it would be better for them to have Jesus leave and send another one to guide them. But it was true or Jesus would not have said so. If it had not been expedient—better—then some other plan would have been used. Divine wisdom does not make mistakes. A little reflection, however, easily discovers the reason why it was better. As a personal guide they had to consult Jesus each time a difficulty arose. To perpetuate this plan would have limited their labors and hindered the work. With the Spirit as an indwelling guide, they had the needed assistance wherever they went. Since the whole world was to be reached, the plan was not only expedient, but necessary.

"Comforter."—Doubtless the presence of the Spirit with the apostles was a source of much consolation, but that probably resulted from the fact that he enabled them to confirm their preaching by miracles and signs, which would in turn assure their hearts. The Greek word also means *guide* or *helper*. All the recorded facts show that to be the sense which Jesus attached to the term. This means that Jesus promised them a helper who would miraculously direct their minds and confirm their work. Beyond this the promise does not go.

II. The Spirit's Work in Conversion (Verses 8-11)

"Will Convict."—With this verse before him, one can hardly fail to understand what the Spirit does for the world—unsaved sinners. His work is to demonstrate so clearly the fact regarding Jesus that there can be no doubt that he is the Christ. This line of evidence will convict sinners of their mistake in rejecting him, and reprove them for their continued practice of evil.

Further Explanation.—Jesus explains that this conviction regarding sin had reference to their unbelief in him as the Christ. His claim as their Messiah had been sustained by their own prophets when compared with his life, particularly his miracles. The Holy Spirit would bring these facts before them with such power that they would be convicted as sinners for rejecting him. The Jews had condemned him as an impostor, but the Spirit would prove them wrong by showing him both righteous and sinless. This line of proof would also show that in the final judgment, when the sins of all must be properly rewarded, all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. (2 Cor. 5: 10.)

The Method Used.—The preceding paragraphs state only *what* the Spirit does for the world; the *how*, though implied, is not stated. It is not only necessary to know *what* the Spirit does, but *how* he does it; that is, if the *how* can be discovered. Since Jesus told the apostles that the Spirit would *abide in* them when he came (John 14: 17), we are forced to admit that he convicts the world through their words. The Spirit was to guide them; they were to teach the world. (Matt. 28: 19.) The facts sustain these statements. When the Spirit came to the apostles, they spake as he gave them utterance. (Acts 2: 1-4.) The people heard the apostles, were convicted—"were pricked in their heart" (Acts 2: 37)—and then obeyed the commands to repent and be baptized. That is precisely the method of the Spirit's work now, the only difference being that we have the written word of the Spirit,

and the people on Pentecost had the spoken word. This matter is perfectly easy of comprehension when we remember that the written word is the language of the Spirit just as truly as was the spoken. According to Joel 2: 28, 29, and Peter's application of it in Acts 2: 17-20, the Spirit was poured out upon the apostles miraculously; through their words the Spirit convicted the sinners who were saved.

III. The Spirit's Influence on Christians (Rom. 8: 10-15)

Christ in You.—The relationship of the saved to Christ is expressed as being "in Christ" (2 Cor. 5: 17), and Christ "in you," as stated in the lesson text. Of course, no one understands either expression to be taken literally. Spiritually, Christ dwells in Christians when they believe and obey his words. Paul says plainly that Christ dwells in our hearts "through faith." (Eph. 3: 17.) So far as we are able to understand there is no other way it can be. Two plausible meanings are offered for this difficult verse: 1. If Christ dwells in us, then our bodies are dead to the practice of sin, and we are spiritually alive because of righteousness. This is true, in fact, regardless of Paul's meaning in this verse. 2. Though—that is, notwithstanding—we are in Christ, our bodies are subject to the natural death entailed by Adam's sin, but we are alive in Christ by righteousness. That is likewise true in fact. Either shows the necessity of being in Christ.

The Spirit in You.—That both Christ and the Spirit dwell in saints is the plain statement of the text. The *how* Christ dwells in us is stated; the *how* the Spirit does it is not definitely expressed. That he dwells in our hearts "through faith," when we believe and obey his words, just as does Christ for the same reason, cannot be denied. This is fully sustained by Paul's exhortation to be "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5: 18), which, in the parallel passage (Col. 3: 16), he explains by saying, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." This indwelling of the Spirit in our hearts we know to be a fact, as certainly as we know the words of the apostles to be the language of the Spirit. Accepting this, we are safe; going further is probably speculation; following his words, we will be saved.

Live by the Spirit.—The same Spirit that raised Jesus will raise our bodies. If the Spirit dwells in us, as mentioned in the preceding paragraph, we may be sure that we will be raised to eternal life. (John 5: 29.) We have assurance of this both in the resurrection of Jesus and the miraculous work of the Spirit. In this state we are not debtors to live after the flesh, according to its inclinations, but to live by the teachings of the Spirit. In so doing we will "put to death the deeds of the body" and live spiritually here and eternally in the hereafter. Since the body will die regardless of how we live, the words, "if ye live after the flesh, ye must die," must mean that unless Christians live as the Spirit directs they will be lost. From this verse it is certain that Christians may so apostatize as to be lost. We should realize that Satan will not overlook this possibility.

Led by the Spirit.—Those who live by the Spirit are led by the Spirit. As the "law of the Spirit" (Rom. 8: 2) makes "free from the law of sin and death," being led by the Spirit is to be influenced by the motives presented in the gospel to live as the Spirit directs. The Spirit leads, but Christians must follow. Hence, Paul urges that they work out their own salvation. (Phil. 2: 12, 13.) Under the

power of the Spirit's teaching the heart will be purified from evil thought, the life freed from deliberate wrongs, and the worship of God will be maintained with steady persistence. Such will be acceptable sons of God. The relationship of sonship banishes the dread and fear that torment the unrighteous, because we depend upon the love and mercy of our heavenly Father.

IV. The Witness of the Spirit (Verses 16, 17)

"The Spirit Himself."—The language here is decisive on the point that the evidence that we are children of God is the combined testimony of the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. The Holy Spirit bears witness *with* our spirit, not *to* it. In the "law of the Spirit"—the gospel—the Holy Spirit states exactly what sinners must do to have remission of sins, and to be saved finally. (Mark 16: 16; Luke 24: 46; Acts 2: 38; 3: 19; Rom. 10: 10; 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.) This constitutes his witness; the human spirit knows whether these things are done. If the human spirit knows that the conditions laid down by the Holy Spirit are being met, the testimony of both jointly become proof that the individual is a child of God.

"Heirs of God."—The relationship of sons carries with it the blessing of inheritance. This makes us "joint-heirs with Christ," the highest honor possible in receiving that inheritance. While heirs, the inheritance has not yet been received; it is reserved for us in heaven. (1 Pet. 1: 4.) This is to be received, provided we suffer with him; that is, provided we are led by the Spirit regardless of any sufferings we may be required to endure. (Rev. 2: 10.)

V. The Spirit's Intercession for Saints (Verses 26, 27)

The Spirit's Help.—The words, "we know not how to pray as we ought," do not mean that we cannot pray any acceptable prayers; but that we often fail to express our petitions properly, and feel our inability to do so, is most certainly true. That in our weakness we often groan in our longings for something for which we find no adequate expression is unquestionably a part of our earthly experience. That a better knowledge of the Spirit's teaching would make our prayers more pleasing to God and acceptable to ourselves must be admitted. Much help the Spirit gives in this way is lost because of our not knowing his words.

God Knoweth.—If the passage means that, because of our weakness, the Holy Spirit makes intercession directly to God for us, the mode of expression, not being known to us, cannot be understood by us. But we are assured that God knows the mind of the Spirit. We can know the Spirit's words; following them, we are safe.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. If it had been expedient for the gospel truth to have been perpetually confirmed by direct miracles, no doubt provision would have been made for apostles and other miracle workers to have had successors in the church. The fact that such was not done is proof that miracles ceased with the apostolic age.

2. A fact vital in understanding the work of the Spirit is that the Bible is the language of the Spirit. The Spirit through the words as

a medium puts the thoughts in our hearts. Words carry the thoughts.

3. When a scripture text states a fact, with no hint as to *how* the fact was accomplished, that information must be learned from other texts. We have no right to assume the *how* any more than the *what*.

4. As the apostles spoke by direction of the Spirit, their words contain the Spirit's testimony. Those who receive his testimony have his witness in their own hearts—the truth he reveals. (1 John 5: 7, 10.)

5. We will never be able to comprehend fully what God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit have done for us till we meet them in glory; but we know it is all for our good here and hereafter.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In the light of the first two sections of this lesson, discuss the work of the Spirit in the new birth. (John 3: 3-8.)

2. Discuss the question of spiritual gifts in the apostolic church as described in 1 Cor. 12: 4-11.

3. Discuss the different laws mentioned in Rom. 8: 1-4, showing the work done by each.

4. Discuss the contrast that Paul makes between the flesh and the spirit in Rom. 8: 5-9; Gal. 5: 16-18.

5. Discuss the manner of the Spirit's speaking, basing your remarks upon the following texts: 1 Tim. 4: 1; 2 Cor. 4: 6, 7; 1 Pet. 1: 12.

6. Give Paul's contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5: 16-24.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What is indicated by the expression "for you"?
What other proofs show this promise limited to apostles?
What is meant by expedient that Jesus go away?
What is meant by the word "Comforter"?

II

How does the Spirit "convict" the world?
What explanation did Jesus give of this?
How would they be convicted on each point?
What method did the Spirit use in convicting them?
What proof have we of this?

III

How is the relationship of the saved expressed?
How does the Spirit dwell in us?
What two explanations are offered for verse 10?
What proof have we of our resurrection?
What does verse 13 show regarding apostasy?
What is meant by "led by the Spirit"?

IV

What is the Holy Spirit's testimony?
What testimony is borne by the human spirit?
When and where will we receive the inheritance?

V

What help is given by the Spirit?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson XI—June 16, 1935

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Deut. 8: 11-18; 2 Cor. 9: 6-8.

11 Beware lest thou forget Jehovah thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his ordinances, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

12 Lest, when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;

13 And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

14 Then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget Jehovah thy God, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;

15 Who led thee through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions, and thirsty ground where was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not; that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end:

17 And lest thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.

18 But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth; that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as at this day.

6 But this I say. He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."* (1 Cor. 4: 2.)

TIME.—For Deuteronomy, about 1500 B.C.; for Corinthians, A.D. 57.

PLACES.—Plains of Moab and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Moses, the Israelites, Paul, and the church at Corinth.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 96: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 10.	M.	Stewardship Commanded (Deut. 8: 11-20)
June 11.	T.	Stewardship Neglected (Mal. 3: 7-12)
June 12.	W.	Stewardship Practiced (2 Cor. 8: 1-9)
June 13.	T.	Stewardship Rewarded (Matt. 25: 14-23)
June 14.	F.	Stewardship Directed (1 Cor. 16: 1-9)
June 15.	S.	Stewardship Encouraged (2 Cor. 9: 6-15)
June 16.	S.	Stewardship in Worship (Psalm 96: 1-8)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Warning Against Forgetting Jehovah (Verse 11).
 - II. Dangers of Forgetting Pointed Out (Verses 12-14).
 - III. Reasons Why They Should Not Forget (Verses 15-17).
 - IV. Reasons for Remembering Jehovah (Verse 18).
 - V. Reaping as We Sow (2 Cor. 9: 6-8).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Our first scripture text is from Moses, Israel's great leader and lawgiver, and was written a short time before committing the leadership of the people to Joshua. The book of Deuteronomy contains Moses' last address to the people, and its composition was begun the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year after leaving Egypt. (Deut. 1: 3.) This was 1451 B.C. The whole book was completed in a few weeks, for the next Passover, coming in the first month, was kept in the land of Canaan. (Josh. 5: 10-12.) This was after Moses' death. Our second text, found in Second Corinthians, was written by Paul probably in A.D. 57.

Lesson Links.—When the Israelites first came to Kadesh-Barnea, they could have entered the promised land in a few weeks at most, if they had been faithful to God; but because of their sins they were forced to wander in the wilderness about thirty-eight and one-half years. (Deut. 1: 34-46.) Much of their experience during that long period is not recorded, but enough is recorded to show they grievously sinned against God. In Deuteronomy Moses recounts the many favors they had received from God, repeats most of their laws, warns them of the danger of apostasy, and commits the leadership to Joshua. Our text is a part of that wonderful address.

Paul established the congregation in Corinth probably in A.D. 52, and remained with them eighteen months. (Acts 18: 11.) After returning to Antioch, he went to Ephesus, where he remained two years and three months. (Acts 19: 8, 10.) Before leaving Ephesus he wrote the first Corinthian letter; after reaching Macedonia, he wrote the second letter a few months later.

Lesson Settings.—Moses had been told plainly that because of his own sin he was not to bring the Israelites into the promised land. (Num. 2: 10-13.) He knew this meant his death before they crossed the Jordan. Long experience with them showed him they were a rebellious people. He desired to make his last, earnest appeal to them to protect them, if possible, against apostasy. No address ever bore stronger evidence of sincerity.

Paul had learned that his work in Corinth was endangered by divisions that had crept in since he left them, and that a Judaizing element in the congregation was rejecting his apostleship. To correct the bad situation, he wrote them two letters. Our text is from the second.

LESSON NOTES

I. Warning Against Forgetting Jehovah (Verse 11)

"Beware."—Moses' knowledge of the weakness of human nature, and Israel's proneness to turn away from Jehovah, probably caused him to exhort them to "beware" lest they forget the benefits received and the obligations they were under. He regarded the matter so important that he repeated it several times. (Deut. 6: 12; 4: 9, 23.) They had sinned against God so much that they were denied the privilege of entering the promised land when almost at its border. This was clear proof that they might forget Jehovah again. Their later history shows that they did. Jeremiah, more than seven hundred years later, represents Jehovah as saying, "My people have forgotten me days without number." (Jer. 2: 32.) Since man ever remains the same

in nature, there is the danger of forgetting God now just as then. Moses' exhortation is therefore still timely.

How Done?—Moses did not mean that the Israelites would actually forget that Jehovah existed, but that they might easily forget the many evidences of God's love to them, and fail in their obedience. His statement is that he feared they might forget Jehovah "in not keeping his commandments." We remember Jehovah, not simply by thinking of his existence, but by doing what he requires at our hands. Of course, an appreciation of his mercies to us will lead to obedience; hence, the exhortation not to forget that Jehovah brought them out of Egypt (Deut. 6: 12), nor the things which they had seen, and the covenant made with them by Jehovah (Deut. 4: 9, 23). God's commandments to them came through Moses; rejecting what Moses said was forgetting God; rejecting what Christ's apostles said is doing the same thing.

II. Dangers of Forgetting Pointed Out (Verses 12-14)

Food and Dwelling Places.—The first danger mentioned was plenty to eat and a place to dwell. During the forty years in the wilderness they had to depend upon God's miraculous power for food and drink. They had no permanent abiding place. This would be changed in the land of Canaan. They would get food in the normal way and have permanent homes. With an abundance of food and a secure place to stay, it would be easy for them to forget that these also came through God's mercy. We often forget our dependence upon God, when the things we have are received through our own efforts. Men are likely to think of the harvest as their own, because produced through their labor, and forget that it was received from the soil, sunshine, and rain—gifts of God. In the material realm, no less than in the spiritual, man's life depends upon what God does for him.

Riches.—Another danger of forgetting God was in the possession of riches. Moses reminded them that the increase in flocks and herds, and the multiplication of silver and gold, would have the same effect as an abundance of food and good homes. In this particular the Israelites were not peculiar; great wealth, because of the difficulty of its right use, has always been dangerous to true spirituality. Jesus spoke of the "deceitfulness of riches" (Matt. 13: 22), and God declares that one who "layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God," is a fool (Luke 12: 20, 21). Paul says that the "love of money" is the root from which spring all kinds of evil, and that we should not set our hope "on the uncertainty of riches." (1 Tim. 6: 10, 17.)

Result Is Pride.—The great danger of riches is that they lead to pride. When the heart is lifted up in pride, man forgets his duty to God, and trusts in his own power and possessions. He even forgets his feeling of dependence upon God when he was poor. Anything that would make a nation forget their deliverance from bondage deserved severe condemnation. Pride is one of the most dangerous things that Christians have to overcome in serving God; one of the greatest hindrances to faithful stewardship.

III. Reasons Why They Should Not Forget (Verses 15-17)

Jehovah Led Them.—Without assistance the Israelites could not have escaped the Egyptians or reached the land of Canaan. God's wisdom

led them and his power protected them. Moses describes the dangers of the journey by saying it was "through the great and terrible wilderness." When there was no water to drink, God sent Moses to smite the rock and give them drink. (Ex. 17: 1-7.) When a similar condition existed near the close of the forty years, another miracle was performed to supply water. (Num. 2-13.) When they were bitten by fiery serpents and were dying, God healed those who looked at the brazen serpent which Moses placed on a pole. (Num. 21: 4-9.) Nothing but divine power could have protected them in such emergencies. There was but one answer to Moses' questions, "Who brought thee out of the house of bondage?" and "Who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint?"

Jehovah Fed Them.—The small supply of food with which they left Egypt was soon gone; without help from God they would have perished. God sent them manna, bread from heaven, to sustain life and to teach the lesson of dependence upon him. (Deut. 8: 2-4.) They knew the manna and quails were food that kept them alive; they knew from the manner in which it was given that they were dependent upon God for them. Receiving them depended upon obeying God's commands; hence, they lived not by the food alone, but by the words God had spoken. This statement is quoted by Jesus (Matt. 4: 4), and given the same application as made by Moses. This shows that spiritual life as certainly depends upon doing what God says as physical life depends upon eating natural food. Recognizing this truth, and using it, protected Jesus against the devil's temptation; it will protect us against most, if not all, of his devices. No one can successfully meet temptations without its help.

To Prove Thee.—Moses declared that God thus miraculously led and fed Israel to test or prove them, to know what was in their hearts, and whether they would keep his commandments or not. (Verse 2.) God's design was to do them good, and prevent their boastfully saying, "My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth." Taking all the credit to themselves was to forget God as the source of all blessings. If this lesson had been thoroughly learned by the Israelites, and not forgotten, it would have been of untold advantage to them in their later history; it would have prevented the many and grievous apostasies.

IV. Reasons for Remembering Jehovah (Verse 18)

Power from God.—This verse contains a kind of general conclusion from what Moses had said about the necessity of the Israelites remembering Jehovah by obeying his commandments. He said what they knew must be true, that it was God who had given them power to get what wealth they had. This necessarily brought them under lasting obligations to God. It still remains true that whatever power we have to gain temporal wealth or earthly benefits is allowed us from God. No one will ever be able to dodge the responsibility that such blessings bind upon him. All men should obey God, and remain true to his commands; no other course is in any way reasonable.

The Purpose in View.—The object in view in demanding their obedience to his commands was that God wanted to establish firmly the covenant he had made with their fathers. The benefits and blessings of that covenant God wanted them to have, but these he could not

bestow upon the disobedient. He wanted the laws of the covenant to become so firmly fixed as the rule for their government that their descendants in future ages would still be worthy to receive his favors. All this would be thwarted unless they kept his commandments themselves, and taught their children to do likewise. This lesson is in perfect harmony with all the New Testament says on fidelity to God.

V. Reaping as We Sow (2 Cor. 9: 6-8)

Nature's Law.—In the preceding part of this lesson Moses has shown the necessity of serving God because of the temporal blessings he gives us; in this section Paul shows that liberality is the just principle by which we should meet the obligations we owe to others. This he illustrates from a law in the natural world; namely, that to sow sparingly means to reap sparingly, and to sow bountifully means to reap bountifully. Only seed sown can sprout and grow. Other things being equal, the harvest will be in proportion to the amount of seed sown. This law applies also in the moral and spiritual world. If we are liberal in bestowing favors upon the worthy needy, we may expect God's blessing to rest upon us bountifully. Malachi declared that the Israelites were under a curse in his day because they had robbed God in tithes and offerings. He urged them to bring "the whole tithe into the store-house" in order that God would pour out a blessing upon them. (Mal. 3: 7-12.) The logical results that will follow either deeds of charity or preaching of the gospel cannot be abundant, if our efforts are few and weak. This is a grand reason for liberal efforts in all work looking to the good of men, either temporal or spiritual.

According to Purpose.—In obeying all God's commands, particularly in deeds of charity and giving to the Lord's work, each is required to do as he hath "purposed in his heart." To be forced to act would not be in keeping with man's free moral agency; he must be willing to obey or his service is not acceptable to God. As man's purpose might not be right, Paul adds that man is not to give "grudgingly, or of necessity." Such a purpose of heart would not please God. "Grudgingly" means of sorrow, according to the marginal reading. That means to give under some stress that would lead to sorrow because of the giving. If one is constrained to give against his will, and is sorry for it, such giving God will not accept. If the influence is so pressing that he feels he must give, when he does not want to, the case is the same.

"A Cheerful Giver."—Paul settles the matter in a brief expression: "For God loveth a cheerful giver." No one can hope to be pleasing to God when he is not within the bounds of God's love. This matter of being willing to give was taught the children of Israel. (Ex. 25: 2.) The comforting thought is that God, who is "able to make all grace abound," will not forget our "labor of love," and will reward us as his wisdom knows that we deserve.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Every exhortation to do right is given upon the supposition that man may do wrong. If he did not have that ability, and was in no danger of being overcome by temptation, the exhortation would be vain.

2. Wealth is far more dangerous to the church than poverty, though wealth rightly used is of great benefit to the church. Jesus declared it would be difficult for those having riches to enter heaven, the reason being that it is hard not to trust in riches.

3. Man can never realize his own weakness so well as when contemplating the majesty and power of God. When God appeared upon Mount Sinai, the people trembled, and even Moses did fear and quake. (Ex. 20: 18, 19; Heb. 12: 19-21.)

4. It would aid us greatly in appreciating our responsibility to God, if we would but remember that everything we receive in some way depends upon his power. Without him we can do nothing.

5. In both nature and grace we reap as we sow. If we sow to the flesh, we will reap corruption; if we sow to the Spirit, we will reap life everlasting. Such is Paul's teaching in Gal. 6: 7, 8. How important that we sow good seed!

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give the charges in full that Malachi made against Israel for their failure to make proper offerings. (Malachi 3: 7-12.)

2. Show why some will be rejected and others received at the judgment, according to sayings of Jesus in Matt. 25: 31-46.

3. Show from Matt. 25: 14-30 the principle upon which God will hold each one responsible.

4. Discuss briefly the three temptations of Jesus. (Matt. 4: 1-11.)

5. Discuss the report of the spies, and show what resulted from their report. (Num. 13: 25-33; 14: 26-33.)

6. Tell the story of the rich man whom Jesus said was foolish, as recorded by Luke 16: 13-21.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

Why did Moses exhort Israel to beware?
What shows that he considered the matter important?
What did Moses mean by their forgetting Jehovah?
What did he urge them to remember?

II

What danger of forgetting did he mention first?
What danger did he mention next?
What threat did he say riches would produce?

III

What reason is assigned for not forgetting?

Describe the circumstances referred to.
What did he say about God feeding them?
What use is made of his words in the New Testament?

What was God's design in all these things?

IV

By what power did they get their wealth?
Why did God demand strict obedience?

V

What illustration does Paul use?
How does Paul say we should give?
What is meant by not giving "grudgingly"?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson XII—June 23, 1935

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

Acts 1: 6-8; 13: 1-12.

6 They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority.

8 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 Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant.

6 And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus;

7 Who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith.

9 But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.”* (Mark 16: 15.)

TIME.—A.D. 30 to 47.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Antioch.

PERSONS.—Jesus and his disciples, Paul and Barnabas, and the church at Antioch.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 67.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 17.	M.	-----	Missionary Command (Matt. 28: 16-20)
June 18.	T.	-----	Missionary Pioneer (Gen. 12: 1-9)
June 19.	W.	-----	Missionary Workers (Acts 13: 1-12)
June 20.	T.	-----	Missionary Witnesses (Acts 1: 6-8)
June 21.	F.	-----	Missionary Obedience (Acts 16: 6-10)
June 22.	S.	-----	Missionary Prayer (2 Chron. 6: 32, 33)
June 23.	S.	-----	Missionary Passion (Psalm 67: 1-7)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. Jesus' Final Statement to the Apostles (Verses 6-8).

- II. Barnabas and Saul Sent as Missionaries (Acts 13: 1-3).
 - III. Their Labors in Salamis (Verses 4, 5).
 - IV. Their Labors in Paphos (Verses 6-10).
 - V. The Sorcerer Punished (Verses 11, 12).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The conversation between Jesus and his apostles, reported in our text, occurred just before his ascension, which was forty days after the resurrection. (Acts 1: 3.) As the resurrection was on the first day of the week, the forty days would end on Thursday, according to the Jewish method of reckoning time. The incidents recorded in Acts 13: 1-12 occurred in A.D. 47, seventeen years after the ascension. The record was made by Luke, when he wrote the book of Acts, probably about A.D. 63, or soon thereafter.

Lesson Links.—In the mountain in Galilee, where Jesus promised to meet the apostles, he had given the command to make disciples of all nations—preach the gospel to the whole creation. (Matt. 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15, 16.) He had also required them to wait in Jerusalem for spiritual endowment from heaven. (Luke 24: 49.) In the conversation in our text he is repeating, in another form, both the preceding commands, with the statement that they were to be his witnesses “unto the end of the world.” For the first seventeen years after the establishment of the church the preaching of the gospel was limited to Jerusalem, Judea, and the near-by countries. Our second text introduces the first great effort to take the gospel to the far distant Gentile nations. It begins the story of what is known as Paul’s first missionary journey, a real effort to reach the uttermost parts of the earth.

Lesson Settings.—Jesus had had many meetings with the apostles, and had given them much instruction regarding the kingdom of heaven, during the forty days. Our lesson records his last meeting with them before his ascension. It occurred on the Mount of Olives. It was a tender and touching farewell with assurance that it would not be “many days” till his promises to them would be fulfilled. As he concluded this statement he was taken up into heaven.

The congregation at Antioch was in Gentile territory, and doubtless contained many Gentile converts. (Acts 11: 20, 21.) It seems especially fitting that the first general missionary tour among Gentile nations should start from this congregation.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jesus’ Final Statement to the Apostles (Verses 6-8)

The Apostles’ Question.—God’s statement to Abraham, “in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12: 3), is the foundation promise upon which world-wide missions are based. Isaiah, referring to the future kingdom, had declared that “all nations shall flow unto it” (Isa. 2: 2, 3), and Amos had said that the tabernacle of David was to be restored that the Gentiles might seek after the Lord (Amos 9: 11, 12; Acts 15: 16, 17). With strange dullness even the apostles, with all the teaching of Jesus before them, did not under-

stand the nature of the kingdom Christ was to establish. They thought it was to be the restoration of their old temporal kingdom, and limited to the Jews. Hence, they asked: "Dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They had been disappointed because he had not already done so. His resurrection had revived their hope, and they probably thought his presence at Jerusalem again meant he was ready to assume authority as their king.

Jesus' Reply.—Jesus gave no direct reply to their question, knowing that after they received the Spirit all necessary information would be given. Since they could not begin their work till then, no direct answer was needed. He told them, however, that it was not necessary for them to know the precise time God would cause events to happen. This being true, they could well afford to wait for God's plans to be worked out in his own time. If our modern, self-appointed prophets would believe what Jesus says here, they would quit setting times for the Lord's return. His words, "But of that day and hour knoweth no one" (Matt. 24: 36), should have convinced all that time-setting for the coming of Christ is labor in vain.

The Essential Thing.—His statement was an assurance that God would take care of all things unknown to them. The thing for them to remember was that they would receive power—divine qualification—for their work at the proper time. This power was to be received when the Holy Spirit came upon them. The essential thing was for them to patiently wait for it, and be led by it. Their work was to be his witnesses from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the earth. He meant that their testimony to him and his words was to be binding upon all, for they were to remit and retain sin. (John 20: 22, 23.) It was the same as his other statement, "and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28: 20.) His law would remain applicable till the end of the world. This made the apostles his official missionaries to all nations. Other preachers can repeat what they said, but dare not change or pervert it on pain of being accursed. (Gal. 1: 6-9.)

II. Barnabas and Saul Sent as Missionaries (Acts 13: 1-3)

The Work Defined.—The words mission and missionary are not found in the Bible, but they express Bible ideas. Their use, therefore, is perfectly legitimate, and it is correct to speak of "Christian missions" or "Christian missionaries." The word missionary is derived from the Latin, and means one sent for some special purpose. The Greek word from which we get our word "apostle" also means one sent; and, like the word missionary, may be applied to any one for any purpose, so far as the meaning of the word is concerned. Barnabas and Saul are both called "apostles" (Acts 14: 14); that is, both were sent from Antioch according to the Spirit's direction. In current use, however, the word apostle is applied to those selected and sent by Jesus personally.

Application of the Term.—Ordinarily the word missionary is applied to those sent to preach in heathen lands. Such are missionaries, of course, but the term cannot be limited to them. Those sent anywhere, near or far, for a specific work, are missionaries. One sent to preach the gospel in a community five miles away is just as truly a missionary as one sent to China or Japan. Barnabas was no more a mis-

sionary when sent with Paul to distant lands than when sent from Jerusalem to Antioch. (Acts 11: 22-24.)

Called.—Luke mentions five prophets and teachers in the Antioch church: Barnabas, Symeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul. As they were prophets, and, of course, possessed some spiritual gifts, it was the natural thing that the Holy Spirit should announce the call of Barnabas and Saul to them. As the congregation at Antioch was in Gentile territory, and made up largely of Gentiles, it was fitting that the first great tour in Gentile countries should start there. Barnabas and Paul were both born in Gentile countries, and especially fitted for work among Gentiles.

Sent.—The command to "separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" simply means to send them away to the work. In doing this they fasted, prayed, and laid their hands upon them. Fasting is natural on solemn and serious occasions; starting gospel preachers to heathen fields was both. Prayer is always appropriate in all our undertakings in God's service. It is not so easy to determine the exact reason why hands were laid on them, nor who did it. The pronoun "they" may refer to the other prophets mentioned; the grammar favors that view. That the whole congregation approved of the work is, of course, to be assumed. As Barnabas and Saul had both been preachers for ten or more years, and already possessed some measure of the Spirit (Acts 9: 17; 11: 24), it is not reasonable to suppose they laid hands on them to impart the Spirit. As hands may be laid on for various purposes, it may have been, as it often is with us, an affectionate way of bidding them Godspeed, while asking God's blessings on them. So far as the record indicates, it may have been entirely informal.

III. Their Labors in Salamis (Verses 4, 5)

Sent by the Spirit.—The text says that they were "sent forth by the Holy Spirit." Verse 3 says "they" sent them away; that is, they were sent by the other prophets, either alone or in connection with the whole congregation. What they did is said to have been done by the Holy Spirit, because they acted by the Spirit's direction. This is a general truth of much importance in Bible study. As the apostles were speaking as the Spirit gave utterance (Acts 2: 4; 1 Cor. 2: 13), to obey their words is to obey the Spirit, and to reject their words is to reject the Spirit (Acts 7: 51-53).

At Salamis.—Cyprus is an island near the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. Seleucia, from which they sailed, is a seaport a few miles from Antioch. Salamis, the capital of the island, is more than a hundred miles southwest of Antioch. Here Paul and Barnabas had their first experiences in the long missionary journey. Being Jews themselves they entered the synagogue of the Jews to begin their teaching. This plan they continued to follow, as the synagogues furnished the most likely places where they could first get a hearing. Luke here adds the incidental statement that they had "John as their attendant." From verse 13 we learn that John left them after reaching Perga, and returned to Jerusalem. Why he did so is not stated.

IV. Their Labors in Paphos (Verses 6-10)

Encountered a False Prophet.—Leaving Salamis on the eastern coast of Cyprus, they went through the island to Paphos, on the extreme west coast. Here Paul got his first opportunity that we know of in preaching the gospel to a Roman officer. Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, was a man of understanding, and called Barnabas and Saul to him that he might hear the word of God. Men of ability to understand, who are honest, will always be affected by the preaching of the gospel. Evidently the preaching was reaching the proconsul's heart, for verse 12 tells us that as a result of what he saw he believed. With this officer they also found a sorcerer, who was a false prophet; his name was Elymas.

"Withstood Them."—There were two reasons why he would be inclined to withstand the preachers: he was a Jew and a sorcerer. Paul's preaching would show the Jewish law was abolished and his sorcery was a false practice. As his magical arts had probably gained some influence with the proconsul, he would resist anything that would tend to destroy that influence. Hence, his efforts to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Satan knows the power of God's word, and loses no chance to get it out of hearts where it might germinate and grow. (Matt. 13: 19.) That false prophet was just a servant of Satan, trying to prevent the proconsul from believing God's word.

Denounced by Paul.—Here Saul's name is changed. Before he was called Saul, after this, Paul. Just why his name was changed has long been a matter of speculation. The record gives no light on the question; guessing is of no practical value. Paul looked at Elymas intently and charged him with being full of guile and villany, and called him a "son of the devil," an "enemy of all righteousness." Such a denunciation indicated that Paul was determined to show no quarters to any hypocrite. Paul then asked, "Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" The issue was clearly stated, and Paul was ready to demonstrate the correctness of his denunciation.

V. The Sorcerer Punished (Verses 11, 12)

"The Hand of the Lord."—The hand of the Lord means his power. Sometimes it refers to punishment inflicted on people for their sins (Ex. 9: 3; Judges 2: 14, 15); sometimes it means the miracles he uses to confirm the truth (Acts 11: 21). The expression in our text is an example of the former. In this case the miracle resulted in injury to the wicked person. Though such punishment was none too severe for the hypocrite, yet that was not the customary way the apostles treated their enemies. The issue in the case was between a false and a true teacher. The hypocrisy of the false had to be shown in its true light. Causing some physical affliction to come upon Elymas was the best way to show his weakness, and convince the proconsul that Paul was preaching the truth. Miracles in confirmation of the truth varied, but were always suited to the demands of the special case, so as to produce the best results. His sudden blindness was so evidently the result of divine power that none who saw him could deny it. Natural blindness does not come suddenly.

The Proconsul Believed.—Luke tells us that the proconsul was "astonished at the teaching of the Lord," and that, when he saw what

was done, he believed. Mark says that the Lord confirmed the preaching of the apostles by the "signs that followed." (Mark 16: 20.) Here we have a clear example of that truth. In describing their work at Iconium on this same journey, Luke says the Lord bare witness to the word by "granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands." (Acts 14: 3.)

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Curiosity often makes men spend valuable time trying to discover the unrevealed. However interesting such labor may be, it is time lost. The essential thing is to be certain about present duty, and see to it that we are not neglectful in that.

2. Every Christian should count himself a missionary; that is, one who is *sent* of the Lord to carry the gospel to some one. When the whole church becomes imbued with the true missionary spirit, then the Lord's work will prosper as it has never done since apostolic days.

3. Missionary work includes both *going* and *sending*. Both should be done wisely, whether in near-by fields or foreign territory. When individuals and congregations take the sending part seriously, something worth while will be accomplished.

4. Preaching the simple gospel has always met opposition, and always will. Falsehood must not only be rejected, but condemned. (2 Tim. 4: 2.) Those who fail to condemn false doctrines are not servants of God.

5. Desperate cases require drastic treatment, but it should always be administered as becomes followers of Christ. Nothing is gained for the truth by unchristian conduct, or compromising with error.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Tell the story of Jonah's preaching to the people of Nineveh. (Jonah 3: 1-10.)

2. Explain the first great general missionary effort of the church at Jerusalem, noting the occasion of it. (Acts 8: 1-13.)

3. Tell the story of the labors of Paul and Barnabas in Lystra. (Acts 14: 8-28.)

4. Explain why Paul and Silas, on the second missionary journey, went into Macedonia, and give the first work there. (Acts 16: 6-15.)

5. Repeat Paul's explanation of his own call to become a minister and witness for the Lord. (Acts 26: 12-20.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What promise is the ground for world-wide missions?
Why did the apostles ask the question about the kingdom?

Why did Jesus not answer directly?
What lesson is in this for all?
What was the essential thing for them?

II

Explain the words "mission" and "missionary"?
Why was the word "apostle" applied to Barnabas?
To what may the word "missionary" be applied?
Who called Saul and Barnabas?
Who sent them?
What was done, and why?

III

How did the Spirit send them?
Locate the island of Cyprus, and the city
of Salamis.

IV

What is said of Sergius Paulus and
Elymas?
How did Elymas withstand them?
Repeat Paul's denunciation of Elymas.

V

What is meant by the "hand of the
Lord"?
What punishment was visited upon
Elymas?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson XIII—June 30, 1935

LIBERTY UNDER LAW

(TEMPERANCE LESSON)

Rom. 14: 13-21; 1 Cor. 8: 9-13.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more; but judge ye this rather, that
no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling.

14 I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself:
save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

15 For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in
love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and
peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

18 For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of
men.

19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby
we may edify one another.

20 Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean;
howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21 It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy
brother stumbleth.

9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock
to the weak.

10 For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple,
will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols?

11 For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose
sake Christ died.

12 And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when
it is weak, ye sin against Christ.

13 Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for ever-
more, that I cause not my brother to stumble.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor
to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." (Rom. 14: 21.)

TIME.—About A.D. 53 to 58.

PLACES.—Rome and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Churches at Rome and Corinth, and all Christians.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Gal. 5: 16-24.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

June 24.	M.	Liberty under Law (Rom. 14: 13-21)
June 25.	T.	Liberty through Sacrifice (1 Cor. 8: 9-13)
June 26.	W.	Liberty through Self-denial (1 Cor. 10: 1-7)
June 27.	T.	Liberty through Self-control (Isa. 28: 1-6)
June 28.	F.	Liberty through Unity (1 Cor. 1: 10-17)
June 29.	S.	Liberty through the Gospel (Rom. 6: 8-14)
June 30.	S.	Liberty through the Spirit (Gal. 5: 16-24)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Christian Attitude Toward Indifferent Things (Verse 13).
 - II. This Attitude Illustrated (Verses 14-18).
 - III. An Exhortation to Maintain This Attitude (Verses 19-21).
 - IV. The Proper Use of Christian Liberty (1 Cor. 8: 9-11).
 - V. The Dangers in Sinning Against Brethren (Verses 12, 13).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The book of Romans, which contains our first lesson text, was written by Paul at Corinth near the close of A.D. 57 or early in A.D. 58. Paul was on his third missionary journey, and remained at Corinth three months, during which time the letter was written. Before reaching Corinth on this journey, he spent two years and three months in Ephesus. (Acts 19: 8, 10.) While there, in the spring of A.D. 57, he wrote the Corinthian letter. This was approximately nine months before the writing of the Roman letter.

Lesson Links.—The church had been established nearly a quarter of a century when these letters were written. In both of them the apostle dealt with difficulties that had come up in the experiences of actual congregations. Paul had desired for some time to visit the congregation at Rome, that he might have fruit among them, but had been hindered. (Rom. 1: 13.) He also longed to see them, that he might impart any spiritual gift that might be needed (verse 11). This desire being providentially denied, he doubtless hoped to accomplish by a letter a part, at least, of what he might do for them, if present.

During Paul's absence from Corinth the congregation had been split into contending factions—some of Paul, some of Apollos, some of Cephas, and some of Christ. (1 Cor. 1: 11, 12.) Some one of the parties, possibly those "of Paul," had evidently written him for advice regarding a number of questions. (1 Cor. 7: 1.) His general purpose, of course, was to correct the evils that had crept into the congregation in his absence.

Lesson Settings.—The Judaizing element that had been giving the congregations trouble generally had hindered the work of the church greatly. It not only needed to be exposed, but had to be, or the unity required of God's children would be destroyed. In the first eleven chapters of Romans, we have the most complete defense of the gospel of Christ as God's power to save (Rom. 1: 16) that is known to literature. In the remaining part of the book we have exhortations on practical Christian living, the chief of which, possibly, is our text on the law of love.

The party spirit at Corinth, as is always the case, had led to flagrant disregard for the rights of others, and furnished the demand for our second text on the restraints that must be applied to our use of Christian liberty. The proper balance between liberties and restraints is a most vital matter of Christian duty. Nothing will better enable one to solve the difficult problems that arise.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Christian Attitude Toward Indifferent Things (Verse 13)

Judging Forbidden.—The apostle does not mean that it is wrong to compare one's conduct with Bible teaching, or withdraw fellowship from those who walk disorderly; for, the former is a privilege (Matt. 7: 20), the latter is a direct command (2 Thess. 3: 6). The connection and context show clearly that Paul is discussing the Christian's attitude to indifferent matters. All texts should be understood in the light of the context. The rule expressed by the apostle is that in such matters no one has a right to judge another man's servant. (Rom. 14: 4.) In purely indifferent matters, each one is God's servant, and to God alone he is responsible. Before God he will stand or fall upon his own individual conduct. The final decision in such matters will be rendered when "each one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Verse 12.)

"A Stumblingblock."—The apostle shows that those whose faith is weak in some particular thing, or for any other reason satisfactory to themselves do not take part in it, do not have the right to condemn others who do take part. This liberty on the part of the strong might easily be abused. Hence the apostle protects the nonparticipant by saying that "no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way." That means that no one has the right, in indifferent matters, to so act that his brother will be damaged, or influenced to do wrong. In duties plainly commanded each one must obey, regardless of what any one thinks about it, but in personal privileges he must be governed by what the influence may be.

II. This Attitude Illustrated (Verses 14-18)

"Nothing Is Unclean."—Paul illustrates the Christian's attitude to indifferent things by a reference to the eating of meats offered to idols. To the Corinthians he wrote on the same subject as follows: "Concerning therefore the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one." (1 Cor. 8: 4.) Since the idol was nothing, then the sacrifice to the idol was nothing so far as the elements used in the sacrifice were concerned. This fact justified the apostle's statement in our text, "that nothing is unclean of itself." Since the meat used in the idol sacrifices was clean of itself, and the sacrifices being nothing in themselves, the nature of the meat was not changed when placed in an idol's temple. Its fitness for food, therefore, was not affected in the least. Those with that knowledge would not have their consciences disturbed by the fact that they were eating meat that had been offered to an idol; they would eat whatsoever was set before them, asking no questions. (1 Cor. 10: 27.)

This Knowledge Limited.—Paul declared that all men do not have this knowledge respecting the nothingness of idols, and the fact that nothing is unclean of itself. (1 Cor. 8: 7.) Hence, he adds in our text that nothing is unclean, "save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Clearly he means that one who considers such meat unclean, though not so in fact, will condemn himself by eating it, for in so doing he will violate his own conscience and act dishonestly. His judgment being wrong will not

destroy his hypocrisy. His lack of knowledge must be taken into account by the better informed brother; such is unquestionably Paul's teaching.

The Law of Love.—The principle of brotherly love demands that we shall recognize the rights of others, and regulate our conduct in such way as not to endanger their salvation by influencing them to do wrong. Paul says, "Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died." Christ died for men; we can't afford to act in a way to bring about their destruction. That would be overthrowing the work of Christ. "Let not then your good be evil spoken of" means that we are not to use our personal rights in a way that may lead others to be lost; this would cause even good to be evil, because a matter of reproach.

A Better Plan.—The apostle says the kingdom of God does not consist in eating and drinking, but in "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." The personal rights of eating, drinking, and such like temporal matters can easily be modified or changed for the betterment of the spiritual things of God's kingdom. Those who follow this wise course will serve Christ in a way that is "well-pleasing to God, and approved of men." Such a course must necessarily be better for all parties concerned.

III. An Exhortation to Maintain This Attitude (Verses 19-21)

Things of Peace.—"The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4: 3) is far more important, even to the individual, than having his own preferences satisfied in indifferent matters. One may result in the condemnation of men, the other can produce no serious harm to any one. Instead of despising a weak brother, we should try to "edify one another." Proper efforts to instruct him may remove his objection, preserve unity, and result in salvation. Such a possibility cannot be ignored by those with proper knowledge of Christian liberties.

"The Work of God."—The work of God includes the church established at the price of Christ's blood, and the privilege of being saved in heaven. The simple matters of eating and drinking and such like things are utterly insignificant in comparison with God's great work in saving the world. Christians who overthrow God's work just to gratify their own personal desires are unworthy of the name. This they do when they carelessly or deliberately put stumblingblocks in the way of others, and cause them to sin. All meats indeed are clean, but one must not eat in a way causing offense to the weak brother. To do so is evil—a sin—according to Paul's words.

IV. The Proper Use of Christian Liberty (1 Cor. 8: 9-11)

"Take Heed."—Paul reasons that those then with knowledge enough to understand that offering meat to an idol did not render it unfit for food, had the liberty to eat it without sin; that no questions need be asked when buying the meat. Others might eat it without this knowledge and defile their consciences; do what they doubted as being right. Hence his advice that caution be used that their liberty be not exercised in a way to lead some to do what they doubted. In such cases the liberty of one would become a stumblingblock to another.

The lesson made is clearly this: Liberties in indifferent matters must be so used as not to interfere with the liberties of others, or influence them to do anything detrimental to their good.

Consider Circumstances.—In the matter of eating meats, as in fact in all personal rights, circumstances have much to do in fixing conduct. Eating the meat at home, or under private conditions, would probably have produced no bad influence on the one with less knowledge; but for some weak brother to see him "sitting at meat in an idol's temple" was a different matter. Paul reasons that the brother's weak conscience might embolden him to eat in honor of the idol. In the text from Romans, Paul says that such eating on the part of the strong brother would be an occasion of the weak falling. It might drive him from the church entirely, or back to the worship of idols. Either one would have been fatal to his salvation.

For Whom Christ Died.—Paul says that in such cases the weak brother would perish through the knowledge of the strong. He means that, when those who have knowledge use their liberties in a way that the weak brother is caused to stumble, that leads to their condemnation. It is the unrestrained use of liberties, not their right use, that the apostle is charging with such fearful results. The thing that makes it so serious is that the very one for whom Christ died is the one that the reckless use of liberties may cause to perish. Surely no Christian can afford to be responsible for such terrible results. Brotherly love, and the value of human souls, should prevent any such careless use of liberties.

V. The Dangers in Sinning Against Brethren (Verses 12, 13)

"Ye Sin Against Christ."—Paul says that, when our reckless use of liberties leads others to violate their consciences, we sin against them. This we do because we lead them to sin, and are therefore really in part responsible for their sin. Since Christ died to save them, when we do that which may lead to their being lost, we are sinning against Christ, for the reason that we are defeating his work. These are two great reasons why we should "take heed," as Paul says, that our liberty shall not become a stumblingblock to others. Probably we would not have any trouble with the question of eating meats sacrificed to idols, especially in so-called Christian countries, but the argument is applicable to anything of a similar nature. It affects very materially the matter of introducing things into the worship of the church. If a thing be really indifferent, but is opposed by those ignorant of the true fact, and for that reason conscientiously against it, those in favor must yield or be guilty of sinning against brethren. However, those opposed should beware lest their opposition results from prejudice or contrariness, for they are under equal obligation not to unnecessarily offend brethren. Paul's final statement is that he would not allow his privilege to eat meat cause his brother to stumble.

Another Fact.—Paul's argument is based upon the supposition that the thing in question is indifferent. His reference to eating meats offered to idols assumes it innocent in itself, because meats are not unclean and the idol is nothing. But eating meat in an idol's temple he condemns for two reasons: 1. Its dangerous effect on the weak (1 Cor. 8: 10). 2. Because in so doing one would have "communion with

demons," which is sinful (1 Cor. 10: 20, 21). Things indifferent in themselves cannot be forced into the church worship over honest protest without sin; things wrong, or lacking divine authority, cannot be introduced without perverting the worship, and sinning against God. In either case, those opposed are forced to submit and be dishonest with themselves, or leave the congregation. It is just here that the introduction of instrumental music becomes "exceedingly sinful."

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. "Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth." (Rom. 14: 22.) By this the apostle means that one will be in a state of blessedness, if he does not condemn himself by practicing what he opposes, or something of like nature.

2. That which is wrong in nature must be prohibited everywhere; that which is right must be limited by circumstances and regulated to produce best results. Christian liberties must be modified by restraints.

3. Conscience, though wrong, must not be violated; if wrong, it must be educated, or the individual may be lost. Honesty is no proof of correctness. The right thing done at the wrong time or in the wrong way may lead to one's condemnation.

4. Circumstances often determine whether an act is indifferent, illegal, or criminal. Things legitimate at home may be sinful as a part of church service. Things scriptural according to the Jewish law are sinful in the church, unless authorized by Christ or his apostles.

5. Setting bad examples, or doing unauthorized things, in our religious acts, endangers the salvation of others and shows a lack of respect for divine wisdom. Both are sinful in character.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss Paul's argument on the Christian's relationship to civil government. (Rom. 13: 1-7.)

2. Discuss the apostles' attitude to civil government as seen in the following incident, related in Acts 5: 17-32.

3. Discuss the points made by Paul in 1 Cor. 10: 23-32.

4. Discuss the points made in James 1: 9-15. Show how the lessons here fit the spirit of our lesson subject.

5. Tell the story of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10: 1-7), and show how their case illustrates the subject of "liberty under law."

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What is not condemned in the command against judging?

What is the nature of the matters in question?

What does Paul mean by a "stumbling-block"?

II

What led Paul to say "nothing is unclean of itself"?

What does the apostle say about "knowledge"?

How could one condemn himself when the meat was clean?

What is demanded by the "law of love"?

What contrast is made in verse 17?

III

What is more important than one's own preference?

What is the "work of God"?

How can Christians overthrow God's work?

IV

What liberty does Paul concede?

What bearing do circumstances have on religious conduct?

What fearful results are charged against the use of liberty?

V

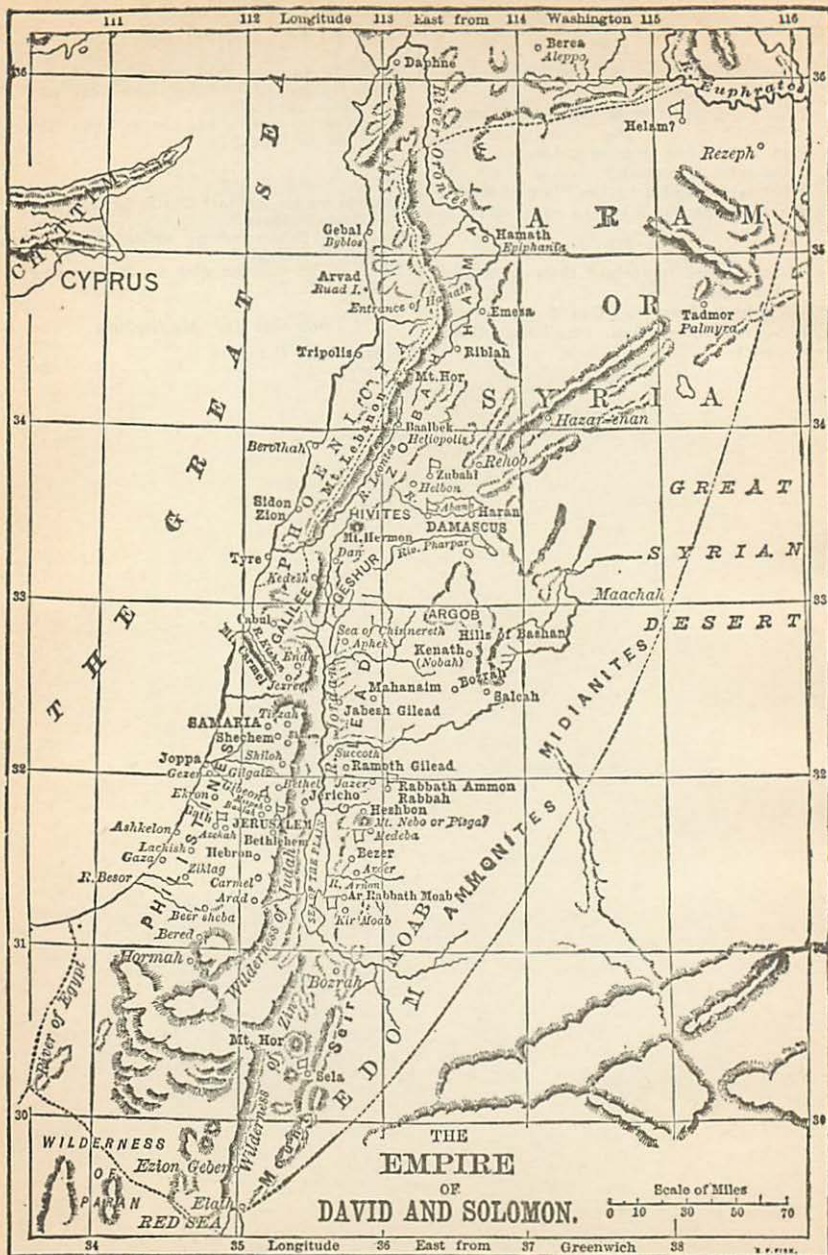
How do we sin against Christ by sinning against brethren?

How does Paul condemn eating meat in an idol's temple?

What shows instrumental music in worship sinful?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.



THIRD QUARTER

REPRESENTATIVE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

AIM: Through a study of the lives of some men and women of the Bible, to discover the source of their spiritual power, to share their experiences, and to receive guidance for our own living.

Lesson I—July 7, 1935

MOSES (LEADER AND LAWGIVER)

Ex. 24: 3-8, 12-18.

3 And Moses came and told the people all the words of Jehovah, and all the ordinances: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which Jehovah hath spoken will we do.

4 And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the mount, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

5 And he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto Jehovah.

6 And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient.

8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words.

12 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law and the commandment, which I have written, that thou mayest teach them.

13 And Moses rose up, and Joshua his minister: and Moses went up into the mount of God.

14 And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whosoever hath a cause, let him come near unto them.

15 And Moses went up into the mount, and the cloud covered the mount.

16 And the glory of Jehovah abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

17 And the appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

18 And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah."*
(Psalm 33: 12.)

TIME.—About 1491 B.C.

PLACES.—The wilderness, Mount Sinai.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Moses, and the children of Israel.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Ex. 34: 27-35.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 1.	M.	God's Covenant with Israel (Ex. 24: 1-8)
July 2.	T.	Moses in the Mount (Ex. 24: 12-18)
July 3.	W.	Moses Finds Favor with God (Ex. 33: 11-17)
July 4.	T.	Moses an Intercessor (Num. 21: 4-9)
July 5.	F.	Moses a Witness to Christ (John 5: 39-47)
July 6.	S.	Moses at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17: 1-8)
July 7.	S.	Moses Meets God (Ex. 34: 27-35)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Moses Announced Jehovah's Words to Israel (Verse 3).
 - II. Moses Prepares to Ratify the Covenant (Verses 4, 5).
 - III. The Covenant Confirmed (Verses 6-8).
 - IV. Moses Called into the Mountain Again (Verses 12-14).
 - V. Jehovah's Glory Again on the Mount (Verses 15-18).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The incidents described in our lesson text occurred B.C. 1491, or 2,513 years after the creation of man. Moses was eighty years old at the time. This is learned from the fact that he spent forty years in the royal family as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter (Acts 7: 23), and that another forty years was spent in the wilderness of Midian (Acts 7: 30). In God's providence eighty years of the life of Moses were spent in preparing for the forty years' work that followed. (Deut. 34: 7.)

Lesson Links.—Four hundred and thirty years before the time of this lesson God made a promise to Abraham that involved special favors to his descendants, and spiritual salvation to the world. (Gen. 12: 1-3; Gal. 3: 17.) The former was fulfilled through Moses, the great Jewish lawgiver and leader; the latter, through Jesus, the world's Redeemer. The descendants of Abraham, as a people, had suffered many evils, including their long bondage in Egypt, before the time came for them to possess the land promised to their ancestors. Giving them national independence, with necessary laws and an appropriate system of religion, was the difficult work that God placed in the hands of Moses. His years of practical experience prepared him to do his part with eminent success; God's power and providence did what was beyond the power of man. The perverseness of the people provoked Moses to sin and miss the promised land himself, but his work as lawgiver and leader is without a parallel except by that done by the Savior himself.

Lesson Settings.—In the seventh week after leaving Egypt the Israelites encamped near Mount Sinai. After three days' preparation of the people (Ex. 19: 11, 16), Jehovah spake the ten commandments from the top of the mount. This was done while there appeared upon the mountain the most sublime and majestic display of divine power that man had ever seen. Such awe-inspiring scenes filled them with fear, and even caused Moses to "fear and quake." (Heb. 12: 21.) While the grandeur and impressiveness of that wonderful time was still fresh in their minds, Moses required that they give their decision regarding a covenant with Jehovah. The making and ratification of that covenant is the matter presented in our lesson text.

LESSON NOTES

I. Moses Announced Jehovah's Words to Israel (Verse 3)

"All the Ordinances."—After hearing Jehovah speak the ten commandments the people requested that Moses, not God, speak to them after that; that is, they wanted Moses to become their mediator with God. (Ex. 20: 18-20). From Ex. 20: 21 and 24: 1 it appears that, after the people heard the commandments spoken, Moses was called into the mountain where God delivered to him the laws that are recorded in Ex. 21: 1 to 23: 33. From our text we learn that Moses came down and told the people "all the words of Jehovah, and all the ordinances." That means all the laws recorded in the chapters mentioned above, not all that are contained in the full system. Most of the Mosaic system was given after that; but those here named are fundamental, and may rightly be considered as a kind of constitution, the foundation upon which others might rest, and serve as a means of ratifying the covenant.

"All the People."—All the people with one voice declared they would do all that Jehovah had spoken. Since a covenant means a "contract," their consent was necessary to make the contract binding. God agreed to make them his special people, bring them to Canaan and give them possession of the land. He had already demonstrated his ability to fulfill his part of the contract by their deliverance from Egypt. The majesty of his power had been displayed in a most wonderful manner on the mountain. Through Moses he gave them a brief statement of what he required of them. Their consent made them a party to the contract. It is worthy of special note that they agreed to do "all" Jehovah had said. Whatever terms or conditions are specified in a contract are necessary; *all* of them, not just those *we* like.

II. Moses Prepares to Ratify the Covenant (Verses 4, 5)

"Wrote All the Words."—Man's proneness to forget covenants makes it necessary to put them in a form to which reference may often be made. There are two reasons for this: (1) That man may be reminded from time to time just what the covenant requires, and what he has agreed to do; (2) that legitimate penalties may be inflicted in case the covenant has been broken. The more important the covenant, the more necessary that it be put in an unchangeable form. In this particular, no covenant could be as important as one between God and man. The words written included the ten commandments and those in the following three chapters.

"Builded an Altar."—Because of man's sinfulness, any covenant between him and God must include man's repentance and purification from past sins. This requires a sufficient sacrifice to meet the demands of the case. In Gen. 15: 18 it is said that Jehovah "made a covenant" with Abram. The original words are said to mean "cut a covenant," the reference being to the sacrifice of an animal in the making of covenants. In later times it seems to have been the custom to divide the sacrificial animal in two exactly equal parts, and for the contracting parties to meet between the pieces and pledge loyalty to the agreement. (Jer. 34: 18-20.) Whether this part of the ceremony had begun or was used at the dedication of the old covenant is not certain, but that sacrifices were considered a necessary part is evident from our text. Hence, the statement that Moses re-

quired the building of an altar. The twelve pillars probably represented the twelve tribes of Israel, and indicated their agreement to be governed by the terms of the covenant.

Offerings Prepared.—The text says they “offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen.” Paul says “the blood of the calves and the goats.” (Heb. 9: 19.) The burnt offering was entirely consumed by fire, and was an “atonement” for sin (Lev. 1: 3, 4); the peace offering indicated that man was reconciled to God and peace restored (Lev. 7: 11, 12). These both find their antitype in Christ, who is in the sin offering in our behalf, and the peace offering by which we are restored to the favor of God.

III. The Covenant Confirmed (Verses 6-8)

The Blood Divided.—Moses put half the blood in basins, the other half he sprinkled upon the altar. This sprinkling upon the altar was doubtless intended to represent the fact that Jehovah agreed to bind himself to support, care for, and defend the people. This was not necessary to make the author of all truth faithful to his promises, but to assure the people that God’s promises would not fail.

The People’s Confession.—When Moses returned from the mountain, the people agreed to accept the proposed covenant. Moses then reduced the covenant to the written form. As a part of the dedication ceremonies he read what was written, and the people solemnly promised to be obedient. This was their confession that they were bound by its conditions. Such confession was not an arbitrary matter; it was the natural and necessary thing in such a case; is still necessary in like cases. Next Moses sprinkled the other half of the blood—that put in the basins—upon the people. Paul adds that he sprinkled it upon the “book itself.” (Heb. 9: 19.) This sprinkling Paul calls “the blood of the covenant.” He shows that in like manner the new covenant was dedicated by the blood of Christ. (Heb. 9: 23-26.) Those who confess Christ and are “baptized into his death” (Rom. 6: 3) receive the benefits of his blood—that blood by which the new covenant was ratified.

IV. Moses Called into the Mountain Again (Verses 12-14)

God’s Promise.—Moses’ leadership is manifest in every move made. Through him the Israelites received their entire system, both national and religious. He was told that God’s purpose in calling him back into the mountain was to give him “tables of stone, and the law and the commandment.” The ten commandments had already been spoken, written in the covenant and ratified, before they were ever put on the tables of stone. Moses remained in the mount forty days (verse 18), broke the tables as he came down from the mount (Ex. 32: 15-20), and was called back to receive other tables, and remained forty days again (Ex. 34: 1, 28). Thus the ten commandment laws had been in force at least eighty days before the tables of stone were delivered to the people. While in the mountain Moses also received a pattern of the tabernacle (Heb. 8: 5), and other laws which appear in the books.

Why Tables of Stone?—God said that the purpose of speaking the commandments from the mountain top was that the people might believe Moses forever. (Ex. 19: 9.) Such display of divine power would assure them that Moses was God’s spokesman to them, and

that they should obey his words. Perhaps the preserving of these commandments in stone—something different from the written form in the book—would more forcibly keep this thought before them. It did not mean that the commands were more important than other commands. The tables of stone have long since perished, or been destroyed, but their form in the books perpetually preserves them along with the other laws. Moses' breaking the original tables probably indicated typically that the law of which they were a part was to be broken, abolished, and give place for the new covenant written "in tables that are hearts of flesh." (2 Cor. 3: 2-11.) This text certainly does show that the ten commandment law did end at the death of Christ. (See also Eph. 2: 14-16; Col. 14, 15.)

Aaron and Hur.—Moses made provision for the government of the people in his absence. This was a wise precaution. So many people just beginning to enjoy liberty would easily become uncontrollable. Their confidence in Moses then made them more inclined to listen to any that he appointed to the task of oversight. Perhaps there were none in the whole multitude more capable of the work than Aaron and Hur. In this apparently incidental circumstance we get two important facts: First, that leadership of some kind is necessary in dealing with groups, companies, or multitudes; second, that those following the properly delegated leadership are following those who appoint the leaders. Those who hear and obey Christ are obeying the Father who sent him; those who hear and obey the apostles are obeying Christ, for they taught by his authority.

V. Jehovah's Glory Again on the Mount (Verses 15-18)

"Moses Went Up."—Verse 14 seems to indicate that when Moses left the elders Joshua went with him part of the way up the mountain. Then Moses was called further up into the cloud that covered the top. The further statement is made that the "glory of Jehovah abode" on the mountain. The appearance of this glory is said to have been "like devouring fire." When the ten commandments were spoken from the top of this same mountain, "Jehovah descended upon it in fire." (Ex. 19: 18.) Evidently the two events had the same general appearance, though all the things mentioned in the first are not repeated here. Paul probably refers to this circumstance when he says, "Our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12: 29.) The cloud rested upon the mountain six days before God called Moses out of the cloud and began delivering to him the laws and instructions he was to receive. Doubtless this new appearance of the divine majesty filled the Israelites with fear and trembling, just as it did a few days before. It was probably intended to have the same lesson for them, namely, that they were to be impressed with the necessity of receiving Moses' message when he returned as the messenger of God.

Forty Days.—The text says that "Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights." The following reasons may be assigned for his long stay in the mount. First, receiving the pattern for the tabernacle and other laws would require much time if he made any effort to put it in permanent form; second, the long time served as an excellent test of their faithfulness under trial. During the forty days he neither ate nor drank. (Ex. 34: 28; Deut. 9: 9.) The same thing occurred during the Savior's temptation in the wilderness. (Matt. 4: 2.) It was during this forty days' wait that the people

rebelled and made the golden calf. (Ex. 32: 1-6.) They may have decided that Moses had perished in the consuming fire on the mountain, but that did not justify their sin. They had seen God's power manifested too much to be excused for their doubt and sin.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Regarding the commandments of God David said: "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right and I hate every false way." (Psalm 119: 128.) Nothing better can be said.

2. Jesus said it was expedient for the apostles for him to go away. (John 16: 7.) It was also expedient for the apostles to finish their personal labors, and the plan of salvation to be written out. This makes it more accessible, and leaves no chance for changing it.

3. Just as the shedding of blood was necessary in the dedication of the old covenant, so it was in the new. It required the blood of Christ. (Heb. 10: 1-4, 11, 12.) Those in the church are saved by the blood.

4. Those called to leadership as prophets in the old covenant age were always qualified to do the work. Moses was the outstanding leader of them all, and his work the most important and far-reaching.

5. The miraculous manifestation of God's approval of Moses could not be misunderstood. The same is true of Jesus, whose resurrection proves him to be the Son of God and the Savior of men.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the infancy of Moses and his providential salvation by Pharaoh's daughter. (Ex. 2: 1-10.)

2. Tell the story of why Moses fled from Egypt. (Ex. 2: 11-15; Acts 7: 23-29.)

3. Describe Moses' stay in the land of Midian, and his call to deliver the Israelites from bondage. (Ex. 2: 16 to 3: 12.)

4. Tell the story of the first Passover, and how the first-born of the Israelites were saved. (Ex. 12: 1-14.)

5. Sketch briefly the incidents connected with the crossing of the Red Sea. (Ex. 14: 10-31.)

6. Describe the transfiguration. (Matt. 17: 1-8.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What did Moses announce to the people?
What request did the people make after hearing God speak?
What answer did the people give Moses?
Why was their consent necessary?

II

Why was it necessary to have the covenant in written form?
What words did Moses write at that time?
What had to be included in any covenant God made with man?
What custom does Jeremiah refer to?
What offerings were made?

III

Why did Moses divide the blood?
Why sprinkle some on the altar?
What other features are in the dedication ceremonies?
When do we receive the benefits of Christ's blood?

IV

Why was Moses called back into the mountain?

Why were these laws put on the tables of stone?

What is said of Aaron and Hur?

V

Describe Moses' stay on the mountain. Why did he stay so long?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson II—July 14, 1935

NAOMI (A WOMAN OF FAITH AND COURAGE)

Ruth 1: 14-22; 4: 14-17.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law.

16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God;

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

18 And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.

19 So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and the women said, Is this Naomi?

20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty; why call ye me Naomi, seeing Jehovah hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, who returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

14 And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be Jehovah, who hath not left thee this day without a near kinsman; and let his name be famous in Israel.

15 And he shall be unto thee a restorer of life, and a nourisher of thine old age; for thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.

16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

17 And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“A woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised.” (Prov. 31: 30.)

TIME.—About 1173 B.C.

PLACES.—Moab and Bethlehem.

PERSONS.—Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 31: 10-20.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 8. M.-----Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1: 14-22)

July 9. T.-----Naomi's Faith Rewarded (Ruth 4: 13-17)

July 10. W.-----A Mother's Faith (Ex. 2: 1-10)

July 11. T.-----A Mother's Faith Rewarded (2 Kings 4: 25-37)

July 12. F.-----A Woman of Great Faith (Matt. 15: 21-28)

July 13. S.-----Piety at Home (1 Tim. 5: 1-8)

July 14. S.-----A Good Woman (Prov. 31: 10-20)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Orpah Returns to Her Own People (Verses 14, 15).
 - II. Ruth Replies to Naomi (Verses 16-18).
 - III. Naomi and Ruth Go to Bethlehem (Verses 19-22).
 - IV. Ruth Becomes an Ancestor of Christ (Ruth 4: 14, 15).
 - V. Naomi's Labor of Love (Verses 16, 17).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The exact time when the incidents found in the book of Ruth occurred cannot be fixed. The one chronological fact given is that these things happened "when the judges judged." (Ruth 1: 1.) There is no way to determine who was judging Israel when Elimelech, of Bethlehem-judah, took his family to the land of Moab, nor who was judging when Naomi returned. Obed, the grandfather of David, was born after Ruth had been received among Naomi's people. David was born probably about 1085 B.C. It is a reasonable supposition that the events of this lesson occurred about one hundred years earlier, or 1185 B.C. Nothing more definite on the time seems possible.

Lesson Links.—Apparently the elders who lived past the death of Joshua ruled the people for a time. (Judges 2: 7, 8.) After that, the Lord raised up judges to defend the people against their enemies. (Judges 2: 16-18.) The period of the judges is supposed to have lasted more than three hundred years. Sometime in that period occurred the famine mentioned in Ruth 1: 1, and which was the immediate occasion of Elimelech's taking his family to that heathen land. We have other instances of God's people leaving Canaan because of famine, and all bringing trouble to the family. The first was when Abram, to escape a famine, went to Egypt. (Gen. 12: 10-20.) Isaac started to Egypt because of a famine. (Gen. 26: 1-11.) Later Jacob's family went to Egypt because of famine conditions, and that resulted in the long and cruel bondage there. The book of Ruth details the sad and touching story of another Israelite who took his family to an enemy country with disastrous results.

Lesson Settings.—In order to prevent the children of Israel from drifting into idolatry, God required them not to make any marriage contracts with the nations about them. (Ex. 34: 15, 16; Deut. 7: 3-5.) For Elimelech to take his family into a heathen country was extremely dangerous, if he remained any length of time. It meant to subject his sons to the temptation of violating God's law. The story shows that to have been the result. Both sons married Moabite wives. The final blow came to the family when the father and both sons died, leaving Naomi in a heathen land with two idolatrous daughters-in-law. Hearing that Jehovah had visited her people in giving them bread, she decided to return to her own land where she could worship the true God. In returning she had to take her daughters-in-law or leave them. It is that part of the story with which our lesson text deals.

LESSON NOTES

1. Orpah Returns to Her Own People (Verses 14, 15)

Naomi Begins the Return Journey.—The record shows that, when Naomi began the return journey to Canaan, her two daughters-in-law started with her. (Verses 6-8.) What prompted them to start is not stated. Evidently Naomi decided to test the wisdom of their going by suggesting that each return to her mother's house. Unless they were willing to abandon their idolatry, she knew their stay with the Israelites would be a failure. Her genuine interest in them is shown in her prayer that Jehovah would grant them opportunity to find rest. With an appropriate motherly tenderness she kissed them goodbye. They were so affected by her tokens of love that they both declared they would return with her.

Naomi's Reasoning.—Perhaps thinking their decision was mainly due to their disturbed feelings, Naomi appealed to their judgment with a course of calm reasoning. She referred to the Jewish law, that when a man died and had no children, his brother should take his wife. (Deut. 25: 5-7.) She reminded them that she had no other sons that might marry them, she was too old to have other sons, and they could not wait for them if others could be born. She further declared that the hand of Jehovah had gone forth against her. She meant that after all her losses she had nothing left to offer them. Nothing but the strongest determination would prompt them to go under so much discouragement.

The Final Decision.—Her reasoning was the real test that led to the final decision. Both again wept, but evidently for different reasons. Orpah decided to return to her people, and was sad at the final parting from the generous and kind Naomi; Ruth doubtless wept for joy because of her decision to cast her lot with Naomi's people, and Jehovah her God. The sequel shows that Ruth's decision was the right one. Orpah disappears and is lost among her own idolatrous people; Ruth has been made famous as one of the maternal ancestors of the world's Redeemer. Naomi's last appeal to Ruth was to follow the example of Orpah, and return to her people, "and unto her god." These were the two strongest motives to be offered. Resisting them, Naomi knew that her decision to go with her was final and unchangeable. This is evident from Ruth's words in the following verses of the text.

II. Ruth Replies to Naomi (Verses 16-18)

Her Appeal.—Without hope of any material gain, Ruth made a complete surrender, and broke all other fleshly ties that she might follow Naomi to the land of Jehovah's people. It is perhaps too much to say that she had already been converted to the worship of Jehovah, yet it is impossible to know how much her determination to go was the result of the association in a Jewish family. Whatever the facts may have been, her appeal to Naomi not to entreat her longer to return to her own people bears all the evidence of genuine sincerity. As a tender and sweet appeal, her words are unsurpassed; in fact, one of the world's literary gems.

"Thy God My God."—Ruth showed the firmness of her character by the mention of several things which, under the circumstances, would be a sure test of her attachment to Naomi. She said, "Whither thou goest, I will go." That meant that, regardless of how difficult the

way, or the destination to which it led, she would trust the leadership of Naomi. That she did not misplace her trust is one of the interesting features of her life story. She said that the abiding place of Naomi would be hers also. However humble it might be, she would count the association of such a friend as more valuable than all she had to forsake. She further declared that all old ties should be broken, if necessary, and she would cast her lot among Naomi's people. But she reached the limit of noble resolve when she said she would turn from idolatry to Jehovah, Israel's God. She ended her touching appeal by promising that she would remain there till death and be buried among Israel's dead.

Ruth's Vow.—With her appeal ended, Ruth vowed that nothing but death would cause her to part from Naomi. Her words, "Jehovah do so to me, and more also," mean that she was willing for Jehovah to bring upon her any punishment due those false to their promises, and even more than was due, if anything but death caused them to part. The record furnishes no proof that she was ever untrue to that vow. Naomi, seeing that she was "stedfastly minded" to go, offered no further objections, and they proceeded on the journey.

III. Naomi and Ruth Go to Bethlehem (Verses 19-22)

"Call Me Mara."—Naomi very naturally returned to Bethlehem, as that was the ancestral city from which she and her family left for Moab. (Ruth 1: 2.) The interest shown by the people when she returned is evidence that Elimelech's family was well known, or perhaps prominent. She was readily recognized, which indicates that her stay in Moab had not been of long duration. When her friends addressed her as Naomi, which means *pleasant*, she asked them to call her Mara, meaning *bitter*. This name she considered more in keeping with her experiences. Her explanation was: "For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me," adding that she went out full, but Jehovah had brought her back empty. Doubtless she considered her misfortunes were due largely to the fact that they had dwelt in a heathen land, and her sons had married idolatrous women. This probably explains her persistence in finding out what she might expect of Ruth, if she went with her to Bethlehem.

The Time.—The text restates the case by saying, "So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess" with her. That means that she returned for the reasons already given, and in the manner described. It was in the beginning of the barley harvest, which came in the spring. This harvest began after the Passover, and that was about the first of April.

IV. Ruth Becomes an Ancestor of Christ (Ruth 4: 14, 15)

Lesson Interval.—In the scripture between the preceding sections and this one, we find a record of the events between Naomi's return and the marriage of Boaz and Ruth. According to the Jewish law the poor and sojourners were to be allowed to glean after the reapers. (Lev. 19: 9, 10.) Ruth by uniting herself permanently with Naomi accepted a share of the responsibility of making a support. Being harvest time, she went into the fields to glean. It happened—probably by providence—that she went to the field of Boaz, a kinsman of Elimelech, and a man of much wealth. Boaz saw her, inquired who she was, commanded his reapers to treat her kindly, and later agreed to take her as his wife.

A Near Kinsman.—The law (Deut. 25: 5-12) shows that, if a married man died having no children, his brother should take his widow as a wife, and thus perpetuate his brother's name. The law made provision, however, that the living brother could be released from this obligation, if he desired, by going through a certain legal process. In practice, it seems, the law was applied to those of more distant relationship, when the one near refused to take the widow. This explains Boaz's delay to take Ruth until he knew that a nearer kinsman wished to be freed from the obligation. (Ruth 3: 12, 13; 4: 1-6.) With these legal matters all properly arranged, Ruth became the wife of Boaz, a position of much importance and value to both herself and her mother-in-law. It all came about because of the faith, courage, and wise counsel of Naomi, and the hearty cooperation of Ruth.

Jehovah Praised.—The friends recognized the providence of God in it all, and praised him because he had not allowed the family of Elimelech to cease. They probably were thinking mainly of the material benefits that would come to the distressed Naomi, but the divine Being knew there was something infinitely greater in view. They rejoiced that Naomi had not been left without a near kinsman, and asked that his name become "famous in Israel." This wish was granted, for the child born was in the line of Christ's ancestry, which made his name famous not only in Israel, but in all the world.

Naomi Encouraged.—Her friends assured her that the child would be to her "a restorer of life, and a nourisher of thine old age." They further assured her that her daughter-in-law, Ruth, would be better to her than seven sons. Ruth was in a position to make that prediction come true, and doubtless did so by seeing that Naomi, in her old age, was properly supplied with temporal comforts.

V. Naomi's Labor of Love (Verses 16, 17)

"Took the Child."—The simple words that "Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it," closes the story of Naomi's life. As the child perpetuated her family name, her efforts in helping to rear him was no doubt a genuine labor of love. Her work in training him, the many fine lessons instilled into his heart, or the years she was spared for such work, are all matters left to the imagination. The traits of faith and courage that are so manifest in her life, according to the record that we have, are assurance that the child had good training both by precept and example. Of course she finished her life without knowing how important a place she had filled in developing God's plan; the same is true of all who are striving to accomplish, to the measure of their ability, God's purposes in this world.

The Genealogy.—The last few verses in the book of Ruth explain why the story was told. It adds a few names to the genealogy of Christ that we would not have without the story of Ruth. That story could not be told without giving the part played by the subject of our lesson—Naomi. The neighbor women gave the name Obed to the child born to Boaz and Ruth. They said, "There is a son born to Naomi," meaning that this son would perpetuate her family. This family story, interesting and beautiful as it is, probably would not have found a place in the divine record except for the fact that it fills a gap in the genealogical evidence to Christ's Messiahship. Incidentally we get the graphic picture of the godly Naomi.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. In the case of Orpah we have a fine example of the fatal nature of turning back from a good work begun. It also shows that no destination can be reached just by starting; faithfulness till the journey is completed is necessary. Both Bible and common sense teach it.

2. None but noble souls are capable of noble decisions, and none are worthy as leaders but those of strong faith and dauntless courage. In Ruth and Naomi we have examples of both.

3. Ruth's change, and the remarkable honors that came to her, is evidence that all things do work for good to those who really love God. If not in material things as fell to her lot, still in the spiritual, which is in fact far better. Ultimately such a life is infinitely best.

4. It is our business to be true to God, and leave the final results with him. When the full record is revealed, many will find they have accomplished much more than they supposed; influences which they set in motion will have spread beyond their greatest expectation.

5. As servants of God, we may not become "famous in Israel," but we can be useful, occupy the place for which we are fitted, and use the talent with which we are endowed. None can be more worthy of reward, or more sure to obtain it.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the Moabites and give their origin and the location of their country. (Num. 22: 1; Deut. 1: 5.)

2. Describe the death of Moses in this land. (Deut. 32: 48-52; 34: 1-6.)

3. Who was Balak, and what efforts did he make against the Israelites? (Num. 22.)

4. Briefly state the results of his efforts. (Num. 23 and 24.)

5. Describe the oppression of the Israelites by Eglon, the king of the Moabites. (Judges 3: 12-30.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

Who started to Bethlehem?
Why did Naomi urge Orpah and Ruth to return to their people?
What reasons did she offer?
What was the final decision of both?
What last appeal did Naomi make to Ruth?

II

What request did she make of Naomi?
How did Ruth show the firmness of her decision?
What vow did Ruth make?
What did her words mean?

III

What is shown by the reception she received on her return?
Why ask them to call her "Mara"?
What season of the year did they reach Bethlehem?

IV

What occurred between this and the preceding sections?
What law is found in Deut. 25: 5-12?
What exception was allowed?
Why did her friends praise Jehovah?
How did they encourage Naomi?

V

What more is said of Naomi?
Why was the book of Ruth written?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson III—July 21, 1935

DAVID (THE GREAT-HEARTED)

1 Sam. 26: 5-12; 2 Sam. 1: 23-27.

5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had encamped; and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay within the place of the wagons, and the people were encamped round about him.

6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.

7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the place of the wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head: and Abner and the people lay round about him.

8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thy hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time.

9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless?

10 And David said, As Jehovah liveth, Jehovah will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle, and perish.

11 Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed: but now take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head; and they got them away: and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from Jehovah was fallen upon them.

23 Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided:
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.

24 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet delicately,
Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan is slain upon thy high places.

26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.

27 How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others."* (Phil. 2: 4.)

TIME.—About 1073 to 1063 B.C.

PLACES.—Ziph and Ziklag in Palestine.

PERSONS.—David, Saul, and Jonathan.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—John 17: 1-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 15.	M.	David Spares Saul (1 Sam. 26: 5-12)
July 16.	T.	David's Friendship with Jonathan (2 Sam. 1: 23-27)
July 17.	W.	David Plans to Build the Temple (2 Sam. 7: 1-13)
July 18.	T.	David Mourns for Absalom (2 Sam. 18: 28-33)
July 19.	F.	David's Song of Praise (2 Sam. 22: 19-29)
July 20.	S.	David's Charge to Solomon (1 Kings 2: 1-7)
July 21.	S.	Christ's Farewell Prayer (John 17: 1-10)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. David Locates the Camp of Saul (Verses 5, 6).
- II. Abishai Proposes to Slay Saul (Verses 7, 8).
- III. David Refuses to Allow Saul to Be Slain (Verses 9-11).
- IV. David Leaves Saul's Camp (Verses 11, 12).
- V. David Laments the Death of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1: 23-27).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Our first text refers to the time when Saul, Israel's first king, was pursuing David with the intention of having him slain. It was about 1060 B.C. when David was probably twenty-five years old. The second text refers to the death of Saul and his son, Jonathan, an event which was the immediate occasion of David's being made king. He first began his reign in Hebron when thirty years old, where he reigned seven years and six months. This was over Judah. After this he reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem over all Israel. (2 Sam. 5: 1-4.)

Lesson Links.—Because of Saul's disobedience in the Amalekite war, the prophet Samuel told him that his kingdom would pass to one better than he. (1 Sam. 15: 28.) David was that better one, whom Samuel anointed some considerable time before the incidents of our lesson text. (1 Sam. 16: 1-13.) This was all unknown to Saul. He was subject to spells of great melancholy, and his servants had persuaded him to have David play before him at such times. (1 Sam. 16: 14-23.) David's victory over the Philistine giant, Goliath, brought him great praise from the people. Saul considered it uncomplimentary to himself, and indicated that David would be the better one who would seek his kingdom. (1 Sam. 18: 6-9.) He offered his daughter to David in marriage, but planned through the acceptance of the offer to cause David's death. This bitter feeling against David was such that he had to flee to save his life. The long time that David fled as an outlaw furnished the occasion for him to manifest the traits of character in our lesson subject.

Lesson Settings.—With unrelenting anger Saul pursued David from place to place. Being eluded each time by David probably increased his anger, and strengthened his determination to destroy him. Meeting the emergency that arose at each time with success shows that David was a calm, cool, and skillful general. At one time during David's wanderings Saul expressed a desire for friendly relations again. (1 Sam. 26: 21-25.) This feeling, however, soon gave place to wrath, and another determined effort to have David killed. Twice while David was a fugitive Saul fell into his power, but was spared. 1 Sam. 24: 1-8 details one, our text the other.

LESSON NOTES

I. David Locates the Camp of Saul (Verses 5, 6)

Where?—To understand fully the incident described in our first text, we must remember that Saul had been trying for some time to have David killed. David had fled from place to place to save him-

self. Verses 1 to 3 of this chapter say that the Ziphites went to Gibeah and reported to Saul that David was in the wilderness of Ziph, hiding in the hill of Hachilah. Ziph is about twenty-five miles south of Jerusalem; Gibeah is seven or eight miles a little northwest. Gibeah was Saul's headquarters. Once before the Ziphites had tried to throw David into Saul's hands. (1 Sam. 23: 19.) David had been told by the Lord that the people of Keilah would deliver him to Saul, which led to his going to the wilderness of Ziph. Acting on the information given by the Ziphites, Saul came with three thousand picked men and encamped in the hill of Hachilah. At that time David had about six hundred men (1 Sam. 23: 13) to defend himself against Saul. Only superior skill and bravery, or the providence of God, would enable him to succeed. With the latter, no one could fail.

David Views Saul's Camp.—Through spies sent out David learned certainly that Saul, with an army, was in that section seeking him. He had also learned exactly where Saul had pitched his camp. He probably was better acquainted with the country than Saul was, and was able to get a view of the camp without being discovered. It is not known just how he did it, but likely from some secluded spot, or as the shadows of night were coming on. He saw the arrangement of the camp. Apparently the wagons formed a circle, inside of which both Saul and Abner, his captain general, were placed for safety. Around this circle were the three thousand men. This knowledge was very necessary, if any surprise move was to be made. It shows the skill of David as both soldier and commander. With this knowledge David's plans could be formed with accuracy, which was necessary if they were to be carried out successfully.

David Chooses an Aide.—In the dangerous undertaking which David contemplated, anyone that went with David had to be wise, brave, and self-composed. He laid the case before Ahimelech, the Hittite, and Abishai, the brother of Joab, who was David's captain general. (2 Sam. 2: 18.) David doubtless considered either of them a suitable one for the task. Abishai, who was probably a nephew of David (1 Chron. 2: 15, 16), agreed to go with David.

II. Abishai Proposes to Slay Saul (Verses 7, 8)

In the Camp.—Regardless of whatever divine providence may have been over David, it is certain that a man of his military ability used extreme caution in carrying out his plan. They entered the camp at night; no other time would it have been possible except by superior force. This two men against three thousand did not have. They found Saul asleep within the barricade of wagons, just where David saw him earlier. Abner, the commander, was by him, and the soldiers prepared to act at once. Nothing could have been better arranged for safety and success with the ordinary means for military operations then known.

Abishai's Offer.—As the Jews had been accustomed to receive Jehovah's help in their defense against their enemies, nothing was a more natural conclusion to Abishai than that the whole thing had happened by divine power. He naturally took that to mean that God had actually delivered Saul into David's hands, with the purpose that David should gain the victory. His idea of dispatching Saul as a relentless enemy, who in no other way could be handled, was the common military notion, and is not much, if any, different than that of modern carnal warfare. Abishai was willing to strike the blow which would rid

David of a persistent enemy and persecutor. He was so certain that he could succeed, that he promised not to strike him a second time. Saul had struck his spear in the ground at his head. Perhaps this was that it might be ready for instant use. Abishai purposed to smite Saul with his own spear.

III. David Refuses to Allow Saul to Be Slain (Verses 9-11)

"Jehovah's Anointed."—David promptly said to Abishai, "Destroy him not." The reason he assigned for his refusal was put in the form of a question: "Who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless?" This did not mean that Saul was worthy of mercy at David's hands, but rather that David would show proper respect for one who had been anointed to rule God's people. This, in fact, was showing respect to the authority of God, and a characteristic that was always present with David. This respect for a ruler was based upon a statement in the law, where reviling God and cursing rulers were condemned in the same verse. (Ex. 22: 28.) This principle caused Paul, when being mistreated by the high priest, to apologize for speaking evil, because it had been written, "Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people." (Acts 23: 5.) Then David asked God to forbid that he should put forth his hand against Saul as God's anointed.

Leaves Saul to Jehovah.—David expressed his determination to leave the disposition of Saul as king entirely to Jehovah. He mentions the three ways that Saul might be removed from the kingdom, neither of which would involve him in personal guilt. 1. Jehovah might in some way take him away. This Jehovah had a right to do as man's Creator and Preserver. 2. He might die a natural death in due time. This would be in harmony with God's decree because of sin. 3. He might go into battle and perish in the ordinary way in such cases. For this Saul would be responsible because of volunteering to take such a risk. David was sure that Saul would lose in one of these ways without his staining his hands with blood, and violating the law.

IV. David Leaves Saul's Camp (Verses 11, 12)

Spear and Cruse.—David told Abishai to take the spear that was at Saul's head, and the cruse of water. With these they left the camp as secretly as they came. No man either saw them or heard them. Not a man awoke. This fact would hardly have been true, if only human wisdom and power had been used. With so many men some would likely have been aroused. Then the question of guards on duty would have to be admitted as a possibility. The explanation is found in the text. "A deep sleep from Jehovah was fallen upon them."

Final Results.—The spear and cruse taken were unmistakable evidences that David had been in their camp, and that Saul's being alive was due to David's generosity. For this reason, doubtless, David took them. He wanted to destroy Saul's wrath, and stop his pursuing him, without becoming a violator of God's law himself. When he was safely away on a mountain top, he called to the people and ironically praised Abner for being such a good protector of his master. Then, changing his manner, he rebuked him as being worthy of death for not keeping watch over Jehovah's anointed. (1 Sam.

26: 13-16.) Notwithstanding the fact that Saul confessed his sin and praised David (1 Sam. 26: 21-25), David feared that Saul's repentance would not last, and that he would one day fall into his hands. This led him to seek safety among the Philistines, where he remained a year and four months. (1 Sam. 27: 1-7.)

V. David Laments the Death of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1: 23-27)

Died in Battle.—The Philistines gathered together to make war upon Israel. Their army was encamped at Aphek, and the Israelites were in Jezreel. (1 Sam. 29: 1.) The prophet Samuel had died, and Saul could get no answer from the Lord regarding the outcome of the war. He then violated the law (Lev. 19: 31), and went against his own practice in the past (1 Sam. 28: 3), by consulting the necromancer of Endor (1 Sam. 28: 7-19). Samuel was allowed to appear and tell Saul that, because of his disobedience, he would lose the battle, and the life of himself and his sons. The battle was pitched at Mount Gilboa (1 Sam. 28: 4), and everything happened just as Samuel said it would. (1 Sam. 31: 1-6.) Saul, from deep distress, took his own life.

Reasons for the Lament.—Soon after David became associated with Saul's family there sprang up a life-long love between him and Saul's son, Jonathan. (1 Sam. 18: 1-5.) This mutual friendship was the reason David was so deeply touched when Jonathan fell in battle. Saul was the anointed of the Lord, and David always respected that even when Saul was seeking to slay him. He was David's father-in-law, and the father of Jonathan, both of which probably added to his kindly feeling for Saul in spite of all his unkind treatment.

David's View.—David showed his real view of the case by repeating the words, "How are the mighty fallen!" He recognized the fact that in the death of Saul and Jonathan, two mighty men had fallen. They entertained entirely different feelings toward David, but remained together pleasantly in life, and were not separated in death. Jonathan recognized his filial duty to Saul, but was never untrue to David in the most trying circumstances. David also praised their ability by saying they were "swifter than eagles" and "stronger than lions."

Israel Told to Weep.—David represents Saul as king, standing in a similar relationship to them as a father does to his daughters. His benefits to the people had been as scarlet garments with proper ornaments. He meant that they should gratefully remember one who had been their leader and protector. Only a magnanimous soul could so praise one who had been his bitterest enemy for years. There is nothing to indicate that he was not expressing the real sentiment of his heart. His words are to be understood in their plain import.

Love for Jonathan.—David mentions most naturally his remembrance of Jonathan's love, and expresses his deep regret for the loss of so wonderful a friend. Their friendship had been truly mutual, extremely pleasant and enduring. It had not been affected by any of those experiences that commonly would tend to destroy it. This eulogy on Jonathan was not overdrawn, and is another evidence of David's willingness to accord to each the measure of praise which his conduct merits, an evidence that he really was "great-hearted."

A Final Word.—If David had manifested the characteristic that is usually expected in such cases, he would have rejoiced that his enemy was out of the way. He had been anointed and knew that he

was to become king, but that did not destroy his fine sense of the fitness of things, or make him wish to reach honors through sin or mistreatment of others.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. The Lord was with David in his struggles against Saul, yet David used his common sense and judgment to protect himself. God has provided means for our temporal existence, yet we must use them to the best of our ability to get the best results. This is also true in the spiritual realm; God saves, but we must obey.

2. One evidence of the truly great is the prompt and decisive rejection of what is wrong or wholly out of place, even though the opposite course might result in temporary gains.

3. An ignorance of the truth revealed in God's word often leads men to desire to do the wrong thing, or that which is not best. All decisions should be made in the light of what God teaches.

4. Not taking advantage of another's weakness is the spirit of true greatness. To endure evil wrongfully inflicted is Christlike; to deliberately inflict evil is sin.

5. Rejoicing at the afflictions or downfall of others indicates a bitter, revengeful spirit. Even our known enemies deserve credit for what good they do. Great-hearted persons cheerfully give it.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Tell the story of Saul's sin in offering a sacrifice himself. (1 Sam. 13: 5-15.)

2. Sketch briefly the Amalekite war, and Saul's disobedience to Jehovah in it. (1 Sam. 15: 1-33.)

3. Discuss the anointing of David. (1 Sam. 16: 1-13.) Give special notice to verses 6-13.

4. Describe in full the first time that David showed great kindness to Saul. (1 Sam. 24: 1-18.)

5. Describe the battle at Gilboa in which Saul and his sons lost their lives. (1 Sam. 31: 1-13.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.

Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.

Repeat the Lesson Links.

Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What had been Saul's feeling for David?
Where was Saul's army camped?
How had the Ziphites treated David?
How many did each have in his army?
Why did David view Saul's camp?
Who went with him when he entered the camp?

II

Describe the camp.
Why did Abishai offer to slay Saul?

III

What reason did David give for refusing to allow it?

What similar instance in the New Testament?

How did David say Saul might come to his death?

IV

Why take the spear and cruse?

What enabled them to visit the camp without detection?

How did David speak to Abner?

Why did David go among the Philistines?

V

What reason did David have for lamenting both Saul and Jonathan?

Why tell the people to weep?

Describe Jonathan's love.

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson IV—July 28, 1935

AMOS (PROPHET OF SOCIAL JUSTICE)

Amos 7: 7-17.

7 Thus he showed me: and, behold, the Lord stood beside a wall made by a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in his hand.

8 And Jehovah said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumb-line. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more;

9 And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

10 Then Amaziah the priest of Beth-el sent to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words.

11 For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land.

12 Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there:

13 But prophesy not again any more at Beth-el; for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house.

14 Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore-trees:

15 And Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

16 Now therefore hear thou the word of Jehovah: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not *thy word* against the house of Isaac;

17 Therefore thus saith Jehovah: Thy wife shall be a harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou thyself shalt die in a land that is unclean, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.*” (Amos 5: 24.)

TIME.—Amos prophesied about 793 B.C.

PLACES.—Amos lived in Tekoa in Judah, twelve miles south of Jerusalem; his preaching in Bethel, ten miles north of Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—God, Amos, and the people.

DEVOTIONAL BIBLE READING.—Psalm 85: 7-13.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 22.	M.	.....	The Judgment (Amos 3: 9-15)
July 23.	T.	.....	The Judge (Amos 7: 7-15)
July 24.	W.	.....	Repentance (Amos 5: 4-15)
July 25.	T.	.....	Mercy (Hos. 11: 8-11)
July 26.	F.	.....	Pardon (Hos. 14: 4-9)
July 27.	S.	.....	Restoration (Amos 9: 11-15)
July 28.	S.	.....	Righteousness (Psalm 85: 7-13)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Vision of the Plumb Line (Verses 7, 8).
- II. Jehovah Foretells Israel's Future (Verses 8, 9).
- III. Amaziah Reports Amos to Jeroboam (Verses 10-13).
- IV. Amos Describes His Prophetic Call (Verses 14, 15).
- V. Amos Prophecies Against Amaziah (Verses 16, 17).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—In Amos 1: 1 the prophet says that the visions which he saw were “in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.” This was Jeroboam II, whose reign of forty-one years began about 825 B.C. Azariah, king of Judah, began reigning in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam. He was also called Uzziah. (2 Kings 15: 1, 13, 30, 32.) That is the name given him in our text. Amos began to prophesy two years before the earthquake, which occurred in the reign of Uzziah. The date of the earthquake is not known, but for Amos to prophesy in the reign of Jeroboam, he had to begin during the first fourteen years of Uzziah’s reign, 798 to 784 B.C.

Lesson Links.—After Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, came to the throne, ten tribes revolted under the leadership of Jeroboam, who became their king. They were the northern kingdom, known as the kingdom of Israel. Judah and Benjamin, known as the southern kingdom, or kingdom of Judah, remained with Rehoboam, whose capital was Jerusalem. Besides the different encounters that each nation had with their heathen neighbors, numerous conflicts arose between the rulers of Judah and Israel. Some of these led to serious wars. Jeroboam, the first king over the ten tribes, instituted a counterfeit system of religion with altars at Bethel and Dan. (1 Kings 12: 25-33.) The idolatry introduced here continued to increase as the years passed. The kings of Israel, in particular, were noted for their wickedness, and participation in idolatrous practices. This kind of wickedness reached its height in the days of Ahab, and his queen, Jezebel, both of whom were slain. (1 Kings 22: 34-40; 2 Kings 9: 30-39.) It was against the personal and national corruption in each kingdom that the prophets poured forth their denunciations.

Lesson Settings.—At the time that Jeroboam II was king, Israel was enjoying a period of comparative peace. This allowed the king to regain some lost territory, and give his attention to the internal affairs of his own kingdom. This gave a time of temporary prosperity that was accompanied with social and moral degeneracy. He is said to have walked in the “sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,” who headed the revolt when the ten tribes became a separate kingdom. (2 Kings 14: 23-29.) Amos mentions their social and religious sins in different places in his prophecies. Our lesson text contains one of his strongest rebukes.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Vision of the Plumb Line (Verses 7, 8)

Other Visions.—The visions in the preceding verses of this chapter are somewhat introductory to this one. Amos saw multitudes of locusts eating the tender grass. This indicated that Israel’s enemies would impoverish them by taking away their means of subsistence. This led the prophet to plead in behalf of his distressed people. The vision represents God as repenting—changing his mind—and not allowing their complete destruction. Then he saw Jehovah contending by fire; that is, he saw Jehovah permitting their country to be devastated by civil and foreign wars. Again the prophet pleads for the people, and again Jehovah repents, and complete destruction is averted.

"A Plumb-line."—The margin and the King James Version both say that Amos saw the Lord standing "upon" a wall with a plumb line in his hand. It is immaterial whether he saw the Lord upon the wall or standing beside it. The essential thing in the vision is that he held a plumb line in his hand. The use of a literal plumb line is to determine whether an object is perfectly perpendicular. In construction work this is necessary to secure safety. As morally applied here, it means that Jehovah would apply to them strict justice, and reward them accordingly. When their conduct failed to be strictly upright, God would allow their enemies to inflict upon them such disasters as they deserved. The historical facts furnish full evidence that the vision correctly represented the mind of Jehovah.

II. Jehovah Foretells Israel's Future (Verses 8, 9)

Vision Explained.—The Lord asked Amos what he saw, and he replied, "A plumb-line." Then it was explained in words what the vision meant. In the preceding visions the Lord had been seen as repenting, and mercifully preventing the complete overthrow of Israel, but had now reached the point when he would "not again pass by them any more." He had before changed his mind and given them another chance before allowing their complete national overthrow; now he purposes to allow the final blow to fall upon them.

Details Mentioned.—Jehovah declared that "the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste." High places referred to their places of worship, which were doubtless placed on some elevated location of some kind. This was true whether the worship was true or false. The trouble in their case was that what little worship they rendered to Jehovah had been so mingled with idolatrous practices that it was all abominable to God. Their places of worship were to be destroyed. Isaac builded an altar at Beersheba (Gen. 26: 25), which had become a place of idolatry and was destroyed by Josiah nearly two hundred years after the reign of Jeroboam. (2 Kings 23: 8.) But the kingdom of Israel had ceased long before that time. Probably our text is only a general reference to the fact that the Israelites were descended from the two worthy ancestors—Isaac and Jacob—and that they had so perverted the worship that came from the God of Isaac and Jacob that even the places should be destroyed.

The House of Jeroboam.—God promised Jehu that he would allow his sons to the fourth generation to sit upon the throne because he had executed the Lord's wrath against Ahab. (2 Kings 10: 30.) This was literally fulfilled when Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam, was slain by Shallum, who usurped the throne. (2 Kings 15: 8-10.) This also fulfilled the prophecy of our text that Jehovah would "rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." The reign of Jeroboam was peaceful, so far as foreign enemies were concerned, but that was ended when his son was assassinated, after reigning only six months. The usurper, Shallum, reigned but one month and was slain by Menahem, who was forced to purchase peace from the Assyrian king. (2 Kings 15: 13-20.) The remaining years of Israel's national existence were filled with internal and foreign troubles. Truly Jehovah did not "pass by them any more."

III. Amaziah Reports Amos to Jeroboam (Verses 10-13)

A False Charge.—Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, reported to the king that Amos was trying to arouse the house of Israel in conspiracy against him. The charge was utterly false, but that is not surprising when we remember Amaziah was the priest of Bethel, one of the places where the first Jeroboam established his counterfeit system of religion. (1 Kings 12: 25-33.) It was not strange that an idolatrous priest should misrepresent a prophet who condemned moral wickedness and religious corruption. Amos was not conspiring against the king, or trying to raise an insurrection, but was telling them just what would happen unless a reformation occurred. The priest said the "land is not able to bear all his words." The truth was that they were not willing to hear his words. They could have heard them, and would have been blessed if they had.

Definite Predictions.—Amaziah charged Amos with saying that Jeroboam would die by the sword, and Israel would be led into captivity. Unless Amos said something not recorded in the text, the prophet lied in these charges. The statement about Jeroboam dying by the sword was false; he died a natural death. (2 Kings 14: 29.) Up to that time Amos had not said the Israelites would be carried away captive, though he did say it later. (See verse 17.)

"Go, Flee Thou Away."—Notwithstanding the prophet had charged Amos with treason against the kingdom, he pretended enough kindness to urge the prophet to leave for Judea, where he might be safe if he insisted on prophesying. This showed that the priest was more anxious to get rid of the prophet's influence than he was to see justice done. If the prophet had been guilty of what Amaziah had charged against him, he should have insisted on his apprehension and proper punishment; sending him off to deceive others with his false prophecies was an absurd course to take. Amaziah had lied to the king; he was also trying to deceive the prophet. His reason for making the request is absurd. He said that Bethel was the "king's sanctuary"—the place where the king's religion was practiced. That meant that nothing must be said against the king's religion—just another way of exalting the king above God. He said, "It is a royal house." Being a "royal house," in a worldly sense, is far less important than being "a spiritual house," or a "house of prayer."

IV. Amos Describes His Prophetic Call (Verses 14, 15)

"A Herdsman."—Amos replied to Amaziah by saying, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore-trees." He had no hereditary claim on the prophetic office. His call from tending flocks and herds to the high work of declaring God's will against evil left no doubt but that his claim was genuine, and his work of God, if his predictions came true. His special call was to deliver that message against Israel, and he would not allow any human command to interfere. It was equivalent to saying that, if the Lord wanted him to prophesy in Judah, he would do so; but, since his command from Jehovah was to prophesy unto Israel, he would not be turned away from that duty.

Other Prophecies.—Amos probably retired to Tekoa, in Judea, south of Jerusalem, where other prophecies were uttered against Damascus, the Philistines, Tyrians, Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, and Judah. All this is supposed to have occurred after his prophecy against

Israel, as described in our lesson text. He did not propose to allow Amaziah to drive him away before he declared the message God sent him to deliver. Being just a plain herdsman and tree dresser, he would not have been there had not Jehovah sent him.

V. Amos Prophecies Against Amaziah (Verses 16, 17)

"The Word of Jehovah."—Since Amaziah had demanded that Amos not prophesy against Israel, the prophet told him he should hear what Jehovah had to say against him. He was not only an idolatrous priest, but one who was trying to prevent the delivery of God's message to the people. For him personally, therefore, Jehovah had a message, and Amos was ready to tell him what it was. It was doubtless a great surprise to Amaziah when Amos refused to stop his prophesying against Israel, and uttered a most frightful one against himself.

The Family Disaster.—As Amaziah was in idolatrous service, there was probably little to say in favor of his morals or that of his family. But the prophet told him of definite misfortunes that would overtake him. His wife would become utterly lost to virtue, and the sacred relationship of husband and wife would be marred or destroyed entirely. His sons and daughters would be slain by the sword; he would be deprived of them by the method of cruel murders. Both of these losses would be as severe a strain on family ties as is known. The pleasures of his home, whatever they might be, were to be completely destroyed. His land was to be "divided by line," probably means that their inheritance was to be taken by strangers. And, finally, he was himself to die in a "land that is unclean." That likely meant that he would be taken as a captive, and die among some foreign people. As this passage gives us all we know about this matter, we do not know under what circumstances these predictions were fulfilled. But the fact that his other predictions were fulfilled is evidence that these were too.

Israel Captive.—In verse 17 Amos predicts what the priest had falsely charged him with saying before this. He here declares that "Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land." The later history of the kingdom of Israel fully confirms this prediction. The time for the prediction to be fulfilled was not far away. About a half century later the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser, came against Israel, and took King Hoshea and the people away captive. (2 Kings 17: 1-6.) The reason why Jehovah allowed this capture of his people is expressly stated to be the sin of the people—the very thing for which Amos condemned them. They had "feared other gods," "walked in the statutes of the nations" whom God cast out, and did things secretly against Jehovah that were not right, one of which was partaking in the idolatrous practices of their neighbors.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. The Psalmist said that Jehovah "will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth." (Psalm 96: 13.) Men often make mistakes in their judgments; not so with God. Infinite wisdom will be sure to reward just as each deserves. This guarantees justice for the righteous just the same as for the wicked.

2. God told, through Amos, the future of Israel as a nation, and Amaziah's family as individuals. In his word he tells the future of

all men, both obedient and disobedient. His words are just as true regarding the final destiny of men as they were of Israel and Amaziah.

3. Those who cannot honorably meet facts often resort to falsehoods to escape consequences. Such falsehoods *may* harm the one misrepresented or defamed; they *always* harm the one who uses them.

4. Those who profess to be servants of God should not be terrified by the threats of men, and fail to speak the truth upon which the salvation of men depends. Displeasing God is more dangerous than displeasing men.

5. Trying to defeat the word of God has always been a work of the devil, and deserves the severest rebuke. Elymas is a noted example in the New Testament. (Acts 13: 6-11.)

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Briefly discuss the lessons in Amos 5: 11-15.
2. Point out the different charges made against the people by Amos in Amos 5: 21-27.
3. Point out and discuss the charges he made against them in Amos 6: 1-7. Note particularly verses 4-6.
4. Discuss Amos 9: 9-12. Compare it with the use made of verses 11 and 12, as found quoted in Acts 15: 16, 17.
5. Describe the capture of Israel and her king by the Assyrian general, Shalmaneser. (2 Kings 17: 1-6.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

What promise had the Lord made Jehu?
Explain the overthrow of Jeroboam's house.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

III
What was false in Amaziah's report to Jeroboam?
Why did he resort to falsehood?
What request did Amaziah make?

I

What were the visions in the preceding verses of this chapter?
Describe the vision in this section.
What application of plumb line was intended?

IV
What answer did Amos make?
Against what other people did Amos prophesy?

II

How is the vision explained in the words of the text?
What is meant by not "pass by them any more"?
What is meant by "high places"?
What had happened to the altar that Isaac built?

V
What disasters are promised to Amaziah's family?
What was the prophecy against the kingdom of Israel?
Why did Jehovah allow such misfortunes to come to his people?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson V—August 4, 1935

JOSIAH (A RELIGIOUS REFORMER)

2 Kings 23: 1-5, 21-23.

1 And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.

2 And the king went up to the house of Jehovah, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of Jehovah.

3 And the king stood by the pillar, and made a covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and all his soul, to confirm the words of this covenant that were written in this book: and all the people stood to the covenant.

4 And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the threshold, to bring forth out of the temple of Jehovah all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el.

5 And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.

21 And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto Jehovah your God, as it is written in this book of the covenant.

22 Surely there was not kept such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah:

23 But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah was this passover kept to Jehovah in Jerusalem.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."* (Matt. 4: 10.)

TIME.—About 646 to 608 B.C.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah.

PERSONS.—Josiah and the people.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Deut. 6: 4-13.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

July 29.	M.	.....	A Great King (2 Kings 22: 1-7)
July 30.	T.	.....	A Great Book (2 Kings 22: 8-13)
July 31.	W.	.....	A Great Reformation (2 Kings 23: 1-5)
August 1.	T.	.....	A Great Feast (2 Kings 23: 21-23)
August 2.	F.	.....	A Great Guide (Psalm 119: 105-112)
August 3.	S.	.....	A Great Helper (Psalm 43: 1-5)
August 4.	S.	.....	A Great Trust (Deut. 6: 4-13)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Josiah Reads the Book of the Covenant (Verses 1, 2).
 - II. Josiah and the People Make a Covenant (Verse 3).
 - III. Josiah Cleanses the Temple and Worship (Verses 4, 5).
 - IV. The Passover Kept (Verses 21-23).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Josiah succeeded to the throne as king of Judah about 641 B.C. He was then eight years of age. This was about eighty years after the kingdom of Israel had been taken into captivity by the Assyrians. Josiah's father, Amon, was murdered by his servants after a brief reign of two years. (2 Kings 21: 23, 24.) Josiah's reign lasted thirty-one years. The last thirteen were the most interesting, because that was the period during which his great reformatory work was done. By an unfortunate meddling in the quarrel between Egypt and Assyria, a mistake on his part, he lost his life in battle. (2 Kings 23: 29, 30.) Morally he was one of the best, if not the best, of all the kings that ruled God's people.

Lesson Links.—Since the time of our last lesson Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, and Amon have ruled over Judah. The reigns of all except Hezekiah are but a repetition, in greater or less degree, of the evil that so often disgraced the rulers of both Israel and Judah. In contrast Hezekiah stands out with the divine compliment that he did "that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah." (2 Kings 18: 3, 4.) His father, Ahaz, worshiped idols, despoiled the house of the Lord, and closed its doors—suspended the temple worship—for about fourteen years. (2 Chron. 28: 24.) Hezekiah cleansed the house and restored the worship. (2 Chron. 29: 1-11.) During his reign the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, invaded Judea, and Hezekiah purchased peace at a great price. (2 Kings 18: 14-16.) Later the Assyrian army was destroyed and Sennacherib was murdered by his sons. (2 Kings 19: 35-37.) Hezekiah was succeeded by Manasseh, whose wicked reign of fifty-five years was a return to idolatry. (2 Kings 21: 1-9, 15, 16.) Amon's brief reign of two years was a continuation of wickedness.

Lesson Settings.—Coming to the throne when only eight years old, Josiah was too young, of course, to personally direct the affairs of state. Though not mentioned, some form of regency was doubtless used. This explains the fact that his work of reformation did not begin till he had been king for ten years—his eighteenth year. The wickedness that had prevailed for the preceding half century explains his lack of knowledge respecting God's laws. When the "book of the law" was found in the temple, and brought to the king, his honor and integrity made him set about at once to effect a reformation among the whole nation in both morals and religion. That is the story in our lesson text.

LESSON NOTES

I. Josiah Reads the Book of the Covenant (Verses 1, 2)

Book Found.—During the two preceding reigns, covering fifty-seven years, wickedness prevailed. Naturally a knowledge of the law decreased, and the temple service was perverted or suspended by the introduction of idolatry. (2 Kings 21: 2-7.) Doubtless some work in removing evil was done during the first ten years of Josiah's reign, but the real reformatory work began when he was eighteen. The temple needed repairing, and Josiah set the wheels in motion to have it done. The law required the offering of the half shekel annually for the temple. (Ex. 30: 14-16.) Josiah required that this money be computed and turned over to workmen that the repairs might be made. While this task at the temple was in progress, the book of

the law in the house of Jehovah was found, and brought to the king by Shaphan, the scribe.

Effect on the King.—When the high priest found the book, he delivered it to Shaphan, who read it first himself. Then he read it before the king. (2 Kings 22: 10.) The threats found in the book against God's people, if they sinned, made a deep impression upon the young king. According to their custom in expressing grief and distress, "he rent his clothes." He asked for further inquiry to be made of Jehovah, and the high priest and scribe consulted the prophetess, Huldah, who confirmed all that had been read from the book. She also made a promise of divine favor to Josiah because of his youth, purity, and humbleness. (2 Kings 22: 14-20.) The book they found was probably that restatement of the covenant made by Moses, in the plains of Moab, just before they entered Canaan. It was placed in the side of the ark. (Deut. 31: 26.)

The People Hear the Book Read.—In order that the requirements of the covenant be understood by the people, the king called to him all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. This probably meant all the old men through whom he expected to have the conditions of the covenant carried to the people generally. This great assembly was gathered at the temple. In addition to the elders called, there were present priests, prophets, and an assembly of "both small and great." The king read in their ears "all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of Jehovah." That he read it all to that general audience is probably proof that the book was that of Deuteronomy. Moses' brief review of their laws, rather than the whole system recorded in the preceding books. Reading it all is also evidence that he wanted the people to keep all its requirements. That was probably the most interesting Bible readings even known up to that time; it has not likely been equaled by any since that time except that mentioned in Neh. 8: 1-3.

II. Josiah and the People Make a Covenant (Verse 3)

"By the Pillar."—As a substitute for this expression the margin says, "on the platform." Solomon made a "brazen scaffold" five cubits square and three cubits high, which he placed in the midst of the court. (2 Chron. 6: 13.) Upon this he stood upon his knees while offering the prayer at the dedication of the temple. Most likely this was the platform upon which Josiah made his covenant before the people, and called upon them to accept it as their own. A platform so high enabled all to see him, and better understand his words.

The Promise.—A covenant literally means a contract, but in this particular instance it refers to the solemn vow or promise which the king made to keep the covenant that God had already made with the fathers. The covenant that was ratified at Mount Sinai had just been read to the people. It contained promises from Jehovah and commands for the people to keep. The king simply promised, in the presence of the people, that he would keep Jehovah's commandments, testimonies, and statutes "with all his heart, and all his soul." His vow meant that he would use the full measure of his strength in doing God's will. This was not only right, but was a most worthy example to the people. Rulers are under obligations to lead by strict obedience to law. In this way he would "confirm" the covenant by showing his confidence in it as the actual covenant Jehovah had made

with the fathers. Or, he may have meant that he would keep the commands and statutes, because in so doing, he would keep the covenant. As all commands were equally a part of the covenant, he would have to keep them all or else he would not keep the covenant.

The People Agreed.—The text says that "all the people stood to the covenant." This means, at least, that they gave their endorsement to the king's promise, and agreed to become bound by the same promise. This shows that they voluntarily promised to keep Jehovah's commandments. The language may imply that in giving this endorsement they stood up, at the king's request, for that very purpose. The vital matter, however, is the fact that they agreed to be true to the covenant requirements.

III. Josiah Cleanses the Temple and Worship (Verses 4, 5)

Vessels Brought Out.—During the preceding reigns, when wickedness prevailed, idolatrous practices were brought into the temple—the holy place dedicated to the worship of God. When the worship of idols filled the temple, they brought in such vessels as were used in that worship. The first thing necessary, when the true worship was to be restored, was to get those vessels out; the building had to be cleansed by removing everything suggestive of idol worship. This work was required of the high priest and the priests "of the second order." This expression may refer to the common priests. These vessels were to be used in the worship of Baal, Asherah, and all the host of heaven. Such a variety of idol worship doubtless required a great number of vessels. These names, and combinations with them, represent many different heathen gods. Possibly a lot of the idol worship was also in the outer court. Evidently all of it was destroyed; for the vessels were burned without Jerusalem in the fields or valley of the Kidron. The text says the ashes were carried to Bethel, but no reason is given for that.

"Idolatrous Priests."—The worship of idols requires priests to conduct the worship. They are here called "idolatrous priests," because their services were in honor of the idols. The first Jeroboam introduced a perverted worship. (1 Kings 12: 25-33.) From his day wicked kings in both kingdoms had tolerated, endorsed, or supported idolatry. At no time probably was the situation worse than when Josiah undertook the work of restoring the pure worship. The kings before him had ordained idolatrous priests to burn incense in the various cities of Judah, and especially around Jerusalem. These priests were put down, meaning, of course, that their idol services were no longer allowed. Baal was a supreme deity that was represented by the sun. Mentioning the sun also probably refers to different features of sun worship. The moon and planets would include the various heavenly bodies that the heathen used to represent different ideas.

IV. The Passover Kept (Verses 21-23)

The Command.—Josiah's zeal in restoring the pure worship of God not only swept over the kingdom of Judah, but into the territory occupied by the kingdom of Israel before their captivity. (2 Kings 23: 15-20.) When the passover season came, Josiah commanded that the Passover should be kept "as it is written in this book of the covenant." King and people had taken a solemn vow to do what the

book of the law required. The Passover was probably the most important requirement in the book according to their view of the matter. No service rendered could so effectively make them realize their dependence upon Jehovah. It reminded them of that night when their escape from bondage depended upon the power of God. This fact, properly cherished, would do more to make them see the necessity of worshiping only Jehovah than any other service the book of the covenant required. Wisely then did the king command that the Passover be observed as was written.

No Such Passover.—The record says there was no such Passover kept from the days of the judges, or in the reign of any of the kings of Israel or Judah. After the lapse of the true worship for so many years, and the general and thorough reformation brought about by Josiah, it is no surprise that that Passover surpassed all previous ones. Probably it was observed about as universally as the first one when they left Egypt. Under normal conditions this would not likely have been. The law provided that under certain conditions the Passover might be observed in the second month instead of the first. (Num. 9: 11-13.) But that Passover was deemed so important that it is not probable anyone failed to keep it unless legally unclean. The entire nation doubtless entered into this feast more heartily than usual, and with the purest motives. A deep sense of reverence for Jehovah, and a corresponding feeling of thanksgiving, were likely manifested throughout the whole week that the feast of unleavened bread lasted. Spiritually considered, there had really been none like it before.

The Sacrifices.—When it is remembered that the law required all to have part in this annual feast, it is evident that the numbers of lambs needed for the passover supper alone would be enormous. Some idea of what was required for the individual suppers and the various sacrifices can be gathered from 2 Chron. 35: 1-18, where we have a fuller account of this Passover. From that description we can see why it is said to have surpassed in magnitude any other Passover. This wonderful Passover was in the eighteenth year of Josiah, and the tenth of his reign.

Other Reforms.—Josiah also followed the law in banishing all that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, and all other kinds of abominations. (Deut. 18: 9-14; 2 Kings 23: 24.) The record says that there had been no king like him in turning to Jehovah with all the heart, soul and might. (2 Kings 23: 25.) Notwithstanding Josiah's reforms, enough wickedness before him and afterwards justified the seventy years' bondage of Judah, which began about twenty-five years after his death. The wickedness of Manasseh seems mainly responsible for the captivity. (2 Kings 23: 26, 27.)

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Spoken truth must be heard, and written truth must be read, to accomplish the desired results. In the early days of the church the people heard the apostles speak; now we read what they wrote. A blessing rests upon those who read and keep the truth. (Rev. 1: 3.) Paul told Timothy to "give heed to reading." (1 Tim. 4: 13.)

2. The most vital proposition in the world is of no value to one who will not decide to accept it, or fails to remain with it after ac-

cepting it. The vow to serve God should not be broken deliberately, or through neglect.

3. When false doctrines or practices of any kind get into the church, pious people will strive to get them out. Two things are of especial importance: One is to keep the worship of the church free from human practices; the other is to keep our hearts free from sin.

4. The Passover to the Jews was a service of the greatest significance and strongest influence. The Lord's Supper to the Christian is of a similar nature. No Christian is strong enough to attempt to get along without it. No one is in danger of giving up, if he allows nothing but an unavoidable circumstance to prevent his being at the Lord's table each Lord's day.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss Hezekiah's prayer and Isaiah's prophecy regarding deliverance from Sennacherib's army. (2 Kings 19: 14-28.)

2. Describe the destruction of Sennacherib's army and his own death. (2 Kings 19: 29-37.)

3. Tell the story of Hezekiah's sickness, and the manner of his recovery. (2 Kings 20: 1-11; Isa. 38: 1-8.)

4. Discuss the reign of Manasseh, and mention the different evil things he did. (2 Kings 21: 1-18.)

5. Tell the story of Jerusalem's capture. (2 Kings 25: 1-7.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

Describe the finding of the book of the law.
When did the reformatory work begin in reality?
How did the reading of the book affect the king?
What book did they find?
Who heard the book read?
What is indicated by reading "all" the book?

II

What is meant by the expression "by the pillar"?

What is here meant by the word "covenant"?
What promise did Josiah make?
What is meant by standing "to the covenant"?

III

How did idolatrous vessels get in the Lord's house?
What gods are mentioned?
What became of those vessels?
What kind of priests had been put in the service?
What became of those idolatrous priests? (Verse 20.)

IV

How far did Josiah extend his reform work?
What command did he give?
Describe that Passover.
What other reforms did he make?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson VI—August 11, 1935

DANIEL (TEMPERANCE AND HEALTH)

Dan. 1: 8-20.

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

9 Now God made Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs.

10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your food and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths that are of your own age? so would ye endanger my head with the king.

11 Then said Daniel to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the youths that eat of the king's dainties; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he hearkened unto them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's dainties.

16 So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.

17 Now as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 And at the end of the days which the king had appointed for bringing them in, the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

20 And in every matter of wisdom and understanding, concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God?"* (1 Cor. 6: 19.)

TIME.—About 605 B.C., the beginning of the seventy years' captivity.

PLACE.—Babylon, on the Euphrates, five hundred miles east of Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Daniel, his companions, and the servants of Nebuchadnezzar.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 46.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 5.	M.	-----	A Courageous Purpose (Dan. 1: 8-13)
August 6.	T.	-----	Benefits of Abstinence (Dan. 1: 14-21)
August 7.	W.	-----	Daniel's Wisdom (Dan. 2: 25-30)
August 8.	T.	-----	A Prayer for Protection (Psalm 141: 1-10)
August 9.	F.	-----	Total Abstinence (Jer. 35: 1-14)
August 10.	S.	-----	Greatness in the Sight of God (Luke 1: 8-17)
August 11.	S.	-----	God Our Refuge and Strength (Psalm 46: 1-11)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Daniel Rejects the King's Dainties and Wine (Verses 8-10).
- II. Daniel Asks for a Ten Days' Test (Verses 11-13).
- III. Results of the Test (Verses 14-16).
- IV. Results of Their Three Years' Training (Verse 17).
- V. Daniel and His Companions Brought Before the King (Verses 18-20).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The approximate time of our lesson is learned from the following facts: Jehoiakim became king of Judah about 610 or 609 B.C. (2 Kings 23: 31-36.) In the third year of his reign

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, besieged Jerusalem, and the Lord granted him victory. (Dan. 1: 1, 2.) Jehoiakim became his servant, paid tribute for three years, then rebelled. He died in the eleventh year of his reign. (2 Kings 23: 36; 24: 1.) From Jer. 52: 12-30 we learn that the Babylonian king took captives from Judea several times. It is probable that Daniel was among the captives taken when Nebuchadnezzar's army besieged Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign, or about 606 B.C. This makes an interval of about thirty-seven years that elapsed between this and last lesson.

Lesson Links.—At the death of Josiah, the subject of last lesson, the people made his son, Jehoahaz, king. He had reigned but three months when the Egyptian king, Pharaoh-necoh, removed him and put his brother, Eliakim, in his place. Jehoahaz was taken in chains to Egypt, where he died, and Eliakim's name was changed to Jehoiakim. (2 Kings 23: 31-34.) Pharaoh-necoh exacted a tax, which Jehoiakim paid by taxing the people. (Verse 35.) Later Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh-necoh at Carchemish (Jer. 46: 2), and then besieged Jerusalem, forcing Jehoiakim to become tributary to him. When Jehoiakim rebelled against him after three years, the Babylonian king sent a mixed army of Chaldeans, Syrians, and Moabites against him. There is little regarding the later years of Jehoiakim except the general statements of his wickedness, and his disgraceful burial. (Jer. 22: 18, 19.) When Jehoiakim became a servant to Nebuchadnezzar, some of the vessels of the house of God were taken to Babylon and placed in the temple of their idol. (Dan. 1: 2.)

Lesson Settings.—Nebuchadnezzar commanded the master of his eunuchs—officers or servants connected with the royal palace—that he would bring in certain of the children of Israel, “even of the seed royal and nobles,” that they, too, might stand in the king's palace. Just what service he had in mind in desiring some of the Israelites to be made servants we do not know. It requires many servants of various kinds to look after all the affairs in a royal court. Among these, the master of the eunuchs found four—Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—whose development pleased the king greatly. The master changed their names to Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Of these four Daniel has world-wide fame; the others, after the reference in the book of Daniel, are not mentioned again.

LESSON NOTES

I. Daniel Rejects the King's Dainties and Wine (Verses 8-10)

Daniel's Purpose.—The youths selected were to have no blemish, be skillful in all wisdom, endued with knowledge and understand science. None others were deemed worthy to stand before the king. This also required a knowledge of the Chaldean language. To reach this high state of qualification the king required that they be trained for three years. (Dan. 1: 4, 5.) In order to keep them in the best physical condition the king ordered that they be provided daily with the dainties and wines from his own table. These Daniel determined in his own heart to refuse, lest he be defiled. He had the following reasons for his decision: 1. The heathen ate beasts that the Jewish law declared unclean. (Lev. 11.) 2. They probably also ate things strangled, which was the same as eating blood. This also was for-

bidden. (Lev. 3: 17.) 3. Probably some of the animals eaten had been offered to idols. Daniel did not want to even appear as countenancing the idol. The ordinary carousals in wine were against both the teaching of the Jewish scriptures, and morality as well.

His Request.—Being a captive Daniel knew he could not demand that a different food be supplied him; but he had the right to request it, and give his reasons for his wish. He availed himself of this right. The text says he made the request with the explanation that he did not want to defile himself. That probably means that he carefully laid before the prince of the eunuchs the reason why he, as a Jew, could not consistently use the king's dainties and wine. This request, however, would doubtless have been refused had not God caused "Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs." Daniel's modesty and fidelity to the law of God made him worthy of the providential aid that was given in making his request pleasing to the master over him.

The Prince's Reply.—The prince feared that to grant Daniel's request would result disastrously to himself. To violate the king's order would put him in danger of being beheaded. As the king specified their food for the express purpose of their appearing "well-favored," he would be sure to make inquiry, if they did not look as well as other youths of similar age. The prince knew that, when the king found his command had been ignored, he would probably lose his life. For this reason he would not have given Daniel's request any consideration, if God had not inclined him to do so.

II. Daniel Asks for a Ten Days' Test (Verses 11-13)

Daniel's Suggestion.—Daniel next appealed to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had put in charge of the food for the young men selected for training. He suggested that the steward test the matter by giving him and his three companions "pulse to eat, and water to drink," for ten days. That meant they wanted a vegetable and grain diet, with water to drink, for the time specified. This would not be long enough to endanger the steward or prince; for, if they did not hold up under that system, the prince could change before any serious damage would occur. That would make him safe, and give a chance for Daniel's suggestion to be tried. If no loss in youthful appearance was seen in that time, the prince would not fear to try it further. Daniel's success in making the suggestion was in the fact that he did not ask for long enough time to make such changes as might become known to the king, and require an explanation that would endanger his life.

Daniel's Promise.—Daniel asked that the steward compare their appearance at the expiration of the time with those who had been fed on the king's dainties, and said: "And as thou seest, deal with thy servants." He meant that he was perfectly willing for a test to be made. He was so certain that obedience to God's law would work no harm that he was ready for his heathen masters to put him to the test. Just as God providentially made the prince of the eunuchs favorable to Daniel's request, so he would see to it that Daniel's conscientious respect for his law would not result in harm, if there had been any natural danger of such a thing. Doubtless the plain, simple food requested by Daniel was better for them than the kingly dainties. Such food often leads to overindulgence, and results in

harm to the body. In addition to Daniel's respect for God's regulation on the kinds of food allowed, his desire to be supplied with plain food was the best for them—would leave them in the best physical condition.

III. Results of the Test (Verses 14-16)

Fairer and Fatter.—The steward was favorably influenced by Daniel's offer, and decided to prove by a ten-day trial whether or not he could grant the wish to be gratified for a longer time. The text says that at the end of the time "their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's dainties." Fair countenance and solid flesh are just the natural things to expect, when youthful people are liberally supplied with healthful food. This would be the ordinary way that such tests would end, even if there were no overruling providences in the case. The results in the test were especially striking, because compared with other youths who were being supplied with the king's dainties and wine. But better results would have followed, under the circumstances, if the food eaten had not been more wholesome and healthful than that used by others. Such fidelity to God before idolatrous people could not have gone unrewarded, when God's people were under his providential care, both spiritually and politically. The promise of God, through Moses, was that faithfulness would be rewarded with special benefits. (Deut. 6: 2, 3.) There are many promises of the same general tenor.

Daniel's Request Made Permanent.—The physical results were so convincing that the steward was willing to allow Daniel's wish continued gratification. Aside from any divine influence, of which he was wholly ignorant, he had two considerations that would induce him to grant the request: 1. Doubtless the personal bearing of Daniel and his three companions was so attractive that he really wished to extend any favors possible. When no harm was apparent from the test, he saw no danger to himself by agreeing to the same plan indefinitely. This alone would be a very decisive reason. 2. When he saw that they came through the test in apparently much better physical condition, he realized that, if that continued, the king would be highly pleased. This naturally was what he wanted to happen. To please the king without danger to himself was enough to bring to Daniel what he desired.

IV. Results of Their Three Years' Training (Verse 17)

Knowledge and Wisdom.—The text says God gave these four youths "knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom." It is impossible to know all the ways in which this development was made possible. That they were naturally capable need not be doubted; that God providentially directed affairs so they would have competent teachers is also probable. If their proficiency came through these natural means alone, it still was from God. Indirectly he was the author of it all. But God may have miraculously aided their minds to comprehend more readily the things they needed to know. Whatever means may have been used, the fact remains that at the end of the time they had become skillful in the use of knowledge and wisdom.

"Visions and Dreams."—In addition to the superior learning that was common to all four, Daniel is said to have had "understanding

in all visions and dreams." The statement is verified in the following chapters wherein we have the record of Daniel having things revealed to him in visions, and his interpretation of dreams. (Dan. 2: 19, 26-28.) This was a common method by which God revealed truths to the prophets. (Num. 12: 6.) Supernatural dreams were true to facts, and contained nothing preposterous. In this they differ from dreams in general, which may be absurd, preposterous, or impossible.

V. Daniel and His Companions Brought Before the King (Verses 18-20)

None Like Them.—"At the end of the days which the king had appointed" means at the end of three years, according to verse 5. Then all who were from other nations, and in the same course of training, along with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were brought into the king's presence for examination. The king "communed with them," which doubtless means he tested their knowledge of the Chaldean language, sciences, and general Babylonian affairs. Without this information they would not have been considered useful in the royal court, or in transacting the king's business. In this general examination he found that none of the others were like Daniel and his three associates. Their ability clearly put them in a class to themselves. The record says, "Therefore they stood before Nebuchadnezzar. That means that they were appointed to a place in his regular service. The fact that the four Hebrews only received appointment means that only four were then needed, or the others were not sufficiently qualified for the service required.

"Ten Times Better."—The king tested them thoroughly in matters of wisdom and understanding. In every feature of the test he found them, not only better than other young men brought before him, but "ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm." These were classes of professional wise men who claimed to be able to reveal secrets through various arts. That they were recognized as possessing extraordinary powers is clear from the fact that Nebuchadnezzar sent for them to interpret his dream. (Dan. 2: 2.) But in the matter of wisdom and understanding the king found the four Hebrews far superior to those professional wise men. The word "ten" here can hardly mean that they were exactly that much wiser than the magicians, but rather that they were very much better and wiser. Definite numbers are often used to express an indefinite amount. That seems clearly the meaning of the word here.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Daniel's case is a splendid example of the fact that God's servants do not have to conform to the sinful practices around them just because others do, and that faithfulness will finally be rewarded. The command from inspiration is: "And be not fashioned according to this world." (Rom. 12: 2.)

2. It is always appropriate to ask that God's word be given a test by being tried. No difference what the circumstances may be, a servant of God should insist on being permitted to do what God requires. A true servant *will* insist on that right.

3. Daniel's request had reference to physical matters, and it came

out best; the Christian's tests will usually pertain to morals and religion. Faithfulness to God's word will finally win in spite of any sacrifices that may be required. Salvation depends upon obedience to God, not upon pleasing men.

4. Whatever blessings we receive in this life come directly or indirectly from God. This fact should be frankly admitted, and all our conduct should be made to harmonize with that fact.

5. As heaven is better than earth, so pleasing God and going to heaven will be infinitely better than pleasing men and being lost. Loving the praise of men more than the praise of God is a fatal condition of the heart.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the reign of Zedekiah, telling how he became a captive, and how he came to his death. (2 Kings 24: 18 to 25: 1-7.)

2. Describe the vision of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. (Dan. 2: 25-35.)

3. Give the general features of Daniel's interpretation of the dream. (Dan. 2: 36-45.)

4. Describe the effect that Daniel's interpretation had on King Nebuchadnezzar, and tell what he did for the four Hebrews. (Dan. 2: 46-49.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.

Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.

Repeat the Lesson Links.

Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What character of servants could stand before the king?

What did Daniel purpose in his heart?

What request did he make?

Why?

How did the prince reply to his request?

II

What suggestion did Daniel make to the steward?

Why suggest ten days as the time for the test?

What promise did Daniel make?

III

What were the physical results of the test?

What made the results so striking?

What general promise had Moses made in Deut. 6: 2, 3?

Why did the prince allow Daniel's request to continue?

What two considerations probably accounts for his action?

IV

What reasons may be assigned for the wisdom of the youths?

In what was Daniel especially distinguished?

V

How did the Hebrews compare with other youths?

How did they compare with the magicians and enchanters?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson VII—August 18, 1935

MARTHA (A HOME MAKER)

Luke 10: 38-42; John 11: 17-28.

38 Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

17 So when Jesus came, he found that he had been in the tomb four days already.

18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off;

19 And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother.

20 Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary still sat in the house.

21 Martha therefore said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee.

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live;

26 And whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world.

28 And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Teacher is here, and calleth thee.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." (John 11: 5.)

TIME.—A.D. 29 or 30.

PLACES.—Bethany and Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jesus, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 116: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 12.	M.	.....	A Hospitable Home (Luke 10: 38-42)
August 13.	T.	.....	Sickness in the Home (John 11: 1-6)
August 14.	W.	.....	Jesus in the Home (John 11: 17-27)
August 15.	T.	.....	Joy in the Home (John 11: 32-44)
August 16.	F.	.....	A Careful Mother (1 Sam. 2: 18-21)
August 17.	S.	.....	A Good Family Heritage (2 Tim. 1: 1-6)
August 18.	S.	.....	A God of Mercy (Psalm 116: 1-8)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Jesus Entertained by Martha and Mary (Verses 38-40).
 - II. Mary Chooses the Good Part (Verses 41, 42).
 - III. Jesus and the Disciples Again in Bethany (John 11: 17-20).
 - IV. Martha's Confidence in Jesus' Power (Verses 21-24).
 - V. Jesus the Resurrection and the Life (Verses 25-28).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The event recorded in the text from Luke occurred late in A.D. 29. If at the Feast of Dedication, which is probable, then it happened perhaps as late as December the twentieth. It was something more than three months before the time of the crucifixion. The visit to Bethany to raise Lazarus, recorded in our second scripture text, was early in A.D. 30. The exact time cannot be fixed, but is supposed to have been in January. This allows for only a few

weeks to have elapsed between the two events of this lesson, even if it happened late in January, which seems most likely.

Lesson Links.—Jesus attended the Feast of Tabernacles. (John 7: 2, 11-14; Luke 9: 51-53.) This feast came in October. While there, the Jews attempted to kill him, because he claimed God as his Father. (John 8: 55-59.) It is also certain that he attended the Feast of Dedication, at which time they made another attempt to kill him, but he evaded them. (John 9: 39.) This feast was kept to honor the cleansing of the temple in 164 B.C. It had been previously desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes. This feast probably occurred about December the twentieth, a little less than three months after the Feast of Tabernacles. After their second attempt to kill him at the Feast of Dedication, Jesus again went into Perea, east of the Jordan. (John 10: 22, 39, 40.) While on this journey he spoke the parables found in Luke 15: 1 to 16: 31. His entertainment in the home of Lazarus and his sisters may have been when he arrived for the feast. After his brief stay east of the Jordan he returned to Bethany and raised Lazarus.

Lesson Settings.—Nothing could be more natural than that he should visit his friends when he went to the feast. His returning to raise Lazarus was a different situation. When the sisters sent Jesus word that Lazarus was sick, he delayed two days, and then proposed to his disciples that they go to Bethany. The disciples, remembering the two attempts against his life in Judea, tried to persuade him not to return. (John 11: 3-8.) But he insisted that he must work till the day of his life had come to its close. In spite of Jewish hatred and opposition, he rendered a loving service, and left for the world one of the most remarkable evidences of his divine power.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jesus Entertained by Martha and Mary (Verses 38-40)

Jesus Received.—"As they went on their way" means that as they were traveling through Judea they came to a certain city. This was Bethany, since that is definitely stated to be the city of Mary and Martha. (John 11: 1.) The special friendship that existed between Jesus and the family of Lazarus and his sisters makes it probable that he was often entertained there when he was in Jerusalem for any purpose. The two instances in our lesson are doubtless recorded because they are of special importance. One gives a beautiful lesson on hospitality, though something else is of more value; the other records one of his most remarkable miracles. The Greek word for receive means to "receive as a guest"; she admitted him into the house as a friend, not simply as a visitor. The text says into "her house." Some think she may have been a widow, and the home was hers, while Lazarus and Mary lived with her. Nothing more is known, however, than what the text says. The lessons are not changed whatever their home relationship may have been. The family relationship is clearly stated.

"Heard His Word."—The contrast between the sisters is strikingly presented in Luke's words. Martha received Jesus as a Guest, but Mary received him as a Teacher. For that reason she sat at his feet and "heard his word." Sitting at the feet of a teacher was the ancient posture of students in receiving instruction. (Deut. 33: 3; Acts 22:

3.) Martha was "cumbered about much serving." The margin says "distracted," which probably is the correct idea. By "serving" is doubtless meant that she was preparing the meal, and was much disturbed about preparing just such an one as would show proper respect for her honored Guest. This is often the case when meals are being prepared for guests not worthy to be compared with the Lord.

Martha's Complaint.—Her anxiety to prepare a suitable meal for Jesus led her to present a complaint to him against Mary, because she had offered no help. She asked, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone?" That is, "Do you think it right for her not to assist me in providing for your bodily comfort?" Then she asked the Lord to bid her to aid in the preparation of the meal. Martha was actuated by a spirit of true hospitality, an honest desire to provide for the comfort and pleasure of her guest. For this she deserves praise, not censure. This desire may lead to many unnecessary or foolish things, but the desire is right. Fortunate is the one who can translate the desire into action with wisdom and good taste.

II. Mary Chooses the Good Part (Verses 41, 42)

"Many Things."—Instead of agreeing with Martha, and asking Mary to assist her, Jesus offered a mild rebuke by saying, "Thou art anxious and troubled about many things." Undue anxiety and unnecessary trouble about many things, even material things that perish with their using. He then said, "But one thing is needful." The margin says that many ancient authorities read "but few things are needful, or one." Those who take this view understand that Christ referred to the meal Martha was preparing, and that he was telling her that all her anxiety and worry were unnecessary, because only a few articles (or even one) were needful for their repast. A more probable view is that he meant that only one thing is of real vital importance—the bread of life. Food for the body is of importance, of course, and cannot be neglected, but it is of a temporary nature. The bread from heaven—the truth that sustains the spiritual man—is the one thing that is preeminently needful; the thing that should receive our first consideration. This view harmonizes better with the words regarding Mary.

Not Taken Away.—The word good is used in the absolute sense, something that is perfect; or, as we would say, she has chosen the best. It was something that could not be taken from her. A meal, however carefully prepared, can only serve for a time, then another is necessary; but the truth received into the heart remains permanently with its life-giving power. This same truth was expressed by Jesus in another form when he said: "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6: 33.) Since Mary was concerned about the more vital thing of seeking food for the soul, the Lord refused to bid her leave that to provide temporal food for him as a guest. However honorable the guest, the teacher is of far more value.

III. Jesus and the Disciples Again in Bethany (John 11: 17-20)

"When Jesus Came."—In verse 4 Jesus said the sickness of Lazarus was for the glory of God; that is, God's glory would be manifested

through that which happened to Lazarus naturally. When he said the "sickness is not unto death," he meant that Lazarus was not to remain dead, and that his resurrection would bring glory to God. After hearing of the sickness, Jesus waited two days before starting to Bethany. When they arrived, they found that Lazarus had been in the tomb four days already. He must have died about the time the news reached Jesus that he was sick; for the two days' delay and the time to reach Bethany would be about the time required for the body to have been buried four days. Their custom of embalming bodies evidently had not been followed in the case of Lazarus, for verse 39 says that "by this time the body decayeth." Failure to practice this custom may have been a providential overruling, so that there would be no possible doubt about Lazarus being dead, and the genuineness of the miracle of his resurrection.

Friendly Consolation.—The statement that Bethany was about "fifteen furlongs"—slightly less than two miles—from Jerusalem was doubtless made to explain why their many friends in Jerusalem were there to comfort the sisters, according to their custom. The Orientals were accustomed to vehement and long-continued mourning. The unreasonable habit of having professional mourners was a common thing. In the case of Jacob the period of mourning continued for seventy days, thirty after the days for embalming were past. (Gen. 50: 3, 4.) This text may refer, however, to those friends who came to offer real sympathy with the sorrowing sisters, not to the professional mourners.

Martha Meets Jesus.—The incidental statement that Martha went out to meet Jesus, while Mary remained in the house, is in harmony with the fact that she assumed responsibility and took the lead in temporal things, as is indicated in the preceding sections of this lesson. Mary, consistent with her deep interest in spiritual things, remained in the house thinking of her great loss; and, so far as we know, probably meditating upon some of the rich truths that she learned while sitting at Jesus' feet a few weeks before.

IV. Martha's Confidence in Jesus' Power (Verses 21-24)

"Whatsoever Thou Shalt Ask."—Her first expression of confidence in the Lord was saying that Lazarus would not have died if Jesus had been there. Of course such close friends as Martha and Mary would have known much about the manifestations of Christ's power in the past. So many healings in various places could not have been unknown entirely. Whatever they thought about his ability to heal when absent, they felt sure he could have healed their brother if present. They probably also thought that Jesus' love for Lazarus would have caused him to do so. Their lack of understanding the purpose of miracles (Mark 2: 9-11) did not prevent their unwavering confidence in Jesus' power to heal. Martha likely did not consider that the raising of a body dead so long would be possible (verse 39), but she expressed her faith in Jesus being heard by the Father in whatsoever he might ask. She was sure he would not ask for the wrong thing.

"Shall Rise Again."—Jesus took advantage of her confidence in his power to assert the certainty of the resurrection. Martha replied that she knew he would rise "in the resurrection at the last day." While the resurrection of Christ exemplified and gave emphasis to the

doctrine of the resurrection as nothing else could have done, the Jews had a notion of such an event at the last day. (Isa. 26: 19; Dan. 12: 2.) Jesus had already taught that a resurrection would come. (Luke 14: 14; John 5: 29.) Upon these definite teachings Martha could base her hope of a resurrection at the last day.

V. Jesus the Resurrection and the Life (Verses 25-28)

Believer Shall Live.—Jesus made Martha's faith in the resurrection of her brother the occasion for saying that he was the author of eternal life, and the source of the resurrection. Her only hope of her brother's resurrection then must center in himself by whose power her hope could be realized. This led to the statement that, if one were a believer in him, he might die a natural death, but would be raised again to enjoy spiritual life. According to his words in John 5: 28, 29 all in their tombs will be raised, but only those who have done good will be raised to life; the wicked will be condemned. Verse 26 of our lesson text says: "Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." There are two especially important lessons here that should be given careful thought: 1. Since believers in Christ will die physically just as others do, the expression "shall never die" cannot refer to a natural death. If believers in Christ never die in a spiritual sense, then their spirits must continue to exist while the body remains dead. Those materialists who teach that the spirit of man is unconscious—does not exist—between death and the resurrection are mistaken, because in conflict with Christ's words. 2. The word believeth is in the present tense, and means one who *continues* to believe. Perfect faith (James 2: 21-24) is an obedient faith, faith that continues, and that is all that is acceptable to God. When Jesus affirms that the believer will never spiritually die, he means those whose faith continues; and that is absolutely true. That is the only hope for the salvation of anyone. Make "shipwreck" of faith, and spiritual death will follow.

Martha's Confession.—To Christ's question, "Believest thou this?" Martha said, "I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." By using the past tense, "believed," she may have indicated that she had long been a believer in him as the promised Messiah, or she may have wished to state with emphasis her strong belief in him then. The past tense of verbs is sometimes used for the present for the purpose of emphasis. Predicting the coming kingdom of Christ, Isaiah said: "The people that walked in darkness *have* seen a great light." (Isa. 9: 2.) Here the past refers to the future, and adds force to the prediction.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. No amount of material blessings or bodily comfort can set aside the necessity of learning and obeying the truth. No courtesy we can show to others equals showing them the truth.

2. It is more important to labor for the food that does not perish (John 6: 27) than for that which perishes with the using.

3. The only satisfying comfort regarding the dead is the assurance that they have been righteous, and will be raised to the enjoyment of eternal life. Wealth, social honors, or political preferences will not avail at the judgment bar of God.

4. Martha had confidence that whatever Jesus asked of the Father would be done. To that fine sentiment we should also add that whatever Jesus requires us to do is right, and should be done.

5. A good work begun should be completed, if we expect to receive the blessings promised. Enduring to the end brings salvation. Faith should wax strong and continue till death, else it ceases to be perfect faith.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Tell the story of another good woman as revealed in Acts 9: 36-43. Give all the facts.
2. Give the full story regarding Priscilla as gleaned from Acts 18.
3. Relate the conversion of Lydia. (Acts 16: 11-15.)
4. Repeat Paul's argument on the resurrection of the dead as found in 1 Cor. 15: 12-19.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

How do we know what city they entered?
Why were the two incidents of our lesson recorded?
How is the contrast between the sisters presented here?
What was meant by "cumbered" and "serving"?
How did the Lord answer Martha's complaint?

II

What did Jesus mean by "one thing is needful"?
What then should receive our first consideration?

What is meant by the word "good"?
What similar statement did Jesus make?

III

What did Jesus say about the sickness of Lazarus?
What is shown by verse 39?
What shows that the miracle was genuine?
Why was the distance from Jerusalem mentioned?
What was their custom in mourning?

IV

What shows Martha's confidence in Jesus' power?
What misunderstanding did they have regarding miracles?

V

What did Jesus say about life and the resurrection?
Who is a believer in the true sense?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson VIII—August 25, 1935

BARNABAS (A CONSECRATED MAN OF MEANS)

Acts 4: 36, 37; 11: 19-30.

36 And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race,

37 Having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

19 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews.

20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord.

22 And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch:

23 Who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord:

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul;

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

27 Now in these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius.

29 And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judæa:

30 Which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." (Acts 11: 24.)

TIME.—Barnabas gave the price of his field A.D. 30; brought relief to Jerusalem A.D. 45.

PLACES.—Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Antioch.

PERSONS.—Barnabas, Paul, and other Christians.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 96: 1-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August 19.	M.	.....Christian Brotherhood (Acts 4: 32-37)
August 20.	T.	.....Barnabas Befriends Saul (Acts 9: 26-30)
August 21.	W.	.....A Spiritual Adviser (Acts 11: 19-26)
August 22.	T.	.....Caring for the Needy (Acts 6: 1-6)
August 23.	F.	.....The Grace of Sharing (Phil. 4: 14-20)
August 24.	S.	.....Pure Religion (James 1: 19-27)
August 25.	S.	.....Acceptable Offerings (Psalm 96: 1-10)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Liberality of Barnabas Recorded (Verses 36, 37).
- II. The Word of the Lord Preached in Antioch (Acts 11: 19-21).
- III. The Church at Jerusalem Sends Barnabas to Antioch (Verses 22-24).
- IV. The Labor of Saul and Barnabas in Antioch (Verses 25, 26).
- V. Antioch Sends Relief to Judea (Verses 27-30).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—It is evident that Luke did not record all the interesting things that transpired in the early days of the church. The remarkable liberality of the church, however, is made prominent by several references, and particularly that of Barnabas. Just when this offering was laid at the apostles' feet is not known, but was certainly not very long after Pentecost. The conversion of Cornelius, some six or seven years later, was the beginning of the work among the Gentiles. This led to the reception of Gentiles into the church at Antioch. It was perhaps A.D. 45 when that church sent relief to Judea by Barnabas and Saul, which is the second part of our lesson.

Lesson Links.—When the church began, three thousand were added

the same day. Not long afterward—exact time not known—the number was increased to five thousand. The death of Stephen occurred some two or three years later, or A.D. 32 or 33, and Paul's conversion occurred soon after that. After his conversion Paul went into Arabia, and three years later came to Jerusalem. (Gal. 1: 17, 18; Acts 9: 26, 30.) After a brief stay in Jerusalem the brethren sent him away to his own city, Tarsus. Some time after the church had been established in Antioch, the report reached the church in Jerusalem and Barnabas was sent to Antioch to strengthen the work there. How long Barnabas continued in this work before Paul came to his assistance is not stated in the text. But their combined labors resulted in many being saved, and finally led to the decision that fixed the status of the Gentiles in the church. (Acts 15.)

Lesson Settings.—The great number of conversions in the early days of the church brought together so large a body of brethren that special liberality was necessary to care for their needy. Luke shows the importance of this matter by several references to it, including that of Barnabas recorded in our lesson text. This need of liberality was made more necessary, perhaps, by the fact that many of the first converts were from among those who were attending the Feast of Pentecost from a distance, and probably remained in Jerusalem after conversion longer than expected. This good work begun so freely then was continued in later years; and, contrary to the heathen practice of neglecting their poor, the church contributed freely to be distributed "as any man had need." (Acts 2: 45.) The congregation at Antioch is an outstanding example of the brethren following this practice.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Liberality of Barnabas Recorded (Verses 36, 37)

Tribe and Home.—Cyprus, the home country of Barnabas, is an island in the northeast part of the Mediterranean Sea, something more than a hundred miles southwest of the Antioch of our lesson. Barnabas, as a Levite, would not have any land possession in Palestine (Num. 18: 21-24), but that fact would not prevent his making private purchases in a foreign land. As he was from Cyprus, it is probable that his land was there. It is also probable that he was attending the Feast of Pentecost, and was among the first converts to Christianity. Deciding to stay and give his life to the church work probably was one reason for selling his land.

A Voluntary Offering.—It has been suggested, as a further reason why he sold the land, that Paul's words in 1 Cor. 9: 6 imply that he probably had no family to support, and decided to give all his time and means to the spreading of the gospel. This, of course, he had a right to do, if he so desired. That his generous gift was purely voluntary is evident from the following facts: It is recorded as being acceptable to God, and followed by the record of another case that was not, and resulted in the deaths of the givers. Peter told Ananias he was not compelled to sell the land, or give all the price, but that his sin was in lying about what he gave. (Acts 5: 4.) Paul, in discussing the matter of giving, many years later, declares that gifts pleasing to God must be cheerful, and as one purposes in his heart. (2 Cor. 9: 7, 8.) Evidently Barnabas gave liberally,

cheerfully, honestly and as he had purposed in his heart, meeting all the requirements of acceptable giving.

Why Recorded?—Reporting the great liberality of the church probably led Luke to record the case of Barnabas for the reason that he became so prominent in church work later. He knew that such examples would have much influence in stimulating others to imitate so worthy an example. Besides that, the record of such unselfish giving would furnish a good background by which the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira, told in the next chapter, could be contrasted, and made to appear all the more heinous.

II. The Word of the Lord Preached in Antioch (Acts 11: 19-21)

Missionary Efforts.—Luke has already said (Acts 8: 1) that all the Jerusalem church except the apostles had been scattered abroad. In our lesson text he describes the work in Antioch, but goes back several years to the death of Stephen as a starting point. In the meantime Paul had preached the word in Arabia (Gal. 1: 17, 18), Philip started the work in Samaria (Acts 8: 5-25), Peter admitted the first Gentiles into the church (Acts 10: 1-48), and the parties mentioned here had preached in Phoenicia, Cyprus, Cyrene, and Antioch. Thus they were carrying out the Savior's words that his gospel should be preached in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and then to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Work in Antioch.—The first preaching in Antioch was to the Jews only. Some of those scattered abroad had preached the word in Cyprus and Cyrene, but later came to Antioch and preached to the Greeks also. The margin says "Grecian Jews." The word translated Greeks is sometimes used in that sense. (Acts 6: 1; 9: 29.) When used in that sense, the reference is to those speaking the Greek language because reared in Greek countries. If that is what Luke means in this passage, then the Jews were Hebrews who spoke their own language. Probably those who preached to them were also Grecian Jews, who had learned the gospel of Christ while attending their feasts at Jerusalem. If Greeks here mean Gentile Greeks, then the preaching was done after the conversion of Cornelius had become generally known. The first view, however, seems the more probable.

"Believed and Turned."—The "hand of the Lord" being with them means that God's power was manifested in proof of their preaching. That was what Jesus said would happen, and what Mark said did happen. (Mark 16: 20.) Luke mentions the same fact in different words in Acts 14: 3. In fact, that was the method of confirming the word all through the apostolic age. (Heb. 2: 3, 4.) The statement that a great number "believed and turned unto the Lord" shows that turning to the Lord was something that followed belief. This shows that belief is not enough to save, unless one can be saved without turning to the Lord. This, of course, is not true. These words are in perfect accord with the statement of Jesus: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

III. The Church at Jerusalem Sends Barnabas to Antioch (Verses 22-24)

Barnabas Made Glad.—The text says that, when Barnabas reached Antioch and saw the remarkable evidences of God's grace in the establishment of a large congregation in that Gentile city, he was glad.

But, realizing the danger of falling away from steadfastness, he exhorted them all, "that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." This exhortation, of course, was entirely useless unless they could and might cease to cleave to the Lord. Nothing is more certainly taught in the New Testament than the fact that Christians may make shipwreck of the faith. (1 Tim. 1: 19.) Many years later Paul declared that some would arise in the church that would speak perverse things, and draw away disciples after them. (Acts 20: 30.)

"A Good Man."—To show why the brethren at Jerusalem selected Barnabas for that important work Luke, contrary to the usual habit of Bible writers, adds the complimentary expression, "for he was a good man." Surely no other kind was suitable for the task of building up in the faith a young congregation. The history of Barnabas' future labors in the Lord's kingdom shows that they made no mistake in their selection. Luke further states that he was "full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." "Full of the Holy Spirit" is applied to different measures of the Spirit; the context has to determine how it should be applied in any given case. That Barnabas possessed some miraculous measure of the Spirit later is asserted. (Acts 14: 3.) The expression here probably means that his mind was filled with the Spirit's teaching, and that he faithfully and ably presented it to others.

IV. The Labor of Saul and Barnabas in Antioch (Verses 25, 26)

Why Seek Saul?—When Paul came to Jerusalem after his conversion, the disciples were afraid to receive him as a true convert. Barnabas, for some unexplained reason, was first convinced of his sincerity, and urged the apostles to receive him. (Acts 9: 26, 27.) This tie of friendship evidently remained through the years while they labored in separate fields. When Barnabas realized the great opportunities for extending the kingdom in Antioch, he saw the need of a competent helper. Naturally his mind turned to Saul, whom he knew to be in Tarsus at that time. He went to Tarsus, found Saul, and secured his consent to assist him in the work.

The Work Done.—The text shows that their uninterrupted labor in Antioch continued for a whole year, and that they "taught much people." That is just what we, with all the later facts of history before us, would expect to hear about their labor, even if Luke had said nothing about the results. Doubtless the statement was made so that the reader would know that the work started there so successfully had been carried on with equal success.

Disciples Called Christians.—It was during their year's work at Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians. There has been some controversy concerning who first applied this name to the followers of Christ. Some say that Saul and Barnabas did it, and that is why it is of direct divine origin. Strong and plausible arguments are offered in favor of this view. Others say it was first given by their enemies, to deride the disciples. Of this there is no proof whatever. It is immaterial, however, that we know just who started the use of it, or for what purpose they used it. The word means "of Christ," and is the only one-word description of Christ's followers in contrast with those who are not. It has the exact meaning needed for that purpose. Its use, therefore, could hardly have

been just an accident. The name has the endorsement of the apostles. (Acts 26: 28; 1 Pet. 4: 16.) It is used freely, and approved by all people who accept the New Testament as a divine production. That is all the sanction that is needed for its approval and use.

V. Antioch Sends Relief to Judea (Verses 27-30)

Prophets.—Sometime during the year prophets came to Antioch from Jerusalem. This is the first mention of New Testament prophets, but the way they are mentioned implies that they had been exercising the gift of prophecy before they came to Antioch. One of them, Agabus, was moved by the Spirit to declare that there would be a great famine over all the world; the margin says "the inhabited earth." The expression here probably means the Jewish world, or over all Palestine. This idea seems confirmed by the fact that the brethren at Antioch determined to send relief to Judea. Luke, writing years later, says the famine occurred as predicted; but the Antioch brethren believed what the prophet said, and began to make preparations to meet the needs of the case.

Relief Sent.—Of the Jerusalem church, it is said they laid their offerings at the feet of the apostles, and distribution was made as each had need. That same liberality and benevolence was manifested by the saints at Antioch. They gave "every man according to his ability," which indicates that the teaching on scriptural giving had not been overlooked by those who taught them. Probably Paul gave them instruction of a like kind with that written to the Corinthian brethren years later. (2 Cor. 9: 1-15.)

"Barnabas and Saul."—Barnabas and Saul, who had accomplished so much in Antioch, were selected to take the offering to Judea. It was delivered to the elders, who, of course, saw to it that it was distributed to the proper persons. This indicates indirectly the Bible teaching that the elders are, as the term *bishop* shows, the general overseers of the church. This is the first mention of elders in a congregation, but their mention shows that they had been in some time.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. It is a wonderful thing to give liberally of that which has come into our possession. Whether we are able to give much or little, the spirit of giving must be the same. It is pleasing to God. The "Lord loveth a cheerful giver" has not been changed.

2. The apostles and early Christians took seriously what Jesus said about preaching the gospel to the whole creation. When persecution scattered the Jerusalem congregation, they went everywhere preaching the word. The kingdom spreads when Christians preach the word wherever they go.

3. It is a great work to establish congregations in new territory. But they need capable and experienced Christians to direct affairs till the babes in Christ grow into men and women. Without this, much labor is lost. Youthful enthusiasm must be tempered with the wisdom that only comes through experience.

4. Being a citizen of Christ's kingdom and wearing the name Christian are the highest honors that can come to us in this life. Serving Christ faithfully and being worthy of his name are the most valuable things we can do.

5. Apostolic congregations have left us worthy examples of sending not only the gospel, but temporal relief, to those in need in other countries. No amount of means that we may possess will ever enable us to reach all the worthy places; unlimited opportunities are before us.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Relate the facts of the tragic death of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5: 1-11.) Contrast this story with that of Barnabas.
2. Tell the story of Paul's first association with Barnabas. (Acts 9: 26-30.)
3. Describe the labors of Paul and Barnabas in the island of Cyprus. (Acts 13: 4-12.)
4. Describe their stay in Lystra. (Acts 14: 8-19.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What were Barnabas' tribe and country relationships?
How should the offering of Barnabas be described?
What reasons can be assigned for that fact?
What does Paul say about giving?
Why did Luke record the liberality of Barnabas?

II

When did the foreign missionary efforts begin in the church?
Describe some of them.
Describe the starting of the church in Antioch.

What is meant by "believed and turned" to the Lord?

III

What work did Barnabas do in Antioch?
How did Luke describe Barnabas, and why?
What is meant by "full of the Holy Spirit"?

IV

What kindness did Barnabas first show to Saul?
What work did they do in Antioch?
Who first used the name Christians?
What proof is there that it is a scriptural name?

V

What prophecy was made?
Describe the relief work of the Antioch church.

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson IX—September 1, 1935

PAUL (WORKER WITH HAND AND BRAIN)

Acts 20: 33-35; Phil. 4: 4-13.

- 33 I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.
- 34 Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.
- 35 In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.
- 4 Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice.
- 5 Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.
- 6 In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
- 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.
- 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable,

whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

9 The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do; and the God of peace shall be with you.

10 But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content.

12 I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want.

13 I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak." (Acts 20: 35.)

TIME.—About A.D. 58.

PLACES.—Miletus, Ephesus, and Philippi.

PERSONS.—Paul and the elders of the church at Ephesus, and the church at Philippi.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Acts 22: 3-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

August	26.	M.	-----	Paul a Laborer (Acts 18: 1-11)
August	27.	T.	-----	The Secret of Contentment (Phil. 4: 8-13)
August	28.	W.	-----	The Courage of Contentment (Heb. 13: 1-6)
August	29.	T.	-----	Spiritual Service (Rom. 1: 8-17)
August	30.	F.	-----	An Unselfish Minister (2 Cor. 11: 1-9)
August	31.	S.	-----	Loving the Brethren (1 John 3: 13-24)
September	1.	S.	-----	Paul's Conversion (Acts 22: 3-10)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Paul an Example in Laboring (Verses 33-35).
- II. Christian Forbearance and Thanksgiving (Phil. 4: 4-7).
- III. Exhortation to Consider Worth-while Things (Verse 8).
- IV. Paul's Example to Be Followed (Verse 9).
- V. Paul's Confidence in God's Power (Verses 10-13).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The incident recorded in the first section of our lesson occurred probably in 58 A.D. It was in the early summer, for Paul was at Miletus, and hastening to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost, which came in June. (Acts 20: 16.) The book of Philippians, from which the remainder of our lesson text is taken, was written about four years later, or in 62 A.D. It was probably in the latter part of Paul's two years' imprisonment at Rome.

Lesson Links.—The language from Acts is a part of Paul's address to the elders of the church at Ephesus. He was finishing his third missionary tour. Evidently he found that the boat upon which he was traveling would remain some time in the harbor at Miletus, and he sent for the Ephesian elders to come to him there that he might give them what seemed his farewell address. Upon reaching Jerusalem he delivered to the brethren the contribution, which had

been sent from the congregations on his route. It was at this visit he was seized by an angry mob of Jews, and dragged out of the court of the temple. He would have been killed had not the chief captain of the Roman soldiers rushed to his assistance, and put him in the castle. (Acts 21: 27-40.) Because of a secret plot to kill him, he was sent to the Roman governor at Cesarea. After remaining in prison there for two years, and seeing no chance to get a fair trial, he appealed to Caesar, and was sent to Rome for his case to be settled by the emperor. There he remained in prison another two years, during which time he wrote several books, one of which was Philipians.

Lesson Settings.—Soon after starting his third missionary tour Paul came to Ephesus, where he remained two years and three months. (Acts 19: 8, 10.) This labor endeared Paul to them, and made his departure a most sad circumstance. His meeting with the elders on his way back to Jerusalem was while the boat upon which he traveled was waiting in the harbor at Miletus. Supposing that to be their last meeting, they bid him farewell with the most touching tokens of their love for him. After some four years of continuous imprisonment, when well toward the end of his career, Paul was prepared by a rich experience to give the most valuable advice to those he had taught personally. His words should still have the same powerful influence upon us. If we are truly spiritually-minded, they will.

LESSON NOTES

I. Paul an Example in Laboring (Verses 33-35)

Did Not Covet.—Paul told the Ephesian elders that he “coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel.” To covet is to have an inordinate desire for things, and applies to things to which we have no legal or moral right; they may be either right or wrong in themselves. Paul’s words show that he had no desire to take any advantage of them, in the name of a gospel preacher, for his own personal profit. In this he was entirely different from those “grievous wolves” just mentioned, and all others who would “with feigned words make merchandise” of them. (2 Pet. 2: 3.) Wherever Paul went the brethren had the most convincing proof of his sincerity in all things. He allowed no personal inconvenience to affect his moral or spiritual integrity.

Labored with His Hands.—Paul reminded them that he had labored with his own hands to supply the necessities for himself and those laboring with him. This he did, of course, when such became a necessity under the circumstances in which he labored. That Paul had a right to receive temporal support for his work in the Lord’s vineyard is asserted by him in a letter that he wrote while in Ephesus. (1 Cor. 9: 1-23.) In this passage he argues at length to show that those that preach the gospel are entitled “to live of the gospel.” Yet he says that he did not use this right in preaching to the Corinthians “that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.” (Verse 12.) He asserts that in all things he gave “an example.” Then preachers that are not willing to follow his example, when necessity requires, are not willing to obey inspiration, as another section of this lesson will show. But, in principle, laboring to help the needy is applicable to all Christians; for Paul says those elders should follow his example—do the same things. If so, then applicable to all of us.

The Blessing of Giving.—He urged that they remember the words

of the Lord, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The spiritual benefit received by the giver is more than the material benefit to the recipient. Happy is the man who seeks the greater benefit! This expression from the Lord is not recorded in either of the four gospels. Where Paul got it, or how, we do not know, but the inspiration of the apostle is sufficient guarantee that Jesus did say it. Of course, the records do not give every single expression used by him in his ministry. John tells us that many of the things done by Jesus were not recorded. (John 21: 25.)

II. Christian Forbearance and Thanksgiving (Phil. 4: 4-7)

Rejoice Always.—Paul says rejoice, and then repeats the command for emphasis. Those in the Lord have something worth-while to rejoice about; they enjoy the relationship of sons of God, and are heirs to eternal life. This inalienable right, as children of God, is the source of the most satisfying joy. Rejoicing in the things that only Christians are entitled to not only gives genuine comfort, but it safeguards the Christian against indifference and loss of faith. It stimulates one to greater efforts.

"Known Unto All Men."—Rejoicing is primarily for one's own good; exercising forbearance toward all men is mainly for the benefit of others. If consistently practiced, all men with whom we have dealings will see it. The Revised Version puts "gentleness" in the margin. Thayer's Lexicon defines the Greek term by the words, *seemly, suitable, equitable, fair, mild, and gentle*. Referring to the word "moderation" in the King James Version, Macknight says that it "means meekness under provocation, readiness to forgive injuries, equity in the management of business, candor in judging of the character and actions of others, and the entire government of the passion." A truly remarkable Christian trait! A profound bit of apostolic instruction!

"At Hand."—In the expression, "the Lord is at hand," Paul probably meant to encourage the Philippians to perseverance in spite of all difficulties. The Lord can be considered as "at hand"—nigh—in the sense of time or place. In this text, probably the latter; that is, he was representing God as being near enough to them to understand fully their struggles and difficulties. In either view of the word, they could understand the Lord would see to it that they would be properly rewarded for their faithfulness to him, and their enemies would receive what was due them. The same is true of us all; the Lord is near enough to know what each of us deserves for his efforts—good or bad.

"In Nothing Be Anxious."—Paul here repeats the teaching given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 6: 25.) The text teaches that we should not be disturbed with undue anxiety, but trust the case to God, with prayer for his help and thanksgiving for the favors he gives us. This is not only the best way, but the most satisfactory one. Moreover, those who pursue that course will enjoy a peace that comes only through obedience to God—a peace that will pass understanding.

III. Exhortation to Consider Worth-while Things (Verse 8)

Things Mentioned.—In making a final summary of his entreaties, Paul mentions the following praiseworthy things: 1. Those that are

true. These would include especially the exact facts that are revealed in God's word, and any other truth vital to man's well-being. (John 8: 32.) 2. Things that are honorable; that is, things that are grave, venerable, or worthy of reverence. Divine persons and things should be considered with veneration and fear; worthy human things should be truly respected. 3. Things that are just—fair to both God and man. 4. Things pure—both in body and mind. The mind should be free from impure and vicious thoughts, and guarded against the deadly influence of false doctrines. 5. Things that are lovely. That would include things amiable in themselves, or because of their value in rendering conduct acceptable. 6. Things of good report. Ordinarily to have a good reputation is a desirable thing, though one might be approved by men and disapproved by God. Men may say evil of us falsely. In that case, the blessing of God will rest upon us. (Matt. 5: 10-12.) Instead of "good report" the margin gives "gracious." The Greek word literally means "sounding well." If it means here to "speak well," then to be gracious is the idea; if it should be understood as "well spoken of," then good report is correct. The true Christian will practice the former, and be worthy of the latter. With either view Paul's words are exceedingly important.

"Think on These Things."—The word used by Paul means more here than the simple idea of thoughts passing through the mind. It means to consider, reason upon, or take an account of. That means that a Christian should take these matters into strict account when determining his course of conduct. When that is done, our conduct will not be very far from the truth at any time; and easily corrected, when a deviation from the truth is discovered. The statement, "if there be any virtue," probably means that, if there be anything excellent that is worthy of praise, the things mentioned would certainly be in that class, and be worthy of our careful consideration.

IV. Paul's Example to Be Followed (Verse 9)

"In Me."—That Paul here presented his life as an example for the Philippians to imitate is too clearly stated to be misunderstood. His whole life is evidence that he was neither egotistical nor proud. His words, therefore, must be understood to mean that he wanted them to follow what he did that was right. Or, as he expressed the matter in another place, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11: 1.) In Eph. 5: 1 he says that we should be "imitators of God." The least consideration of Paul's Christian career will show that he is worthy of being imitated. Many uninspired Christians live such a well-ordered life that they are worthy examples; they are not faultless standards, but in most things worthy of imitation. This is all Paul would have claimed for himself.

Four Things.—Paul refers to things learned, received, heard, and seen. Some things learned were received; some things heard were also seen. The apostle probably did not use the four words to distinguish four distinct classes of things, but rather to say they should do all they had learned and received from him respecting their duty, whether the information came by sight or by hearing. It was another way of saying they should do their whole duty as he had taught it to them. That same exhortation applies to us.

V. Paul's Confidence in God's Power (Verses 10-13)

Aid Received.—Though Paul knew how to support himself by his own labor when necessary, and did it, yet he was grateful and rejoiced when he received help from the brethren. Before closing, he reminds them that they only had sent him aid when he left Macedonia, and this they did "once and again." (Phil. 4: 15, 16.) He rejoiced that after some delay, occasioned by their lack of opportunity, they were again able to give thought to his help. The opportunity they lacked was probably their inability to get the means to send him. His reference to their interest in him is complimentary to their faithfulness to him as God's servant.

Not Seeking a Gift.—In verse 17 he says he was not seeking for a gift, but "for the fruit that increaseth to your account." He was not using any need of his as a motive to get their offering, but was willing to leave his own support to the providence of God, knowing that he could, if necessary, labor with his own hands. Besides he had long since learned the lesson of being content with whatever he had. He knew how to be abased, and how to abound; how to be filled, and how to be hungry; how to have abundance, and how to be in want. He had learned the secret of how to be content—free from anxious care—in whatsoever state he found himself. If the brethren could, and did aid him, he rejoiced and gave God thanks; if they did not, or could not, he supported himself, and still gave God thanks. He did not become sour, and falter in God's service because some of the brethren did not give him material support. It would be a blessing to the church, if modern preachers would imitate his example in that particular.

Source of Confidence.—Paul realized that, whatever the situation might be, everything accomplished could in some way be attributed to God. He meant that in the strength that God supplied he could meet any situation that might arise, and do the work that God required under the circumstances. That is just as true of us as it was of Paul. Striving to serve God with all our power, with full confidence in his mercy, and the efficiency of the means he has supplied, is all that any can do, or is required to do. This was true of those inspired; it is true of us who are not inspired.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Having a legal right to do things does not always mean that it is best or expedient to do them. Some preachers would be better servants of Christ, if they had to labor some; others could accomplish much more, if they could be freed from such labor.

2. Even in the sorrow of deep affliction there is no reason for not rejoicing that we are servants of God, and have the promise of life eternal. With God's love and providence we can ultimately win.

3. Those who make the Lord's work, as he teaches (Matt. 6: 33), the matter of first consideration will not be in danger of failing to receive the final reward. Thinking on the things Paul mentions will fill any life with the greatest joy—now and hereafter.

4. It is a great joy to imitate the example of one who is really praiseworthy; it is surpassed only by the satisfaction that one is himself worthy of being imitated.

5. One of the most valuable Christian graces is the ability to be content in serving God under the difficulties that come our way.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe Paul's journey from Troas to Miletus, and locate the places. (Acts 20: 13-16.)
2. Give the preceding part of his speech to the elders. (Acts 20: 17-32.)
3. Describe his journey from Miletus till he left Tyre. (Acts 21: 1-14.)
4. Describe some of Paul's first work in Philippi. (Acts 16: 16-34.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What is meant by covetousness?
From whom was Paul different?
Of what did Paul remind the Philippians?
What does Paul teach on supporting the laborer?
What quotation did he make from Jesus?

II

Why should those in the Lord rejoice?
What does Paul say is known to all men?
What is the meaning of "forbearance"?

What did Paul mean by the Lord being "at hand"?

III

Name and explain the things mentioned in verse 8.
What is meant by "good report"?
What is meant by "think on these things"?

IV

Explain Paul's command to follow his example.
What things did he tell them to do?

V

What did Paul say regarding aid from the Philippians?
What was he seeking?
What was the source of his confidence?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson X—September 8, 1935

LYDIA AND PRISCILLA (CHRISTIAN WOMEN IN INDUSTRIAL LIFE)

Acts 16: 11-15; 18: 1-3, 24-28.

11 Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis;

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony; and we were in this city tarrying certain days.

13 And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together.

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come unto my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

1 After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth.

2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them;

3 And because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought: for by their trade they were tentmakers.

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 her of the fruit of her hands; and let her works praise her in the gates." (Prov. 31: 31.)

TIME.—A.D. 51 or 52.

PLACES.—Philippi and Corinth.

PERSONS.—Paul, Lydia, Priscilla, and Aquila.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Prov. 31: 10-31.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 2.	M.	-----A Faithful Convert (Acts 16: 11-15)
September 3.	T.	-----Hospitality of a Fellow Craftsman (Acts 18: 1-4)
September 4.	W.	-----Women Helpers (Phil. 4: 1-7)
September 5.	T.	-----A Benevolent Seamstress (Acts 9: 36-43)
September 6.	F.	-----Women at the Mill (Matt. 24: 38-44)
September 7.	S.	-----Workers at Home (Titus 2: 1-8)
September 8.	S.	-----A Home Builder (Prov. 31: 23-31)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Paul and His Company Arrive in Philippi (Verses 11-13).
 - II. Lydia's Conversion Related (Verses 14, 15).
 - III. Association of Aquila and Priscilla with Paul (Acts 18: 1-3).
 - IV. The Labors of Apollos in Ephesus (Verses 24-26).
 - V. Apollos Instructed "More Accurately" (Verses 26-28).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Paul first came to Philippi on his second missionary tour, which he began probably in A.D. 50, soon after the conference in Jerusalem. (Acts 15: 36-41.) How much time was spent in passing through Syria and Cilicia, Phrygia and Galatia, is not known; but, on reaching Troas, he was directed by a vision to enter Macedonia. In obeying this call, he came first to Philippi, where the conversion of Lydia occurred. Some little time after this—time enough for some work in three places—Paul reached Corinth, where he became associated with Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. The last lesson reference to Priscilla relates incidents that occurred at Ephesus probably A.D. 53.

Lesson Links.—In Paul's second missionary tour he had Silas instead of Barnabas for a fellow worker. They came to Derbe and Lystra, places visited on the first tour. At Lystra Timothy became a member of the party. Paul's desire to preach in Asia and Mysia being overruled by the Spirit's leading, they came to Troas, where Paul received a vision that called them into Macedonia. Promptly

obeying the call, they soon reached Philippi, where their first work resulted in the conversion of Lydia and her household. Leaving Philippi they went to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and to Corinth. The work in the first two places was successful, but apparently not so in Athens. Paul remained in Corinth eighteen months (Acts 18: 11), after which he began the return journey to Antioch, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla. A short stop was made at Ephesus where they remained, but Paul finished the journey, landing at Cesarea. The incidents recorded in the last lesson text occurred at Ephesus, before Paul reached it on his third missionary tour.

Lesson Settings.—In entering new places Paul's usual custom was to first visit a Jewish synagogue, where he would probably get an opportunity to speak. Going to the place of prayer by the riverside indicates that there was no synagogue in Philippi at that time. This incident shows that those early preachers used any place where listeners could be found, or induced to come. In Corinth, a great commercial city of Greece, Paul soon formed an intimate association with Aquila and Priscilla, which led to their conversion to Christ, and the important work of enlightening Apollos—an eloquent, but mistaken preacher.

LESSON NOTES

I. Paul and His Company Arrive in Philippi (Verses 11-13)

The Journey.—Troas, from which they set sail, is located on the northwest coast of Asia Minor. Traveling a general northwest course, they reached Samothrace the first day. Samothrace is an island midway between Troas and Neapolis, which was the seaport for Philippi. As they went from the island to Neapolis the second day, the journey required two days, or parts of two days. The whole distance was probably fifty miles. Making the distance in that time with a sailing vessel was doubtless due to the fact that the winds were favorable. On the return part of the tour the same distance was made in five days. (Acts 20: 6.)

A Noted City.—The text says that Philippi was the first city of that part of Macedonia. Being a "Roman colony" probably means that the city had been changed by placing Roman citizens or soldiers there under the direct supervision of Rome. Such Roman colonies in other countries would enjoy special privileges as Roman citizens. It was not the "chief city," as given in the Common Version; for, commercially, Thessalonica was the greater city. But it was "first" in the sense of being celebrated. This was probably occasioned by the great battle there (42 B.C.), when Octavius and Antony defeated Brutus and Cassius. The victors settling some of their veterans there probably accounts for the change to a Roman colony.

The Sabbath Day.—Arriving in a city where perhaps not one soul had ever heard of the gospel story, they would spend some time in finding an opportunity to begin their efforts in delivering the message. Following their usual custom, they doubtless would have entered a Jewish synagogue first, if there had been one. Their not doing so indicates that there was none. By some chance they learned that some Jewish women were meeting for prayer at the riverside. Notwithstanding the fact that the Jewish law had been abolished at the death of Christ, the Jews generally did not believe it; hence, would continue to observe the Sabbath. Knowing this fact, Paul knew

that on the Sabbath day would likely be the time for their assembling. The use of the pronoun "we" here shows that the writer, Luke, was with them. The little company was composed of Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy.

II. Lydia's Conversion Related (Verses 14, 15)

Personal Description.—1. Her home was in Thyatira, a city in the Lydian province of Asia Minor. 2. Her business was that of selling "purple." That means purple dyes or fabrics colored with purple, or both. Thyatira was noted for the manufacture of both, and Lydia was in Philippi selling one or both. 3. Her religion. Some think she was a Gentile proselyte to the Jewish religion. Whether so, or a native Jewess, is immaterial. She was a worshiper of God when she heard Paul preach. In her case, then, we have the conversion of one who was a sincere worshiper of God, which shows that even honest worshipers of God may need conversion. Their worship may be unscriptural.

"Heard Us."—This complimentary statement implies two things: 1. She did not allow her business ability or success to interfere with her worship of God. In this particular her conduct is a stinging and just rebuke for many who claim to know the full truth, and pose as members of the church. 2. Her worship was honest. Of this the circumstances furnish ample proof. She was willing to hear what the God she worshiped had to say. This is more than many professed servants of God are now willing to do. Her willingness to hear accounts for her conversion to Christ. The truth can reach no others.

Heart Opened.—The text says the Lord "opened" her heart. This he did through the preaching of Paul, not through some direct and mysterious power of the Spirit. To open the heart is a figurative expression that means to enlighten the mind. This is done through the word of God. (Psalm 119: 104, 105, 130; Rom. 10: 17.) Paul was sent by Jesus to "open their eyes." (Acts 26: 16-18.) To open the eyes and to open the heart are both figurative expressions that mean the same thing—give enlightenment. Paul speaks of the "eyes of your heart" being enlightened. (Eph. 1: 18.) As Paul was present with a command to open people's eyes, it is certain that he did what he was sent to do, and gave the enlightenment through his preaching Jesus to her.

Was Baptized.—When she learned from Paul that Jesus was the Christ—had her heart opened—she was ready to do what Paul said was her duty. Jesus had said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16: 16), and Paul, of course, told her that. He would not pretend to preach Christ to her, and not tell the terms upon which Jesus said people could be saved. The statement that she was baptized is proof that Paul did tell her about baptism, and that she believed that Jesus was the Christ. Her household being baptized also shows that they were believers—the only kind Paul was authorized to baptize.

III. Association of Aquila and Priscilla with Paul (Acts 18: 1-3)

Same Race.—It is quite natural that Paul should have become closely associated with that Jewish family. Being of the same race would at once be a strong tie of friendship when alone in a foreign country. They all reached Corinth under difficult circumstances, and a

common need would draw them together. Aquila and Priscilla, along with all other Jews, had been driven from Rome. Instead of returning to Pontus, their far-away homeland, they came to Corinth. Paul also was a stranger there, ready to begin the work of establishing Christianity in that great commercial center. The like circumstances under which they entered the city drew them together when they met.

Same Trade.—Under the circumstances Paul, of course, had to provide for his own support. Meeting Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, who were of the same occupation, opened the door still wider for mutual sympathy and assistance. Fortunate for both Paul and themselves that he was permitted to abide with them. It was a great material help to him, and a spiritual benefit to them. Paul probably became a partner with them in the tentmaking business, as they later became his partners in teaching the gospel of God's Son. Not only their conversion, but their proficiency in the Lord's work, should doubtless be attributed to the fact that they furnished a lodging place for Paul.

IV. The Labors of Apollos in Ephesus (Verses 24-26)

An Alexandrian.—Luke introduces the work of Apollos with a brief description of the man, including his race, natural ability, and acquired qualifications. His native home was Alexandria, an Egyptian city celebrated as an educational center. The fact that he was born and reared there implies that he was not lacking in culture. The Jews, who were a large element of its population, were the equal of any in education and refinement. With such advantages at hand, one of such natural ability certainly cultivated his talents.

Qualifications.—He was an "eloquent man." This natural talent, with proper cultivation, made him an effective speaker; a most important asset for a preacher. "Mighty in the scriptures" means that he had been thoroughly taught the Old Testament scriptures—knew how to apply their prophetic statements regarding the Messiah. It is further stated that he was "instructed in the way of the Lord," and had been "taught accurately the things concerning Jesus." To all this must be added that he was "fervent in spirit"—filled with zeal in the propagation of the gospel. Of the things that go to make one an effective speaker, few have been better qualified than Apollos. Notwithstanding his fault in knowledge, his acquired qualifications were the very things needed for the preaching of all the gospel facts that he knew.

John's Baptism.—He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, but not in everything necessary to know. He taught accurately concerning Jesus, so far as he knew, but on one thing his knowledge was at fault—he knew "only the baptism of John." Just how his knowledge happened to be defective on this point is not stated, but that does not alter the fact that it was. The language implies, of course, that Apollos himself had only the baptism of John, and was himself also administering the same. Since he was clearly mistaken in preaching that John's baptism should be practiced then, evidently all who, since that time claim to receive and practice John's baptism, are likewise mistaken; otherwise there would have been no occasion for the part taken by Aquila and Priscilla as related in our next section. His boldly preaching in the synagogue made it necessary that his mistake be corrected to prevent spreading an error.

V. Apollos Instructed "More Accurately" (Verses 26-28)

"Took Him Unto Them."—Priscilla and Aquila might have attempted to correct Apollos by a public criticism of his error, but that was probably the unwise thing to do for several reasons. Few have the tact and wisdom to administer public criticisms effectively. Such an effort might have caused confusion and aroused the opposition of Apollos. They pursued the better plan of taking him to themselves for a private interview. He could then correct his own mistakes with those he had wrongly taught. Besides this a public criticism, if Priscilla took part in it, would not harmonize with the teaching that women should keep silence in the churches—public assemblies. (1 Cor. 14: 34.) True this language had not been written when Apollos was corrected by Priscilla and Aquila, but the statement, "as in all the churches of the saints," shows that to have been the general rule in the churches before Paul wrote First Corinthians. He wrote it because it was true, and he had doubtless been teaching it. With this fact the conduct of Priscilla harmonizes, and at the same time shows that women may teach in private.

What the Mistake?—John's work was to prepare a people for the Lord. (Luke 1: 17.) He has no successor; when he died, his work was done. Long after his death Jesus commanded baptism in his own name. (Matt. 28: 19, 20.) This supplanted anything before. To attempt to administer John's baptism is to try to perpetuate an abolished law. John never baptized into the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The mistake of Apollos was in using John's baptism after Jesus had given his command on the subject. It is the same mistake if any try to practice it now. Obeying laws out of date is invalid, either human or divine.

Apollos in Achaia.—For some reason Apollos determined to go to Greece. The brethren encouraged him, and wrote the disciples to receive him. This is the first mention of letters of commendation. Reaching his destination, he helped the brethren much, and "powerfully confuted the Jews," showing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Miraculously the Holy Spirit overruled the apostles when their wisdom was at fault; the Spirit's teaching in the word of God will show us our mistakes, if we will read it.

2. God opened Lydia's heart by giving the gospel and inspiring Paul to preach it; Paul did it by preaching the gospel, God's power to do the work.

3. In God's providence misfortune often leads to great blessings. Being driven from Rome, Aquila and Priscilla met Paul, and learned the way of salvation.

4. It is fortunate for one preaching error to be heard by some who know the truth. If he is honest, they may lead him to the right way.

5. Truths on one point do not compensate for errors on another. Regardless of how much truth one knows, he should correct errors as fast as he finds them. The danger of error should not be ignored.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Tell the story of the woman who anointed Jesus. (Mark 14: 3-9.)
2. Point out the complimentary things that Paul wrote Timothy in 2 Tim. 2: 10-17.
3. Discuss the later career of Apollos as revealed in Paul's references to him in First Corinthians.
4. Discuss Paul's work in Ephesus after Apollos departed to Corinth. (Acts 19: 1-7.)
5. Discuss Paul's work in the school of Tyrannus. (Acts 19: 8-20.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

Describe the journey from Troas to Philippi.
How did they make it in two days?
What was meant by Philippi being the "first" city?
How did it happen to be a "Roman colony"?
Why visit the place of prayer on the Sabbath day?

II

Describe Lydia's home, business, and religion.
What was complimentary in the statement that she "heard us"?

How was her heart opened, and what does the expression mean?
What caused her to be baptized?

III

What occasioned the association of Paul with Aquila and Priscilla?
What led to their close friendship?
What benefit did each receive?

IV

How did Luke describe Apollos?
Name the qualifications he possessed.
What fault was there in his teaching?

V

In what manner did Priscilla and Aquila instruct him?
What was the exact mistake he was making?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson XI—September 15, 1935

TIMOTHY (A CHRISTIAN WORKER IN TRAINING)

2 Tim. 1: 1-14.

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day

4 Longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also.

6 For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands.

7 For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline.

8 Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God;

9 Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal,

10 But hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

11 Whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher.
 12 For which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not ashamed; for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day.

13 Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

14 That good thing which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us.

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.—About A.D. 60 or 67.

PLACE.—Probably Second Timothy was written from Rome.

PERSONS.—Paul and Timothy.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 Tim. 6: 11-16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 9.	M.	Paul Chooses Timothy (Acts 16: 1-5)
September 10.	T.	Paul's Charge to Timothy (2 Tim. 1: 1-14)
September 11.	W.	A Good Soldier (2 Tim. 2: 1-13)
September 12.	T.	A Good Workman (2 Tim. 2: 14-26)
September 13.	F.	A Good Preacher (2 Tim. 4: 1-8)
September 14.	S.	A Good Teacher (2 Tim. 4: 6-16)
September 15.	S.	A Man of God (1 Tim. 6: 11-16)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Paul's Salutation to Timothy (Verses 1, 2).
 - II. Exhortation to Diligence in Service (Verses 3-5).
 - III. Exhortation to Zeal and Courage (Verses 6-8).
 - IV. Reasons for Courage and Endurance (Verses 9-12).
 - V. Timothy Exhorted to Hold Sound Words (Verses 13, 14).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The second letter to Timothy, from which our lesson text is taken, is the last one written by Paul. Verse 8 shows that he was a prisoner at the time, and verses 16 and 17 indicate that he was in a Roman prison. It is generally understood that the writing was done during a second imprisonment there, and a short time before his death, as 2 Tim. 4: 6-8 clearly implies. His death probably occurred about A.D. 67. Different estimates on chronology vary slightly on the date of his death, but A.D. 67 is substantially correct. This places the date of our lesson text not earlier than A.D. 66.

Lesson Links.—Timothy joined Paul and Silas on the second missionary tour at Lystra, A.D. 50. All of Timothy's activities in church work during the sixteen or more years intervening between that time and the writing of this epistle cannot be traced here. That he enjoyed a personal association with Paul at times, and received from him careful training, is evident from the records. It was probably during his first imprisonment at Rome that Paul addressed to him the first epistle. Timothy was in Ephesus at that time. (1 Tim.

1: 3.) That he remained in Ephesus for a considerable time seems certain, and was there when Paul wrote him the second letter. After Paul's release from the Roman prison, it is supposed that Timothy traveled with him in revisiting churches. Because of the persecution against Christians at Rome, Paul probably returned to assist them while Timothy remained at Ephesus.

Lesson Settings.—Paul's zeal in defending the brethren at Rome doubtless aroused against him bitter opposition, that resulted in his arrest and imprisonment. In his first imprisonment he was granted much liberty, even being allowed to dwell in his own hired house. (Acts 28: 16, 30.) But 2 Tim. 2: 9 seems to indicate that at that writing he had no such liberties. When he appeared to make his defense, all the brethren forsook him. (2 Tim. 4: 16.) This probably happened because they were terror-stricken by the bitterness of the persecution. Paul did not doubt the mercy of God in preserving him "unto his heavenly kingdom" (verse 18), but did not have any hope of being released. From his prison, with death's shadow falling at his feet, he penned the words of our lesson.

LESSON NOTES

I. Paul's Salutation to Timothy (Verses 1, 2)

"An Apostle."—Paul began both of his letters to Timothy with a reference to his apostolic office. This he probably did, so that those with whom Timothy labored would recognize that he was acting by divine authority when carrying out the instruction contained in them. The word "apostle" literally means *one sent*, regardless of whom, when, or why. In the New Testament it applies mainly to those sent by the Lord in person. In this text Paul asserts that he was an apostle "of Christ Jesus," which is equal to saying that he was sent forth by the Lord. His letters to Timothy put the authority of Christ back of what he said. In 1 Tim. 1: 1 he also says he was an apostle by "the commandment of God." His apostleship then was according to God's will, and the direct call of Christ. "According to the promise of the life" probably means that the purpose of Paul's call to the apostleship was that he might proclaim the promise of eternal life. The highest authority possible guaranteed that what Paul said to Timothy was the exact truth, and for that reason should be willingly received and heartily practiced.

"My Beloved Child."—These words indicate the true and tender feeling which Paul entertained for Timothy. In the first letter he addresses him as "my true child in faith." (1 Tim. 1: 2.) By this Paul means that through his own personal work Timothy was made a believer—begotten by the word—and that he stood in a spiritual relationship to him that is comparable to that of an earthly father to his own son. It is a figurative expression that means that Paul taught him the gospel of Christ. This harmonizes with John's statement that believers are "begotten of God" (1 John 5: 1), and Paul's own statement to the Corinthians: "For in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4: 15). This form of expression is only applicable in the case where one actually makes another a believer. It furnishes no proof for the Catholic practice of calling all priests "Father." This practice violates the teaching of Jesus in Matt. 23: 7-10.

II. Exhortation to Diligence in Service (Verses 3-5)

Paul's Thanksgiving.—Paul declared that he had served God "from my forefathers in a pure conscience." In a speech before the Jewish Sanhedrin, he said he had lived before God "in all good conscience until this day." (Acts 23: 1.) He was just as honest in trying to serve God under the law as he was in serving him as a Christian under the gospel. He remembered Timothy day and night in his supplications, and thanked God for the privilege of doing so. There could have been no greater evidence of his unselfish Christian love.

Longed to See Timothy.—Paul longed to see Timothy again, that he might "be filled with joy." It would naturally be a pleasure to see one he had led to the truth, one who had been his companion in many struggles for that truth; but he probably wanted the greater joy of giving Timothy his parting instructions in fuller detail than in his brief letter. The words, "remembering thy tears," refer to some incident that greatly affected Timothy. Just what it was is not mentioned. It may have been their last parting before Paul started for Rome the last time. Knowing that the persecution against the Christians was raging there may have made both Paul and Timothy feel that it might be their last meeting. That Paul, when writing this letter, was anxious to see Timothy again is seen in his urging him to come to him quickly. (2 Tim. 4: 9, 21.)

"Unfeigned Faith."—Paul expressed his great pleasure in remembering that Timothy's faith had not weakened, but that, on the contrary, he had given full proof of his sincerity. He had doubtless been greatly aided in his fidelity to the church by the same unfeigned faith of his mother and grandmother. The apostle mentions this complimentary fact by saying that such faith dwelled first in his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice. How long they had been in the church before Timothy was converted is not known. That they were both pious Jewish women need not be doubted, but the fact here stated is that they both were converted to Christ before Timothy. It is not known how long Paul and Barnabas remained at Lystra, Timothy's home city, nor how long they were there on their return (Acts 14: 6-22); but the conversion of Timothy could have occurred at either time, and that of his grandmother and mother been first.

III. Exhortation to Zeal and Courage (Verses 6-8)

"Stir Up the Gift."—Because he knew of Timothy's unfeigned faith, Paul urged him to "stir up the gift" of God which he possessed. The margin says to "stir into a flame." Plainly expressed, he meant for Timothy to zealously use the power that had been given him. He did not mean the natural gifts which he had inherited, or natural endowments which he had cultivated, but a miraculous gift which had been bestowed upon him. This is evident from Paul's saying, "Which is in thee through the laying on of my hands." That there was a variety of spiritual gifts bestowed upon individuals in the apostolic day through the laying on of the apostles' hands is evident from 1 Cor. 12: 1-11; Acts 8: 17, 18. What particular gift Paul had bestowed upon him is not known. As all these gifts were for the confirmation of the word of God (Heb. 2: 3, 4), Paul urged him to seek opportunities where his gift might be properly used for the purpose in view.

"Spirit of Fearfulness."—Paul encouraged Timothy to a zealous use of his gift by the assurance that God has not given us a "spirit of fearfulness," but rather one of power, love, and discipline. The manifestation of God's love assures us that we need not have any slavish fear of him; we should look upon him as a loving Father who wants our efforts for the truth to succeed. Neither should we fear what men may do to us (Heb. 13: 6); for we know that ultimately the truth must prevail, and all enemies to the truth must be rejected. This should lead all saints to courageously fight "the good fight of the faith," that they may lay hold of eternal life. (1 Tim. 6: 12.) This should be done in love, and with proper self-control.

"Be Not Ashamed."—All men are subject to temptations; bitter persecutions bring terrible temptations. Notwithstanding Timothy's strong faith, Paul thought it expedient to caution him against being ashamed to defend the evidence that Jesus was Lord, or of himself as a prisoner for his defense of it. Before ever visiting Rome Paul wrote the brethren there that he was not "ashamed of the gospel of Christ," the power of God to save both Jews and Greeks. (Rom. 1: 16.) He demonstrated the truth of his assertion by faithfully teaching that gospel while imprisoned there for two years. Imprisoned a second time, and probably denied the privilege of preaching it, he was still urging that it be done by those not imprisoned. The brethren, probably terrified by the persecution, all forsook him at his first defense. (2 Tim. 4: 16.) This, of course, was a grief to him, and may have been the occasion of his urging Timothy to come to him, and not be ashamed of him because a prisoner. Such fidelity to the truth will likely occasion the suffering of hardship, but the "crown of righteousness" promised the faithful (2 Tim. 4: 7) is ample inducement for it.

IV. Reasons for Courage and Endurance (Verses 9-12)

Saved and Called.—Sacrifice, endurance, and persistence are the prices usually paid for worth-while blessings. Such demands are proper when reasons justify. The first reason that Paul assigns is that God prepared a plan of salvation, and called us to enjoy that salvation. The value of salvation justifies any and all conditions which divine wisdom made necessary, as well as any sacrifice which circumstances require. This was all designed according to God's own purpose and grace, not because we were able to pay for it with any works we might do. Salvation, though received upon conditions, is not a matter of debt—something God owes us—but a gift promised by his grace. This gift was determined by the Father ages before it was manifested.

Manifested and Confirmed.—A second reason is that God's purposes and plan were manifested and confirmed by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ; it was brought to light through the gospel. The miracles were ample confirmation (Heb. 2: 3, 4), and we have the full assurance that our labor in the Lord will not be in vain. There can be no better reason assigned for faithfulness than this.

God Is Able.—Paul said that his being a preacher and an apostle of Christ was the reason he was then suffering imprisonment, but that he was not ashamed, just as he had formerly written the brethren at Rome. He had had many evidences that his faith in God was well

placed, and was sure that God was able to guard what had been committed to his care "against that day." This is the final reason why he could gladly endure suffering for the church Christ died to found.

V. Timothy Exhorted to Hold Sound Words (Verses 13, 14)

"The Pattern."—The original word for "pattern" is defined to mean *outline, sketch, example, and pattern*. The idea of the text seems to be that in the gospel we have the truth outlined, sketched, or put in a form of words. As these words were dictated by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2: 13), they constitute the best form or pattern for expressing gospel truth. If God chose those words to express his will, we cannot do better than to repeat them in trying to teach men the truth. To safeguard Timothy against propagating error, he was urged to hold fast to the form or pattern of sound words. We have a right to ask what the words mean that God used to express his will. When that is done, we have the exact truth. That was the safe course that Paul advised Timothy to follow. It is still safe, if we wish to be sure we are presenting the plan of salvation just as 'it was revealed.

Healthful Words.—The word translated "sound" means healthful, and it is so given in the margin. The words used in the revelation of God's will are healthful, because they do for man's spiritual nature just what wholesome food does for the body—maintains health. The opposite, though not here expressed, is equally true. False words do for man's spirit just what poisonous foods do for the body—produce death. Healthful words—the pure gospel—may also be contrasted with "vain talking" (1 Tim. 1: 6), which is, in fact, teaching for doctrines "the precepts of men." (Matt. 15: 9.)

A Final Exhortation.—This was to urge Timothy to guard that "good thing which was committed unto thee." As he had already been exhorted to hold the pattern of sound words, this probably referred to the special gift that Timothy had received through the laying on of Paul's hands. Through the Spirit's aid he was to carefully use his gift for the defense and propagation of the divine word.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. We should remember that an apostle had the authority of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. Their words should be believed.

2. Whosoever is ashamed to acknowledge Christ or obey his words will be rejected by him at the judgment. (Mark 8: 38.) Those ashamed to stand with true disciples are ashamed of Christ. (Matt. 25: 40, 45.)

3. A talent, whether natural or acquired, is of no value unless used. Even supernaturally endowed men were required to stir up the gift they had received. The difficulty with many Christians is a nonuse of the talents possessed, not the lack of talents. The man in the parable was not condemned because he did not have five talents, but because he did not use the one he had.

4. There are many reasons for courage, endurance, and persistence; none for indifference, neglect, or quitting.

5. A diseased body hinders or prevents good service; a sick soul is a hindrance rather than a help in God's work.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss Paul's instruction to Timothy in 1 Tim. 4: 1-6.
2. Discuss the instruction given him in 1 Tim. 6: 17-21.
3. Discuss the instruction found in 2 Tim. 2: 1-14.
4. Discuss the instruction found in 2 Tim. 2: 15-19.
5. Discuss Paul's final charge to Timothy. (2 Tim. 4: 1-8.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

What reference did he make to Timothy's grandmother and mother?

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

III

What did he mean by "stir up the gift"?
How did Paul encourage Timothy to be zealous?
What caution did Paul think expedient?

I

Why did Paul refer to his apostolic office?
How did he become an apostle?
For what purpose was he made one?
What is indicated by the words, "my beloved child"?
What justifies their use?

IV

What is the usual price paid for worthwhile things?
What reasons are given for faithfulness?
What did Paul say God was able to do?

II

What did Paul say regarding his service to God?
For what did he give thanks?
Why did he long to see Timothy?
What great pleasure did Paul express?

V

What is meant by "pattern" of sound words?
What is meant by the word "sound"?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson XII—September 22, 1935

JAMES (A GREAT CHRISTIAN LEADER)

James 1: 1-17.

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting.

2 Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations;

3 Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience.

4 And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

5 But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord;

8 A doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways.

9 But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate:

10 And the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11 For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass; and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings.

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been approved he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man:

14 But each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death.

16 Be not deceived, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him." (James 1: 12.)

TIME.—James wrote about A.D. 48 or 50.

PLACE.—Probably written from Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—James and Jewish Christians scattered abroad.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Matt. 4: 1-11.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 16.	M.	.....	A Great Leader (Acts 21: 15-19)
September 17.	T.	.....	A Wise Leader (Gal. 2: 6-10)
September 18.	W.	.....	A Safe Counsellor (Acts 15: 12-21)
September 19.	T.	.....	A Man of Faith (James 1: 1-11)
September 20.	F.	.....	God's Good Gifts (James 1: 12-18)
September 21.	S.	.....	Wisdom from Above (James 3: 13-18)
September 22.	S.	.....	Ministering Angels (Matt. 4: 1-11)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Testing of Faith Works Patience (Verses 1-4).
 - II. Faith a Condition of Acceptable Prayer (Verses 5-8).
 - III. Both Rich and Poor Exhorted to Rejoice (Verses 9-11).
 - IV. Those Approved Receive the Crown of Life (Verses 12-15).
 - V. Christians Warned Against Being Deceived (Verses 16, 17).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The date of James, according to the generally accepted theory, is placed about A.D. 62. Perfect accuracy, of course, is not necessary regarding its date; but the supposition that James 5: 8 refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, makes the suggested date probably correct. The death of the writer adds no light because of the difficulty in determining exactly which James was the writer, and therefore the impossibility of learning just when he died. It was doubtless written some time before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Lesson Links.—A James is referred to in three different ways. The difficulty is to know whether two or three distinct persons are meant. "James, the son of Zebedee" (Matt. 10: 2), was the brother of John, both being apostles, and he was beheaded by Herod in A.D. 44. (Acts 12: 2.) "James, the son of Alphaeus," also called "James the less" (Matt. 10: 3; Mark 15: 40), was also an apostle. "James, the Lord's brother," is mentioned in Gal. 1: 19. Some contend that the Lord's brother was James the less. If so, then "James, the Lord's brother," was an apostle; if not the same person, then he was not an apostle. Whichever view is correct, it is understood the author of the epistle was the James who took part in the conference in

Jerusalem regarding the circumcision of Gentiles (Acts 15), and was associated with Peter and John in giving Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship in their going to the Gentiles. (Gal. 2: 1, 6-9.)

Lesson Settings.—James does not introduce his letter by styling himself an apostle, or by any other expression to indicate that he was one. Some conclude, therefore, that he was the Lord's brother, but not an apostle. Whether this be correct or not, his long stay in Jerusalem, and his intimate association with those known to be apostles, gave him direct and accurate information regarding the things of which he wrote. If not an apostle, which seems probable, he enjoyed some spiritual gift, which directed him to record the exact truth as he had received it from those who had been with Jesus from the beginning. His words are, therefore, the words of inspiration.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Testing of Faith Works Patience (Verses 1-4)

Address and Greeting.—James very modestly refers to himself as "a servant" of God and Jesus Christ. If he was the Lord's brother, such modest personal reference was very becoming, and harmonizes well with the general tone of the letter. The "twelve tribes" is an expression that refers to the Jewish people, because they were descended from the twelve sons of Jacob. Here James describes those to whom he writes as "of the Dispersion"; that is, those scattered among the Gentile nations. Hence, his letter, instead of being addressed to some individual or congregation at some place, is addressed to Jewish Christians everywhere. If the expression "twelve tribes" be taken in a spiritual sense—spiritual Israel (Gal. 6: 16; Rom. 2: 28, 29)—then James had in mind all Christians everywhere. It is certain that his letter has a general application. For that reason it is sometimes referred to as a catholic epistle, the word "catholic" meaning general.

"Count It All Joy."—Falling into trials would ordinarily be counted, by unconverted sinners and worldly-minded Christians, as anything but a reason for joy. Those who understand the true spirit of Christianity know that James was correct. Instead of "temptations," the margin gives "trials," which is evidently the meaning of the word in this verse. Temptations properly refer to the inducements Satan offers to lead us to sin. Trials are of broader application. They may be providential circumstances, natural events, or the evil and seductive schemes of the devil. That these all test the genuineness and strength of our faith is certain. The joy is in the fact that such trials increase our power of endurance by developing patience. Jesus said those are blessed who are persecuted for righteousness. (Matt. 5: 10.) He said, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad." No one is glad of trials and sufferings, but of the good results that come from our overcoming them.

"Perfect Work."—The exhortation is to let patience have her perfect work, "that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." By patience James probably means "steadfastness," and the word perfect means "complete." When, through tests, our endurance and steadfastness are completely developed, we will be as safe against the devices of Satan as men in the flesh can be. We will lack

nothing in our preparations for successful service to God, especially in the matter of resisting temptations.

II. Faith a Condition of Acceptable Prayer (Verses 5-8)

God Gives Liberally.—In trying to reach that perfect degree of steadfastness in which nothing is lacking, one might find that he is lacking in the essential thing of knowing how to do it. If so, he is advised to ask God for wisdom, and assured that it will be given liberally without any upbraiding. At the time James wrote there were only manuscript copies of the scriptures, and few of them. Much inquiry for knowledge was a necessity. It seems entirely reasonable to think that God would providentially see that sincere seekers for truth received it. Of course the apostles, as inspired men, received the truth miraculously; there was no other way in which it could be revealed through them. But in a providential way others could be directed to some servant of God who knew the truth. Paul asked the Lord what to do, and was told to go to Damascus, and it would be told him. Then Ananias was sent for that purpose. (Acts 22: 10-16.) Now that we have the New Testament record we can go to that for knowledge which we lack. Now, as then, it is received through the words of God's servants.

"Ask in Faith."—Believing that God will answer our prayers, if they are in harmony with his will, is necessary to make them pleasing to God. Without this we need not expect that they will be answered. This was necessary when some prayers were answered through miracles in the apostolic day; it is necessary now or at any time, if they are answered providentially or through natural means. The requirement is that there be no doubting; for a doubting man is like the waves of the sea, driven by the winds in any direction they may blow. James declares plainly that such a man need not think he will receive anything of the Lord. A doubting man has a double mind, quickly changing from side to side; now rejoicing in belief, but soon lapsing into doubt. This frame of mind closes the door to blessings.

III. Both Rich and Poor Exhorted to Rejoice (Verses 9-11)

The Low Exalted.—As the brother of low degree is directly contrasted with the rich, James must refer to the Christian who is poor in worldly goods. As a rule, this would mean a humble position or low estate. Paradoxical as it may seem, James says such an one may "glory in his high estate." This exaltation could not be of a temporal character, for that would conflict with the low estate just mentioned. James is his own best interpreter on this point. He asks: "Did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?" (James 2: 5.) A position in God's family that assures us admission into the everlasting kingdom is a more glorious exaltation than any earthly honor. The poorest saint has this exaltation, and has the most substantial reason for rejoicing. The more pinching the poverty, the more glorious will seem the heavenly riches.

The Rich Made Low.—The rich in this world, regardless of the amount of his possessions, must be made low—reach that degree of humility that he will trust in God, not in the "uncertainty of riches."

(1 Tim. 6: 17.) He must realize his own weakness, and learn that only through Christ can he be saved; he must understand that the "love of money is a root of all kinds of evil," that he must be "rich in good works," and use his riches to lay up for himself "a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life." (1 Tim. 6: 10, 17-19.) When the rich man realizes his true worth and the power of Christ, he will rejoice that he is permitted to humble himself at the feet of the Master. Only this course can save the rich of this world.

Reason for Humility.—In spite of all riches, man will pass away as the flower of the grass. Under the sun's heat and the scorching wind, the grass withers and its grace and fashion perish. So it is of man. After a brief time, age touches him with disease and soon he disappears. In departing he leaves his possessions, and finds, if he is not rich toward God, that his efforts have been wasted and he has been a fool. (Luke 12: 16-21.) The transitory nature of man proves it folly to lay up treasures here, and not be rich toward God.

IV. Those Approved Receive the Crown of Life (Verses 12-15)

"Endureth Temptation."—In verse 2 James says Christians should count it joy when they fall into temptations; in this verse he says that the man who endures temptations will be blessed. He also says, "Behold, we call them blessed that endured." (James 5: 11.) Peter says we will be blessed if we suffer for "righteousness' sake." (1 Pet. 3: 14.) There is no blessing promised to the man who suffers on account of his evil deeds; nor for the man who is persecuted for righteousness' sake, unless he patiently endures it. To obtain the crown of life one must endure to the end. Jesus said: "But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." (Matt. 24: 13.) See also Rev. 2: 10. This is further sustained by the fact that the "crown of life" is promised "to them that love him." Those who love him are the ones who keep his commandments. (John 14: 21, 23, 24.)

A False Charge.—James says that no one should say that his temptations are from God; such a charge would be false. That God has tried or tested men to see if they would obey him is true; but he did not do it with the design of having them do wrong. That is the sense of the word temptation in this verse, for it says God cannot be tempted with evil. It follows then that he does not tempt others with evil. Testing strength is right, and often very desirable; but tempting to evil is sinful. The margin says that God "is untried in evil." As no evil is in his nature, and no evil practice is possible, he could not have any experience in evil. This assures us that in enduring temptations without yielding to sin, we have the love and mercy of God on our side, which is enough to guarantee our success, if we trust in him and obey his commands.

The True Fact.—The real fact is that man is led to sin by his own lusts. Like a fish is drawn from the water after swallowing the baited hook, so through lusts man yields to the alluring temptations offered by Satan and is drawn into sin. Changing the figure, James represents lust as the mother conceiving and bearing sin; and the sin, when it has reached its full deadly influence, bringing forth death. Understanding this fearful truth, and realizing his own weak-

ness, becomes at once one of the strongest reasons why man should resist temptations till the very last day.

V. Christians Warned Against Being Deceived (Verses 16, 17)

The Possibility.—A warning against evil implies that evil may exist, and that we may partake of it. Whatever may be true of the words of others, inspired men did not say foolish and impossible things. Not only James, but Paul, urged that we be not deceived. (1 Cor. 9: 6; Gal. 6: 7.) We may be deceived, and we may deceive ourselves, which is probably a more dangerous feature, because harder to detect. (James 1: 26; 1 John 1: 8.) The possibility of deception becomes more evident when we remember the delusive and alluring means that Satan uses to accomplish it. Satan transforms himself "into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11: 14), and uses "craftiness" and "wiles" of error (Eph. 4: 14). James also says that one who is only a "hearer of the word and not a doer" deludes himself. (James 1: 22.) The danger of being deceived, and being lost finally (Heb. 3: 6, 12-14; 4: 11), should inspire all saints to use every precaution against falling into sin.

Good and Perfect Gifts.—Another reason for resisting temptations and fidelity to God is that all good and perfect things come from him. He is the Author and Source of life, light, and all blessings, both spiritual and temporal. Directly or indirectly all good comes from him. His nature is unvarying and his promises not changeable like the turning of a shadow. As the Creator of the universe, his power is unlimited; as the Designer, his wisdom is perfect; as a loving Father, his mercy is boundless. To him we must give account at the last day. Satan, though posing as an angel, has nothing for us but sin, misery, and eternal death. Yielding to sin has nothing for us but temporary gratification of the lusts of the flesh that end in death; resisting sin brings spiritual joy here and eternal joy hereafter. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6: 7.)

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. As tests show the strength that materials have, so trials demonstrate who will be able to stand against evils. Only those Christians that resist evil are dependable servants of God. The real defense of the church rests with them.

2. Only an unwavering faith that one has that he is right will protect him against the blighting influence of false doctrines. Weak faith opens the door for all kinds of errors. Endorsing false teaching is sin. (2 John 9-11.)

3. True humility is real exaltation. Those worthy will be invited to higher seats. (Luke 14: 10.) Temporal losses are often the road to spiritual gain.

4. Efforts and labor that fail to be approved are vain. Tasks not finished are failures as a rule; always failures, if they be the works of a Christian.

5. Nothing is more dangerous than to be deceived into thinking that there is no danger. This is one of Satan's most effective schemes.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the doers of the word. (James 1: 21-25.)
2. Discuss the relationship of faith and works. (James 2: 14-25.)
3. Discuss the causes that lead to war as found in James 4: 1-4.
4. Repeat, with comments, the condemnation of the rich. (James 5: 1-6.)
5. Discuss the subject of patience as presented in James 5: 7-11.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

Give James' greeting and address.
To whom was his letter addressed?
How should Christians consider trials?
What does James mean by patience having a perfect work?

II

How does James say God gives?
How was Bible truth learned in the apostolic times?
How was Paul enlightened when he asked?

What is necessary to make prayers acceptable?

What does James say of the doubting man?

III

What is meant by the low being exalted?
Why should the rich rejoice in being made low?
What reason is given for humility?

IV

What does a warning imply?
In what ways is deception likely to occur?

V

How does Satan try to deceive us?
What other reason is given for resisting temptations?
What does Paul say of deception?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson XIII—September 29, 1935

JOHN (THE MINISTER AND HIS PEOPLE)

3 John.

- 1 The elder unto Gaius the beloved, whom I love in truth.
- 2 Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.
- 3 For I rejoiced greatly, when brethren came and bare witness unto thy truth, even as thou walkest in truth.
- 4 Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.
- 5 Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal;
- 6 Who bare witness to thy love before the church: whom thou wilt do well to set forward on their journey worthily of God;
- 7 Because that for the sake of the Name they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.
- 8 We therefore ought to welcome such, that we may be fellow-workers for the truth.
- 9 I wrote somewhat unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.
- 10 Therefore, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that would he forbiddeth and casteth them out of the church.
- 11 Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God.
- 12 Demetrius hath the witness of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, we also bear witness; and thou knowest that our witness is true.

13 I had many things to write unto thee, but I am unwilling to write *them* to thee with ink and pen:

14 But, I hope shortly to see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be unto thee. The friends salute thee. Salute the friends by name.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God.*” (3 John 11.)

TIME.—Unknown, probably A.D. 96.

PLACE.—Probably Ephesus.

PERSONS.—John and Gaius.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—1 John 4: 7-21.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September 23.	M.	-----	A Pastor and His People (3 John 1-14)
September 24.	T.	-----	Walking in the Light (1 John 1: 1-10)
September 25.	W.	-----	God's Loving Commandments (2 John 1-12)
September 26.	T.	-----	The Gift of Eternal Life (1 John 5: 1-12)
September 27.	F.	-----	The Primacy of Love (1 John 3: 1-12)
September 28.	S.	-----	John the Seer (Rev. 1: 10-20)
September 29.	S.	-----	God Is Love (1 John 4: 7-21)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Grounds for John's Rejoicing (Verses 1-4).
- II. Gaius Praised for Faithful Work (Verses 5-8).
- III. The Hostility of Diotrephes Condemned (Verses 9, 10).
- IV. "He That Doeth Good Is of God" (Verses 11, 12).
- V. "Peace Be Unto Thee" (Verses 13, 14).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—This short epistle, which is the scripture text of our lesson, is generally attributed to the apostle John. It is also a matter of general agreement that it was written in the latter part of his life. His referring to himself as "the elder," probably because of his advanced age, or the long period of labor as an apostle, makes this conclusion very plausible. The date of his death is not known, but must have been early in the second century. Critics differ regarding the time when this epistle was written, but some time between A.D. 80 and 90 is quite likely correct.

Lesson Links.—The apostle John was not only the author of the three short epistles, but of the Gospel of John and Revelation. He was the last survivor among the apostles, living thirty or more years after the destruction of Jerusalem. In actual experience in the church, he surpassed all the other apostles. As one of the twelve, he knew the Lord personally; he shared the common lot of the others in the work before the destruction of the city; he remained a long time as the only one of the chosen apostles to relate, as an eyewitness, what he had seen in following Jesus. Some years after the writing of this letter, he was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he received those wonderful visions that make the story found in Revelation. It

is thought that the last years of his life were passed in the city of Ephesus.

Lesson Settings.—The use of the word “elder” implies that age and experience had brought his wisdom to the highest degree of perfection. To this must be added the inspiration that guided him into all truth. But the special characteristic of this epistle is that he writes with the tenderness and love that a father shows to his children. The letter is addressed to Gaius, but who he was is not known further than the mention here. There are several texts that mention Gaius. It seems that all the passages could not refer to the same man, but how many different ones is uncertain. It is evident, for some reason not given, that he was truly beloved by the apostle. This accounts for the affectionate style of the letter.

LESSON NOTES

I. Grounds for John's Rejoicing (Verses 1-4)

“The Beloved.”—Although we have little definite knowledge of Gaius, we are sure that he was a Christian of some prominence. The fact that John addressed a letter to him is proof of that. Besides, he refers to him as “the beloved.” This means that he was beloved by all who knew him, for John says, “Whom I love,” which means that John added his love to that of the brethren in general. John also said, “Whom I love in truth,” that is, sincerely.

John's Prayer.—John's prayer concerned all things that would be for Gaius' good, both in material prosperity and physical health. This shows that it is appropriate to pray for temporal prosperity, provided the scriptural conditions of acceptable prayer be met. John adds the limiting clause, “as thy soul prospereth.” This means that Gaius was spiritually healthy; that he was living the Christian life so well that God's approval was upon him. Being such he would know how to use any increase in material prosperity to the glory of God. Such spiritually-minded people can safely receive increased prosperity, and others may rightly pray for them to receive it. Too many have healthy bodies and material goods whose souls are sick with sin.

II. Gaius Praised for Faithful Work (Verses 5-8)

Toward Others.—The expression, “thou doest a faithful work,” means he acted as a faithful man of God, as a consistent member of the church should act. This he did both toward the brethren and strangers. By this is evidently meant the brethren at home and brethren from other sections, not sinners, though kindness to them is a Christian duty which Gaius doubtless observed. Probably Gaius was blessed with abundance of temporal goods and assisted the brethren at home, and extended hospitality and help to strangers who visited his congregation. The brethren who visited John bore witness of Gaius' love before the church. In the light of what Jesus said on love it is perfectly clear what they meant by Gaius' love. Keeping Christ's commandment is the proof of love to him (John 14: 21); so doing to others what Jesus requires is evidence of love for them. Gaius manifested his love in his good deeds to the needy.

Additional Work Advised.—John not only praised Gaius for the good work already done, but advised additional work. Evidently the

strangers were Christian workers passing that needed help. John said that Gaius would do well to set them forward on their journey in a way "worthily of God." This might mean that they, in a manner worthy of their high calling as God's servants, might be able to do their work, or that he might assist them in a way in keeping with his position and ability in the church.

III. The Hostility of Diotrephes Condemned (Verses 9, 10)

"Somewhat."—This expression indicates that he had before referred to the matter that Diotrephes was desirous of having the preeminence over them. What he had previously said to them about this matter is not here or elsewhere mentioned. The word "somewhat" implies that he had not given the rebuke that such conduct required, but that he had mentioned his knowledge of the unfortunate situation. It is not improbable that Diotrephes was an elder of the congregation; at least he was prominent enough that he was exercising a bad influence on the church. As an elder, however, he would be in position to try to have the preeminence under the guise of apparent authority. The statement that he was casting some out of the church can hardly be harmonized with any other view than that he was acting as an overseer of the congregation.

"The Preeminence."—He had an inordinate desire to be ruler, presiding officer, or occupy the chief seat. The seeking for such authority is evidence upon its face that one is not qualified to rule a congregation of God's people. It not only violates the plain teaching of Jesus on the point (Luke 14: 7), but such persons bring reproach upon the church by failing so completely to manifest the spirit of humility of Jesus, its founder. They always resort to schemes and disgraceful things in accomplishing their desires. As humanity does not change, those with the Diotrephes spirit are just as detrimental to the church now as then. He was so exalted in his own imagination that he even refused to accept the authority of John as an apostle of Christ. His imitators today virtually reject the authority of the apostles by ignoring their teaching on humility.

"His Works."—John assured Gaius that if he came he would bring to remembrance the wicked works of Diotrephes. He probably meant that he would point them out in such a plain way that all would know just wherein they were evil. As an apostle, he would rebuke Diotrephes just as his conduct deserved. One part of his works that needed severe condemnation was his vain talk, prating against the apostle with "wicked words." He was reproaching John in words that were mere tattle. He was not content with this work against John, but would not receive the visiting brethren himself, and forbid others to receive them. Those who were willing to show the spirit of hospitality and receive the brethren, he cast out of the church. Probably announced them as withdrawn from. This step he would hardly have dared to take had he not been posing as an elder, who was "lording it over" the congregation instead of making himself an ensample to the flock. (1 Pet. 5: 3.)

IV. "He That Doeth Good Is of God" (Verses 11, 12)

Imitators.—To imitate one another is a common practice among human beings. There is nothing wrong in so doing when one imitates

those who do right. In this verse the apostle says: "Imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good." Paul gave the same instruction when he said to the Corinthians: "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11: 1.) When Paul imitated Christ he did right; those who imitate him in the same things imitate Christ. This is good, not evil. Such an one will never lord it over the charge of God, or be unkind to his brethren.

"Of God."—The text says that those who do good are of God. As God is the author of the good, those doing good must be of him. They are approved by him in doing the good, whatever it may be. Of course the converse is equally true—those doing evil are of the devil, as John expresses in 1 John 3: 8. In our text John says that the one who does evil "hath not seen God." He is here contrasting the habitual sinner with the habitual worker of good, not one who occasionally does something wrong. The unsaved man—whose profession is sin instead of righteousness—does not have the correct understanding of God's goodness and mercy. This is figuratively expressed as not having seen God.

An Example of Righteousness.—John refers to Demetrius, who had the testimony of all that he was righteous. His case was in striking contrast with Diotrephes. The truth also bore witness to his upright Christian character. This could mean that the facts harmonized with the good report of him; or, that by living just as the truth required, the truth itself was bearing witness, because it was the standard by which he was to be judged. To this John adds his own testimony to the good Christian conduct of Demetrius.

V. "Peace Be Unto Thee" (Verses 13, 14)

Not All Written.—This verse shows that John had many things that could have been written with profit to them, but for some reason he decided not to write them. Why that decision we do not know. As he hoped to see them in a short time, he may have decided that he could as easily give them the remainder of the instruction orally. This would save much labor, and be satisfactory, if the things were of a local character. Speaking face to face meant to deliver orally his messages. This implies that they were not of enough general importance to require that they be preserved.

Salutations.—The last expressions in this short letter are salutations to Gaius and others. They show the affectionate regard that John had for the faithful in Christ. This is a characteristic feeling which is manifest in all his letters. Asking for peace to be the lot of Gaius meant that he wanted him to enjoy both temporal and spiritual good. This would give Gaius pleasure, and be beneficial to the church. Others beside John joined in the wish for his good, and John wished Gaius to extend the salutation to other friends there.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. The workman can have no greater joy, so far as his task is concerned, than to know his labor has been a success. Lost effort is a source of much grief to the workman, and disappointing to one for whom he labors. To know that those whom one has led to the truth are faithfully walking in it, and refusing to be turned from it, brings lasting joy to the preacher's heart.

2. A faithful work is worthy of praise, and will receive it sooner or later. One need not take the time to praise himself; if worthy, others will take care of that for him unsolicited. The essential thing is to do things "worthily of God"—as becomes those who are his servants.

3. Seeking to have the preeminence rather than seeking to serve God—to exercise authority rather than be obedient to God—will endanger the soul of any one, and do great damage to the church. The Diotrephes spirit deserves prompt condemnation.

4. Striving to imitate the good as manifested by any one is a worthy effort; striving to imitate the ideal character as found in the matchless life of the Master is the most commendable effort.

5. All Christians should desire peace and prosperity, both in their own affairs and the work of the Lord. Wishing the same good for others is a high Christian sentiment.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give the points made in John's discussion of walking in darkness and the danger of sin. (1 John 1: 5-10.)

2. Give his discussion on the subject of how we may know that we know him. (1 John 2: 1-6.)

3. Discuss John's statements on the love of God for man, and the love of man for man. (1 John 4: 7-16.)

4. Discuss John's teaching on the witness of God and the Spirit. (1 John 5: 1-12.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What is known about Gaius?
What prayer did John offer in his behalf?
What is meant by "as thy soul prospereth"?
What reason did John have for rejoicing concerning Gaius?
What general truth did John express?

II

What is meant by "a faithful work"?
Who were meant by "strangers"?
What additional work did John advise?

What is meant by "for the sake of the Name"?
What is true of those endorsing false teachings?

III

What is meant by the word "somewhat"?
What position did Diotrephes probably have?
What is meant by desiring the "pre-eminence"?
What evil works did he do?

IV

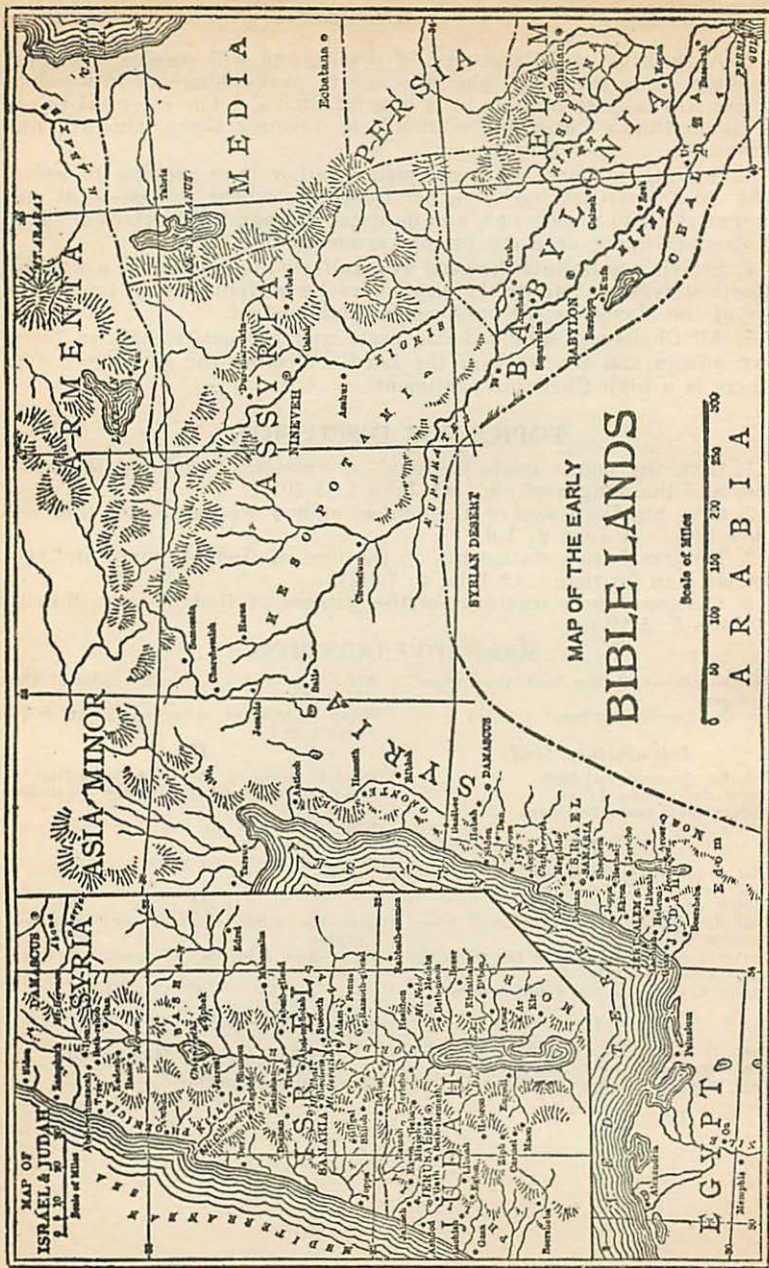
Give the Bible teaching on imitating others.
What does John say of good and evil?

V

Give and explain the salutations.

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.



FOURTH QUARTER

LATER PROPHETS AND LEADERS OF JUDAH

(From Isaiah to Malachi)

AIM: *By a study of the Later Prophets and Leaders of Judah, to throw light upon this period of Hebrew history, to become more familiar with the records of these great leaders, and from their lives to gain guidance for our own lives.*

Lesson I—October 6, 1935

ISAIAH PORTRAYS THE SUFFERING SERVANT

Isa. 53: 1-12.

1 Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?

2 For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke *was due*?

9 And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"With his stripes we are healed." (Isa. 53: 5.)

TIME.—About 712 B.C.

PLACE.—Probably Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, the promised Messiah, and Isaiah.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Rev. 5: 9-14.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

September	30.	M.	.....	The Suffering Servant (Isa. 53: 1-12)
October	1.	T.	.....	The Courageous Servant (Isa. 50: 4-11)
October	2.	W.	.....	The Sorrowing Servant (Matt. 26: 36-46)
October	3.	T.	.....	The Dying Servant (John 19: 28-37)
October	4.	F.	.....	The Atoning Servant (1 Pet. 2: 18-25)
October	5.	S.	.....	The Sacrificing Servant (Heb. 10: 1-13)
October	6.	S.	.....	The Glorified Servant (Rev. 5: 9-14)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. "He Was Despised, and Rejected of Men" (Verses 1-3).
- II. "He Was Wounded for Our Transgressions" (Verses 4-6).
- III. When "Afflicted He Opened Not His Mouth" (Verses 7-9).
- IV. "His Soul an Offering for Sin" (Verses 10, 11).
- V. "Numbered with the Transgressors" (Verse 12).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Isaiah delivered his prophecies "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." (Isa. 1: 1.) From Isa. 6: 1 it appears that he was called to the prophetic office in the year that Uzziah died. This was about 760 B.C. Jotham, his son, reigned sixteen years (2 Kings 15: 33), and his son, Ahaz, reigned sixteen years (2 Kings 16: 2). Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, succeeded to the throne and reigned twenty-nine years. (2 Kings 18: 2.) If Isaiah prophesied till the close of Hezekiah's reign, the time of his prophecies was about sixty years. Since the time of his death cannot be fixed definitely, the time may be much less than that. The time our lesson text was delivered was about 712 B.C. This was about forty-eight years after his work began, and possibly the last year of his prophetic labors.

Lesson Links.—The fact that Isaiah is said to have prophesied in the days of four of Judah's kings indicates that his predictions were mainly for or against Judah, but some were directed against other peoples. Babylon, Moab, Damascus, and Egypt all came in for a share of his denunciations. (Chapters 13 to 19.) His prophetic work began probably forty years before Israel was taken captive by Assyria, and he made some references to them. (Isa. 8: 6, 7.) Isaiah saw Judah more than ordinarily prosperous under the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, and Hezekiah, the last especially being noted as among Judah's best kings. Ahaz was noted for his extreme wickedness. (2 Kings 16: 3, 4.) The Syrian king joined forces with the king of Israel and besieged Jerusalem. (Verse 5.) When the Assyrian king made insulting and impossible demands, Isaiah comforted Hezekiah by predicting the defeat of the Assyrian army. (2 Kings 19.) He also told Hezekiah that all he had laid up, and all his family, would finally be carried to Babylon. (2 Kings 20: 16-19.)

Lesson Settings.—Isaiah often spoke in such lofty strains that his language cannot, with any degree of fairness, be applied to a temporal kingdom. Many of these passages are quoted or referred to by some

New Testament writer. This places the stamp of divine approval upon the spiritual application. A striking one in this class is that of Isa. 28: 16, quoted in 1 Pet. 2: 6. Our lesson chapter is clearly a prophetic description of the Lord's suffering and death. No one disposed to treat the crucifixion story candidly can fail to see that Isaiah had that in view.

LESSON NOTES

I. "He Was Despised, and Rejected of Men" (Verses 1-3)

"Who Hath Believed?"—Isaiah's question, "Who hath believed our message?" means that when Christ came with his message of salvation many would reject him. This is precisely the fact as it actually occurred. His other question, "And to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?" implies that sufficient demonstration of God's power had been made to convince any who gave it honest consideration. John says he "came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not." (John 1: 11.) Paul quotes the words of Isaiah in this text to show that all who heard did not obey. (Rom. 10: 16.) In the following verse he mentions the fact that believers are made by hearing Christ's message.

"A Tender Plant."—Isaiah further foresees this coming one as a tender plant out of dry ground. In Isa. 11: 1 the prophet refers to the same person as a "branch" that was to come from the stock of Jesse. A tender plant out of dry ground probably indicates the unfavorable circumstances under which Jesus was born and brought up, if he was to become a great king. This was one of the reasons why his own people rejected him and the message he brought. Impossible for any good thing to come out of Nazareth, they thought. The carpenter's son being their long-looked-for Messiah was out of the question, in their minds.

"No Form Nor Comeliness."—The prophet's words regarding the Lord's physical appearance are not to be taken literally. He did not appear in his personal ministry in the way and manner that was to be expected in one who was to become a king. Plainly, they were disappointed and did not desire him. The fault was theirs, for they allowed their desires to close their eyes against plain facts.

"Despised, and Rejected."—The Jews not only did not desire him, but, because of their disappointment, they soon came to despise him. Such treatment from his own people, when he came to save them, naturally filled his soul with grief and sorrow. The most poignant grief, doubtless, was when his own disciples, on the night of his arrest, forsook him and fled. (Matt. 26: 56.) The circumstances under which he died were such as cause men to hide their faces from those they are expected to defend.

II. "He Was Wounded for Our Transgressions" (Verses 4-6)

"Borne Our Grievs."—That this expression refers to Jesus we have the express testimony of Matthew in Matt. 28: 17. Peter says that he "bare our sins in his body upon the tree." (1 Pet. 2: 24.) The word "surely" indicates that there would be no doubt about his doing it. The New Testament record says he did do it. To bear our griefs and sorrows means to pay in his death the price necessary to obtain the pardon of sins, which, if not pardoned, would bring us

grief and sorrow. Notwithstanding he did suffer for our sins, yet his own people esteemed him as smitten and stricken of God; that is, they esteemed him a criminal, and justly condemned as a punishment from God. In their blind zeal, they condemned him as a blasphemer.

"Our Transgressions."—The prophet adds force to his predictions here by using the passive voice of the verb. "He *was wounded* for our transgressions, he *was bruised* for our iniquities." The past time is used to indicate that the event is so certain to take place that it is spoken of as if it had already occurred. Being without sin himself (Heb. 4: 15) his wounds were received on our behalf—that we might obtain relief from our own transgressions. The chastisement necessary to procure the pardon of sins, and bring everlasting peace, was laid upon him. As scourging by the lash doubtless often caused the blood to flow, the word "stripes" here perhaps means to indicate that by Christ's blood we are healed. That blood, of course, is the element by which we receive the cleansing from sin. (1 John 1: 7.)

"Laid on Him."—When Jesus came, mankind was like sheep without a shepherd that had gone astray. Each one had turned to his own way. Jehovah's law had been forgotten by most nations, and his own chosen people were groping in darkness through the blindness of those who professed to be righteous leaders. A most deplorable state! At such an opportune time the Messiah appeared to bring peace, joy, and salvation. Jehovah laid on him the "iniquity of us all." The punishment that justly belonged to mankind individually was transferred by the heavenly Father to his own Son. How such a thing was possible cannot be understood by man. How wonderful is divine wisdom! How broad is divine love!

III. When "Afflicted He Opened Not His Mouth" (Verses 7-9)

"As a Lamb."—Though John the Baptist called Jesus "the Lamb of God" (John 1: 29, 36), and he is several times referred to under the same figure in Revelation, yet here the prophet only says that in his death he was like a lamb in one particular. As a lamb for slaughter and a sheep to be sheared are dumb—cannot speak any protest—so Jesus, when afflicted, did not try to make any such defense as would lead to his release from sufferings. If he had made a defense and failed in it, his power would have been discounted; if he had succeeded and escaped the sufferings and death, the plan of salvation would have been destroyed. He pursued the only course open to him as the Savior of the world.

"Oppression and Judgment."—Through injustice and false judgments he was condemned and taken from men. There were few, comparatively, who cared or considered the injustice of the whole proceedings. They were not enough concerned to really learn that he was dying for the transgression of the people, to whom the stroke of divine justice was really due.

"Grave with the Wicked."—The enemies heaped the final insult upon the Lord by crucifying him between two robbers (Matt. 27: 44; Luke 23: 39-41), thus bringing him to his grave with the wicked. They wanted his death to appear as a just punishment for wickedness. They did this, "although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." Their charges against him were all false;

they were not able to convict him even of having tried to deceive any one. But regardless of all this, they put him to death. It is incidentally mentioned that he was buried in the grave of a rich man. This was literally fulfilled in the burial of Jesus in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea. (Matt. 27: 57-60.) This peculiar fact was doubtless mentioned as one proof that Isaiah was speaking by inspiration. Such apparently insignificant things foretold become strong evidence of the story being true.

IV. "His Soul an Offering for Sin" (Verses 10, 11)

"To Bruise Him."—The prophet said it pleased Jehovah to bruise him. The word "yet" in this sentence implies that, notwithstanding his innocence, it pleased God to allow him to be brought to grief and crucified. What Jehovah allows to be done he may be said to do; for without his allowing it, it could not be done. He was not pleased in the fact that Jesus had to die, but was willing to allow it so sinners might be saved. As a blessing for making his soul an offering for sin, it was promised that he should see his seed—would have disciples to follow his teaching—would prolong his days and that the pleasure of Jehovah would prosper in his hands—his kingdom would continue for a long time and God's will be done in it.

Jehovah Satisfied.—When Jehovah saw the travail of his soul—saw Jesus without complaint paying the price of man's redemption—he was satisfied, and placed Christ's offering to man's credit.

"Justify Many."—The prophet says that by his knowledge he would justify many. Matthew says he shed his blood "for many unto remission of sins." (Matt. 26: 28.) His knowledge means the truth by which he proposes to save the world. He said himself that it is the truth that saves. (John 8: 32.) His truth will not only enable one to be righteous, but to stand justified in the last day. Jesus declared that the words he spoke will judge us at the last day. (John 12: 48.) This is a matter of common justice, since he bore the punishment due to our iniquities.

V. "Numbered with the Transgressors" (Verse 12)

"Portion with the Great."—The prophet's language here seems to refer to the exaltation that was due the Messiah, because of his pouring out his soul unto death in behalf of transgressors. In Isa. 52: 13, the declaration is that "he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high." This is just what Paul said did happen, because he became obedient to the death of the cross. Paul's words are these: "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2: 9-11.) The Lord gained his exaltation through his obedience to the Father, and is willing to share final glory with those who obey him. (Heb. 5: 8, 9.) His being numbered with transgressors, though innocent of any wrong, is another incidental proof of the prophet's inspiration, and the truth of Christ's divinity.

"The Sin of Many."—The word "many" is sometimes used to mean "all." Matthew says Jesus poured out his blood "for many" (Matt. 26: 28); Paul says he "gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2: 6).

Evidently these two expressions mean the same thing. Jesus poured out his blood that all might be saved; all who will accept its merits through obedience to him may be saved. Even Christ's blood cannot save the disobedient; this would be in conflict with man's personal responsibility. The statement that he "made intercessions for the transgressors" was literally fulfilled in the prayer he offered on the cross, saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23: 34.)

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Depending upon human wisdom we often reject that which is right, or that which will be best for us. Man often estimates his own power so highly that it is hard for him to realize that God's ways and thoughts are as much higher than his as heaven is higher than the earth. (Isa. 55: 8, 9.)

2. Doing good to those who may return the kindness is what human nature is prone to do. Suffering for others purely for their good is a divine trait, and the highest form of service. The best Christians are those who serve the most.

3. Bearing the unavoidable without filling our hearts with bitterness and resentment is better for us individually, and far better for the cause we represent. Christ is our greatest example in this.

4. The price of success is often high, but that is not bad, if the thing secured is worth the price. As the soul is of more value than the world (Matt. 16: 26), no duty imposed can be too much to pay for its salvation.

5. Numbering Christ with transgressors did not make it true; misrepresenting his disciples does not make them false to his teaching. Only our own disobedience will merit his condemnation.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the scene in which Jesus was mocked, telling all they did to him. (Matt. 27: 27-31.)

2. Describe the incidents connected with his crucifixion as related in Matt. 27: 33, 34.

3. Describe the death of Christ as related in Matt. 27: 45-56.

4. Tell the story of his burial, giving all the details as found recorded in Luke 23: 50-56.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What is indicated by the question, "Who hath believed our message"?
What is indicated by the second question?

How does Isaiah describe the coming one?
What is meant by "no form nor comeliness"?
How did the Jews' conduct affect Jesus?

II

How do we know the prophet here refers to Christ?
What is meant by bearing griefs and sorrows?
What is indicated by the passive voice of the verbs?
How are we healed by his stripes?
What is meant by our iniquity being laid on him?

III

How did John the Baptist refer to Christ?
 What is the point made by the prophet?
 How was his condemnation effected?
 How is it true that his grave was with the wicked?

IV

How is it true that Jehovah bruised him?
 What satisfied Jehovah?

V

What is meant by "portion with the great"?
 What is the meaning of the word "many"?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson II—October 13, 1935

THE STORY OF JEREMIAH

Jer. 1: 6-10; 26: 8-15.

6 Then said I, Ah, Lord Jehovah! behold, I know not how to speak; for I am a child.

7 But Jehovah said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak.

8 Be not afraid because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah.

9 Then Jehovah put forth his hand, and touched my mouth; and Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth:

10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.

8 And it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that Jehovah had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold on him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.

9 Why hast thou prophesied in the name of Jehovah, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant? And all the people were gathered unto Jeremiah in the house of Jehovah.

10 And when the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house unto the house of Jehovah; and they sat in the entry of the new gate of Jehovah's house.

11 Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy of death; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

12 Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, Jehovah sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.

13 Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Jehovah your God; and Jehovah will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

14 But as for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as is good and right in your eyes.

15 Only know ye for certain that, if ye put me to death, ye will bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth Jehovah hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"To whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak." (Jer. 1: 7.)

TIME.—About 646 to 586 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jeremiah, priests, princes, and elders of the kingdom of Judah.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 26: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 7.	M.	Jeremiah Called (Jer. 1: 1-10)
October 8.	T.	Jeremiah Warning the People (Jer. 26: 1-7)
October 9.	W.	Jeremiah Faithful (Jer. 26: 8-15)
October 10.	T.	Jeremiah Imprisoned (Jer. 37: 16-21)
October 11.	F.	Jeremiah Delivered (Jer. 38: 7-13)
October 12.	S.	Jeremiah Praying for His People (Jer. 42: 4-10)
October 13.	S.	Testimony of the Faithful (Psalm 26: 1-7)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Jeremiah's Excuse and Jehovah's Reply (Verses 6-8).
 - II. Jeremiah Qualified for His Work (Verses 9, 10).
 - III. Jeremiah Threatened with Death (Jer. 26: 8, 9).
 - IV. Charges Preferred Against Jeremiah (Verses 10-12).
 - V. Jeremiah's Appeal for a Reformation (Verses 13-15).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The record says that the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, king of Judah. (Jer. 1: 2.) This was about 627 B.C. The following verse says he continued to prophesy till the eleventh year of Zedekiah, at which time Judah was carried away captive by the Babylonians. This was about 587 B.C. The full time during which his prophecies were delivered was about forty years. It is supposed that he died in Egypt, some two years after the captivity. (Jer. 43: 5-8.) He was evidently forced to go with the small number of Jews who fled there for safety, as indicated in the passage just cited. The first lesson text was spoken about the *beginning* of his ministry; the second probably about twenty years later.

Lesson Links.—If Isaiah's prophetic career closed in the reign of Hezekiah, there must have been seventy or more years that elapsed between his ministry and that of Jeremiah. The latter was called to the prophetic office in the reign of Josiah, who was one of Judah's best kings. In spite of all the good reforms brought about through the efforts of Josiah, Judah became so desperately wicked that God allowed them to be carried into captivity for seventy years. This calamity was predicted by both Isaiah and Jeremiah. (Isa. 39: 1-8; Jer. 20: 4-6.) After the death of Josiah things rapidly grew worse for the Jews. Zedekiah, their last king, rebelled against the king of Babylon, which resulted in the besieging and capture of Jerusalem. Zedekiah attempted to escape, but was captured, was forced to witness the death of his sons, and then have his eyes put out. (2 Kings 25: 1-7.) Jeremiah passed through those troublesome times, denouncing the sins of his own people and maintaining a righteous life in spite of the demoralized state of society.

Lesson Settings.—Jeremiah was a native of Anathoth, a small village a few miles northeast of Jerusalem. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and of the priestly family of Hilkiah. Jer. 1: 6 is supposed to indicate that he was called to the prophetic office early in life. From verse 5 we learn that divine foreknowledge enabled

Jehovah to select him for the work even before he was born. Paul refers to his selection as an apostle in the same manner. (Gal. 1: 6.) The occasion for our second lesson text was the opposition to him aroused by his obeying God's command to stand in the temple court and demand that the people obey—walk in God's ways—or their house would be destroyed. (Jer. 26: 1-7.) This prediction, which was very displeasing to the people, literally came true, as he asserted it would.

LESSON NOTES

I. Jeremiah's Excuse and Jehovah's Reply (Verses 6-8)

God's Purpose.—In the two verses preceding our lesson text is the announcement which Jehovah made to Jeremiah that he had been appointed a prophet unto the nations. He was assured that this selection was made even before he was born. Infinite knowledge knew beforehand just what character of man he would be. Such power would make no mistake in selecting the right one to accomplish the work desired. Selecting the agents and means to accomplish his purposes is a matter that belongs exclusively to the divine Being, and is unconditional on man's part; personal duties involve the conditions upon which blessings are to be received.

The Excuse.—Jeremiah objected on the ground of his unfitness, saying, "I know not how to speak; for I am a child." His words did not mean an unwillingness to obey God, but a sense of fear that he was not qualified to do the work. This was a commendable feeling; in fact, it is very similar to Paul's language which says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2: 12.) Jeremiah's fear was probably, in part, due to his realization of the magnitude and importance of the task required. But as often happens, he was looking at the task from the human viewpoint only, overlooking the fact that Jehovah is able to qualify servants for the work assigned. The proper and improper attitude is forcefully expressed by Adam Clarke in these words: "They whom God never called *run*, because of worldly honor and emolument; the others hear the call with *fear and trembling*, and can go only in the strength of Jehovah."

Jehovah's Promise.—Jehovah's reply to Jeremiah means that he was to drop his excuse, and render implicit obedience. This Jeremiah, as all others can do, could do; the rest he could leave to the power and providence of God. He was told to speak whatsoever Jehovah commanded him. That meant that the message he delivered was God's, not his. Since God would give him the message and power to deliver it, his youth and inexperience could not be any hindrance. He was further told to not be afraid of men, for Jehovah would be with him and deliver him from them. That meant, of course, any deliverance necessary to the delivery of the message he was to speak.

II. Jeremiah Qualified for His Work (Verses 9, 10)

"Touched My Mouth."—The statement that Jehovah put forth his hand and touched Jeremiah's mouth indicates that he was delivering to him the power to declare the message as God desired it done. Touching the lips was a significant act, because by the proper use of the lips the right message would be spoken. It served to impress

upon the prophet that the divine power bestowed was to be used to the honor of God; its reception constituted a most sacred and solemn trust. The bestowment of miraculous power belongs to God; significant physical acts required, or used in connection therewith, do not change the matter in the least. Jesus anointed the blind man's eyes with clay, and required him to wash in the pool of Siloam, but the opening of his eyes was by the miraculous power of God. (John 9: 1-7.) The conditions had to be complied with, and were, therefore, necessary to the healing; but divine power did the healing. In like manner we must obey the gospel to receive pardon, but pardon is something that God does for us.

Set Over the Nations.—This expression shows that when God appoints any one to a special work, he requires all others to be subject to that appointment. If this were not true, then inspired persons would have no advantage over the uninspired, and we would have no way to know what messages are of God. Paul put the stamp of approval on that truth, when he declared that any man or angel that preached differently from what the apostles said would rest under the curse of God. (Gal. 1: 8, 9.) Jesus gave his apostles authority to bind their words upon men. (John 20: 22, 23.) In our text is recorded the fact that a like authority was given the prophet.

To Build and Overthrow.—To build, overthrow, pluck up, break down, and destroy are all expressions to indicate results that would come from the prophet's work. In the radical sense, of course, it was God's power or permission that would bring such results. But, as they would come about through the words of Jeremiah, he would be indirectly responsible for them, and therefore represented as doing them. One may be said to do a thing when in any way he is connected with the doing.

III. Jeremiah Threatened with Death (Jer. 26: 8, 9)

The Occasion.—This language was spoken in the days of Jehoiakim, probably about 608 B.C. Jeremiah was required to stand in the court of the temple and speak to all the cities that came to worship. He was told not to diminish a word from all that Jehovah had commanded. Every man was to be required to turn from his evil, walk in God's law, and give ear to what the prophets said. If they failed to give heed to what God said, their house was to become a curse among the nations. (Jer. 26: 1-7.) This put the case squarely before them; they must reform or take the consequences in the destruction of their temple, and captivity in a foreign land.

"Laid Hold on Him."—Jeremiah's denunciations, doubtless, continued from day to day as people came to worship. The expression, "when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that Jehovah had commanded him," probably indicates only that he had made a thorough and full denunciation of their evils, and stated the disasters that were imminent. The priests, prophets, and people were so enraged that they laid hands on him, declaring that he should die for such displeasing prophecies. This was not the only time when Jeremiah's life was endangered by the people who resented the words he used. (Jer. 11: 19; 18: 23.)

Why Angry?—They wanted to know why he had claimed Jehovah as authority for his words that threatened such disasters to them.

Declaring that their temple would be destroyed and they carried into captivity seemed intolerable. To charge such misfortunes to their own wickedness was too exasperating to be endured. Their resentment went beyond bounds, and they declared that such a prophet was worthy of death. The last expression probably means that, like an angry mob, they gathered about him ready to tear him in pieces.

IV. Charges Preferred Against Jeremiah (Verses 10-12)

"The Princes of Judah."—The princes of Judah were probably a royal court—those who considered state matters, and gave the king counsel. Hearing of the teaching of Jeremiah, they came up from the king's house to the Lord's house, and sat in the entry of the gate to hear the case. The priests and prophets (wicked or false prophets) charged Jeremiah with prophesying against the city, and therefore with being worthy of death. Their charge that he had spoken against the city was true; he had pronounced most terrible denunciations against it, for their wickedness deserved it. But it was not true, for that reason, that he was worthy of death. Had they not been blinded by their sins, they would have known that he was worthy of their deepest gratitude for warning them in advance of an impending calamity.

Jeremiah's Reply.—Jeremiah did not deny the charge of having prophesied against the temple and city. That he had done with force and earnestness. Without excuse or apology he offers the defense that God had sent him to do that very work. If so, a refusal to do it would have been disobedience to God. This a true prophet could not do. However disagreeable a duty may be to the speaker or others, there can be no better reason for his message than that God requires the words to be spoken. In that confidence Jeremiah rested his case with the princes. In the same confidence now preachers can rest their cases with God. Preachers may misunderstand what God says; but, knowing his word, there is no redeeming excuse to offer for refusing to tell it to those who need its saving power.

V. Jeremiah's Appeal for a Reformation (Verses 13-15)

"Amend Your Ways."—In view of his commission from Jehovah the prophet could appropriately demand that those sinners, though mistakingly thinking themselves in God's favor, amend their ways and doings, become obedient to the voice of Jehovah. Without this, disaster was certain to overtake them.

"Jehovah Will Repent."—In Jer. 18: 5-12 the prophet fully states the fact that Jehovah will repent of evil determined for a people only upon their repentance and reformation from sinful works. Our lesson text has the same thought expressed; in fact, it is a true gospel principle that runs through the entire Bible teaching. The word "repent" means a *change of mind*, particularly in reference to the will power. The changed conduct that follows results from the determination to do or not to do the prescribed thing. Repentance may refer to things involving no sin. Only in this sense can it be applied to God. If God promised a calamity, and they turned from evil, he would change his mind and not bring it. The misfortunes promised by Jeremiah could be escaped only by their turning from evil.

Jeremiah's Reasoning.—The prophet conceded that, as he was in

their hands, they could put him to death; but with what results, was his question. To do so, would add more sin to their account; leave them worse than before. Then it would not avert the calamity that was sure to come. Why fight against the decree of God? An unanswerable argument, which only mad men could reject.

Final Results.—Verses 16-19 show that the argument was effective with the princes, who enforced their conclusion with a reference to others who had prophesied evil against Zion and were not killed. In chapters 36 to 38 we have the record of Jeremiah's being required to have his prophecies against Israel and Judah written out and read to those who came to worship at Jerusalem. This was in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim. The event in our second text was the first, or four years earlier. When it was known to the king that the roll was being read to the people, and some read to him, he caused it to be burned. God commanded Jeremiah to have it written again, and a curse pronounced upon the king's family because of his evil. (Jer. 36: 27-32.)

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. God does not require us to do impossible things; hence, no one should offer inability as an excuse for not trying to obey. Besides, we often have much more ability than we are willing to admit. A failure to earnestly use what we have is a common sin of neglect.
2. One who refuses to use the means God specifies shows a lack of faith in both his wisdom and promises. The obedient one trusts in God; the doubters are disobedient.
3. Becoming angry with one who tells a vital truth upon which salvation depends only endangers the one doing it. Rejecting a messenger or his message does not destroy the truth of what he says.
4. Jeremiah offered no apology for telling the truth; neither should we. He gave his *reasons* for telling it; so may we. In fact, that is just what an inspired apostle says we should do. (1 Pet. 3: 15.)
5. The nature of man, as a creature of ability and responsibility, requires that blessings shall be offered to him on conditions. Without this there would be no fair way to distinguish between the wicked and the good in bestowing rewards. As God created man, he would, of course, deal with the nature he gave him. God could not be unjust.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss Jeremiah's teaching on the justice of God in dealing with nations. (Jer. 18: 1-12.)
2. Discuss Jeremiah's rebuke of the priests and prophets that said peace, when there was no peace. (Jer. 6: 9-15.)
3. Describe Jeremiah's imprisonments. (Jer. 37: 11-21; 38: 6-13.)
4. Describe the circumstances of Jeremiah's going to Egypt. (Jer. 43: 1-7.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.

Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.

Repeat the Lesson Links.

Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

How did God announce Jeremiah's call to him?

What excuse did Jeremiah offer?

What is meant by his words?

What did God's reply mean?

What promise is made to Jeremiah?

II

What is signified in touching Jeremiah's mouth?
 How does the blind man's case illustrate this thought?
 What is meant by set over the nations?
 What did Paul say on this subject?
 In what sense did Jeremiah build and overthrow?

III

What occasioned the threat of death to Jeremiah?
 What effect did his teaching have on the people?
 Why were they so angry with him?

IV

Who were the "princes of Judah"?
 What charge was made by the priests and prophets?
 How did Jeremiah reply to their charge?
 What is the best reason for any preaching?

V

What did Jeremiah tell them to do?
 How can the word "repent" be applied to God?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson III—October 20, 1935

THE MESSAGE OF JEREMIAH

Jer. 7: 1-11, 21-23.

- 1 The word that came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying.
- 2 Stand in the gate of Jehovah's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of Jehovah, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship Jehovah.
- 3 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.
- 4 Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, are these.
- 5 For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor;
- 6 If ye oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt:
- 7 Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, from of old even for evermore.
- 8 Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.
- 9 Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods that ye have not known,
- 10 And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations?
- 11 Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, saith Jehovah.
- 21 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat ye flesh.
- 22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices:
- 23 But this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people."* (Jer. 7: 23.)

TIME.—About 607 B.C.

PLACE.—At a gate of the temple and Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Jeremiah, and the Jews.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 96: 7-13.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

- | | | |
|-------------|----|---|
| October 14. | M. | Jeremiah Reproves Israel (Jer. 7: 1-11) |
| October 15. | T. | Jeremiah Calls to Obedience (Jer. 7: 21-26) |
| October 16. | W. | Obedience to God's Voice (Ex. 19: 1-6) |

October 17.	T.	.....Obedience to the Gospel (Rom. 6: 15-23)
October 18.	F.	.....Obedience to Christ (2 Cor. 10: 1-7)
October 19.	S.	.....Obedience Better than Sacrifice (1 Sam. 15: 17-23)
October 20.	S.	.....A Call to Worship (Psalm 96: 7-13)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The People Are Urged to Reform (Verses 1-3).
- II. A Thorough Amendment Required (Verses 4-7).
- III. A Charge of Falsehood, Idolatry, and Hypocrisy (Verses 8-11).
- IV. Obedience Better Than Sacrifices (Verses 21-23).

Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The chronological facts presented in our last lesson will serve for this lesson also. This prophecy is supposed to have been delivered in the same year as the second text of our last lesson, which was in the first year of Jehoiakim's reign, 608 B.C. Whether the event of this lesson occurred before or after that recorded in chapter 26 is not known.

Lesson Links.—The lesson links in the preceding lesson, just as the chronological facts, will fit this lesson also. The student probably should turn back and review both paragraphs. It may be added here that Jeremiah prophesied under five kings; namely, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. (See 2 Kings 23: 29 to 40: 20.) Jehoiachin is also called Jeconiah (1 Chron. 3: 16), and Coniah (Jer. 22: 24). A number of Jeremiah's predictions were dated by referring to the king then ruling, or the year of his reign. The order in which the kings reigned shows clearly that Jeremiah's prophecies are not put in the book in the order in which they were delivered. The probable explanation is that they were written separately, and later put together without regard to the chronological order of delivery. This does not in any way affect their truthfulness. If events are true in fact, the order in which reported is usually a matter of little or no consequence.

Lesson Settings.—The circumstances under which this lesson was spoken are about the same as that part of the last lesson, which is recorded in the twenty-sixth chapter of Jeremiah. Both were spoken at the gate of the temple, and to those who came to worship. This shows that even professed worshipers of God may often need rebuke for their sinful practices. How badly they sometimes need it will appear as we study the text before us.

LESSON NOTES

I. The People Are Urged to Reform (Verses 1-3)

God's Command.—Although prophets and other inspired men were under the general guidance of God's spirit, yet they were often given specific directions to do certain things. An angel of the Lord told Philip to leave Samaria (Acts 8: 26), and the Spirit told Peter to go with the messengers from Cornelius (Acts 10: 19, 20). So in our lesson text we read that God gave Jeremiah a special command to deliver a certain message at the gate of the temple. He was to an-

nounce his message by saying to the people, "Hear the word of Jehovah." That meant for them to give heed to it because it was the word of the Lord. If so, no one could refuse it without rejecting divine authority.

Worshippers.—Jeremiah was told to deliver this message to all of Judah, who entered the gates of the temple to worship Jehovah. Josiah had introduced a great religious reformation, but Jehoiakim, his son, had turned to evil, walking after the wicked kings who preceded him. (2 Kings 23: 37.) Previously Isaiah had rebuked the people because their wickedness had gone to the point of corrupting their worship. He said: "And the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw nigh unto me, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men which hath been taught them." (Isa. 29: 13.) The Savior quoted this text and applied it to some in his day. (Matt. 15: 9.) This shows that trying to worship God according to the doctrines and precepts of men has never been acceptable to God; neither can it ever be. Tampering with God's word and attempting to worship by a substitute plan is the worst kind of sin. (Lev. 10: 1-7.) There is something to be said in favor of one who falls under the weight of temptation, but nothing for one who deliberately perverts God's revealed will.

God's Promise.—As the people would at least have a show of respect for God, and come to the temple for their perverted services, the gate of the temple was the best place for Jeremiah to stand while delivering his message. He demanded in the name of the Lord that the people amend their ways. Their sins were so great that a reformation was absolutely necessary. Jehovah promised that with such reformation he would change his decree and prevent their being taken captive. He would cause them to dwell in their own land. Nothing short of perversity could reject a promise of so much vital importance.

II. A Thorough Amendment Required (Verses 4-7)

"Lying Words."—They were told not to trust in lying words. These were spoken, of course, by lying prophets; men who claimed that the Lord authorized what they were doing and would accept their service. They were to say, "The temple of Jehovah," by which they probably meant that they were acknowledging the temple as God's house and rendering the service required. As they were doing nothing of the kind, they were uttering falsehoods which they had received from the false prophets. Here the prophet requires the rejection of false teaching; in another place he condemns the false teacher. He declared that God said he had heard what was said by those who prophesy lies, passing off their dreams as the word of God, and that he was against the prophets "that use their tongues, and say, He saith." Such he declared caused his people to err, and could not profit them any. (Jer. 23: 23-32.)

Things Required.—Jehovah required them to *thoroughly* amend their ways and doings. It was not just a slight reformation, or a temporary change, that Jehovah demanded; he required a complete change and a full and permanent reform. Nothing less would be worth while, if they were to be permitted to remain in their own land. They were to execute justice thoroughly between a man and his neighbor. If not honest among themselves, they would not be so with

Jehovah. Taking advantage of one's unfavorable situation was a species of injustice that God condemned. This they did, if they oppressed one sojourning among them. Oppressing the fatherless and the widows was another line of injustice which God severely condemned. This they must not do. Shedding innocent blood was also condemned. Those guilty of that violated the second greatest commandment, and forfeited their own rights to God's permission to live. Finally, if they wanted God's protection and the privilege to remain in their own land, they were to turn away from all false gods, and worship only Jehovah. It was absurd to ask Jehovah's help while they gave their service to idol gods. The prophet presented the case squarely; there was no misunderstanding; disobedience meant captivity in a foreign land.

An Appeal.—In verse 4 the simple promise was that a reformation would allow them to remain in their own land. In verse 7 the promise is repeated with the further statement, "In the land that I gave to your fathers, from of old even for evermore." There was a touch of sentiment in the words that the land was the same that had been given the fathers in the centuries gone by. That included the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, words that had a magic influence on Hebrew minds. The words, "even for evermore," meant that Jehovah intended for Abraham's descendants to have that land as long as they remained true to his will. To sin and lose it would show the fault was theirs, not God's. Notwithstanding this earnest and tender appeal, sin continued to prevail, and the captivity was the final result.

III. A Charge of Falsehood, Idolatry, and Hypocrisy (Verses 8-11)

"Cannot Profit."—After telling them not to be guilty of injustice, immorality, lying, murder, and idolatry, the prophet charges them directly with accepting lies, and by implication, with the other crimes mentioned. He declares that lying cannot profit. This truth should be realized by all who are inclined to this sin. Some apparent advantage may sometimes be gained by falsehood, but nothing permanently good can come of it. It not only dwarfs the soul, but it usually is not long till the liar has trouble. Even if he should continuously deceive men, he has not deceived God at all; if he should never be punished by man for the wrong, he cannot escape the judgment of God at last. In the end the liar must lose; often his falsehoods are detected in the making.

Other Sins.—In bad effects and final consequences other sins are much the same as lying; they cannot profit. The prophet asks, "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely?" What good is possible from such a life, even if one only lives for this world? They will all disappoint in time. The prophet's point in the question, however, is this: If you are guilty of that sort of conduct, why do you appear in the temple and claim that your offerings are acceptable and your sins are pardoned? Some things are too inconsistent to be tolerated for a moment; an honest heart spurns them. Every one recognizes the fact that any pretense to worship is absurd, when the heart and life are full of sin. Burning incense to Baal and walking after other gods, when pretending to worship Jehovah in his temple, were even more ridiculous than when immoral characters claim to worship God. Claiming to be pardoned is a false assertion when the claimant is practicing untrue doctrines. This matter was

definitely settled by Jesus in these words: "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.)

"A Den of Robbers."—The service of God could not really be conducted by persons of the character described here, for it would be a house of criminals. They would be robbers of the worst type. They would be robbing God of the spiritual service due him, and robbing themselves of the divine blessings he would bestow. Jesus referred to those money changers in the temple court as robbers in the literal sense (Matt. 21: 13), and drove them out, saying, "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers." (Matt. 21: 13.) Calling any religious acts that we perform worship to God is worthless unless they are, in fact, such. Jesus said: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6: 46.) God said he had seen the hypocrisy of the pretended worshippers then; surely he will see us, and know our motives and deeds.

IV. Obedience Better Than Sacrifices (Verses 21-23)

"Eat Ye Flesh."—The prophet's words, "Add your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat ye flesh," are not very clear, when considered alone; but, in the light of the lesson text and other passages, should doubtless be considered as a rebuke. In view of their general wickedness, and especially that of their perverted worship, the meaning may probably be expressed thus: Since your offerings and sacrifices are displeasing to me, you might just as well put them all together and use them for food. Jeremiah also presents God's displeasure at their worship in these words: "Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing unto me." (Jer. 6: 20.) On the same subject also these: "When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt-offering and meal-offering, I will not accept them." (Jer. 14: 12.) To the same purpose Isaiah had long before rebuked them as follows: "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." (Isa. 1: 11.)

The Fathers in the Wilderness.—Jeremiah adds force to his rebuke by telling them that when Jehovah brought their fathers out of Egypt he did not command sacrifice, but obedience. Of course he later gave them the system of sacrifices, but at first his demand was that they render obedience to his commands. This indicates that the spirit of obedience is more important than offering any kind of sacrifices. In fact, sacrifices are displeasing to God unless they are purposed and offered by one whose heart is submissive to the will of God. The system of sacrifices, though given of God, may be utterly repulsive to God; in fact, will be unless the heart is right. Saul, the first king of Israel, disobeyed God's command, but wanted to offer a sacrifice to him. The prophet Samuel said to him, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15: 22.) His words also assured Saul that Jehovah had more delight in obedience than in sacrifice. The whole tenor of Bible teaching confirms this fact. God's children should take heed to it.

"May Be Well."—They were given to understand plainly that to have God's favor and protection over them they must hearken to his voice—obey his commands; and that, if they wanted things to go well

with them, they must walk in all the ways that God commanded. While God's commands to us are not the same as to them, the principle of obedience is precisely the same. Our acceptance with God and final salvation depend upon our hearkening to God's voice. There has been no exception to this rule in any age or dispensation. It is the just and righteous course for creatures to pursue toward the Creator.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. It is bad for anyone to be wicked; but, when those who profess to be the people of the Lord fail to make their moral conduct and religious practices harmonize with their professions, the situation is inexcusable. Christians are rightly supposed to obey.

2. A thorough amendment in matters of evil is the only satisfactory thing. Half-hearted service is little, if any, better than none at all. Jesus requires that we shall love God with "all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." (Matt. 22: 37.) Obedience must be "from the heart" (Rom. 6: 17); that is, sincerely.

3. Even irreligious people learn sooner or later that there is no profit in sin; Christians are supposed to understand that all the time. Because God is not directly promising us immediate temporal punishment for our sins is no reason to conclude that we will never meet punishment. "The wages of sin is death" is still the law.

4. Whatever other excellent things we may do, none can supplant the necessity of obedience. All else that we can do that is commendable in itself is sanctified to our good by the spirit of obedience to God. However great sacrifice may be, obedience is better.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the message of Jeremiah on the influence of false prophets as found in Jer. 23: 13-22.

2. Discuss his message on false prophets that substitute something else for God's word. (Jer. 23: 23-32.)

3. Give Jeremiah's prediction regarding the new covenant. (Jer. 31: 31-34.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.

Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.

Repeat the Lesson Links.

Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

How were prophets and apostles directed?

Give some examples.

To whom did Jeremiah deliver this message?

Who else gave like instruction?

What lesson is in Lev. 10: 1-7?

What promise was made the people?

II

What lying words were they likely to receive?

How did the prophet condemn the false teacher?

What did Jehovah require of the people? Name the things they were not to do.

What final requirement was made?

Why did the prophet refer to the fathers?

III

What did the prophet say about the crimes mentioned?

What question did the prophet ask, and why?

How did Jesus settle the question of acceptance with God?

How did Jeremiah describe them?

IV

How understand the words, "eat ye flesh"?

What is the argument in referring to the fathers?

What was necessary to their faring well?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson IV—October 27, 1935

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

(TEMPERANCE LESSON)

Dan. 5: 17-28.

17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

18 O thou king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty:

19 And because of the greatness that he gave him, all the peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he raised up, and whom he would he put down.

20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:

21 And he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts', and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; until he knew that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that he setteth up over it whomsoever he will.

22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this,

23 But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine from them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.

24 Then was the part of the hand sent from before him, and this writing was inscribed.

25 And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end.

27 TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

28 PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; and whosoever erreth thereby is not wise."* (Prov. 20: 1.)

TIME.—About 539 or 530 B.C.

PLACE.—Babylon.

PERSONS.—Daniel and Belshazzar.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 1.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 21.	M.	Alcohol and Poverty (Prov. 23: 1-21)
October 22.	T.	Alcohol and Stupidity (Isa. 28: 1-8)
October 23.	W.	Alcohol and Sorrow (Prov. 23: 29-35)
October 24.	T.	Alcohol and Punishment (Amos 6: 1-8)
October 25.	F.	Alcohol and Exclusion (1 Cor. 6: 1-11)
October 26.	S.	Alcohol and Death (Dan. 5: 17-28)
October 27.	S.	The Righteous and the Wicked (Psalm 1: 1-6)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. Daniel Offers to Read the Writing (Verse 17).

II. Daniel Describes Nebuchadnezzar's Glory (Verses 18, 19).

III. Belshazzar Reminded of His Father's Sins (Verses 20, 21).

- IV. Daniel Condemns Belshazzar's Sins (Verses 22, 23).
 V. The Writing Explained (Verses 24-28).
 Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—As pointed out in Lesson 6, Third Quarter, Daniel was probably among the captives taken to Babylon in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, about 605 B.C. Some fifty years later, Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, became king. After ruling seventeen years he was murdered, as our lesson chapter relates, the city of Babylon taken by Cyrus, and the Babylonian monarchy brought to an end. This was in 538 B.C. According to this chronology, which is approximately correct, Daniel was under the Babylonian supremacy about sixty-eight years.

Lesson Links.—In verse 11 Nebuchadnezzar is called the father of Belshazzar, yet the facts show that he was a grandfather. Jer. 52: 31 shows that Evil-merodach reigned before Belshazzar. This must be since the kingdom came to an end with the death of Belshazzar. The apparent difficulty is easily solved by remembering that with them the words father and son were used with more latitude than we give them. The term son would apply to grandson or son, and the word father to father or grandfather. Sometimes even to a descendant. (Matt. 22: 42.) Our lesson chapter comes chronologically after chapters 7 and 8. The vision of chapter 7 was received in the first year of Belshazzar (verse 1); that of chapter 8, in the third year (verse 1). The incidents in chapters 1 to 4 occurred in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, which is supposed to have lasted slightly more than fifty years. Evil-merodach is said to have reigned two years. His most important act affecting Jewish captives was in releasing Jehoiachin from prison after thirty-seven years. (2 Kings 25: 27-30.)

Lesson Settings.—"Until the time of his own land come" (Jer. 27: 7) indicates that Babylon was to fall in the time of the grandson, and Jer. 25: 12 shows it was to come at the end of the seventy years that had been predicted. Babylon was to be punished for her own sins regardless of the fact that she had been the medium through whom God had punished his own people for theirs. When Jehoiachin was taken captive, Nebuchadnezzar "carried out thence all the treasures of the house of Jehovah." (2 Kings 24: 13.) When the city of Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple burnt, they took away the vessels. (2 Kings 25: 13-15; 2 Chron. 36: 18, 19.) It was out of these vessels that Belshazzar and his lords were drinking wine and praising "the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone," when the mysterious hand wrote the mysterious words announcing Babylon's doom. (Dan. 5: 1-7.)

LESSON NOTES

I. Daniel Offers to Read the Writing (Verse 17)

Occasion for the Offer.—Belshazzar was terrified by the strange writing, trembled with fear, and frantically cried for the enchanters and soothsayers to be brought in to explain the mystery. He offered to clothe any one in purple, put a chain about his neck, and make him the third ruler of the kingdom, if he would read and interpret the

writings. When they failed, the king was greatly troubled and his guests were perplexed. Then the queen—probably the queen mother, widow of Nebuchadnezzar—told him of Daniel, who had been so great a person in his grandfather's reign because of his superior wisdom. She assured the king that Daniel could show the interpretation to him. This occasioned the bringing of Daniel before the king, when the same offer was made to him that the king made to the enchanters.

Daniel Refused the Gifts.—Daniel promptly rejected the king's offer of rewards, saying, "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another." Evidently Daniel wanted the king to know that he could not buy with honor and material rewards that which can come only through the direct power of God. Neither did he want the king to think he was willing to sell divine favors for so much personal gain. God cannot be bribed, neither does he authorize his servants to sell divine blessings to the highest bidder. If Daniel had been disposed to accept his offer, there was nothing to be gained by it. In a few hours the city was to fall into the hands of the enemy, and Belshazzar would not be able to make his promises good. This Daniel well knew. Daniel meant that the king could keep his rewards or give them to another, if he desired; he would accept none of them himself. This was a fine lesson, but too late to do Belshazzar any good; he had passed the stage when redemption is possible.

Daniel's Promise.—After positively refusing the king's gifts, Daniel agreed to read the writing and make known its interpretation. This he could do without compromising the truth in any way, or being unfaithful to God. The king deserved rebuke by hearing the plain facts, and Daniel laid them before him without any effort to remove their sting or court the king's favor.

II. Daniel Describes Nebuchadnezzar's Glory (Verses 18, 19)

God's Gifts.—Daniel reminds Belshazzar that the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar, his father (grandfather rather), "the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty." Of course the prophet meant that it was through God's providence that Nebuchadnezzar was permitted to become king and achieve the greatness, glory, and majesty, not that he directly gave him these temporal favors. The fact that God gave Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom in any sense was not recognized by the king. He said: "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling-place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan. 4: 30.) Because of this boastful claim the king was told that he should be driven from among men and dwell in the field with the beasts till seven times pass over him; or "until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." (Dan. 4: 32.) That he was a great king and had builded a great city is certainly the correct statement of facts, but that he did it independently by his own power and might is not true. God gave these things to him by allowing him to obtain them.

Extent of Power.—That greatness, which God's providence allowed him to have, gave him such influence that peoples and nations trembled and feared before him. He slew or kept alive just as his fancies dictated. He either raised one up or put him down. As a despot, he ruled with an iron hand, fearing neither God nor man. Since God allowed him to have such power and position, it was the natural

thing that he held responsible for proper conduct. Great power brings with it great responsibilities. The greater the power, the more seriously should the responsibilities be considered.

III. Belshazzar Reminded of His Father's Sins (Verses 20, 21)

Heart Lifted, Spirit Hardened.—Nebuchadnezzar had received many special favors through the ministration of Daniel as a prophet of Jehovah. It is remarkable that he did not continually remember these and his obligation to the source of such blessings; but, as is usually the case, the removal of calamities or the multiplication of blessings had the opposite result. The exercise of such great power gave him an undue opinion of himself, hardened his spirit against others, and filled his heart with vanity and pride. Such an individual is incapable of acting with either justice or mercy; he cannot be true to either God or man. Long before Solomon had said, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Prov. 16: 18.) This bit of practical wisdom, if known and accepted, would have saved Nebuchadnezzar much trouble. It is just as valuable today as then.

"Was Deposed."—He was not allowed to continue as king, nor permitted to enjoy his royal glory. While boastful words were falling from Nebuchadnezzar's lips a voice from heaven announced that he had lost his kingdom. (Dan. 4: 31.) Belshazzar was also reminded that the declaration to Nebuchadnezzar that he should be driven from men, dwell in the fields with beasts, and eat grass like the oxen were all literally fulfilled. His "heart was made like the beasts"! This means that he acted from animal instinct rather than human reason. This event in Nebuchadnezzar's life is a fine explanation on what is a scriptural "change of heart." The king lost his reason or understanding; at the end of his period of punishment he had another change of heart. He said: "Mine understanding returned unto me." (Dan. 4: 34.) When he lost his reason, he had an unfortunate change of heart (Dan. 4: 16); when he got his understanding back, he had a good change of heart.

God's Purpose.—This period of lost reason continued for "seven times," which is generally supposed to mean seven years. The purpose in this strange case was to make Nebuchadnezzar know that the "Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men." The wickedness of Judah brought them seventy years' bondage in Babylon; the wickedness of Nebuchadnezzar brought him seven years of departed glory; the wickedness of man will bring rejection from God at the judgment.

IV. Daniel Condemns Belshazzar's Sins (Verses 22, 23)

"Thou Knewest All This."—As Nebuchadnezzar forgot God's mercies, so Belshazzar forgot the punishment that followed. He should have remembered both, and not lifted up himself against the Lord of heaven. Pride had been the ruin of his grandfather; it could have no other effect in his case. Of course he knew these things had occurred in his grandfather's time, but he overlooked the fact that similar things could happen to him. We may know of facts, but forget the lessons which they teach. Paul said he would not have the Corinthian brethren ignorant that their fathers all passed through the sea. (1 Cor. 10: 1.) Of course that was an event in Hebrew history that no one would ever forget as a fact; but really Paul

wanted them to remember that, in spite of passing through the sea, many of them failed to reach the promised land. The simple fact without its lesson was of little value.

Profaned Sacred Things.—Nebuchadnezzar brought the holy vessels from Jerusalem to Babylon; Belshazzar profaned them by using them in a drunken feast while praising gods of silver, gold, iron, wood, and stone, which neither see, hear nor know. Such supposed gods could not aid or save any one. Neither drunkenness nor idolatry will allow one to serve God. Belshazzar did not regard Jehovah, in whose hands was his life, and by whose will he could rule, as king; in short, he did not glorify God. But idol gods without power he praised. Such is the deceitfulness of sin through which men are led to eternal ruin. Belshazzar's doom came while engaged in an idolatrous feast. The coming of the Lord and the judgment will take many who will be engaged in their iniquitous pursuits, wholly unconscious of their danger till too late.

V. The Writing Explained (Verses 24-28)

The Writing Inscribed.—Verse 24 and verse 5 both show that a hand mysteriously appeared and inscribed certain words. This writing was on the plaster of the wall. It was perfectly visible and seen by the king and his guests. The consternation and fear that seized the king has been recorded in verses 5-7. There was no question that the writing was done by some superhuman power. Being words of a strange language added to the mystery, and increased the king's perplexity.

The Words Used.—There were just four words, but they carried wonderful and startling ideas. The first one—*Mene*—is repeated, perhaps for the purpose of emphasis. It means "numbered," and by Daniel is explained to signify: "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end." The end was so near that the prophet spoke of it as a thing already accomplished. The prophetic past tense is often used to indicate the certainty of an event; that it will be sure to happen. *Tekel* means "weighing," and here is made to indicate that Belshazzar had been "weighed in the balances," and found wanting. *Peres*, which is another form of the word *Upharsin*, means "divided," and is applied by Daniel in these words: "Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." These words in the most unmistakable manner declare that the reign of Belshazzar was at an end, and that his kingdom must pass to other peoples. A fearful statement to be uttered in the midst of a royal feast. An awful retribution to come to a ruler and his people as a just reward for desperate and long-continued sins.

The Closing Scenes.—The king attempted to fulfill his promise to Daniel, as verse 29 shows. He could place a robe upon him and a chain about his neck, but could not make him third ruler in a kingdom that was to end that night. Whether Daniel objected or not to the robe and chain is immaterial; for he knew that in a few hours neither would signify anything of value to him. Cyrus entered the city that night through the bed of the Euphrates River, surprised the inhabitants, and took the city. Belshazzar was slain, and Darius, the Mede, received the kingdom. Thus Babylon fell because of its own sins.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Wisely Daniel refused the king's gift. Solomon said: "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men." (Prov. 18: 16.) "Every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts." (Prov. 19: 6.) It is exceedingly dangerous to receive gifts from wicked men, as they often only desire to gain endorsement for their evil, or freedom from punishment.

2. As God is the Creator of the universe, good men and bad are both alike dependent upon the provisions that he has made for them. Both the just and unjust enjoy the sunshine and refreshing rains. (Matt. 5: 45.) This alone is enough to bring all under lasting obligations to him. Only wickedness can close our eyes to this great truth.

3. Concerning chastening, Paul said: "All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous, but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby." (Heb. 12: 11.) Punishment is designed to reform, if possible, not to destroy.

4. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin," is still the same important truth as when spoken by James in the long ago. (James 4: 17.) There is no excuse for perverting God's worship. The precepts of men must be rejected in our devotions.

5. The writing that condemned Belshazzar and his kingdom had to be explained; the writing that condemns sinners in the church and out has already been explained. Men must heed it or be lost.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the four kingdoms, as recorded in Dan. 2.

2. Tell the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (Dan. 3: 8-27.)

3. Tell the story of the plot against Daniel, and how his life was preserved, as recorded in Dan. 6.

4. Tell the story, in full, that is recorded in Dan. 4: 28-37.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What occasioned Daniel's offer to read the writing?
What did Daniel say about the king's gifts?
Why did Daniel refuse to accept them?
What did Daniel agree to do?

II

Of what did Daniel remind Belshazzar?
How did God give Nebuchadnezzar those things?
What sentence was pronounced upon him?

How did his greatness affect the nations?
How did he manifest his power?

III

How did Nebuchadnezzar's power affect him?
What comment did Solomon make on pride?
What happened to his heart?
What is meant by the change produced?
What purpose did God have in the matter?

IV

What did Daniel say to Belshazzar?
What did Belshazzar forget?
How did he use the sacred vessels?

V

Give the words written, and explain each.
Give the closing incident.

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson V—November 3, 1935

JUDAH TAKEN CAPTIVE

2 Kings 25: 1-12.

1 And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and encamped against it; and they built forts against it round about.

2 So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

3 On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land.

4 Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden (now the Chaldeans were against the city round about); and the king went by the way of the Arabah.

5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him.

6 Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.

7 And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

8 Now in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem.

9 And he burnt the house of Jehovah, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, even every great house, burnt he with fire.

10 And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

11 And the residue of the people that were left in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the residue of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away captive.

12 But the captain of the guard left of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14: 34.)

TIME.—The fall of Jerusalem was about 586 B.C.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Babylon.

PERSONS.—The Jews and Babylonians.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 107: 10-16.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

October 28.	M.	-----	Judah's King Taken Captive (2 Kings 25: 1-7)
October 29.	T.	-----	Judah Taken Captive (2 Kings 25: 8-12)
October 30.	W.	-----	Judah's Temple Despoiled (2 Kings 25: 13-17)
October 31.	T.	-----	Judah's Desolation (Ezek. 12: 8-16)
November 1.	F.	-----	Judah's Sorrow (Lam. 2: 5-10)
November 2.	S.	-----	Judah's Distress (Lam. 4: 11-16)
November 3.	S.	-----	The Lord Delivers (Psalm 107: 10-16)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Nebuchadnezzar Besieges Jerusalem (Verses 1-3).
 - II. King Zedekiah Captured (Verses 4, 5).
 - III. Zedekiah's Punishment (Verses 6, 7).
 - IV. Jerusalem Taken and Destroyed (Verses 8-10).
 - V. The People Become Captives (Verses 11, 12).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

ANNUAL LESSON COMMENTARY

275

during a Sabbatical year when the servants should be released. However they may have released them to avoid the burden of caring for them during the siege. From what they already knew of Nebuchadnezzar they probably expected a long siege.

Length of Siege.—The text states that the siege continued till the ninth day of the fourth month. That means that it was substantially one and one-half years after Nebuchadnezzar appeared with his army till the city was taken. From this text alone it would appear that the siege was kept up continuously, but Josephus, Antiquities, book 10, chapter 7, tells of the Egyptian king's coming to aid Zedekiah. Nebuchadnezzar withdrew from Jerusalem and defeated him, then returned to renew the siege. The Jews doubtless thinking he was gone, not to return, brought their servants back under the yoke of bondage. (Jer. 34: 10, 11.)

Famine Conditions.—After disposing of the Egyptian enemy, Nebuchadnezzar returned and pressed the siege closely and famine conditions soon prevailed. However long they might have resisted the enemy outside, there was no chance in a walled city to fight starvation. Unless the city had been taken, the whole population would have died. Jehovah had determined that captivity was the price they should pay for their sins, and no power could protect them against the merciless Babylonian king at their gates. Their desperate plight shows that it does not pay to resist or ignore God's laws. Josephus says this siege lasted eighteen months.

II. King Zedekiah Captured (Verses 4, 5)

Attempt to Flee.—When the king and his men of war saw that there was no chance to break the siege, nor to get bread to sustain life, they determined to flee. When a breach was made in the wall they tried to slip out in the night, as the record says, "by the way of the gate between the two walls." Whatever this expression may mean, it is certain that they chose the place for the effort because it would be the place likely to make their escape a success. It was not at all complimentary to the king or his soldiers to leave the others to their fate while they were trying to save themselves. There were two reasons why they could not succeed: One was that the Babylonian army had the city completely surrounded, and complete escape was impossible; the other is that God had determined to permit the captivity. No human power would or could be successful against such odds.

"The Plains of Jericho."—Doubtless Zedekiah laid his plans well, and possibly thought he was sure to succeed. He reached the plains of Jericho, some eighteen miles northeast of Jerusalem, but was overtaken there and his army was separated from him. With no power of defense left, there was nothing to do but submit to capture. Under any circumstances Nebuchadnezzar would probably have treated him roughly, because of his rebelling against him, but submitting to the demands made would have been his best course. Acceding to that which is inevitable is usually the best thing to do. In the case of Zedekiah it probably would not have saved the city or prevented the punishment visited upon him, but it might have saved much other human suffering. The devastation that came upon the city, and the suffering and loss that came to its people, can never be described by human words.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Jehoiakim, the preceding king, began to reign about 607 B.C. At that time Judah was subject to Egypt, but when Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptian king at Carchemish, Judah became subject to Babylon. This was about 604 B.C. After three years he rebelled, and was taken captive and carried to Babylon in fetters. (2 Chron. 36: 6.) This was probably the time that Daniel was taken to Babylon. Zedekiah reigned from 597 to 586 B.C. The captivity was completed at the close of his reign; or, Judah fully subjugated.

Lesson Links.—Jeremiah had predicted the captivity. He had been required by the Lord to tell Zedekiah that the city would be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and that he would burn it with fire. He was also to be told that he would not be able to escape, and would be carried away to Babylon. (Jer. 34: 1-7.) Enraged because of this prophecy, Zedekiah had Jeremiah shut up in prison even while Nebuchadnezzar was besieging the city. (Jer. 32: 1-6.) In the very day that Nebuchadnezzar began his siege (ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah), Ezekiel in Babylon had a vision that indicated the captivity of Judah. (Ezek. 24.) These two prophets gave ample warning regarding the coming disaster, but neither Zedekiah nor the people would take heed to their words. They made it very plain that Babylon was to be the agency by which this disaster was to be effected, and also that in due time Babylon herself would be made to suffer for her own sins. God may use wicked men to accomplish his purposes, but that does not mean that he will not reward the evil persons as their conduct deserves.

Lesson Settings.—It was charged against Zedekiah that he "did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah his God; he humbled not himself before Jeremiah, the prophet, speaking from the mouth of Jehovah." (2 Chron. 36: 12.) He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar after making oath to serve him. In addition to all this, he hardened his heart against turning to Jehovah. (Verse 13.) The chiefs of the priests and the people "trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of Jehovah." (Verse 14.) With such a deplorable state of morals, affecting king, priests, and the people in general, there is no surprise that God allowed their enemies to take them captive. Jeremiah was directed to foretell the utter overthrow of Babylon. (Jer. 51: 60-64.) Their return to Judea after the seventy years was also given to encourage them while being forced to remain in Babylon.

LESSON NOTES

I. Nebuchadnezzar Besieges Jerusalem (Verses 1-3)

The Time.—The text says it was in the ninth year, tenth month, and tenth day of the month that Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem and besieged it. Zedekiah's revolt and the violation of his oath so aroused the Babylonian king that he determined to end the Jewish state by the destruction of their city. From Jer. 34: 8-10 it seems that the Jews released their slaves when they realized that the city was about to be subjected to a siege. The law required that slaves be released on the seventh year after their servitude began. (Ex. 2: 2; Deut. 15: 12.) It has been supposed that this siege was

III. Zedekiah's Punishment (Verses 6, 7)

"Gave Judgment Upon Him."—In the tenth year of Zedekiah's reign, while the siege was in progress, Jeremiah prophesied the destruction of the city and Zedekiah's capture. For this prophecy Zedekiah had the prophet put in prison. The prediction had stated definitely that Zedekiah would "surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes." (Jer. 32: 4.) He was further told by the prophet in the next verse that he would be carried to Babylon. Ezekiel had foretold that the prince among them would be carried to Babylon, where he should die, but would not see the land. (Ezek. 12: 12, 13.) Jeremiah had also declared that he should not die by the sword, but in peace. (Jer. 34: 5.) Zedekiah doubtless rejected Jeremiah's prophecy as being true because it apparently conflicted with Ezekiel's, that he was not to see Babylon. He failed to understand how he could be taken to Babylon, yet not see it. Of course he was disposed to reject the prophecy because it came directly in conflict with what he wanted to believe.

Punishment Inflicted.—Nebuchadnezzar was in Riblah when his soldiers forced an entrance into the city. When they captured Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, they took him to the king who pronounced sentence upon him. (Jer. 39: 3-5.) The horrors of that punishment cannot be realized simply by reading the story. By the king's command the sons of Zedekiah were slain before his eyes. Then Zedekiah's eyes were put out. It would have been less heartless, if the latter had been done first. The physical pain in losing his eyes, terrible though it was, was not so bad as the mental torture of seeing his sons deliberately slain. After this he was bound in fetters and taken to Babylon. Here was a literal fulfillment of the prediction made by Moses centuries before that God would allow their enemies to take them, if they rebelled against him. (Deut. 4: 25-28.)

IV. Jerusalem Taken and Destroyed (Verses 8-10)

The Time.—The Babylonian army made the breach in the wall on the ninth day of the fourth month (verse 3), and the captain of the guard, Nebuzaradan, came on the seventh day of the fifth month. That was nearly one month after the capture of Zedekiah. Jer. 52: 12 says it was on the tenth day of the month. This apparent discrepancy can be removed by understanding that Nebuzaradan started from Riblah to Jerusalem on the seventh and arrived at Jerusalem on the tenth, or that he arrived on the seventh and burned the city on the tenth. Nebuzaradan was sent to destroy the city, plunder the temple, and take the captives to Babylon. He took some eminent persons, including Seraiah, the chief priest, to Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar had them slain. (Jer. 52: 24-27.)

Temple Burnt.—Not only did the Chaldean soldiers burn the houses in the city, but the king's house and the Lord's house—a complete destruction. Even the walls of the city were broken down. All the brass and gold utensils that were necessary in the various services of the temple, both in the outer court and inside the house, were carried to Babylon. Jeremiah says the brass of all these vessels was without weight; so much that its value was not computed. Such a full and complete destruction left the Jews with no place to dwell, no

during a Sabbatical year when the servants should be released. However they may have released them to avoid the burden of caring for them during the siege. From what they already knew of Nebuchadnezzar they probably expected a long siege.

Length of Siege.—The text states that the siege continued till the ninth day of the fourth month. That means that it was substantially one and one-half years after Nebuchadnezzar appeared with his army till the city was taken. From this text alone it would appear that the siege was kept up continuously, but Josephus, *Antiquities*, book 10, chapter 7, tells of the Egyptian king's coming to aid Zedekiah. Nebuchadnezzar withdrew from Jerusalem and defeated him, then returned to renew the siege. The Jews doubtless thinking he was gone, not to return, brought their servants back under the yoke of bondage. (Jer. 34: 10, 11.)

Famine Conditions.—After disposing of the Egyptian enemy, Nebuchadnezzar returned and pressed the siege closely and famine conditions soon prevailed. However long they might have resisted the enemy outside, there was no chance in a walled city to fight starvation. Unless the city had been taken, the whole population would have died. Jehovah had determined that captivity was the price they should pay for their sins, and no power could protect them against the merciless Babylonian king at their gates. Their desperate plight shows that it does not pay to resist or ignore God's laws. Josephus says this siege lasted eighteen months.

II. King Zedekiah Captured (Verses 4, 5)

Attempt to Flee.—When the king and his men of war saw that there was no chance to break the siege, nor to get bread to sustain life, they determined to flee. When a breach was made in the wall they tried to slip out in the night, as the record says, "by the way of the gate between the two walls." Whatever this expression may mean, it is certain that they chose the place for the effort because it would be the place likely to make their escape a success. It was not at all complimentary to the king or his soldiers to leave the others to their fate while they were trying to save themselves. There were two reasons why they could not succeed: One was that the Babylonian army had the city completely surrounded, and complete escape was impossible; the other is that God had determined to permit the captivity. No human power would or could be successful against such odds.

"The Plains of Jericho."—Doubtless Zedekiah laid his plans well, and possibly thought he was sure to succeed. He reached the plains of Jericho, some eighteen miles northeast of Jerusalem, but was overtaken there and his army was separated from him. With no power of defense left, there was nothing to do but submit to capture. Under any circumstances Nebuchadnezzar would probably have treated him roughly, because of his rebelling against him, but submitting to the demands made would have been his best course. According to that which is inevitable is usually the best thing to do. In the case of Zedekiah it probably would not have saved the city or prevented the punishment visited upon him, but it might have saved much other human suffering. The devastation that came upon the city, and the suffering and loss that came to its people, can never be described by human words.

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no means with which to restore the temple even if the Babylonians had been willing for them to do it. Only through the providence of God, when the seventy years' predetermined captivity was past, could their ancient worship be restored. The promise of their return had been made, but it was not to occur till the full time had transpired for the bondage. They trusted so much in their own power and the strength of the walls protecting the city, that they would not allow that defeat was possible. Men are still slow to believe that God's predictions of misfortunes will really come to pass. We hate to admit the possibility of what we wish were otherwise, regardless of the fact that God plainly says it will be.

V. The People Become Captives (Verses 11, 12)

The Residue of the People.—This destruction of the temple occurred more than four hundred years after it was built by Solomon. After the devastation had been completed, the rest of the people, except a few of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen, were carried to Babylon. Doubtless the straitened circumstances and Jeremiah's prophecies had caused some to go over to the Babylonian king, some were slain at Riblah, as already noted, and a great many, of course, died in the siege, or when the city was entered by the Babylonian soldiers. Then we have already learned that there were probably two other times preceding this when captives were carried away. The residue of men, therefore, means what was left after all these classes are counted out. The famine and pestilence doubtless took away many before the city fell into the hands of the enemies. Jeremiah mentions different numbers that were carried away at different times, but how many were left to be taken at the final destruction of the city is not known.

Some Left.—The text states plainly that the guard left some of the poorest of the land. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to get the produce of the soil and vineyards. This required labor, and none were better suited for the task than the native citizens. They were too few and poor to offer any resistance to his rule. Knowing the nature of the country, they would know just how to care for the land. A few superintendents over them would guarantee that the fruits of their labor would be sure to come to him. This would easily keep them in subjection, the land in his power, and yet he would have all the returns possible from them as his subjects. A darker picture could hardly be drawn to show how far they had fallen. They had been under the special providence of God for nearly a thousand years; often punished, but gloriously blessed. Now they are outcasts, under the frowns of Jehovah, and subject to bondage to an enemy people.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Men who fail to make an honest effort to live up to their promises might as well prepare for trouble sooner or later. Those who find that they have promised to do the wrong thing should, of course, frankly say so, and ask to be excused. Zedekiah went against the instruction of God's prophet; that could not succeed.

2. Zedekiah was forced to learn that even kings cannot ignore the words of God with impunity. His conqueror, Nebuchadnezzar, was compelled to learn the same lesson when driven into the fields to eat grass like the oxen. No man is important enough to defy his Maker.

3. Physical and mental torture are the worst possible punishments. Zedekiah had to endure both. The latter is the worse; physical torture may produce death and end the pain; but, since the spirit does not cease to exist, the consciousness of guilt will continue after death.

4. The loss in material things that resulted from the Jews' sins was the greatest misfortune that had befallen the nation. The moral and religious disaster was indescribable. The wages of sin is death, an apostolic declaration, is still a sad but solemn truth.

5. Sin not only enslaves those who practice it, but it so weakens the power of resistance that they soon find themselves without enough will power to repent.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the reign of Jehoiakim. (2 Kings 24: 1-6.)
2. Give all the facts regarding the reign of Jehoiachin. (2 Kings 24: 8-17.)
3. Give Jeremiah's description of the destruction of the city and temple. (Jer. 52: 12-23.)
4. Give Jeremiah's prediction against Babylon, as found in Jer. 50: 1-20.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.

Why better, if he had submitted to Nebuchadnezzar?

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

When did Nebuchadnezzar besiege Jerusalem?
What provoked him to do it?
What was done with their slaves?
How long did the siege continue?
Describe the conditions that existed.

II

Describe Zedekiah's attempt to escape.
What shows they could not have succeeded?
Where and how far did Zedekiah go?

III

Why was Jeremiah imprisoned?
What had Jeremiah told the king?
How harmonize the prophecy of Jeremiah and Ezekiel?
Describe the punishment inflicted on Zedekiah.

IV

How harmonize verse 3 and Jeremiah 52: 12?
Why such a complete destruction?

V

What is meant by the "residue of the people"?
Who were left in the land?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson VI—November 10, 1935

EZEKIEL TEACHES PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ezek. 33: 7-16.

7 So thou, son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, and thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way; that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand.

9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, and he turn not from his way; he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul.

10 And thou, son of man, say unto the house of Israel: Thus ye speak, saying, Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we pine away in them; how then can we live?

11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

12 And thou, son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall he that is righteous be able to live thereby in the day that he sinneth.

13 When I say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his righteousness, and commit iniquity, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered; but in his iniquity that he hath committed, therein shall he die.

14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

15 If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that which he had taken by robbery, walk in the statutes of life, committing no iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

16 None of his sins that he hath committed shall be remembered against him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Each one of us shall give account of himself to God."* (Rom. 14: 12.)

TIME.—About 586 B.C.

PLACE.—Ezekiel prophesied in Babylon.

PERSONS.—Ezekiel and the Jews.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 125.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 4.	M.	..... Sin Brings Death (Ezek. 18: 19-24)
November 5.	T.	..... Penitence Brings Life (Ezek. 18: 25-32)
November 6.	W.	..... Responsibility of Watchmen (Ezek. 33: 7-16)
November 7.	T.	..... Responsibility for Stewardship (Luke 16: 1-10)
November 8.	F.	..... Responsibility for Conversation (Matt. 12: 31-37)
November 9.	S.	..... Responsibility for Conduct (Rom. 14: 1-12)
November 10.	S.	..... Security in God (Psalm 125: 1-5)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Watchman's Life Depends on Faithfulness (Verses 7-9).
 - II. Death of the Wicked No Pleasure to Jehovah (Verses 10, 11).
 - III. Man's Conduct the Standard of Judgment (Verse 12).
 - IV. Salvation of Sinners Depends on Reformation (Verses 13-16).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Ezekiel was among the captives taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, 597 B.C. In Ezek. 1: 1-3 mention is made of a vision received from God in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity. He also says that in the twelfth year of the captivity one came from Jerusalem saying that the city was smitten. (Ezek. 33: 12.) This shows that it had been twelve years after the first captives were taken to Babylon till the city and temple were destroyed, which brings the destruction to 585 B.C. These dates, of course, are approximately correct. Slight variations in chronology are generally probable.

Lesson Links.—The "links" in our last lesson are equally appropriate for this. Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel had foretold the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple. In chapter 4 he presents the siege in a highly symbolical way, drawing a picture of how it

would be done. In chapter 24 he describes the same event through the symbol of a boiling pot. The very day the eighteen months' siege began his wife died, and he was forbidden to mourn for her. (Ezek. 24: 17-29.) This indicated that the destruction of the city would be so complete that mourning for it would be useless. Fourteen years after the captivity he was transported to the land of Israel in a vision, and given a wonderful view of the restored temple. (Ezek. 40: 1-4.) The vision that follows these verses is too highly wrought to be fully comprehended, but it evidently was intended as a glorious description of their restored worship when they were permitted to return from captivity.

Lesson Settings.—While Jeremiah was in Judea predicting the final overthrow of the Jewish nation and the capture of their country, Ezekiel was in Egypt, among the exiles on the river Chebar, predicting the same thing. Chebar is said to be one of the large irrigating canals across the plain between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. Ezekiel sat with the exiles for seven days overwhelmed, and was then told that he was to give warning to the house of Israel. If he failed to perform this duty, it would be to forfeit his own life. With such a charge to give him courage, he declared the misfortunes and restoration in the most impressive words. (Ezek. 3: 15-21.)

LESSON NOTES

I. The Watchman's Life Depends on Faithfulness (Verses 7-9)

Watchman's Duty.—Though there is some difference of expressions, the thought of these verses is substantially the same as that in Ezek. 3: 16-21. Both texts say that Ezekiel was made a watchman to warn the house of Israel. This was a solemn responsibility, involving the life of the prophet and those to be warned. In keeping with the seriousness of the task, Ezekiel was urged to hear the word that God was speaking to him, give heed to it, and faithfully deliver the warning as directed. The warning was to be given from the Lord; that is, the people were to be made to know that the message was coming from the Lord, and that Ezekiel was only the agent through whom it was delivered.

"Die in His Iniquity."—As a watchman is stationed where he can easily notify his friends of any approaching danger, so Ezekiel was enabled through his inspiration to know what danger threatened his people, Israel, and could give them the necessary warning. Warnings are of no value, however, unless they are heeded, and escape from the danger is sought. Those who pay no attention to the warnings, or scorn them, cannot be benefited by them. That was just the reason that the bondage happened; the people ignored the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Hence, in their sins they were taken. Regardless of the warning, a wicked man would have to meet the consequences of his evil deeds. Sinners who reject the preaching of the gospel must suffer for their disobedience. This our personal responsibility requires, and no faults that may be charged up to the preachers can change it.

"Require at Thy Hand."—The prophet or preacher with God's commands must preach them. Failing to do so makes him as guilty as the sinner that will not obey God's command to repent or be baptized. Failing to tell the truth when we have an opportunity, especially that

upon which man's salvation depends, makes the preacher, as a watchman for men's souls, guilty of what may cause them to be lost. Ezekiel said that God will require his blood at thy hands; or, that the watchman would be guilty of a crime that would involve his own soul. Paul declared that he was pure from the blood of all men, because he shrank not from proclaiming the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20: 26, 27.)

II. Death of the Wicked No Pleasure to Jehovah (Verses 10, 11)

Israel's Complaint.—The captives in Babylon realized their condition when it was too late to prevent the trouble. Repentance is all right, and appropriate at any time, but it is often too late to save the individual from misfortune or death when he really becomes penitent. It was no trouble for the captives to see their mistakes, but that did not give them any relief from their captors. They admitted that the consequences of their sins were upon them, and that they were pining away. In their miserable state they wondered how they could endure it, or live under the burden. This was what they were saying. They brought the condition upon themselves against the earnest pleading of God's prophets. Men become captives to sin and Satan because they will not listen to God's word. It was not pleasing to God for the Israelites to be sent to bondage because of their rebellion against him, neither is it pleasing to God for men to enter Satan's kingdom through sin, but they will do it. There is no way to prevent it unless man's responsibility should be destroyed. This, of course, can't be.

God's Pleasure.—Ezekiel was to say to them, "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." That meant that just as certain as they could depend upon the fact that God lived, they could know that he did not rejoice in the death of the wicked. Peter says the same thing in these words: "Not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3: 9.) The thing that pleases the Lord is for sinners to turn from their sins and live. "Why will ye die?" is the question that the Lord puts to all sinners? Jesus said: "There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance." (Luke 15: 7.) There can be no worse misrepresentation of God's love than to say he does not want all men to be saved. Otherwise why should he give his Son to die in their behalf? But infinite mercy and love cannot save sinners who refuse to turn from sins that they may have the benefits of that sacrifice. Divine love is not required to set aside divine justice. God knows how to combine the two properly, and man should acknowledge his ruling to be just and right.

III. Man's Conduct the Standard of Judgment (Verse 12)

"Righteousness of the Righteous."—The question raised in this verse is, What will happen to the righteous man that sins? This settles the matter that a righteous man can sin, else the subject would not have been mentioned in the passage at all. We are told by some that, if one is really saved—a truly righteous man, any sins he might commit after that cannot endanger his salvation; plainly that a saved man cannot be lost finally. In principle that is exactly the point raised here, and the statement of God is that his past righteousness cannot "deliver him in the day of his transgression." It

does not change the matter to say that the prophet here is referring to temporal deliverance, and that the text does not have any bearing on final salvation. The principle is exactly the same regardless of the danger ahead. Sin draws its own punishment in spite of any conduct preceding. Previous righteousness is complimentary, but cannot change the nature of evil that follows. Nothing is more certain than that the destination of a journey is reached by continuing to the end. Without this failure is certain, no difference how far we have gone. Jesus said: "But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." (Matt. 24: 13.) The crown of life is promised to those who are faithful in spite of all difficulties and dangers, even death itself. (Rev. 2: 10.) The disobedient Jews, who failed to reach Canaan because of their sins, are an outstanding example of those who do not reach the destination after having started. (Heb. 3: 17-19.)

"He Shall Not Fall."—The promise of the Lord is just as certain regarding the wicked who turns from his wickedness as the righteous who sins. If he turns from his wickedness, which implies repentance, then his sin once pardoned would not cause him to fall. Or, his sins already pardoned would not be charged to him or cause him to be lost. This is just as true as that the righteous man cannot be saved from the consequences of his sin simply because he has before been righteous. This principle in dealing with men's conduct is so manifestly true that no one questions it in common affairs. If one has been notoriously wicked, we may be suspicious of his profession of righteousness, yet we know that he can be held responsible for each sin as committed. Previous righteousness cannot justify; previous sin cannot condemn when repented of and pardoned. Such treatment of the righteous and wicked not only harmonizes with the plain teachings of the Bible, but also with the responsibility of man which we must recognize.

IV. Salvation of Sinners Depends on Reformation (Verses 13-16)

"In His Iniquity."—In this section of the lesson the prophet further develops the thought already presented, and in a way that there can be no possible chance to misunderstand his meaning. He continues to represent Jehovah as speaking. The point made is this: When God promises the righteous that he shall live, if that man trusts in his own righteousness rather than God and commits sin, then his righteous deeds will not be remembered—they will be of no advantage to him in the day of his sin; but in his iniquity he shall die. The margin says he shall die "for" his iniquity. We have numerous examples of this fact in human laws. A man may live an upright life for years, then commit murder and be executed for his crime. His past righteousness, though very praiseworthy, does not save him; he dies in or for his sin. The principle must be true in the matter of sin against God, else the prophet would not have made the point in rebuking his own brethren for their sins that brought them to bondage. He was addressing God's people, though they had been fearfully disobedient. The New Testament abounds in warning against the deadly effects of sin in the books addressed to saints. These warnings would be without point, unless Christians might sin and ultimately suffer for it.

"If He Turn."—Again the prophet presents the opposite side of the subject. If the wicked, to whom God had promised sure death, should

turn from his sins and do what was lawful and right, he would live. None of his sins would be remembered against him. This shows that the only way for a wicked man to save his life is to reform—turn from his sins. Such an one God says shall “surely live.” Our text further explains some of the things in which man will manifest his reformation.

If He Restore the Pledge.—The law required that things taken as a pledge or pawn should be returned. (Ex. 22: 26.) As the pledge is usually worth more than the thing received, evil men would be tempted to keep it. If he has been guilty of robbery, he must restore what he has unlawfully taken. The law required not only the return of the stolen article, but in some cases it should be paid back fivefold. In Ezek. 18: 31 the prophet said: “Cast away from you all your transgressions, wherein ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit.” James said: “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded.” (James 4: 8.) These passages show that cleansing the heart and spirit is something God requires man to do.

Individual Responsibility.—The proverb about “sour grapes” to indicate that children inherit the sins of the parents (Ezek. 18: 1-4) is clearly denied by the prophet. He said that proverb should not be used, because it was not true. He then said that the soul that sinned should die. He meant that each individual should be held responsible for his own sins. The word “soul” here means the individual, not his spiritual or inner man. It is used in the same sense as in Gen. 46: 26, 27. Men may be unduly influenced by others and led into sin, but they are guilty only because they have committed sin; they may suffer as a consequence of the sins of others, but are not sinners till they become actual transgressors.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Since the watchman has the lives of others committed to his care, he should be held responsible for deliberate neglect of his known duty. Those who pose as preachers of God's word should understand that they are dealing with the destiny of souls; neglect is criminal.

2. States and nations do not want their citizens to go to the prison house, but have to provide them for such as insist on being criminals. God does not want anyone to be lost, but can't prevent it, if they are determined to be sinners, without changing man's nature. Men go to perdition because they will not come to Christ.

3. Personal rights and personal responsibility are the facts which make it necessary for man to be judged according to his deeds. (2 Cor. 5: 10.) This also is required by the absolute justice of God; being no respecter of persons, he cannot do otherwise than reward each one as his works demand—both bad and good.

4. Men are taught not to sin, but they need not be lost just because they do sin. Provision is made for repentance and reformation which will lead to salvation. Humanity is too weak not to make use of this privilege.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Tell what the prophet said about the ways of the Lord not being equal. (Ezek. 18: 25-32.)

2. Discuss the complaint against Israel in Ezek. 20: 1-9.

3. Discuss Israel's return from bondage (Ezek. 36: 22-31.)
4. Discuss the same subject from the prophet's vision of dry bones. (Ezek. 37: 1-14.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

What statement did Peter make on the subject?

What statement did Jesus make about repentance?

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

Where does Ezekiel record the same thoughts as here?

What was Ezekiel urged to do?

How is a watchman's duty like a prophet's?

What is said about one who will not heed the warning?

What is said of the watchman who fails to warn?

II

What complaint did the captives make?
How do men become captives to Satan?
What did the prophet say God had no pleasure in?

III

What question does the prophet raise here?

How does this text apply on the impossibility of being lost?

What did Jesus teach on reaching the destination?

What outstanding example do we have on this point?

IV

What is meant by dying "in his iniquity"?

What is taught on the opposite side?

What is the prophet's teaching on responsibility?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson VII—November 17, 1935

THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY

Ezra 1: 1-6; Psalm 126: 1-6.

1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

3 Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah, the God of Israel (he is God), which is in Jerusalem.

4 And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill-offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.

5 Then rose up the heads of fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of Jehovah which is in Jerusalem.

6 And all they that were round about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered.

- 1 When Jehovah brought back those that returned to Zion,
We were like unto them that dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing:
Then said they among the nations,
Jehovah hath done great things for them.
- 3 Jehovah hath done great things for us,
Whereof we are glad.
- 4 Turn again our captivity, O Jehovah,
As the streams in the South.

- 5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
 6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing seed for sowing,
 Shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“*Jehovah hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.*” (Psalm 126: 3.)

TIME.—About 538 B.C.

PLACES.—Babylon, and the route through, or around, the desert to Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Cyrus, Ezra, and the returning Jews.

DEVOTIONAL BIBLE READING.—Psalm 124.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 11.	M.	.....	The Return from Captivity (Ezra 1: 1-6)
November 12.	T.	.....	Thanksgiving for the Return (Psalm 126: 1-6)
November 13.	W.	.....	Chastisement for Disobedience (Lev. 26: 27-36)
November 14.	T.	.....	Sorrows for the Exiles (Psalm 137: 1-9)
November 15.	F.	.....	Confession and Supplication (Dan. 9: 16-23)
November 16.	S.	.....	Forgiveness and Redemption (Isa. 44: 21-28)
November 17.	S.	.....	Praise for Deliverance (Psalm 124: 1-8)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Cyrus Determines to Rebuild the Temple (Verses 1, 2).
- II. Cyrus Issues His Proclamation (Verses 3, 4).
- III. The Builders Return to Jerusalem (Verses 5, 6).
- IV. Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Captivity (Psalm 126: 1-3).
- V. Prayer for Continued Prosperity (Verses 4-6).
Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Cyrus, who had been king of Persia for probably more than twenty years, became the sole ruler of the Babylonian Empire in 536 B.C. This was evidently soon after the first contingent of nearly fifty thousand Jews returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel. (Ezra 2.) The foundation of the temple was laid in 535 B.C. (Ezra 3: 8-10.) It was in the first year of the reign of Cyrus that his spirit was stirred up by the Lord to make his proclamation that the Jews might return to their land.

Lesson Links.—Nebuchadnezzar had a dream in which he saw a great metallic man that represented four universal empires that were to arise in succession. Daniel interpreted the dream, and said that the head of gold represented the king himself. (Dan. 2: 37, 38.) This meant that the kingdom over which he presided would fall. This came to pass, as we learned in lesson 4, with the death of his grandson, Belshazzar, about 538 B.C. (Dan. 5: 31.) The Median kingdom under Darius and the Persian under Cyrus were confederates, and after its capture Cyrus was given the throne of Babylon. The Jews having been made captives by Nebuchadnezzar naturally became subjects of Cyrus. This accounts for the part he played in mak-

ing it possible for the Jews to return home. It was probably in 536 B.C. when he became the sole ruler of Babylon.

Lesson Settings.—It was by the permission of Jehovah, because of their sins, that the Babylonians were allowed to take them into captivity. So it was through the providence of God that their captors were willing for them to return. As their ancestors in Egypt could not have freed themselves without God's help, neither could those in Babylon have returned to Canaan without such aid. Their stay in Babylon had vindicated the truth of God's words, punished them sufficiently for their rebellion, and God was willing for them to come home. Besides the time prophesied had ended, and their return was necessary to fulfill the predictions. All requirements had been met and the time had arrived for the things described in our lesson.

LESSON NOTES

I. Cyrus Determines to Rebuild the Temple (Verses 1, 2)

"The Word of Jehovah."—Only through the special providence of God can we account for the fact that a heathen king would determine to rebuild the house of God. We are told that the king's decision came about that the word of the Lord might be accomplished; that is, it had been prophesied, and the event had to occur or the prophecy would have failed of fulfillment. But the fact that the prophet said it would happen is proof that God knew all about it beforehand. Jeremiah had said that when the seventy years had been fulfilled God would visit Babylon with punishment. (Jer. 25: 12; 29: 10.) But Isaiah had actually said it would be Cyrus that would bring them home and build the temple. (Isa. 44: 26, 27; 45: 1-7.) It is thought that Daniel may have called Cyrus' attention to this prediction, and that may be the reason why he was so willing to send the Jews back with permission to build. That may have been a part of God's providence to produce the desired results. But in some way God stirred up his spirit, and his consent was given for the work to be done. Of course, Cyrus builded the temple in the sense that he authorized it to be done, and saw to it that assistance was rendered the Jews in the undertaking.

"All the Kingdoms."—The Oriental style used the figure of hyperbole freely; they were fond of exaggerated expressions. But since the Persian kingdom was the greatest ruling power in the world then, the statement that Cyrus had all the kingdoms was not far from being literally true. Neither is it surprising that Cyrus should think that Jehovah had given them all to him. Daniel's influence upon him, and the fact that a Hebrew prophet had called him by name two hundred years before he was born as the one through whom these events would transpire, were enough to make him admit that all his favors came from God. However crude his idea of God may have been, he stated an exact truth; for providentially God had given him all his kingdoms. Men are often far more directly under the providential leadings of God than they know, or would be willing to admit if they did know. Even that which we receive through natural laws comes through the means God provides.

To Build a House.—The words of Isaiah (44: 28) could not be understood in any other way. If Cyrus had been led to believe the prophet's words, there was no other conclusion than that Jehovah had really commanded him to build the house. His determination to do

it was the natural thing from such belief. That God stirred up his mind to begin the work at that particular time is the statement of the text.

II. Cyrus Issues His Proclamation (Verses 3, 4)

"Whosoever."—The proclamation clearly means that every Jew in Babylon that was willing, and wanted to take part in the return and in the building of the house, was permitted to do so. There were no restrictions on any class, nor on any section in his kingdom. This grant was perfectly just, and placed equal responsibility on every Jew. The king's proclamation not only granted the privilege to all Jews willing to return, but it asked for each one that "his God be with him." Cyrus could not feel otherwise about it, if he believed in the prophet's words that God had selected him to have the temple rebuilt. He further stated that "He is God," referring to Israel's God in Jerusalem. The margin says, "He is the God who is in Jerusalem." From these two expressions used by the translators it appears a matter of some doubt just what Cyrus did mean. The one in the text means that Cyrus recognized Jehovah as the true God; the one in the margin implies that he was only conceding Jehovah to be the God in Jerusalem. With his heathen notions of many gods, such an idea was at least probable. But whatever his notion about God, he admitted that Israel's God could bless and prosper them.

Those Who Stayed.—The very words of the proclamation mean that Cyrus did not expect them all to go then; neither was he requiring them to go. But his decree did demand that those who did not return to help in the work should assist those who did. This help was to consist of silver, gold, goods, and beasts. This shows that in their stay in Babylon, their treatment had been such that some had accumulated some goods and money. If any one did not care to go to the work, he could help support those who did. This was the kind of fellowship necessary if they were to make any success reestablishing themselves in the homeland, and renew the ancient worship. This the Jews were required to do for the personal support of the laborers who were to do the actual work. But in addition to this, they were to make freewill offerings for the house of the Lord. That was to be used for the purchasing of material needed to construct the house itself.

III. The Builders Return to Jerusalem (Verses 5, 6)

"Whose Spirit God Had Stirred."—Those who went under this proclamation were the first to return. Our text says they were "the heads of fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites." All of these classes may not have gone, but the first that went belonged to these classes. In 1 Chron. 9: 3 we learn that some from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were among them. This shows that some of the ones who desired to worship God in truth had left their own tribes and joined in with Judah and Benjamin to restore the worship. They probably were incorporated with the kingdom of Judah and never went back to their tribes. It is stated here that those went whose spirit God "stirred" to go. Whatever influence moved some to go, they attributed to God. This was true whether they were influenced by common things or by some providential circumstances. Directly or indirectly God was the one whose power caused them to go.

"Strengthened Their Hands."—This expression means that they assisted the workmen by supplying means of support. Those too young or too old for service probably did not go; in fact, it was better for them not to go at first. Some able-bodied were required to care for those left, and to provide means for their support. This they did in addition to that which they gave "willingly" for the work. A large amount of gold and silver and vessels was taken when they first went back. (Ezra 1: 9-11.) As nearly fifty thousand went, it would require large amounts of provisions and money. It required unstinted liberality to meet the demands. But after their many years of bondage as punishment for their sins, they were doubtless glad of the chance to give liberally and willingly.

IV. Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Captivity (Psalm 126: 1-3)

"Returned to Zion."—Moses, in his farewell address to the Israelites, had told them that, if they turned from the Lord, he would turn from them and "root them out of their land." (Deut. 29: 25-28.) But he also promised that when in the strange land, if they would remember his words and turn from their sins, he would return and gather them back from all peoples wherever they might be scattered. (Deut. 30: 1-5.) Both of these predictions had literally been fulfilled. They were back in their own land, and ready to offer thanks to Jehovah for all his mercies and benefits. Their release brought such happiness that their past experience in Babylon seemed to them as a dream. The text further says that their mouth was "filled with laughter." Those who are deeply sad cry; those who rejoice are filled with laughter. Their bondage was the former state; their return was the latter. Those glad are inclined to sing. James says: "Is any cheerful? let him sing praise." (James 5: 13.) That we are likely to do, because it is natural. In their homeland again they could fill their souls with joy in singing Jehovah's praise.

Other Nations.—Their deliverance exerted such an effect upon them that their heathen neighbors admired what had been done for them. They said: "Jehovah hath done great things for them." Solomon said: "When a man's ways please Jehovah, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Generally there will be an occasional exception to any rule, but Solomon's statement will work in most instances. The Israelites echoed what their neighbors had said, and repeated the same thought, saying, "Jehovah hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." With such great things done for them there was no reason why they should not be glad. With all the great things God has done for us, we should be glad of the opportunity to obey him, and of the promise of salvation through faithfulness.

V. Prayer for Continued Prosperity (Verses 4-6)

"Turn Again."—The words, "turn again our captivity," may mean that they prayed for the return to the prosperity they had before their captivity, or this prayer may have been made before all of them returned. If the latter, they were asking for the return of others still in Babylon. Either idea might be correct, but the former seems more probable. "As the streams in the South" probably means that, as the rains that filled the streams would refresh the land and bring growth, so they wanted their return to their own land to return their pros-

perity. Their long stay in bondage would be like a drouth; their return they wanted to be like the streams from the South that would water the valleys.

"Reap in Joy."—As the sower may cast his seed in the dry soil with dread and fear that it may be lost through lack of moisture, so their long stay in Babylon had been filled with tears and dread lest their nation was completely ruined. But, as the sower rejoices at the timely rain that makes the seed sprout and grow, so they were rejoicing with the hope that, like an abundant harvest, their prosperity would return to them. Certainly a most beautiful way to describe the continued favors they expected from the Lord, and for which they were earnestly praying.

"Come Again with Joy."—The figure is continued. The sower that goeth forth bearing seed for sowing, and weeps because of the unfavorable prospect, will doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him. That is, faithful sowing and patient waiting will probably bring good results. The application was: Their bondage was the season of weeping, but a faithful return to the ways of God brought them back, and would bring them other blessings, if they still walked in the ways of righteousness. In due time they would receive the reward—fruit of their labor—just as God knew was best for them.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. God's using some sinful man to accomplish some divine purpose does not mean that he endorses the man's sins. Through providence he permitted Nebuchadnezzar to become king of Babylon, but caused him to be deposed for his wickedness. Cyrus was but an agent in God's hands to bring about certain results.

2. The man who stays is equally responsible with the man who goes in the matter of making the undertaking a success. Paul was in the field planting churches; some brethren sent once and again to assist him in his need. (Phil. 4: 15, 16.) A preacher is no more obligated to go and preach than the brethren are to send him.

3. People usually do very little of anything till something stirs their spirit. About the best way for Christians to get their spirits stirred is to carefully read the stories of God's servants who accomplished great things against great odds; Paul, for example.

4. Many people have the wrong attitude respecting God's laws. God's commands are not something to be dreaded and escaped if possible; but rather something to be considered as a privilege—a source of great joy. Such an attitude brings real joy.

5. Sin brings dread, terror, and ultimately death. Those who flee from it and reach God's favor have every reason to rejoice, sing, and be happy.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give in full the advice which Jeremiah gave the captives while they were in Babylon. (Jer. 29: 4-9.)

2. Discuss the promises he made them. (Jer. 29: 10-14.)

3. Describe the offerings made for the temple when they reached Judea. (Ezra 1: 68-70.)

4. Explain the circumstances that led Darius to honor Daniel. (Dan. 6.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What caused Cyrus to determine to build the temple?
What statements did Jeremiah make?
How did Cyrus probably learn of these prophecies?
How could he say "all the kingdoms"?
What prophecy did Isaiah make on the subject?

II

Who could return according to the proclamation?

What blessing did Cyrus ask for them?
What is meant by the words "he is God"?
What was required of the Jews that did not return?

III

Who went under this proclamation?
What other tribes are mentioned?
What is meant by "strengthened their hands"?

IV

What prediction had Moses made about the captivity?
How were the people affected by their deliverance?
How did it affect their neighbors?

V

Explain the illustrations used here.

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson VIII—November 24, 1935

THE MESSAGE OF HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH

Hag. 1: 2-8; 2: 8, 9; Zech. 4: 6-10.

2 Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, This people say, It is not the time for us to come, the time for Jehovah's house to be built.

3 Then came the word of Jehovah by Haggai the prophet, saying,

4 Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste?

5 Now therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways.

6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

7 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways.

8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith Jehovah.

8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith Jehovah of hosts.

9 The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah of hosts.

6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts.

7 Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of Grace, grace, unto it.

8 Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying,

9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto you.

10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for these seven shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; these are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of Jehovah." (Psalm 122: 1.)

TIME.—About 520 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Jehovah, Haggai, Zechariah, and the Jews.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 122.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 18.	M.	-----	The Command to Rebuild the Temple (Hag. 1: 2-8)
November 19.	T.	-----	The Command Obeyed (Hag. 1: 12-15)
November 20.	W.	-----	Rebuilding the Temple (Ezra 3: 8-13)
November 21.	T.	-----	Completing the Temple (Zech. 4: 6-10)
November 22.	F.	-----	The Glory of the Temple (Hag. 2: 1-9)
November 23.	S.	-----	The Blessings of the Temple (Psalm 84: 1-12)
November 24.	S.	-----	The House of the Lord (Psalm 122: 1-9)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Time to Build the House Had Arrived. (Verses 2-4).
 - II. The Lord's House First (Verses 5-8).
 - III. The Glory of the Lord's House (Hag. 2: 8, 9).
 - IV. Not by Might, but by the Lord's Spirit (Zech. 4: 6, 7).
 - V. Finishing of the House Promised (Verses 8-10).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Haggai uttered four prophecies within a period of four months. The first in our lesson was the sixth month of the second year of the reign of Darius, probably 520 B.C. The next was in the seventh month, and the last two on the same day in the ninth month. (Hag. 1: 1; 2: 10, 20.) Zechariah began about two months later than Haggai (Zech. 1: 1), and continued over a period of two years (Zech. 7: 1). The time of this lesson is about fourteen years later than our last lesson. The situation at that time made it necessary that somebody utter some stirring denunciations against indifference.

Lesson Links.—There is little personal history of either Haggai or Zechariah that is certainly correct. Whether they were born in Babylon during the captivity or before is not known. Haggai is called a prophet with a message from God. Zechariah is said to have been the son of Berechiah and son of Iddo. These facts have no special significance to modern readers. The contents of their prophecies are the essential things. The foundation of the temple was laid in the second year after the first Jews returned to Jerusalem. (Ezra 3: 8-10.) The enemies being refused the privilege of taking part in the building tried to frustrate the Jews' purpose till the days of Darius. (Ezra 4: 1-5.) In the day of Artaxerxes, who was probably a usurper that reigned a short time before Darius, they secured from him a decree to have the building of the temple stopped. (Ezra 4: 23, 24.) While their enemies tried to hinder them throughout the whole time from the beginning of the work, the decree to stop the work entirely lasted but a few years. Cyrus, of course, would hardly have granted such a decree; a usurper who cared nothing for his predecessors would.

Lesson Settings.—After the work on the house had been stopped for probably two or more years by the decree of Artaxerxes, Haggai and Zechariah began their predictions and teachings to stir up the Jews to

complete the work. When it was begun again, the enemies tried to have it stopped, but allowed the work to continue till word could be received from Darius, the king. A search of the records revealed that Cyrus had granted privilege to rebuild the temple. This set aside the opposition, and permitted the Jews to complete the work. This was done in the sixth year of Darius, which made it substantially twenty years since the foundations were laid. (Ezra 6: 14, 15.)

LESSON NOTES

I. Time to Build the House Had Arrived (Verses 2-4)

"This People Say."—Probably Haggai was the first prophet God had sent them since their return from Babylon. He charged the people with saying the time had not come to build the house of the Lord. They may have reasoned that it had not been full seventy years since the temple was destroyed, and therefore not the time for its rebuilding. But the seventy years had reference to the captivity, not to the destruction of the temple. Jehoiakim became subject to Babylon about 604 or 605 B.C. The first captives returned about 536 B.C. This would be 69 or 70 years. Any variation in reckoning would make it possibly exactly 70 years. The final taking away in the days of Zedekiah was about 586 B.C. The temple was completed in 516 B.C. This was seventy years. Or, they could have meant that the interruptions they had had in the work indicated that the time had not arrived when God wanted it built.

The Answer.—Haggai was told to reply by asking, "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste?" This was saying that it is a time for the Lord's house to be built, if it is a time for you to build houses to dwell in yourselves. It could not be any more important to have houses for themselves than a house in which to worship God. Of this there could be no doubt, and God's favors and punishments in the past were ample proof. By every reasonable consideration the worship of God is the matter of first consideration. So thought Abraham when he builded an altar the first thing on entering Canaan. (Gen. 12: 7, 8.) So taught Jesus when he said, "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness." (Matt. 6: 32.)

II. The Lord's House First (Verses 5-8)

"Consider Your Ways."—The prophet commanded them to consider their ways. He knew that an honest consideration of their ways would convince them that they should make haste to finish the Lord's house. He said they sowed much, but brought in little. He meant they were not doing as much in preparing a house for worship as their natural income justified, and that they could not expect an abundant harvest when they were not trying to prepare for God's worship. To drink and not be filled, to clothe themselves and not be warm, taught the same general lesson. Their efforts for themselves would prove unsatisfactory as long as they were neglecting the Lord's service. As God was giving them material blessings, they need not expect an abundance when they were giving nothing to the Lord's house. They were unworthy of such favors. He said, further, that they would put their earnings in a bag with holes. They could put money in a bag, but it would lose out through the holes. That was equivalent to say-

ing that they would fail in their plans, if they did not take God into their calculations.

"Build the House."—When the house was begun they had hired men of Tyre and Sidon to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to Joppa to go in the house. (Ezra 3: 7.) When the work stopped the material, of course, stopped coming. They were urged by the prophet to again secure more. This they may have obtained from the mountains of Judea. The margin says "hill country," rather than mountain. This implies that they secured enough to finish it in their own hill country without having it brought from the Lebanon mountains. They were promised that, if they would finish the house, God would "take pleasure in it," and be glorified. When they pleased God, they were assured that his blessings would be with them. In the following verses of this chapter the prophet said plainly that their losses and misfortunes were the results of their failure to honor God in his work and worship. Under the influence of Zerubbabel and Joshua, their leaders, the people accepted the advice of the prophet and renewed the work on the temple. (Hag. 1: 12-15.)

III. The Glory of the Lord's House (Hag. 2: 8, 9)

"All Belong to Jehovah."—Haggai urges Zerubbabel to be courageous, promising that Jehovah would be with them then as he had been with the fathers when they came out of Egypt. At Mount Sinai God shook the earth, but through Haggai he here promises another shaking of "the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land." This is perhaps a reference to the great moral and political shaking in the establishing of the Lord's kingdom or church. When the foundation of the temple was laid many who had seen the former temple wept because it was not to be so magnificent as the first. (Ezra 3: 12.) Jehovah promised that he would fill the new temple with his glory. He assured them of this by saying that "the silver is mine, and the gold is mine." As everything belonged to God, he could easily make the new temple as glorious as the other. The real glory of the first temple was not its silver and gold, but the presence of Jehovah in it. He would dwell in the rebuilt temple, and in that particular it would be just as glorious as the one Solomon built.

Latter Glory Greater.—God not only assured them that the rebuilt temple would be filled with glory, but even greater glory than the former. This could not be in the sense that it was the dwelling-place of God, for he dwelt in both of them. But the great moral and political upheaval—the shaking mentioned—would take place while the second temple was standing. It would be during its existence that God's Son would appear in its precincts, pay the price that would abrogate its service, and establish a kingdom that cannot be shaken. (Heb. 12: 28.) Surely greater glory came to the rebuilt temple than ever came to the first! He who purchased the church with his own blood walked in its courts. It was under its sacred system that he lived, and through its typical demands he made the everlasting atonement. Jehovah gave the returned Jews peace in the service of the restored temple, but he gives us a more glorious peace through the spiritual temple, of which Christ is the foundation. (1 Cor. 3: 11, 16.) Such a building, we are assured, cannot be shaken by any storm.

IV. Not by Might, but by the Lord's Spirit (Zech. 4: 6, 7)

The Candlestick.—The first three verses of this chapter present Zechariah's vision of a gold candlestick, its bowl, seven lamps, and seven pipes, and the two olive trees. The candlestick itself was similar to that in the tabernacle. The one in the tabernacle evidently was typical of the word of God, since it was the only source of light in the services, and the design of God's word is to give light. (Psalm 119: 105.) There was evidently a special design in this vision to Zechariah. It was to encourage Zerubbabel in the work of finishing the temple which he had started. This it did by the assurance that success did not depend upon human power or might, but upon those who were directed by the spirit of God and relied upon his power. The point is this: The candlestick, however perfectly made, or however well it gave light with the oil, would give none without it. It depended upon the oil produced by the olive tree and supplied by the pipes; so the completion of the temple depended upon the power of God, supplied through the Spirit directing Zerubbabel. Against this, if strict obedience was rendered, no opposition would avail. There is no more beautiful and forceful illustration of the necessity of depending upon God's power; or stronger assurance that we will not fail if we do.

God's Promise.—That which is clearly implied in the vision of the candlestick is made a definite promise to Zechariah. In the words, "Who art thou, O great mountain?" he referred to the opposition that Zerubbabel had and would have to meet in doing the work. The statement, "before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain," means that the opposition would fail in its efforts. In spite of it Zerubbabel would "bring forth the top stone with shoutings of Grace, grace, unto it." That is, he would finish the task—put on the top stone—amidst shoutings for the favor of God. With such assurance of God's help and the promise of success, Zerubbabel could not have failed to be ready to obey, if his heart was in the service of God at all.

V. Finishing of the House Promised (Verses 8-10)

"Laid the Foundation."—Zechariah said that the word of Jehovah came to him, saying that the hands of Zerubbabel had laid the foundation of the house and his hands should also finish it. This fact was to be the evidence that God had sent him to deliver the message. The proof that a prophet was sent of God was the fact that his predictions came true. It was God's guarantee to Zerubbabel that the message was from God. When Zerubbabel placed the top stone, Zechariah would have the proof that he had really been sent of God. The prediction was a matter of encouragement to Zerubbabel to complete the house.

"The Day of Small Things."—Jehovah said: "For who hath despised the day of small things?" The enemies had despised and ridiculed the Jews because of their weakness and small numbers, and the difficulties under which they labored. God promised to show that those who despised the day of small things would fail when fighting against the truth. The scorn would be turned back upon themselves. It is dangerous to despise things however small, if they be the things of God—things that have his endorsement and promise. In the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem about seventy years later, we have

a fine example of what the prophet here teaches. The enemies mocked Nehemiah and his workers by asking, "What are these feeble Jews doing?" They scorned the idea of their building such a house in so short a time, and said a fox going over their wall would knock it down. (Neh. 4: 2-4.) Ezra and Nehemiah met such scorn in a way that will always win; they put their trust in God, and kept on building. Ezra finished the temple, and Nehemiah the wall.

"*Eyes of Jehovah.*"—"These seven" that should rejoice and see the plummet in the hands of Zerubbabel, probably mean the same as the "eyes of Jehovah." The meaning seems to be that God's eyes would watch the work, and see it finished; protect the workers till it was done.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. The easiest and best time to do anything is when the appropriate occasion arrives. Divine things are done at the proper time—God makes no mistakes in his calculation. The best time to obey God is when the occasion first comes. Delay means loss of some kind.

2. It is not only necessary that we be ready to do the work of the Lord, but that we put his work ahead of our own. That saving the soul is of more importance than saving the body is not debatable, if the Bible is accepted as divine. If so, then serving God comes first by every consideration.

3. We can never bring true glory to God except by serving him according to his own appointments. Jesus says we glorify God in bearing much fruit (John 15: 8). But we cannot bear fruit except by being in Christ, the true vine, and abiding in him. We can come to God in no other way. (John 14: 6.)

4. We should learn that our success in divine things comes from God's power, not from our own strength. This should keep us humble, and give God glory. It should also encourage us to realize that the means we have are from God. The gospel is God's power to save regardless of who preaches it.

5. Laying the foundation is a necessity, if we expect to build; but finishing the house is equally necessary to keep our labor from being lost. Those who lay a foundation and do not try to finish are not only mocked, but deserve to be. (Luke 14: 28-30.)

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the exercises at the laying of the foundation of the temple. (Ezra 3: 8-13.)

2. Describe, in full, the dedication of the temple. (Ezra 6: 16-18.)

3. Describe, in full, the Passover they kept. (Ezra 6: 19-22.)

4. Describe the purification required on their return. (Ezek. 36: 22-31.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

* Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What had the people been saying?
What did they mean by saying it was not the time to build?
What was the answer through Haggai?
Show the appropriateness of the answer.

II

Why command them to consider their ways?

What did he say about their works?

What was the lesson he intended?

Where did they get timber when they began to build?

Where were they told to get it for the finishing work?

III

What happened at Mount Sinai?

What is meant here by shaking the earth and heaven?

What was the real glory of both temples?

How did the second have greater glory?
How does Paul use this text?

IV

What lesson is in the vision of the candlestick?

What definite promise was made to Zerubbabel?

V

What is the point in speaking of "small things"?

What is meant by the "eyes of Jehovah"?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson IX—December 1, 1935

EZRA'S MISSION TO JERUSALEM

Ezra 7: 6-10; 8: 21-23, 31, 32.

6 This Ezra went up from Babylon. And he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which Jehovah, the God of Israel, had given; and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of Jehovah his God upon him.

7 And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinim, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.

8 And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.

9 For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon; and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him.

10 For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances.

21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek of him a straight way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

22 For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.

23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us.

31 Then we departed from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the lie-in-wait by the way.

32 And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good." (Ezra 8: 22.)

TIME.—About 458 B.C.

PLACES.—By the river of Ahava and Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, Ezra, and his company of Jews.

DEVOTIONAL READINGS.—Psalm 63: 1-8.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

November 25.	M.	Ezra's Purpose (Ezra 7: 6-10)
November 26.	T.	Ezra's Preparation (Ezra 8: 21-30)
November 27.	W.	Ezra's Prayer (Ezra 9: 5-9)
November 28.	T.	Ezra's Covenant (Ezra 10: 1-8)

November 29.	F.....	Ezra's Teaching (Neh. 8: 1-6)
November 30.	S.....	Ezra's Leadership (Neh. 8: 13-18)
December 1.	S.....	Satisfaction in God (Psalm 63: 1-11)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Ezra Returns to Jerusalem (Verses 6-9).
 - II. Ezra's Preparation to Serve God (Verse 10).
 - III. Ezra Asks Jehovah to Direct the Way (Ezra 8: 21-23).
 - IV. Ezra and His Company Reach Jerusalem (Verses 31, 32).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The events of this lesson occurred in the seventh year of the reign of the Persian king, Artaxerxes Longimanus, 458 B.C. This was the second return from Babylon to Jerusalem; the first, under Zerubbabel, was in 536 B.C. If these chronological dates are substantially correct, seventy-eight years elapsed between the two returns, and about fifty-eight years after the completion of the temple. This extends the time that some of the Jews remained in Babylon more than seventy years after the time for the captivity had expired; or, the full time was near one hundred and fifty years.

Lesson Links.—The long interval since the first exiles returned subjected the Jews to many tests. Evidently they had not made great success in the many reforms necessary, as is indicated by the charges made in Ezra 9: 1, 2. Naturally there was great rejoicing and enthusiasm when the temple was completed, but the facts show that this must have gradually waned. They had probably been disappointed that no great numbers had come from Babylon to assist in the work of restoring the national splendor of their kingdom. They probably took Haggai's prophecy (2: 6-9) literally as meaning that the Gentile nations would be soon shaken, and would give material assistance in their own restoration. Waiting for this, or being discouraged because no such thing happened, they would naturally lose courage as time went on. From a material viewpoint, they were doubtless worse off than when in Babylon. This depressed condition and general poverty led to disappointment and failure to work out the needed reforms. Thus the years dragged on till the time for our lesson events.

Lesson Settings.—The condition of the little Jewish community that had been in Judea as long as the captivity was to last was deplorable when the mission of Ezra was undertaken. He was especially suited for the task. He belonged to the priestly family, and was a learned and proficient teacher of the law. This was especially important in a work that had to be done among those who were already in the homeland. Just as in the case of Zerubbabel in leading the first exiles back from Babylon, Ezra needed the approval and support of the Persian king. This was generously given, and, under the providence of God, had much to do in making Ezra's work a grand success.

LESSON NOTES

I. Ezra Returns to Jerusalem (Verses 6-9)

"A Ready Scribe."—To the modern mind this expression would indicate only that Ezra was a proficient penman or an expert copyist of

the law, but such a sense does not harmonize with the general facts of the story. As the scribes by copying the law became acquainted with its contents, they very naturally became expounders of its meaning. This is clearly the meaning of the expression here. Ezra was evidently a competent and skillful teacher of the law, and was, therefore, just the one to undertake the work of bringing about needed reforms among his own people. His normal character and fidelity to the Persian king were unquestionably the best, as the king readily granted his request to do the things which God had led him to undertake. God had told the captives in Babylon to show proper respect to their captors (Jer. 29: 4-14), and in due time they would be allowed to return. The favor of the Persian king to Ezra, described in our lesson, is a part of the fulfillment of that promise. As God had "turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them" when Zerubbabel brought the first exile (Ezra 6: 22), so he did in the case of the Persian king that granted the request to Ezra.

Those Who Came.—The record says there went up with Ezra some of the children of Israel. Besides the general number that went the following classes are specially mentioned: priests, Levites, singers, porters, and Nethinim. Ezra 8: 15 states that they were gathered together and encamped three days. When Ezra viewed the people and the priests he found none of the sons of Levi; that is, none of the sons of Levi who were not priests. He then sent for some of them, and eighteen men of discretion were brought to be "ministers for the house of God." (Verses 17, 18.) Ezra 8: 20 says there were two hundred and twenty of the Nethinim. This word refers to those *given* for some service. The great number of sacrifices offered at the temple required an immense amount of work, both in offering the sacrifices and in keeping the place sanitary, where so much slaughtering was necessary. This gave rise to a class of servants that assisted the priests. Their work, though distinct from that of the priests, was recognized as a part of the temple service. Hence, the reference to them as a distinct class in connection with the house of the Lord. The two hundred and twenty of this class would indicate that a large number came with Ezra, though the exact number is not known.

The Arrival in Jerusalem.—The start was made on the first day of the first month, making the journey in four months, arriving the first day of the fifth month. Three days of this time was passed when they were encamped while everything was being inspected. (Ezra 8: 15.) When the Nethinim had been brought to the camp and they were ready to move on, it was the twelfth day of the first month. (Ezra 8: 31.) Ezra recognized that his success in making the journey was because the "good hand" of God was upon him. He was under God's protection.

II. Ezra's Preparation to Serve God (Verse 10)

"Set His Heart."—In this expression we have one of the finest compliments that can be paid one who is to teach and lead God's people. Ezra had a fixed purpose, a determination to seek the law of Jehovah. By that is meant that he was determined to know what God's law required of him and those he was leading. To set his heart upon that indicates that he purposed with all his power. This meant he would not allow any difficulties to prevent his knowing God's will. Jesus said to the lawyer: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy

heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." (Matt. 22: 37.) This Ezra evidently did; for he wanted to know what God's laws were, and wanted to be obedient to them. This is the true evidence of man's love for God. (John 14: 21, 23.)

To Do and Teach.—Just to know God's will is of no great value unless one is willing to do it. Nothing is made clearer than that men are saved by doing, not by hearing alone. In fact, James tells us that the hearer that does not forget, but obeys, shall be blessed in "his doing." (James 2: 25.) So the primary purpose Ezra had was to learn God's will, so he could become obedient himself. The second purpose was that he might be able to teach it to others. Of course, he could not teach others till he had himself learned what should be taught. The commendable thing about him was that he did teach it. There are many who know much more about what God's law requires than are willing to practice it; there are more still who are not willing to teach it. The set determination to do and teach God's statutes and ordinances explains why Ezra occupied such a prominent place on carrying out God's purposes.

III. Ezra Asks Jehovah to Direct the Way (Ezra 8: 21-23)

"Proclaimed a Fast."—While encamped at the river Ahava, Ezra proclaimed a fast as a means of humbling themselves before God. According to Christ's words, solemn and serious occasions are the appropriate times to fast. (Luke 5: 33-35.) Nothing could be considered more serious than starting on a long and dangerous journey with the purpose of helping to reestablish the work and worship of God. By fasting they declared their dependence upon God, and besought his mercy and protection. They besought of him a straight way—one free from all kinds of dangers—that they might safely reach Jerusalem with all their possessions. They had received from the king and his counsellors six hundred and fifty talents of silver, besides silver vessels of a hundred talents, and a hundred talents of gold. (Ezra 8: 24-27.) All this at a moderate estimate was probably more than four million dollars. Such an amount of money would mean great dangers from robbers. They needed the protection of God to safely make the journey.

Human Protection Not Sought.—Ezra said he was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to help them against the enemies in the way. Under ordinary circumstances God expects men to use natural methods of protection. There is no lack of faith in so doing. But Ezra felt that under the circumstances to ask for such aid would make the king think he had little confidence in Jehovah. This impression he did not want to make. He was, therefore, ashamed to ask for such protection. Besides this, he had told the king that God's hand was upon all them that seek him. If he should ask for an armed guard, he was afraid the king would not think he was honest in the statement. To the mind of a heathen king such a conclusion would not have been unreasonable. He might have said, If God's hand was upon them for good, why did they need soldiers to guard them? Ezra had also said that God's power and wrath would be against them that forsake him. From this the king might have said, your God will fight your battles; why ask for more? Fearing such a turn in events, Ezra preferred to depend upon God alone, and ask for his protection. He well knew that, if the journey was according to God's

will, he would be safe in the divine protection; if not, soldiers and horsemen could not make him safe.

The Result.—Ezra said they fasted and besought God for his protection, and God was entreated of them—heard and answered their prayers. With that divine aid they completed the long journey successfully. This fact is proof that God did hear their prayers and followed them with his power.

IV. Ezra and His Company Reach Jerusalem (Verses 31, 32)

A Wise Precaution.—During the twelve days spent at the river Ahava in preparation for the real march, Ezra selected twelve men who were “chiefs of the priests,” and committed to them the responsible task of caring for the money and valuable vessels to be taken. The record says he weighed to them the silver and gold and the vessels. He charged them to watch them till they were weighed before the chiefs of the priests and Levites in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem. (Ezra 8: 25, 29.) Ezra was evidently being divinely led, but that was no reason why he should not use practical common sense in protecting the money in his care. The Lord’s business should be conducted in the same careful and safe manner that we try to conduct our own. Weighing the money to them protected those who carried it; for they could not be held responsible for anything not delivered to them. Those who handle the funds of others should be extremely careful to render a strict accounting.

God’s Hand Upon Them.—When they reached Jerusalem successfully, Ezra realized that the journey had been made under divine protection, and so expressed himself. The expression, “hand of our God upon us,” meant that God’s power was with them. This saved them from being attacked by their enemies, or bandits, that were lying in wait to rob travelers whenever there was any chance.

The Journey Ended.—After three months and eighteen days of actual traveling they reached Jerusalem. They camped for three days before delivering the silver, gold, and vessels which they brought for the temple. This time was doubtless necessary to get everything in readiness for making the delivery to the proper persons. The silver and gold was weighed into the temple, and turned over to the priests in charge at the time. The names of the men are given in verse 33. The whole amount was weighed and checked by number and all the weight written. By this plan they were able to know that the amount was correct, and the money had safely reached the right hands.

Final Procedure.—They also delivered the king’s commissions to the king’s satraps, and to the governors beyond the river. This commission had required them to grant any assistance that Ezra might want (Ezra 7: 21-23) in doing the work of the Lord. In harmony with this commission these officers of the king “furthered the people and the house of God.” This grant was practically unlimited, for the king said that Ezra’s demands should be obeyed up to a hundred talents of silver. That meant, of course, that they should give him all he asked for. This all being attended to, the exiles offered burnt offerings to God, a great and worthy sacrifice. The animals used were twelve bullocks, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve he-goats for a sin-offering. This showed their appreciation for God’s blessings, and their thankfulness for his protection from danger; an appropriate way to end a difficult task.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Whatever task in God's work we undertake, we should try to become proficient—do it well. Half-hearted interest is condemned in the divine record (Rev. 3: 15, 16); half-hearted work deserves no praise. Solomon said: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." (Eccles. 9: 10.) The reason Solomon gives is that after death there will be no chance to work or devise in efforts to correct mistakes.

2. Unless one seeks for something impossible, or seeks contrary to the laws governing the case, he will usually find it if he does it earnestly. Isaiah said: "Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." (Isa. 55: 7.) To do this, however, the wicked man must forsake his ways and thoughts. Those who seek according to God's law will find.

3. Doing the right thing at the proper time usually makes the difference between success and failure. Solomon also says, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven." (Eccles. 3: 1-8.) In the list of things mentioned he says there is a "time to laugh; a time to mourn." One laughs on joyous occasions, but mourns on the sad. Serious occasions naturally make us fast.

4. It matters little how much preparation we make for a journey, or how enthusiastically we start on it, we fail if we do not complete it. The final reward is after reaching the destination. We will be failures religiously, if we do not reach heaven.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe, in full, the letter that King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra regarding the work in Jerusalem. (Ezra 7: 11-20, 25, 26.)

2. Describe, in full, the part of the king's letter that was addressed to his own treasurers. (Ezra 7: 21-24.)

3. Describe the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem, giving distance and direction. (Consult map.)

4. Discuss the Savior's words in Matt. 7: 13, 14.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What is meant by "ready scribe"?
What had God required the captives in Babylon to do?
What different classes came with Ezra?
Who were the Nethinim?
How long were they in making the journey?

II

What is meant by "set his heart"?
What did Jesus say on this subject?

What is the lesson here on "doing"?
What two purposes did Ezra have?

III

What happened while camped at the river?
What did Christ teach on fasting?
How much silver and gold did they take?
Why did Ezra not ask for a guard?

IV

What wise precaution did Ezra take?
What is meant by "God's hand upon them"?
Describe the ending of the journey.
What was the final procedure?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson X—December 8, 1935

NEHEMIAH REBUILDING THE WALL OF JERUSALEM

Neh. 4: 6-9, 15-21.

6 So we built the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto half the height thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

7 But it came to pass that, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem went forward, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth;

8 And they conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to cause confusion therein.

9 But we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

15 And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.

16 And it came to pass from that time forth, that half of my servants wrought in the work, and half of them held the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the coats of mail; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.

17 They that builded the wall and they that bare burdens laded themselves; every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held his weapon;

18 And the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.

19 And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another:

20 In what place soever ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us; our God will fight for us.

21 So we wrought in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The people had a mind to work."* (Neh. 4: 6.)

TIME.—About 444 B.C.

PLACES.—Shushan and Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Nehemiah, Ezra, the Jews, and Artaxerxes.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 85: 1-7.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 2.	M.	Praying Together (Neh. 4: 7-14)
December 3.	T.	Building Together (Neh. 4: 15-23)
December 4.	W.	Working Together (1 Cor. 3: 1-9)
December 5.	T.	Walking Together (1 John 1: 1-10)
December 6.	F.	Witnessing Together (Acts 1: 1-8)
December 7.	S.	Worshiping Together (Psalm 95: 1-11)
December 8.	S.	Rejoicing Together (Psalm 85: 1-13)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Why the Wall Was Built (Verse 6).
 - II. Enemies Try to Stop the Work (Verses 7-9).
 - III. The Enemies' Counsel Brought to Nought (Verses 15, 16).
 - IV. The Workers Prepared for Defense (Verses 17, 18).
 - V. The Case Restated (Verses 19-21).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—In 445 B.C., in the month of Chislev (December), men from Jerusalem reported to Nehemiah the sad state of the Jews in the homeland, saying they were in great affliction and reproach, the walls were still broken down, and the gates burned with fire. In 444 B.C., in the month of Nisan (April), Nehemiah received from King Artaxerxes a commission to return and rebuild the walls. This was thirteen years after the return of Ezra, discussed in our last lesson, and ninety-two years since the first exiles came back with Zerubbabel; seventy-two years since the temple was rebuilt.

Lesson Links.—Ezra found on his return to Jerusalem that the people had not separated themselves from the Gentile nations around them. They had violated the law of God (Deut. 7: 2-5) by intermarriages with these nations. (Ezra 9: 1-3.) One of Ezra's first works was to remedy this situation. This he did by persuading the people to put away their strange wives, as recorded in Ezra 10. During the thirteen years preceding the coming of Nehemiah, Ezra probably gave the most of his time to teaching the laws of God and bringing about general religious reforms. When Nehemiah arrived with a commission from the Persian king, he succeeded Ezra as governor of the country's general affairs. His first great work was to repair the walls of Jerusalem to make it secure against enemies that might attack them. That is the story of our present lesson.

Lesson Settings.—Nehemiah, probably of the tribe of Judah, must have belonged to a prominent family, as he was called to the Persian court as cupbearer to the king. Such servants were likely taken from prominent families, perhaps from those of royal ancestry. The whole story indicates that he was a man of great piety, and possibly a man of considerable wealth. (Neh. 5: 16-18.) His responsible position, and acceptable service to the king, no doubt, gained for him a favorable hearing, when he appealed for permission to return to Judea and assist his own people. Besides this, Esther, who was the queen of Artaxerxes at that time, would naturally be in sympathy with the Jews, and use her influence in bringing about this result. Doubtless she was largely responsible in getting for Nehemiah such generous help from the king. An exile could hardly have had more favorable circumstances under which to labor.

LESSON NOTES

1. Why the Wall Was Built (Verse 6)

Preliminaries.—Work is more easily done when proper preparation has been made for it. One of the most essential things is to know in advance exactly what is to be done, and the difficulties that are likely to be met. After being in Jerusalem three days Nehemiah and a few men, doubtless specially chosen, made a careful inspection of the broken down walls. This enabled him to know just how much was to be done, and where the breaches were. This inspection occurred at night in a quiet way, so that no suspicion would be aroused among the enemies. He had not yet told the principal men of the Jews what was in his heart. (Neh. 2: 11-16.) After making this survey of the walls, he laid his plans before the Jews and asked their approval and help to build the walls, which they cheerfully gave.

Enemies' First Effort.—When Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem,

enemy leaders, heard of Nehemiah's plan, they laughed the Jews to scorn and ridiculed their efforts as vain, and suggested that they were rebelling against the king. (Neh. 2: 19.) These taunts and slanders Nehemiah met by saying, "The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build; but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem." (Neh. 2: 20.) When the enemies heard that the wall was actually being rebuilt, they increased their scorn and ridicule with the purpose of making the Jews afraid to go on with the work. (Neh. 4: 1-3.) Nehemiah prayed the Lord to "turn back their reproach upon their own heads," and went on with the work.

"A Mind to Work."—Nehemiah said: "So we built the wall." That is, in spite of enemy scorn, with reliance upon God for protection, they went on with the work. The wall was joined together up to half its height. The reason assigned for their success is that "the people had a mind to work." From the human side, that is the secret of success in most of man's undertakings. Anything that is reasonably possible will generally be done, if there is the strong determination to do it. Without the mind to do it, even easy tasks are left unfinished. Under the difficult circumstances nothing less than careful preparation, diligent precautions against opposition, and a stubborn determination to do the work would have been successful. A noble example for us.

II. Enemies Try to Stop the Work (Verses 7-9)

A Conspiracy to Fight.—When Sanballat, Tobiah, and their confederates learned that the breaches in the walls were being stopped in spite of their ridicule and scorn, they became very wroth, and decided on a more drastic course. Failing to frighten Nehemiah and his workers by misrepresentations, or intimidate them by ridicule, the enemies determined to drive them from the walls by force—resort to the sword. They doubtless felt sure that their combined force would easily gain the victory, and the work would be stopped. In this, however, they were entirely mistaken. Fighting against God must ultimately fail, though at first it may seem to succeed. The enemies knew that a war sprung upon the workers would cause some confusion; they probably reasoned that they could not work and fight both, and that while they were defending themselves they could not build the wall. This was plausible reasoning, and in part true, but it did not mean that the plans of Nehemiah would be completely overthrown.

Nehemiah's Defense.—Nehemiah's defense was twofold; both things necessary, and with both defeat was impossible. 1. He appealed to God for divine protection. 2. He set a watch against them day and night. Since the work he was doing protected the house of God and God's people, he could consistently ask God for such protection. As divine power cannot be met by human effort, there was no danger of their failing as long as they were doing God's will. That Nehemiah had the proper spirit is seen in the fact that in emergencies he always laid the case before the Lord first. Then he used all the available means at hand to protect himself and accomplish the work undertaken. Pray and work was his method of doing things. Nothing better has yet been found. Setting a watch day and night was the first step in preparation to repel an actual attack. Many Christians

would be far more successful in meeting the schemes of Satan, if they kept a constant watch to detect the first indication of his devices to deceive.

Difficulties.—Most every task has some difficulties, and sometimes they are very discouraging. Such were those that confronted Nehemiah, but he allowed none of them to stop the work. The statement of Judah—God's own people—was that there was so much rubbish to be removed before the wall could be built that it seemed impossible for the workers to succeed. This had a depressing effect upon the workers. Then the Jews who dwelt among the enemies brought word of their designs and assured Nehemiah that they were ready to come upon him from every quarter. Nehemiah arranged the families in the best protected places, and urged the men to courageously fight for their brethren, sons, daughters, wives, and houses. (Neh. 4: 10-14.)

III. The Enemies' Counsel Brought to Nought (Verses 15, 16)

Returned to the Work.—From verse 15 it appears that, when Nehemiah learned that the enemies were likely to come upon him from every quarter, the work ceased temporarily while he was arranging the people and supplies in the best condition to meet an attack. When this preparation was known to the enemies, they must have ceased making any show of attacking the workers. This encouraged the workers and gave assurance of safety in returning to the walls to work. The enemies' counsel was brought to nought, in that it was made known to Nehemiah before they had time to carry out their designs.

Another Wise Move.—To more successfully meet any emergency Nehemiah divided his helpers into two classes. One-half of his servants did the actual work on the wall; the other half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. A part of his force stood ready, fully equipped, to defend the work on a moment's notice. This guaranteed the worker's safety while he built the wall. With this number ready for instant action, the enemy could be held in check till the workers could be ready to join in the ranks of the defenders. This practically gave Nehemiah the full strength of fighting men, yet in a way not to prevent the work from going on as designed. This showed him to be a man of extraordinary skill. Verse 16 seems to indicate that the rulers, being important men, were placed where they would be especially protected. This is also a military idea of importance. Leaders are not so easily supplied, and so are given special protection.

IV. The Workers Prepared for Defense (Verses 17, 18)

Each Had a Weapon.—The record says that those who builded the wall and those who bare burdens each had a weapon with which to fight in defending the work. The exact statement is that "every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held his weapon." This expression probably means that each one had his weapon where he could place his hand upon it at once, if the attack should be made. The swords were girded by the side, for they were not in the way of doing the work. The spears, shields, and bows were doubtless placed where they could be taken at once when needed. This, as has already been noted, made every workman and burden

bearer that labored on the wall a soldier as well, fully equipped for instant service, if he was needed in that capacity. Thus supplied with arms, the working half of Nehemiah's force, added to the regular soldiers, put his whole company in position to repel any attacking army that might appear.

The Trumpet Signal.—Soldiers must have a commander, and be ready to obey orders instantly. In order to do this signals are often necessary in conveying commands. Nehemiah told his workmen that the wall was great and large, and they were separated far from each other. This would greatly have hindered them, if the enemy force should all be massed against one point. Defense would be needed where the attack might be made. It would require too long a time to send messengers and call them to the place. So Nehemiah said that the one who sounded the trumpet would be with him. When they heard the trumpet sound at any place, they should all hasten to that place. The sound of the trumpet would mean that the attack was being made at that point. In that manner the fighting force could be collected to a point in the shortest time.

V. The Case Restated (Verses 19-21)

"So We Wrought."—In this verse we have the simple statement that the work was done as Nehemiah had planned it should be; that is, his commands were obeyed by his soldiers and laborers. Some held the spears from the "rising of the morning till the stars appeared." They were prepared any minute of the daylight. Probably with their methods of warfare night attacks were not common, but might occur. In every move Nehemiah showed the wisdom and skill of a successful defender. It is no surprise that with such a commander the work was done. Add to this the providential protection that was over him because of his deep reverence for God, and the result could not have been otherwise.

Additional Precautions.—Under normal conditions the workmen would have returned to their homes at night; but with the danger confronting them Nehemiah required every one with his servants to remain in the city at night that they might be a guard. This would cause them to be there early and late for any emergency. They were so determined to be ready for any surprise attack that might be made that they slept without putting off their clothes. The text seems to mean that the only time they changed clothes was when it was necessary for washing. All of this shows the extreme care used for continual preparedness. This they did that the work might not be hindered or stopped.

Effect Upon the Enemy.—When the enemies heard that in spite of all the efforts to prevent it the wall was finished, though the gates were not put up, they changed their plans and invited Nehemiah to have a conference with them in some village in the plain of Ono. But Nehemiah recognized their motive was to do him mischief. He promptly rejected the invitation with the explanation that he was doing a "great work," and could not leave it to confer with them. The invitation was repeated four times, and answered in the same manner. Then they made false charges against him, but none of these efforts swerved him from the work in hand. (Neh. 6: 1-9.) That's why the wall was built.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Paul said that we serve the law of God with the mind. (Rom. 7: 25.) Both he and the apostle Peter urge Christians to have the mind of Christ. (Phil. 2: 5; 1 Pet. 4: 1.) Those who have "a mind to work" will make a reasonable success in serving the Lord. Those who allow enemy opposition to frighten them will not build much wall.

2. Those determined to do exactly what God requires need not be surprised to meet opposition. Paul told Timothy that "all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3: 12.) Ridiculing faithful servants of God is a device of Satan by which he hopes to make us afraid to do God's will.

3. The best way to bring to nought the enemies' counsel is to earnestly begin the service of the Lord before Satan has time to tempt us away from it. There is little danger, if we trust in God and keep constantly at work in his service.

4. Christianity is both negative and positive. We must reject the wrong, but actively defend the right. We must be prepared to defeat any move made by the devil, but be ever ready for active service for God. The sword and trowel are companion implements of divine service.

5. Every possible precaution should be taken to thwart evil purposes or designs, and protect ourselves from loss or harm. When this is done, we should whole-heartedly do our best to accomplish the work that falls to our lot. Nothing else merits God's approval.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss Nehemiah's prayer on learning of the sad condition of the Jews in Judea. (Neh. 1: 4-11.)

2. Describe the falsehoods told by the enemies respecting Nehemiah's work. (Neh. 6: 5-15.)

3. Describe Nehemiah's trip to Babylon and return to Jerusalem. (Neh. 13: 4-9.)

4. Describe the provision he made for the Levites. (Neh. 13: 10-14.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, places, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What is necessary to know in making a success?
What did Nehemiah do after three days in Jerusalem?
What was the enemies' first effort?
How did Nehemiah proceed?
Why were they successful in building the wall?

II

What did the enemies decide to do next?
How did they expect this to affect the Jews?
Why was their scheme a failure?

What twofold defense did Nehemiah make?

What is the best method in doing God's will?

What difficulties did Nehemiah face?

III

What did Nehemiah do when he heard the enemies' designs?
How did he arrange his force of helpers?

IV

How did Nehemiah equip his workmen?
How much defense did he then have?
What plan for signal did he have?

V

What is meant by "so we wrought"?
What other precautions did he use?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson XI—December 15, 1935

EZRA TEACHING THE LAW OF GOD

Ezra 7: 10; Neh. 8: 1-3, 5, 6, 8-12.

10 For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances.

1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel.

2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people); and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

6 And Ezra blessed Jehovah, the great God; and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with the lifting up of their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped Jehovah with their faces to the ground.

8 And they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading.

9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto Jehovah your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye grieved; for the joy of Jehovah is your strength.

11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"Thy word have I laid up in my heart."* (Psalm 119: 11.)

TIME.—About 444 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Jews.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Heb. 10: 19-27.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 9.	M.	-----	A Resolute Teacher of the Law (Ezra 7: 6-10)
December 10.	T.	-----	A Praying Teacher of the Law (Ezra 8: 21-23)
December 11.	W.	-----	Ezra Reads the Law to the People (Neh. 8: 1-12)
December 12.	T.	-----	Observing the Words of the Law (Neh. 8: 13-18)
December 13.	F.	-----	Finding the Book of the Law (2 Chron. 34: 14-19)
December 14.	S.	-----	Loving God's Law (Psalm 119: 97-104)
December 15.	S.	-----	Fellowship with God (Heb. 10: 19-27)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. Ezra Teaches the Law Publicly (Ezra 7: 10; Neh. 8: 1-3).
- II. Ezra Blesses Jehovah (Verses 5, 6).
- III. Ezra Explains the Law (Verses 8, 9).

- IV. The People Urged to Rejoice and Show Kindness (Verses 10, 11).
V. Results of the Teaching (Verse 12).
Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—The chronological facts presented in our last lesson will serve for this lesson also. In addition, it may be noted that Nehemiah finished the wall on the twenty-fifth day of Elul (September), in 444 B.C. The work was done in fifty-two days. (Neh. 6: 15.) The events of this lesson began six days (Neh. 8: 2) after the wall was finished. It was one of the first of the important events that rapidly followed the completion of that work.

Lesson Links.—When the walls were finished, the enemies were "much cast down in their own eyes." Besides, there were many in Judah sworn to Tobiah the Ammonite, because of his son and daughter being married to Israelites. (Neh. 6: 16-19.) As a protection Nehemiah commanded that the gates be opened only in daylight, and that guards watch the walls. (Neh. 7: 1-3.) He decided to reckon the genealogy of those who came from Babylon with Zerubbabel. Ezra 7: 6-73 contains this reckoning. Among the several important things that occurred soon after the walls were finished, of which our present lesson is one, the people kept the Feast of Tabernacles. (Neh. 8: 14-18.) This lasted eight days, and occurred in the seventh month. On the twenty-fourth of the seventh month they held a day of solemn fasting and confession of sin. In Neh. 12: 37-43, we have a description of the dedication of the wall. Just when this ceremony took place is not known, but it was probably soon after the work was completed. Putting away all the foreign wives was another reform that began the first of the tenth month and was completed the first of the following year, 443 B.C. (Ezra 10.)

Lesson Settings.—Ezra's great ability in teaching the law had doubtless done much in the years preceding the coming of Nehemiah to bring about religious reforms. This largely prepared for the greater reforms brought about through the help of the pious Nehemiah. The divine protection that he enjoyed in rebuilding the walls and protecting the Jews from their enemies was a strong influence to lead the people to accept the instruction given by both Ezra and Nehemiah. The people, in the main, had reached the point that they really were willing to be obedient to God's law. With people thus inclined there will always be good results, when faithful teachers are ready to tell them what God requires of them.

LESSON NOTES

I. Ezra Teaches the Law Publicly (Ezra 7: 10; Neh. 8: 1-3)

Ezra's Ability.—As already noted in lesson 9, Ezra's success in teaching the law of God was attributed to his earnest desire to know it so that, first of all, he might do it himself. No religious teacher has ever been able to make much success in teaching God's law who was not himself a doer of it. Humanity, without any command for it, will hold all teachers responsible for their inconsistency. Practice what you preach represents the general sentiment of all. Ezra "set

his heart to seek the law of Jehovah." Those who do that will obey the law and urge others to do likewise.

All Gathered Together.—The text says they gathered themselves together "as one man." This indicates a general assembly of the people at the same place for the same purpose. There was perfect harmony among them. They came together in the broad place before the water gate. That was the gate which led from the temple to the brook Kidron. They doubtless assembled there because it was the most convenient place near the temple for such a large concourse. They asked Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses. This shows that Ezra was a proficient teacher of the law, and this was generally known to the people. The thirteen years he had been among them was sufficient time for his knowledge in the law to become well known. In strictness of the expression the "book of the law of Moses" would include the five books which he wrote; but the historical events and prophecies that pertained to the Jews all came under that law, and they may have meant by the law of Moses all these books; at least, all that Ezra had been able to collect and bring together at that time.

Those Who Heard.—The text says there assembled "both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding." This would include all children of both sexes that were old enough to understand what they heard. That is all to whom the word of the Lord can be told, preached, or read. That many should hear it, and exactly that many can obey it. Children old enough to intelligently obey should be taught. This proves that those not old enough to obey do not need the teaching. The reason is that they are not sinners, not lost, and, therefore, not subject to the gospel. If they cannot understand what they hear, they can't believe it or obey it. Since the Bible authorizes the baptism of believers only, those not able to understand cannot be baptized. Those who claim to baptize infants have no authority for what they do.

The Time Used.—The text also tells that Ezra read from the book "from early morning until midday." This was a long time for one reading, but evidently was not displeasing to the people, for the record says "that the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." Time does not seem long when the hearer is deeply interested in the things that are being told him.

II. Ezra Blesses Jehovah (Verses 5, 6)

"Opened the Book."—When Ezra opened the book to read, all the people stood up. This was evidently out of respect for the book as a divine production. It was almost the same as if Jehovah in person was speaking to them. Reverently standing while the book was being read was a mark of genuine respect for sacred things. The same custom prevailed in the time of Jesus; for when he went into the synagogue he "stood up to read." (Luke 4: 16-19.) After the reading he sat down to do his teaching. Ordinarily the preachers stand up to read now, but the custom is for the hearers to remain seated. It was probably unfortunate when the ancient custom was abolished, since standing while the word is being read might serve to make the reading more impressive. In verse 4 we have the only occurrence of the word "pulpit" in the Bible. It means a tower, or platform, which raises the speaker above those to whom he is speaking. This is solely

for the purpose of enabling all to better see the speaker. It has no spiritual significance.

"Amen, Amen."—The statement that Ezra "blessed Jehovah" probably means that he praised and gave thanks to Jehovah for all his benefits. He doubtless praised him as the blessed and holy Being; one who is entitled to the praise of all his creatures. When he uttered the praise and thanksgiving all the people said, "Amen, Amen." By that they meant that they endorsed what Ezra had said as being true, and asked Jehovah to let the petitions be granted. Those who use the word "Amen" really make the prayer uttered by another their own. They bowed their heads and worshiped, with their faces to the ground. Thus they brought the body to a posture that indicated their inferiority to Jehovah as their maker. So far as the words are concerned they may just have bowed their heads with their faces toward the ground, or they may have prostrated themselves until their faces really touched the ground. In either case they were showing reverence for sacred things in their Oriental fashion.

III. Ezra Explains the Law (Verses 8, 9)

"Gave the Sense."—It says they read in the book "distinctly," the margin says "with an interpretation." The text further explains by saying, "And they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading." That is what we mean by interpreting the scriptures. Such interpretations were necessary in their case for two reasons: First, they had been in Babylon so long that many of them, especially the younger ones, had lost a correct knowledge of the Hebrew. Much of giving the sense, doubtless, was to put the thought into the language that they best understood and used. Second, being so long without a temple and service they had forgotten much of their rites and ceremonies. Hence, the Levites stood by to cause the people to understand the law. (Verse 7.) Many people today read or hear read the scriptures, but do not get the sense, because they have never learned the fundamental truths of Christianity. Other things being equal, such students and teachers of God's word as Ezra are capable of giving the sense better than those who have never learned the primary facts in the plan of salvation. Of course, even the best and most learned teachers have to use great care not to substitute their own speculations for the gospel facts. The world owes much, however, to competent teachers of God's law.

"This Day Is Holy."—The people were inclined to weep and mourn, probably because they realized how long they had been in disobedience. Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites, who were teaching them, directed their thoughts to more cheerful things. They said the day was "holy unto Jehovah," and they should not weep and mourn. It was rather a day to rejoice, because their captivity had been ended, the law had been restored, and the ordinances had been reestablished. It was a day to be remembered as the time when they had become again the people of the Lord as in former days.

IV. The People Urged to Rejoice and Show Kindness (Verses 10, 11)

Eat and Drink.—Verse 9 says that Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites assured the people that the day was holy; that is, Nehemiah and the

Levites probably endorsed what Ezra told them. Then Ezra said to them: "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet." That evidently meant for them to eat and drink the best they had. They were then in position, with their city protected with good walls, and their country in their own possession, to enjoy the best that the land afforded. With the assurance of God's continued favors, if they were obedient, they had the very best reasons for rejoicing. The fact that they could rest secure in the strength of Jehovah made it a time for joy instead of sorrow.

To Remember the Needy.—While they were eating and drinking with joy because of God's blessings upon them, they were to remember the needy—those for whom nothing had been prepared. They were to send portions to them. This was another matter in which their neglect had doubtless been very evident. Caring for the poor was a specific duty laid down in that law which they had been hearing read and explained, the disobedience to which had caused them to mourn and weep. In his farewell address, Moses had told them to rejoice in all the good that Jehovah had given them; and, when they made an end of tithing their increase, they "should give it unto the Levite, to the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled." (Deut. 26: 11, 12.) The Levites were legally entitled to share the income of the others; the sojourner, fatherless, and widows were the naturally needy ones. Both were to receive from the fortunate ones, and all then could rejoice together. The Levites stilled the people, saying they were to hold their peace; that is, they were to cease weeping and showing grief, for the day was a season for rejoicing.

V. Results of the Teaching (Verse 12)

They Obeyed.—The great assembly was dispersed, each going to his home to enjoy the good things which had been provided through God's providence. They then knew that God wanted them to rejoice in the possession of all good things. They were also careful to carry out the instructions to send portions to others who had none of their own. Religious joy, when it comes from a proper appreciation of God's love and mercy, and is not unmindful of human weakness and dependence, is a wonderful help in rendering true service to God. In such a state all the divine requirements will be a joyful task, and every duty a service of love. Physically, as well as religiously, the cheerful heart can accomplish more than the sad and mournful. When the things we rejoice about have a solid basis upon which to rest, our rejoicing will not be in vain. No joy can possibly equal in value that which comes from the certainty that we are doing exactly what God wants us to do.

Because They Understood.—The joy that brings the greatest satisfaction comes from understanding what is involved. These Jews went home happy and rejoicing "because they had understood the words that were spoken unto them." To learn secrets that have been lost or duties that have been forgotten, like valuable treasures that have been found, fills the soul with a special happiness. To know why their fathers had lost their land, and why they had been returned to it, sent them away with gratitude for God's wonderful love. However they faltered and fell into sin afterward, they knew themselves as

the favored of the Lord. The teaching of Ezra, the scribe, had found an abiding place in grateful hearts at least for the time.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Only those who are able to hear and understand can be taught. The command to teach carries this implied limitation, and no one is ever found trying to teach the requirements of the gospel to those too young to understand. This shows that infant baptism and infant church membership cannot be, for infants cannot believe.

2. The fact that Jehovah is God is proof that he should be praised for his wonderful gifts to men. God must be infinite in power, knowledge and wisdom; refusing to acknowledge this is equal to denying his divinity. To acknowledge this means that we must worship him.

3. It is conceded that God is his own best interpreter; that scriptures are best explained by comparison with other scriptures. Giving the correct teaching is usually not so difficult, if one understands the general fundamental facts. Not much dependence can be placed upon those who do not know such facts.

4. Those who know they enjoy the favor of God have the best reason for rejoicing. Gratefully using the things that God has provided for us is in perfect harmony with such rejoicing. There is no better way to show our own gratitude than by giving needful assistance to others.

5. The Jews then obeyed God because they understood what was taught them by Ezra. Many, unfortunately, that understand do not obey. To know and do not, makes one a sinner. (James 4: 17.)

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the Feast of Tabernacles that was kept. (Neh. 8: 13-18.)

2. Describe the great blessings received from the Lord by the Israelites while in the wilderness. (Neh. 9: 19-25.)

3. Describe the mercies God extended to them while in rebellion against him. (Neh. 9: 26-29.)

4. Describe the action taken by Nehemiah against Sabbath breaking and marriage with foreigners. (Neh. 13: 15-18, 23-30.)

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.
Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.
Repeat the Lesson Links.
Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

To what was Ezra's ability to teach the law attributed?
What is a general sentiment regarding consistency?
What is indicated by the expression "as one man"?

What was included in the "book of the law of Moses"?
Who heard the teaching?
How long at a time did the teaching proceed?

II

What posture did the people take while Ezra read?
How long did this custom continue?
What was meant by "blessed Jehovah"?
What is the meaning of the word "Amen"?

III

What is meant by reading the book "distinctly"?
Why was such interpretation necessary?
Why were the people told not to weep?

IV

What were the people urged to do?
 Why were they in position to rejoice and
 enjoy temporal things?
 What else were they told to do?

V

What were the results of their teaching?
 Why did they obey?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

*Lesson XII—December 22, 1935***MALACHI FORETELLS A NEW DAY**

Mal. 3: 1-12.

1 Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts.

2 But who can abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

3 And he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness.

4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto Jehovah, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years.

5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the sojourner from his right, and fear not me, saith Jehovah of hosts.

6 For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

7 From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye say, Wherein shall we return?

8 Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation.

10 Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith Jehovah of hosts.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." (Mal. 3: 1.)

TIME.—About 428 B.C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Malachi and the Jews.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Isa. 11: 1-10.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 16.	M.	-----	A Better Day Foretold (Mal. 3: 1-12)
December 17.	T.	-----	A Day of Restoration (Jer. 31: 10-14)
December 18.	W.	-----	A Day of New Covenant (Jer. 31: 31-34)
December 19.	T.	-----	A Day of Forgiveness (Psalm 32: 1-7)
December 20.	F.	-----	A Day of Blessedness (Matt. 5: 1-12)
December 21.	S.	-----	Preparing for the Day (Luke 3: 3-9)
December 22.	S.	-----	A Day of Righteousness (Isa. 11: 1-10)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

I. The Messengers Promised (Verse 1).

- II. A Reformation Promised (Verses 2-4).
- III. Punishment of the Wicked Foretold (Verses 5, 6).
- IV. A Corrupt Worship Condemned (Verses 7-9).
- V. A Blessing Promised to Faithful Worshipers (Verses 10-12).
Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—There are different opinions among Biblical scholars respecting the time that Malachi prophesied. Some think it was as early as the time when Ezra came to Jerusalem from Babylon 458 B.C.; others place it as late as the second coming of Nehemiah from Babylon, 433 B.C. The latter date seems the more probable, for it appears certain that it was long after the temple was rebuilt, else there would hardly have been reasons for condemning the corruption of that worship as he did. Their renewed zeal at the reestablishment of their temple services had evidently been lost, and they were needing rebuke again. Even with the latter date, something more than four hundred years elapsed between Malachi's work and the coming of Christ.

Lesson Links.—The rebuilding of the temple, completed in 516 B.C., marked a period of many reforms and the restoration of the service with some degree of purity at least. As already indicated, the intervening time of more than eighty years brought such a relaxing in both morals and religion that strong rebukes were necessary. This accounts for Malachi's strong words against their sins. He condemned the priests for their perversions of the temple services. (Mal. 1: 6-10.) He denounced the people in general, including the priests, for their immorality, infidelity, and mixed marriages with the foreign nations around them. (Mal. 2: 10-17.) He charged the priests with despising the name of Jehovah, offering polluted bread, offering the blind, sick, and lame for a sacrifice (Mal. 1: 13, 14), when the law positively forbade any such offerings. (Lev. 22: 18-20.) The conditions existing at the time justified the prophet's severe condemnation.

Lesson Settings.—If the date we accept as the probable time for Malachi's work be correct, he was contemporary with both Ezra and Nehemiah. He was using his prophetic authority to support the reformatory work that both these pious men had been doing before. They doubtless gave him their full support in his fight against the evils then prevailing. He was the last of the Old Testament prophets, and strong condemnation of sin was an appropriate way for that record to close. His was the last warning sounded to the Jews before the coming of the messenger to announce the near approach of the Messiah.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Messengers Promised (Verse 1)

"My Messenger."—The prophet begins by saying, "Behold." By this he meant for them to give special attention to the momentous truths he was about to announce to them. He declares that God would send them a messenger to prepare the way before the coming one. As the Jews expected the Messiah to come, they would naturally understand that this promised messenger would precede his actual coming.

Two simple considerations show that the prediction referred to John the Baptist. He was to "prepare the way before me," an expression which accurately describes the work done by John. Then Jesus applied the language to John in Matt. 11: 10, and the apostles did the same in the following passages: Matt. 3: 3; Mark 1: 2, 3; Luke 3: 3; John 1: 23.

"Whom Ye Seek."—The Jews were anxiously expecting the coming of one to bring great blessings—the Messiah. The wicked element in Malachi's day had charged God with delighting in evil and asked, "Where is the God of justice?" (Mal. 2: 17.) The prophet's reply may have been an ironic rebuke, meaning that the Lord whom you pretend to seek will suddenly come to his temple; that is, it would not be long after the herald announced his near approach till he appeared. It possibly implied also that he would come before the wicked element would be ready to receive him. About six months after John began his work, Jesus began his public ministry, and in a little more than three years he became a high priest in his own spiritual temple in the most holy place—heaven itself. (Heb. 9: 24.) If the prophet had reference to the temple in Jerusalem, then the prediction was fulfilled in the fact that he personally taught in its sacred courts. He was often in the temple enclosure during his earthly ministry. In leaving the temple on Tuesday afternoon, the week of his crucifixion, he said: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23: 38.) Since his death, worship in that house has never been the way to honor God. As Jesus had declared that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed (Matt. 24: 1, 2), it is most probable that the prophet referred to the spiritual temple, or church. (1 Cor. 3: 16.)

"Messenger of the Covenant."—By this expression the prophet referred to the Lord just mentioned; hence, the word "messenger" in this case refers to Christ himself. It must be distinguished from "my messenger," which means John the Baptist. The word messenger means an "angel," but here both words mean one who brought a message. John and Christ both did that. John's message prepared for the great message of life and salvation brought through Christ. The covenant here mentioned is that new one which Jeremiah said would be made with the house of Israel. (Jer. 31: 31; Heb. 8: 8-12.)

II. A Reformation Promised (Verses 2-4)

"Who Shall Stand?"—The prophet asked who would be able to abide the day of his coming, or be able to stand when he appeared? Evidently only those who would accept him as the promised one they were expecting. Only those who believed in him would be able to endure the test of his teaching and power. All others would be rejected, and cease to be recognized as God's people. This same truth was taught by Jesus in the parable of the vineyard. (Matt. 21: 33-43.)

"Refiner and Purifier."—The work of Christ as the messenger of the covenant would be like a refiner of metals, and one who purifies objects with a cleansing material. The refiner sits by his fire, increasing it, till the dross is separated from the precious metal. The dross is then dipped off and the metal is refined. The experiences that would come to the Jews as God's people would so test them as to remove the dross from their hearts, if they endured the tests, and hold them still in God's favor. Those who believed in Christ were allowed to

enjoy that favor; those who disbelieved in him lost their relationship as God's people. What the prophet said literally came true when the Lord appeared and established his kingdom. The sins of those who accepted Christ were removed as filth is removed by washing garments with soap.

"The Sons of Levi."—As the worship of God then was conducted by the sons of Levi, that expression is used to describe the worshipers in the new covenant, just as Christians are in a spiritual sense called Israelites. It means that as the Levites were legally cleansed that they might engage in the temple services, so those who become Christians are purified in that process, so that they may worship God in spirit and in truth. They become spiritual Israelites. When Christians are called priests (1 Pet. 2: 5), we have a like spiritual use of that term. In the expression "the offering of Judah and Jerusalem," we have the same figure carried further. Levites and priests imply offerings. If Christians are called Levites and priests, then the service they render to God should be called offerings.

III. Punishment of the Wicked Foretold (Verses 5, 6)

Judgment Announced.—The prophet declared that the Lord would come near them in judgment. Those who were rebellious, and would refuse the Lord's offers of mercy, would be severely punished. The work would be done swiftly against the outrageous sinners—the sorcerers, adulterers, false swearers, and those who oppressed the poor and unfortunate. Doubtless, in a multitude of cases, this was visited upon them as individuals, as they had to face the desperate conditions that came to them soon after the church was established. The Roman government destroyed their city and temple in about thirty-five years after the establishment of the church. There was indescribable suffering, and the loss of hundreds of thousands of souls. Rebellion against God did not pay then; it does not pay now.

Jehovah Changes Not.—The statement that Jehovah changes not does not mean that he never changed any laws; for the Mosaic law was repealed by the death of Christ, and the gospel law is now in its place. But the thought is that God is not fickle and unreliable in his promises as men often are. His divine purposes would be carried out, and his promises all fulfilled. His delay in fulfilling his promises did not mean that he would be untrue to them. It was the fact that he was true to his purposes that prevented their being consumed for their sins. He had promised to preserve a remnant through whom Christ would come (Gen. 12: 3), and that fact caused the preservation of Israel and their return from Babylon. Otherwise their national existence would have long before been ended.

IV. A Corrupt Worship Condemned (Verses 7-9)

"Return Unto Me."—Through the prophet God reminded them that from the days of the fathers they had been continually turning aside from God's ordinances—failing to keep them. The history of the centuries after they came from Egypt till they went to Babylon is replete with examples of what the prophet said. A lapsing into grievous sins had come about after returning to their own land. So God said, "Return to me, and I will return unto you." The only way they could

return to God was to again keep his commandments, for a failure to keep them was the way they turned aside from the ordinances. But their consciences were so seared that they did not realize that they had turned aside. Hence, they asked, "Wherein shall we return?" This question is answered in the following verses.

"Will a Man Rob God?"—The prophet did not ask this question for information. It was to put before them strongly what he knew they believed. They would admit that a man should not rob God. With this implied admission in his question, the prophet declared that they had robbed God. This put the charge in the strongest kind of form, and left them to feel deeply the sting when they were told the matters in which they had robbed God. They asked wherein they had been guilty of the charge.

"Tithes and Offerings."—Both tithes and offerings were specific requirements found in the law under which they were supposed to worship God. A failure in observing the commands in either case was a genuine example of robbing God—keeping back that which rightfully belonged to him. To refuse to deliver to others what belongs to them is readily admitted to be robbery; the principle is none the less true when the things we withhold belong to God. That is just as true now as it was then. The prophet declared that such robbing of God brought the whole nation under a curse. History proves the charge true.

V. A Blessing Promised to Faithful Worshipers (Verses 10-12)

"Prove Me."—Bringing in all the tithes and offerings to the house of God was required so those who attended to the services could have a proper support, and there would be sufficient sacrifices for the regular offerings. They had failed in this duty till the Levites had been forced to leave the service of the temple and return to other work for support. (Neh. 13: 10.) This had interfered with the worship. They were urged to bring in the full store, and trust to Jehovah to take care of any loss they might think would result. He assured them that they would receive, through his divine care, more temporal things than they would get otherwise. That meant that they would be prospered more in worldly things, if they served God faithfully. They were receiving through God's providence blessings both temporal and spiritual. There is no room to doubt that Christians will now lose nothing worth mentioning, if they serve God as he directs. It is far more probable that we will deserve most of our common losses because we are such poor servants of his. But should we lose heavily in material things by faithfulness in the Lord's work, the spiritual blessings in store would more than compensate for them. So taught Jesus. (Matt. 6: 19, 20.)

"A Delightful Land."—The direct promise to them was that things should not devour their fruits and harvests. The vines would not shed their fruits before they were ripe. Disasters and pests would be prevented in their behalf. Such favors would be theirs that the nations around them would call them a happy people, and their land a delightful place. Serving God is truly profitable; his promises are unfulfilling, and his love everlasting.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. Before the actual introduction of any new institution some preparatory work is necessary. The sending of some one to the Jews to get them in readiness for the Messiah was the logical and sensible thing to expect. As such messenger John required them to repent. No better preparation could be made in preparing them to consider Jesus and the testimony to his claims as the Messiah.

2. Only those prepared will be able to successfully meet the tests when they come. Christ's law separates sin from the heart as fire separates the dross from the metal. Another prophet said God's word is like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. (Jer. 23: 29.)

3. Ultimately each individual must receive the reward that his conduct in this life merits. Paul declares that we must all appear at the judgment bar of God that each may receive according to what he has done. (2 Cor. 5: 10.)

4. If one takes from another what does not belong to him, or withholds what should be given up, even sinners admit that he is a robber, and deserves punishment. All we have comes in some sense from God. Those who fail to obey God are robbers in the truest sense.

5. God's unchangeableness guarantees that we will not fail to receive the reward for faithfulness. God will not forget our "work of faith and labor of love."

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the places and circumstances where John the Baptist did his preaching. Search the concordance for passages that tell the story.

2. Tell who were baptized by him, and who refused to be.

3. Give the story of his imprisonment and death.

4. Tell what happened when the new covenant began—the incidents that transpired on the day of Pentecost.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.

Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.

Repeat the Lesson Links.

Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

Who did the prophet refer to by "my messenger"?

What is the proof of it?

What charge did the wicked element make against God?

What is meant by "suddenly" coming to his temple?

What did Jesus say of the temple in Jerusalem?

Who is referred to by "the messenger of the covenant"?

II

Who would be able to abide the day of his coming?

Explain the illustrations of refiner and purifier.

Who is meant by the "sons of Levi"?

III

What did the prophet announce?

What classes of sinners did he mention?

What is meant by Jehovah changes not?

IV

Of what did the prophet remind them?

How could they return to God?

What is said on robbery?

V

Why require them to bring tithes and offerings?

What did Jesus teach in Matt. 6: 19, 20?

How would obedience affect the nations about them?

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

Lesson XIII—December 29, 1935

REVIEW: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXILE AND THE RESTORATION

Mal. 3: 17, 18; 4: 1-6.

17 And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, *even mine own possession*, in the day that I make; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

18 Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

1 For, behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Jehovah of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

2 But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings; and ye shall go forth, and gambol as calves of the stall.

3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I make, saith Jehovah of hosts.

4 Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances.

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come.

6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*"The lovingkindness of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children."* (Psalm 103: 17.)

TIME.—About B.C. 428.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Malachi and the Jews.

DEVOTIONAL READING.—Psalm 126.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.—

December 23.	M.	Punishment for Sin (Isa. 1: 1-9)
December 24.	T.	Preservation in Exile (Isa. 49: 8-13)
December 25.	W.	"Peace Among Men" (Luke 2: 8-20)
December 26.	T.	Prayer in Exile (Dan. 9: 15-19)
December 27.	F.	Pardon for Penitence (Isa. 40: 3-11)
December 28.	S.	Prosperity in Adversity (Gen. 41: 37-45)
December 29.	S.	Praise for Victory (Psalm 126: 1-6)

LESSON OUTLINE.—

Introductory Study.

- I. The Righteous God's Own Possession (Verses 17, 18).
 - II. The Wicked to Be Rejected (Mal. 4: 1).
 - III. The Triumph of the Righteous (Verses 2, 3).
 - IV. Elijah to Come First (Verses 4-6).
- Thoughts for Meditation.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

Chronology.—Since our lesson text is taken from the same book, and was probably spoken at the same time as that of the preceding lesson, naturally the chronological facts given in that lesson apply

to this one also. The student can refresh his mind by rereading them. It should be kept in mind that Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament, and a period of a little more than four centuries elapsed between the time it was written and the coming of Christ. For events in that period we are dependent upon what can be learned from profane history.

Lesson Links.—Because there are no "links" between this and last lesson, we close this phase of the 1935 commentary by references to a few important events that transpired in the centuries following. A Jewish high priest, Manasseh, had married the daughter of Sanballat, who was perhaps Nehemiah's most prominent enemy. (Neh. 4: 1-14; 6: 1-9.) In 408 B.C. he began the erection of a temple on Mount Gerizim for his son-in-law. This became the place of Samaritan worship, and introduced the systems of rival worship, which was still being kept up in the days of Christ. (John 4: 20-25.) About one hundred years after the time of this lesson Alexander the Great overthrew the Persian monarchy and established the Grecian in its stead. The Jews, having no king, passed under the rule of the new empire. In the last century before the Christian era the Roman Empire obtained practically a world rulership, and the Jews again passed under the authority of the victors. This was their national condition when Christ appeared to establish his kingdom.

Lesson Settings.—As in the matter of chronology, the "settings" for this lesson are the same as the last. The last recorded events of Old Testament history were in the days of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi. Ezra, the scribe, was perhaps the greatest teacher and religious reformer that Israel ever produced. Nehemiah was one of the best political governors, and Malachi, though his prophecies were few, closed the Old Testament canon with great honor. With force and beauty he condemned the evils existing in his time, and gave a glorious glimpse of a new and better day. With his words we must wait till the Lord gave them fulfillment in sending the messenger to prepare for the beginning of that better day.

LESSON NOTES

I. The Righteous God's Own Possession (Verses 17, 18)

A Contrast.—In the preceding verses (13-16) the prophet vividly contrasts the wicked and righteous of his day. There were some whose words were "stout" against God. They were infidels and revilers, yet were ready to deny that they had spoken against God, or ready to defend their charges against him. They had said it was "vain" to serve Jehovah and no profit in keeping his commandments. They charged that only the proud were happy and the wicked honored. Complainers and revilers have always resorted to such false charges to cover up their own sins. Those that feared the Lord, according to the prophet's words, spake one with another—enjoyed the communion with kindred spirits—and were happy in God's service. Of such God kept a "book of remembrance," because they were his own possession in whom he delighted.

The Day I Make.—Two facts stand out clearly in the development of God's plans: One is that a "remnant" should be saved (Isa. 10: 22, 23; Rom. 9: 27). This was done that the promise made to Abra-

ham might be fulfilled and the Messiah come from the Jews. (John 4: 22; Gal. 4: 4, 5.) The other fact is that those Jews who would believe on Christ when he came could still remain in the favor of God, and those who would reject him would cease to be God's people. Their only chance of salvation would be that they would change and become believers of Christ. (Rom. 11: 20-24.) The word "jewels," of the King James Version, is translated "mine own possession," in the Revised Version. If the expression, "the day that I make," refers to some particular time, it would probably refer to the Christian dispensation as a period of time during which the righteous would be God's peculiar people or his own possession. Instead of "make," the margin has the word "do." That would mean that the righteous would become God's own possession in "the day that I do this"; that is, in the day or time that I fulfill this promise. In that time—the gospel dispensation—God would treat the saved as a father treats his own son.

The Servants of God.—The prophet said that in that glorious day to come there would be the discerning between the righteous and the wicked; those that serve God and those who do not. The gospel law would be made so plain that the good and bad would be clearly distinguished by the fact that one class served God and the other did not. This harmonizes with the well-known simplicity of man's duty before God, and the ease with which we can determine who are obedient to him. This thought is presented by Isaiah with great force in Isa. 35: 8-10.

II. The Wicked to Be Rejected (Mal. 4: 1)

"The Day Cometh."—By this expression the prophet evidently meant not a single day, but a period of time. The destiny of the Jewish nation was sealed when they caused Jesus to be crucified. Individually and collectively they ceased to be God's people; that relationship was utterly destroyed. Their only hope was, and is, to become citizens of the spiritual kingdom Christ has established. As God's people nationally, they were to be as stubble, burned up root and branch. The destruction of their city in A.D. 70 settled this matter fully. That thousands of them suffered personally in that great calamity is beyond question. Their lives were lost and they ceased to live on earth as completely as the burned grass ceases to exist.

"Root Nor Branch."—This is a kind of proverbial expression to mean utter destruction, not personal annihilation. Their national existence, and their Jewish rites personally, were to be completely brought to an end. If the expression should be applied to the wicked individually and the time be the end of the world, the thought would be substantially the same. Dying in sin, their chance to be saved would end, and they would be as fully debarred from God and the righteous as though they had never existed. It does not mean that they would be annihilated as individuals. This view would conflict with plain teaching regarding the future of the wicked. (Matt. 25: 46.)

III. The Triumph of the Righteous (Verses 2, 3)

"Sun of Righteousness."—This expression evidently refers to Christ, the Messiah, that they were expecting. To the wicked his coming

would be like an oven that would consume with intense heat; to the righteous he would be like the rising sun with healing in his beams. Those that feared Jehovah were longing for his appearance (2: 16), anxiously waiting for his mercy and salvation. Those who were really righteous would be glad to dwell in his kingdom, walk in the light of his divine power, and rest in the security of his love and favor. As the prophet had just spoken of a "day" when the wicked would be destroyed, he now speaks of another day whose morning sun would flood the world with moral and spiritual light. That glorious day began in full on Pentecost, when repentance and remission of sins began to be preached among all nations in the name of Christ.

"As Calves of the Stall."—We should note that the prophet is in this lesson expressing many of his thoughts in figurative language. As calves, when released from the stall, frisk and play, so the righteous when freed from the bondage and restraints of sin would, figuratively speaking, leap for joy. Isaiah expresses in a similar manner the joy that was to come to the redeemed in that day that was promised. He said: "Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." (Isa. 35: 6.) These beautiful figures of speech may be considered as fulfilled in the cases where the saved rejoice. (See Acts 8: 39; 16: 34.) The general teaching on the joy that comes to the saved in Christ is found in such passages as the following: Rom. 14: 17; Gal. 5: 22; 1 Pet. 1: 8. The eternal joy that is awaiting the righteous in heaven is beyond any words to adequately describe. As we grow in grace we doubtless increase our capacity to appreciate God's blessings here, and to have a keener anticipation of what is in store for us at last.

"Tread Down the Wicked."—Some take the words, "and ye shall go forth," in a literal sense to refer to the fact that the righteous should go forth safely out of Jerusalem before its destruction. If that be the correct application, then treading down the wicked as ashes under the soles of their feet might also be considered as literal. Its fulfillment would be in the fact that those who afterwards were in the ruins of Jerusalem would actually walk on the ashes of the wicked who perished in the flames. A similar prophecy is found in Isa. 26: 1-7. But if the words are to be taken figuratively, which seems the more probable, then it means that in and through the kingdom of Christ the righteous would finally prevail over the wicked who had oppressed them. Or, putting it in other words, the righteous would finally triumph, and the wicked be lost. Whether taken literally or figuratively, it shows that the wicked must fail, but the righteous will finally gain a complete victory.

IV. Elijah to Come First (Verses 4-6)

Remember the Law.—The reason for this command was that the people then were under the law of Moses. In it they would find all their duties clearly set forth. If they expected to be among the saved when the sun of righteousness arose with healing in his beams, they would need to remember—practice—what Moses had said. The law was for all Israel from Horeb till it was abolished on the cross. The law and the prophets were to remain till John as the only law (Luke 16: 16); but after his coming the kingdom at hand was to be preached.

As they had no prophet from Malachi to John to warn them against sin and rebellion against God, it was especially appropriate that they should be urged to remember the law spoken at Mount Sinai.

"Elijah the Prophet."—The promise here definitely states that Elijah the prophet was to be sent "before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." The great and terrible day must be the day referred to in 3: 17 and 4: 1. Elijah had to come before that day. It is certainly implied that the coming of the day would be soon after the coming of Elijah. This agrees with the preaching of John the Baptist that the kingdom was "at hand." But if the day means the period of the new covenant, when the wicked Jews would be rejected and the righteous enter a new relationship with the Father, it may be asked how it could be a "great and terrible" day? It is easy to see how it would be the greatest day the world has ever known—a period when pardon and ultimate glory would be assured. It would likewise be terrible for the wicked—a time when their eternal doom would be fully revealed; when their complete rejection as God's people would be established; till they were willing to accept Jesus as the Messiah they expected.

What Elijah Meant?—Of course, if we had only this text, we, like the Jews then, would be sure he meant Elijah the prophet who had died long before Malachi's time. Jesus, in explaining the mission of John the Baptist to the multitudes, calls him a prophet, and much more than a prophet, saying of him, "This is Elijah that is to come." (Matt. 11: 9-14.) However strange this may seem, it must be accepted as the fact, or we reject the testimony of Jesus as God's Son. The angel of the Lord told Zacharias concerning John that he was to go forth "in the spirit and power of Elijah." (Luke 1: 17.) Elijah was typical of John, and John manifested the same spirit that moved the fearless prophet of old. This figurative use of the name Elijah agrees perfectly with the many other figurative expressions in this lesson text.

John's Work.—Malachi said that the coming of Elijah would turn "the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers." Of John, the angel said he was to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," and further adds that he would turn the "disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just." (Luke 1: 17.) The angel's words force us to understand that by Elijah we must know that John is meant. This work of John in preparing a people for the Lord was necessary to prevent the earth being smitten with a curse. Unless some had been prepared to receive him, doubtless all would have rejected him, and the world would have been lost. The glorious day—period—foretold by the prophet was heralded by the spiritual Elijah, and was fully revealed by the messenger of the covenant—Jesus the Messiah.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

1. The days, periods, times, or seasons, which God decrees in his own counsels, will always come as he determines. The righteous need not fear that he will forget, nor can the wicked prevent his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises.

2. One of the greatest texts says: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto

Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. 55: 7.) The implication is that, unless the wicked does turn from his sin, he will be lost.

3. One of the strongest motives to induce one to accept any proposition is the promise of joy and happiness. In this particular nothing equals the gospel of Christ. The sweetest pleasures known to this world are found in Christian living; it alone has promise of joys in the life to come.

4. Remembering God's law is our only safety in meeting the devices of Satan. Like Jesus, we must meet all the evil suggestions that come to us in this life with the words, "It is written." Those who rely implicitly upon God's word need not fear of losing any moral battle. A careful study of God's teachings will turn our hearts to the right. Such resistance to the devil will cause him to leave us.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the abrogation of the old covenant, pointing out the faulty features according to Heb. 8: 7-13.

2. Discuss the typical features of the old covenant as presented in Heb. 9: 1-10.

3. Briefly repeat the story of the exile and restoration to their own land.

4. Briefly review the ministry of John the Baptist.

5. Tell how sinners are freed from the bondage of sin and restored to the favor of God.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

Give the subject, Golden Text, time, place, persons.

Give the Lesson Outline.

Introductory Study

Give the chronological facts.

Repeat the Lesson Links.

Explain the Lesson Settings.

I

What contrast does the prophet make?

What charges did the wicked make against God?

What two important Bible facts should be noted here?

What is meant by the "day that I make"?

What view is based on the margin translation?

What did the prophet say would be clear in that day?

II

What was the only hope for the Jews' salvation?

What great event destroyed their national existence?

What is meant by destroyed "root and branch"?

Why can it not mean personal annihilation?

III

What is meant by "sun of righteousness"?

When did that day or period begin?

Explain the figure of "calves in the stall."

How did Isaiah express the same thought?

How may the figures have been fulfilled?

What is meant by "treading down the wicked"?

IV

Why say, "Remember the law of Moses"?

Who is meant by "Elijah the prophet"?

Explain the nature of John's work.

Thoughts for Meditation

Repeat these thoughts.

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